

## **How to Live a Life of Contentment**

Good morning, Bay Point Church! Whether you are new here today or if you have been here a long time our hope, our prayer is that you will experience the love of God through His message, His music, and His people!

Today's message is called "How to live in a life of contentment".

When I was preparing this message, I started thinking about what contentment looks like as I am a very visual person -- so it helps if I can actually see what it looks like...

This is Moka -- she is a 110 lb. American Akita and she just loves everyone but has a special place in her heart for me, her dad.

Now I know some of you are not dog people and I understand as long as you're not a cat person like Casey... but to tell you a little about American Akitas; originally from Japan, they are one of the oldest recorded dog breeds. I have had four now. They usually love one person in the family and 'tolerate' everyone else, but not Moka! She loves everyone, they are usually dog aggressive, she is not.

They don't really play ball or frisbee and she doesn't either. They can be very stubborn which she definitely is and it takes an experienced owner to train them from a young age... I could go on and on about Akitas as they are simply a great breed.

The biggest thing I have found with owning Akitas and this is the point is I found it amazing how content they are. They are completely content just being at the feet of their loved ones. Every Akita I have owned, whether I lived in a house with a lot of property or in an apartment, they didn't need to be entertained, they didn't want to play ball, they didn't need new toys all the time to keep them occupied...they just wanted to be near me, sometimes on the couch, but usually laying by my feet.

Thinking about that, how content she is just laying at my feet, I started getting a little convicted; why don't I feel that content with the stuff I have, just laying at my master's feet: Jesus?

Well, probably because I am a human and she is a dog, but beyond that, it's because for us contentment is not a disposition we are born with, it's actually a skill that we can learn. Now that means I have truly got some learning to do; we all have some learning to do. Amen...

The apostle Paul speaks of this in Philippians, this idea that contentment is a learned skill, he says chapter 4 verse 10-13...

**Philippians 4:10-13(NLT)**

**10 How I praise the Lord that you are concerned about me again. I know you have always been concerned for me, but you didn't have the chance to help me.**

**11 Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have.**

**12 I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little.**

**13 For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.**

Paul is saying it's not his situation that dictates his satisfaction; he dictates his satisfaction. And it can be the same for us.

So say that with me: "my situation does not dictate my satisfaction; I dictate my satisfaction". Again "my situation does not dictate my satisfaction; I dictate my satisfaction" Easy to say, hard to master.

So, how do get there? How do we become content like Paul here? Well, I'm glad you asked because I have found the answer.

I am calling it The Six Principles of Contentment:

## **#1 Don't compare yourself to anyone else.**

### **2 Corinthians 10:12 (HCSB)**

**12 For we don't dare classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. But in measuring themselves by themselves and comparing themselves to themselves, they lack understanding.**

Do *NOT* compare yourself to anyone else. Don't do it, you know when you're looking at social media and you see so and so's new house, that their kids haven't wrecked yet or their new car that hasn't been hit with a grocery cart at Walmart, or even their family who always seems perfect...but behind the scenes are having difficulties and struggles just as your family is.

Now God is not saying we shouldn't have a desire for things, in fact He gave us desires, desires are not bad they are very good. You may desire to become a doctor or a nurse, desire to get married, or have children, desires are not bad, but when looking at other people's stuff we must learn to admire without having to acquire.

## **#2 Enjoy what you have.**

### **Ecclesiastes 5:19 (HCSB)**

**19 God has also given riches and wealth to every man, and He has allowed him to enjoy them, take his reward, and rejoice in his labor. This is a gift of God,**

God wants us to enjoy life. God has given us the things we have, and we worked hard for them so enjoy them. Its ok to have fun on your boat, rest on the lanai your nice house, swim in your pool or drive your jeep around town with the top down like I do, enjoy what you have, just don't elevate your enjoyment to a level when it becomes unbalanced.

## **#3 Be thankful.**

### **1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NLT)**

**18 Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.**

We must be thankful for everything even the things we could take for granted.

Ice. I am thankful for ice.

We have ice to keep our drinks cold in the Florida sun; easy to take for granted living in the US, but most countries don't have ice, they drink their drinks warm. I am thankful for clean water, clean air, the beautiful ocean, air conditioning, for my wife, my family, for my Church, for Pastor John and for toilet paper. Who here is thankful for toilet paper? If not, you will if you ever run out at the wrong moment.

Be thankful.

#### **#4 Live in generosity.**

##### **1 Timothy 6:18 (HCSB)**

**18 Instruct them to do what is good, to be rich in good works, to be generous, willing to share**

God has called us to be a generous people.

We will never be content unless we are giving. It is possible to be wealthy and not materialistic, but if you get irritated whenever someone in the church talks about tithing or giving... you're materialistic. The reason people don't give is because there are things they just won't do without. God doesn't need our money, the local Church does, but God doesn't; He asks us to give because He wants to break the grip of materialism in our lives.

So, live generously.

#### **#5 Remember life is not about things.**

##### **Luke 12:15 (HCSB)**

**15 He then told them, “Watch out and be on guard against all greed because one’s life is not in the abundance of his possessions.”**

Life is not about possessions. The one with the most toys in the end does NOT win; you didn’t bring anything into this world and you won’t bring anything out of it, so don’t judge your self-worth by your net worth.

My jeep is a few years old; it’s lost its new car smell, do I have to have that new Bronco I saw, it looks so cool. Most of you know I love cycling. Do I need that new bike at the shop, no! Mine is only a year and a half old, it may have a few scratches, but it’s a really nice bike. A new one won’t bring me long term happiness, temporary probably, but not long term. It’s all just stuff.

Life is not about things.

**#6 Focus on what will last forever.**

**2 Corinthians 4:18 (HCSB)**

**18 So we do not focus on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.**

Focus on what will last forever.

Only two things will last forever: the word of God and people.

**The Bible says in Isaiah 40:8, “The grass withers and the flowers fade, but the word of our God stands forever.”**

The word of God and people, people last forever, all humans are eternal beings it just depends on where their address is. If we stay focused on the Word of God and people, we will be content. Everything else passes away folks, so focus on what will last forever.

So here it is, the **Six Principles of Contentment** :

1. **Don't compare yourself to anyone else**
2. **Enjoy what you have**
3. **Be thankful**
4. **Live in generosity**
5. **Remember life is not about things**
6. **Focus on what will last forever**

Let us pray!