

Contentment—The Problem

One of the goals of this course is to assist all participants and their offspring to be less vulnerable. We do not want those who are seeking to take advantage of class members and their kids to be successful. However, in saying this we realize this is easier said than done. There are issues we must come to terms with. There are gifts we must claim. So, for you, as facilitator, having conversations within the class period that bring people to comprehend all this can be a challenge.

We are now getting into two lessons on contentment. The first lesson, lesson 4, is seeking to comprehend the problem the subject of contentment confronts. As sinful human beings we are leaning towards being discontent, being unsatisfied with something including being discontented with ourselves, our lives. We have needs and we want to fulfill those needs. Some of those needs like wanting good health, enough to eat, getting along with others are usually good to have and fulfill. But in many cases we don't leave it at that. We want more of something.

A friend told me of a girl in the high school he attended. Some boys there liked to take advantage of vulnerable girls. They found ways to manipulate these girls and get them to think a certain way or to do something. We could call this playing a game on them. But there was this one girl who knew how to stand her ground. She was popular but the guys all knew she was not one to mess with. We might say she was content with who she was and needed no boy to get into her life and influence her in a certain direction. It became obvious to the boys that she did not need them or their tricks. She had her own boundaries. In a word she was not as vulnerable as other girls.

So, we are seeing the importance of understanding ourselves. Whatever are some of our greatest hidden needs, the devil notices. He has many henchmen in this world. A chain is only as strong as its weakest link. That weak link is the one exploiters will focus on.

Once I spoke to a public high school class about human trafficking. One of the male students asked some strange questions. After the class, I asked the teacher, "What do you think is going on with that student?" His answer surprised me. He said, "Some of the girls are so needy they keep calling guys. This guy has probably taken advantage of their desire for his attention. Some girls are probably controlled by him. He may well be trafficking some of these girls where he has the upper hand."

This lesson and the conversation could probably go in many directions. Why do people get into drugs? Why do young people follow the crowd? Why does a young woman marry a controlling guy or a guy marry a controlling woman and then find themselves in an abusive marriage?

Having said all this, we now can see more clearly the value of contentment. Contentment can keep a person from being led astray. But here we have a challenge. We human beings have a sinful nature. Our natural bent is to forget about God and God's blessings. We are out looking for something for ourselves. We probably are not as satisfied with our lives as we would like to be. A wife in northern



Adults Saving Kids

Minnesota found a man on the internet. She left her kids and husband and ran off with the man. Later, her distraught husband committed suicide. We are talking about real issues here, real catastrophes.

What is contentment? It is not being lazy or quitting or giving up. It is having within oneself, an attitude that for this person all is well and nothing more needs to happen. It surely does not mean one will give up being proactive or taking initiatives. It does not stop a person from taking daring actions. We surely witness in the apostle Paul a person who was willing to walk into potential trouble.

Before you facilitate the class, consider what it is that Americans are so busy. In spite of the many labor saving devices we now have, what is driving us? Take a look at what is going on in your own life and what is filling up your time. How much of that is focused on what you actually need and how much of it is on what you want? What you could do without?

We have been called an “amusement culture”. We have gotten used to being entertained. This does not mean entertainment is bad. But can we live without it for a period time or has it become so necessary to us that we are lost without it. Do parents feel such a need to be on their cell phones that their children are neglected?

These are all subjects that could come up in the class period. The purpose of this lesson 4 is not to overlook the struggle we all have with contentment. Rather it is to discover what is going on with us such that discontent is just part of our lives. And when we think of people seeking to take advantage of us and their zeroing in on our dissatisfaction, this can now become a problem for us and our children. So when we turn to lesson 5, we will be looking at ways we can be and messages we can claim that will enable us to be more content.