

"In the beginning  
was the Word,  
and the Word was  
with God, and the  
Word was God."  
~John 1:1

The Lord's Flock  
**Growth**  
DIGEST  
PASTORAL GROWTH SERIES



## “CONTENTMENT VS. COMPLACENCY”

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### I. INTRODUCTION:

Questions:

Are you going through struggles?  
Are you content?

Are your feelings of contentment marked by a nagging feeling that something is missing from your life?  
Are you not living the life that you want to live?

1 Tim 6:8 - If we have food and clothing, we shall be content with that.

It's very easy for us to be confused about contentment. And this confusion is dangerous because a true understanding of contentment is tied to experiencing a life of true joy.

Be content with what I have and that I should not desire more, yet I see it through the Bible that God has grander plans.

Jer 29:11 - For I know well the plans I have in mind for you—oracle of the LORD—plans for your welfare and not for woe, so as to give you a future of hope.

But when does contentment become complacency?

Reaching a goal is not what makes us happy. It's the journey to get to that goal that makes us come alive. **Striving is the universal high.** When things get too regular, humans get bored.

When we run from hard work and negative emotions, we are running from the very thing that we need to make us stronger. Too many times, people get into a routine in their lives.

And then they say they are content with their lives. They say that they like what they are doing and how they are living their lives.

Are they really content or have they gotten complacent?

### II. TOPIC: Contentment vs. Complacency

The difference between being content and being complacent is subtle. They both feel similar.

A. Dictionary Definition:

1. Contentment - satisfaction: a feeling of calm satisfaction.

**Contentment is being truly happy with your life and how you are living it.**

Contented - Nasisiyahan

2. Complacency – is being marked by self-satisfaction especially when accompanied by unawareness of actual dangers or deficiencies.

These deficiencies can be anything from dreams that you are ignoring to stress or boredom that is (or will soon be) affecting your health in negative ways. They also can be actions that you are taking or not taking that will cause you to have regrets.

**Complacency is saying you are happy with your life while ignoring the elephant in the room.**

Complacent – Kampante

B. COMPLACENCY

**There is a great danger in becoming complacent in our fellowship with Christ.** To become complacent would be to become lukewarm and could cause our downfall.

Rev 3:16 - So, because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.

[1 Corinthians 9:24](#) - Do you not know that the runners in the stadium all run in the race, but only one wins the prize? Run so as to win.

Paul urges us to not simply run the race, but to run it with the intent to win. It is not enough to simply continue to do what we're doing, but we should strive to do not only more, but to be better at what we are already doing.

C. Things you can do to break through complacency:

1. **Strive for Something** – Set a big goal and work towards it regularly.
2. **Challenge Yourself** – Face a fear. The more you put yourself in situations that challenge you mentally or physically, the more you will grow.
3. **Acknowledge Your Dreams** – Too many people ignore their dreams.
4. **Build a Foundation** - Start building a foundation by getting a handle on the life necessities, such as finances and health.
5. **Travel** – The best way to knock yourself out of complacency is to travel. It opens you up to a wider range of possibilities.

## D. CONTENTMENT

### 1. What It's Not

In Philippians, the Apostle Paul said that he had learned the secret to being content in any and every circumstance (Phil.4:11). But in chapter three of the same letter, Paul said, "Forgetting what is behind and straining forward to what lies ahead ... I press on" (Phil.3:13-14). So which is it? Should we strain forward and press on? Or should we be content?

The answer, of course, is both, but we must first understand what contentment is not for these to function together.

Contrary to popular use, the biblical word for contentment does not primarily mean to be satisfied. It's because of this misunderstanding that leads people to confuse contentment with complacency. To be content does not mean that we just sit back and do nothing because we are "satisfied" with the ways things are. Contentment does not mean that if we don't have a job, we don't seek a job. Being content does not mean that we refuse to set goals, work hard, or dream big. Contentment is not tied to inactivity in our lives; it's tied to trusting God's activity in our lives.

### 1. What It Is

The word Paul uses for contentment literally means to be sufficient. Contentment is the attitude or mindset that who I am, what I have, and where God has placed me right no

Contentment	Complacency
<p>Gratitude</p> <p>People who are content are grateful for what they have even as they seek to achieve their goals.</p>	<p>Individuals who are complacent believe that things are okay as they are and are not likely to get better. Therefore they make no effort to improve their situation.</p>
<p>Thanksgiving</p> <p>Individuals who are content is that they are thankful for the opportunities that they have received. It is with this attitude of thanksgiving that they seek out new prospects and projects. Their attitude seems to attract additional opportunities.</p>	<p>Individuals who are complacent seem to have the opposite effect. Instead of being thankful, they tend to complain about their situation while doing nothing to change it.</p>
<p>Acknowledgement</p> <p>Individuals who are content understand that they wouldn't be where they are today if they didn't receive help from others. They accept the fact that they need something greater than themselves in order to achieve true success.</p>	<p>Complacent individuals think that they are responsible for their current success. They think that they have achieved everything on their own.</p>

sufficient to biblically fulfill the roles and responsibilities God has given to me.

The word Paul uses for contentment literally means to be sufficient. Contentment is the attitude or mindset that who I am, what I have, and where God has placed me right now is sufficient to biblically fulfill the roles and responsibilities God has given to me.

E. Individuals who are content have a posture of gratitude, thanksgiving, and acknowledgement.

While we push towards more and more success, we must take a moment to evaluate which model we have adapted. Are we content? Do we feel grateful, thankful, and supported? It is essential that we evaluate our underlying motivations because they drive results. Being content positions us for future success while being complacent sets us up for failure.

### **1. How We Get It**

**Learn the lesson;** one of the most encouraging things about contentment is that it first must be learned. Paul says twice (verses 11 and 12) that he had to learn to be content. It comes when we embrace what God is teaching us through any and every situation. And what is God teaching us? That He has and will continue to provide for all our needs.

**Apply the gospel;** elsewhere, Paul says, “He who did not spare his Own Son, but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things” (Rom.8:32). You see what Paul is doing? He’s working out the implications of the gospel. In essence, he’s saying, “Look at the lengths God went to meet our ultimate needs. God gave us His best while we were at our worst.”

### **CONCLUSION:**

Contentment is recognizing that what I have is sufficient and then making the most of it. So if God heals my sickness tomorrow, it means that I didn’t need it to be healed today. If God financially provides for my car to be fixed next week, it means that I didn’t need it to be fixed today. This is the secret to contentment, that like Paul, we all must learn in order to live with joy.

So, no matter where we find ourselves in life, let’s look to the God of the gospel for strength and then seek to make the most of who we are, what we have and where God has placed us for His glory.