



KINGDOM STEWARDSHIP

SESSION 4: THE PERSPECTIVE

“But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment.”

1 Timothy 6:6

CONNECT Open your group time by creating an environment in which you begin to develop a community of connection. Get to know one another through sharing prayer requests and experiences that provide members with an opportunity to engage.

CONNECTING IN PRAYER: Begin your time together with prayer and praise.

CONNECTING WITH ONE ANOTHER: Does contentment mean a lack of desire for more? Why or why not? Describe some obstacles to living with a spirit of contentment in our contemporary culture?

GROW Watch the DVD for Session 4 now. Use the space below to record your thoughts, key points and questions you would like to remember or discuss.

GROWTH THROUGH UNDERSTANDING: The story is told of a dog who was wandering around his owner’s yard one day. The dog was carrying a large bone in his mouth. When the dog came up to the edge of the pond, he looked into the water and saw a reflection of what he thought was an even larger dog with what seemed like an even larger bone. Wanting the bigger bone, the dog immediately opened up his mouth to go after it. Yet in the process, the bone in his mouth dropped into the water and quickly sunk to the bottom out of reach. Not only did the dog fail to get the illusion of the larger bone, but he lost the one he had been enjoying all along.

Discontentment has a way of causing us to lose what we already have in an effort to gain what often does not even exist. In this week’s lesson, Dr. Evans gives us three key perspectives that accompany kingdom stewardship - the first of which is contentment. To be content with what you have, even as you may seek to improve your life or lifestyle, produces a heart of gratitude. Contentment doesn’t mean you have to remain where you

GROWTH THROUGH DISCUSSION: As you dive into the heart of Dr. Evans' teaching, use the following questions to generate discussion among your group.

1. Dr. Evans mentioned three perspectives if you are to be a kingdom steward: Godliness mixed with contentment, loving God more than money and a humble generosity in abundance. Discuss the importance of each perspective.
 2. Paul said he had to "learn" contentment. In what ways can a person learn how to be content? Have you ever experienced a situation that taught you a deeper level of contentment?
 3. Are there any ways that a heavy use of social media may contribute to a lessening of contentment for people who use it frequently? If yes, what might be done to guard against this?
 4. Describe the differences between the following things: A house and a home? Medicine and healing? Friends and authentic relationships? In what ways does being a kingdom steward contribute to the acquiring of the latter in each pair?
 5. What does Dr. Evans call "doing a good work and then expecting something in return?" How does this differ from the good works God commands us to do as His kingdom stewards?
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SERVE Now is the time to apply the wisdom of what you have learned to your life, as you demonstrate the depth of your relationship with God through service to Him and others.

SERVING GOD: Living in a spirit of humility before God with regard to personal resources exemplifies placing your hope in God, along with a heart of gratitude. Every day this week, write down three things for which you are grateful.

SERVING OTHERS: We learned this week that God desires us to be "rich in good works," while also being "generous" and sharing what we have with others. Identify at least one thing of value which you already own and make a decision to share it (by loaning or giving it away) with someone else who may need it this week. If you can identify more than one, all the better.

DAY ONE

MEDITATE: Hebrews 13:5-6

MOVE: Money is a character issue. It's not that money itself is bad or that earning money is bad. Rather, the love of money leads to character corruptions: greed, covetousness, and discontentment. That means money is also a theological issue. To be satisfied with what you have, you have to trust in the Lord's promise that he will never leave you or abandon you. When you believe that, you can declare boldly, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?" Go through your recurring expenses and see if there's something you could remove or reduce and replace the use of those funds to help someone else?



DAILY STEWARDSHIP PRINCIPLE:

Live out God's Kingdom principles here on earth by putting feet to your faith. Over the next 5 days, use the Daily Stewardship Principle to help you meditate on God's word.

DAY FOUR

MEDITATE: 1 Timothy 6:9-10

MOVE: When Paul speaks of those who want to be rich, he's talking about those who pursue and prize riches as life's priority. When they deceive themselves in this way, they're subject to temptation. When riches become all important, people succumb to foolish and harmful desires, because they prioritize the material over the spiritual. But the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Notice he didn't say that money leads to evil—rather, the love of money leads to evil. Make a list of different kinds of "evil" the love of money can lead to. Circle any that may already apply to you. Ask God to either keep you from falling into these areas, or to deliver you from them.

DAY THREE

MEDITATE: 1 Timothy 6:7-8

MOVE: Though it is not to be viewed as a means of material gain, godliness is nevertheless a means of great gain, when it is accompanied by contentment. If you have contentment you have inner sufficiency in spite of external circumstances. A lack of contentment will stifle godliness, but a content man or woman knows that God is acting on their behalf. Spend more time focusing on gratitude this week during prayer than any other area. Then pay attention to how that affects your level of contentment throughout the week.

DAY TWO

MEDITATE: Philippians 4:11

MOVE: Paul talks of contentment as a learned trait. It is something worth learning because it can guard against unnecessary pain. King Solomon, at one time the wealthiest man in the world, said, "The one who loves silver is never satisfied with silver, and whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with income" (Eccl 5:10). One can be filled to overflowing with wealth and material possessions. But without an eternal perspective, the earthly focus will only result in craving for more and end in many griefs. On the other hand, one can be the steward of God-given wealth and yet find peace, purpose and contentment in God when you pursue the spiritual over the material. Identify an area in your life where it would be good for you to have greater contentment. Pray and ask God to increase your contentment in this area this week.

DAY FIVE

MEDITATE: 1 Timothy 6:17

MOVE: First, when you prioritize the material over the spiritual, you become arrogant and conceited—thinking more highly of yourself than others simply because you have more money than they do. Thus, a dangerous potential side effect of wealth is pride. A second threat is that you misplace your hope. If your hope is in the riches you possess in the present age, you have forgotten that money can't deliver. The uncertainty of wealth means it cannot be depended upon, either in this age or the age to come. Instead, we must set our hope on God. Seek to shift your focus of dependency this week from a material source to God, whether that be looking away from your boss, work, or any other person or thing directly to God. Identify how that affects your view of uncertainties in those places or with those people.

DIVE DEEPER: UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WANTS AND NEEDS

ACTION: Think about financial decisions that you made over the last few months, whether large or small. List them in the space provided and indicate whether the decision (purchase) was essential (need), want or desire. Were your decisions made from a heart of contentment or want and desire (greed)? Would God agree? Why or why not?

NOTE: A **need** is something you cannot live without, such as air, water, lodging, food and clothing. A **want** is something that you don't absolutely need but will make your life a little better. A **desire** is something you wish to have, regardless of your needs and **wants**. **Desires** should only be made out of surplus funds after all other obligations have been met.

"Contentment is an attitude that says, I will be satisfied with what God has given me." Anonymous

Purchase or Decision List your decision and/or purchase. Were your decisions made from a heart of contentment or want and desire (greed)? Would God agree? Why or why not?	Need	Want	Desire