

**"Money Works"
Contentment
Psalm 23:1-3; Matthew 23:23
Philippians 4:10-19
(September 23-29, 2018)**

When I can't see, you lead me;
When I can't hear, you show me;
When I can't stand, you carry me;
When I'm lost, you will find me;
When I'm weak, you are mighty;
You are everything I need

(Lauren Daigle, *Everything*)

Answer and discuss the following question with your group.

1. Wile E. Coyote in the Road Runner cartoons sought fulfillment by trying to catch the Road Runner. He schemed, chased and set traps using all kinds of materials he acquired from the Acme Company. Despite his pursuits, catching the Road Runner proved elusive. What kinds of things do people chase after today trying to find fulfillment and contentment? Make a list.

Read the following excerpt out loud or watch message segment #1.

An excerpt from the StoneBridge message, "Contentment".

What if my life could look like that? Wouldn't that be amazing? That I could get to a place where I could say, "I have everything that I need."

Now I think we have a mistaken idea of what that looks like. When I tend to look at this passage you know what I see? I see myself at an all-inclusive resort. It has been paid for and all I have to do is decide when I want to get out of bed and what I am going to wear that day. That is it! It is wonderful! I make my way from the bed to the beach, and on the way there I get whatever I want to eat and drink. And I just keep doing that. It is that easy. It truly is amazing. I totally recommend it.

I just don't think that is what David is talking about in the 23rd Psalm. He is talking about the shepherd leading us. And if we let him do that – if I don't start wandering around all by myself, but if I stay under his leadership, guidance and protection – he does what for me? He will lead me to places of contentment because he is guiding me in the right direction.

This will require obedience. It will require that I follow.

Read Psalm 23:1-3 and answer/discuss the following questions.

2. Based on Psalm 23:1-3, what would you say is the true source of our contentment? What does the good shepherd give to the sheep that follow him?

3. Does true and lasting contentment depend on our own resources, or does it depend on our relationship with Jesus, the Good Shepherd? Explain.

Read the following excerpt out loud or watch message segment #2.

An excerpt from the StoneBridge message, "Contentment".

Paul says that he had learned to be content when he had a little and when he had a lot. He had learned the secret, whatever circumstances he found himself in.

I do think that prosperity has done more damage to a person's soul than adversity. Prosperity has caused us to trust in our money or ability to make money, and because I don't want for anything I don't have to trust God for anything. Did you catch what Paul had to say in Philippians 4:13? *I can do all things through Christ who gives me the strength.* That is not a stand-alone verse. In context, Paul is saying that I can be content in any situation, and it will take a ton of strength from God to do it, whether I have a lot or whether I have a little I will find the strength from God. The longing for more is often a longing to fill something that is empty in my heart.

Okay, so let me get serious with you. I am going to encourage you to tithe. That today you will do the most spiritual thing you have ever done and sit down, get the financial picture for your family together and come up with a plan to tithe. Come up with a plan to live on 90%. The first decision you will make is to look at what you bring home and then figure the 10% of that and give it.

It is so easy to do that now you can go online, on our web site or on our app, and actually punch in the numbers and hit the button and it's all settled at that moment. You can choose to give every week or once a month. I am going to suggest that it is once a week, it is a little easier to get your head and heart around that, or whenever you get paid. Otherwise it will be startling. I want you to go from "I am giving how MUCH?" to "I am giving HOW much?" You will have to rely on Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who gives me the strength."

Read Matthew 23:23 and Philippians 4:10-19 and answer/discuss the following questions.

4. Explain Jesus' point in Matthew 23:23 about not only tithing, but also having a compassionate and generous heart. Is there a connection between tithing and trusting God? Explain.
5. Based on Philippians 4:10-19, what is Paul's "secret" of being content in any circumstance?
6. Can using your resources for God, and giving of your time, talents and resources to spread the gospel, actually lead to contentment? Explain.

Reflection and Wrap-up

7. Do you think selfish pursuits for worldly gain ever result in catching the Road Runner (having true and lasting contentment)? Are you chasing the Road Runner, or have you found contentment in following Jesus?

8. Based on this lesson, how would you explain the connection between giving of your resources and contentment? How does finding contentment through giving contrast with the world's view of pursuing contentment?

9. What steps of faith is God prompting you to take to trust in him?

Pray Together as a Group

Additional Study

If you have time during your Small Group or you want to study more about this topic, read and consider the following passages:

- Proverbs 10:22
- 2 Chronicles 26:5
- Malachi 3:8-10