

S T U D Y G U I D E



CONTENTMENT

MELISSA KRUGER



S T U D Y G U I D E

Contentment

Melissa Kruger



LIGONIER MINISTRIES

Renew your Mind.

LIGONIER.ORG | 800-435-4343

Copyright © 2018 Ligonier Ministries

421 Ligonier Court, Sanford, FL 32771

E-mail: info@ligonier.org

All rights reserved.

No reproduction of this work without permission.

Printed in the United States of America.

Contents

Introduction	3
Study Schedules	5
1. Biblical Contentment.....	6
2. Defining Contentment.....	13
3. The Source of Contentment.....	20
4. The Enemy of Contentment.....	27
5. What Causes Discontentment?.....	34
6. Patterns of Discontentment.....	41
7. An Example of Contentment.....	48
8. Cultivating Contentment.....	55

Introduction

It can be hard to be content. Our culture encourages us to covet and consume in ways that are contrary to biblical teaching. In *Contentment*, Melissa Kruger defines what biblical contentment is and what it means for the Christian life. She helps Christians recognize how the cultivation of contentment is fundamentally rooted in understanding and resting in the person and work of Jesus Christ. In Him, we find ultimate contentment.

This study guide is a companion to the video teaching series. Whether you are using the DVDs, streaming the videos on Ligonier.org, or going through the course in Ligonier Connect, this resource is designed to help you make the most of the learning experience. For each message in the series, there is a corresponding lesson in this guide. Here is what you will find in each lesson:

INTRODUCTION	<p>The introduction is a brief paragraph that summarizes the content covered in the lecture and considered in the study guide lesson.</p> <p>How to use: Use the introduction to each lesson to get a sense of the big picture before watching the video. Refer to these statements as you work through the study guide to remind you of what have already covered and where you are headed.</p>
LEARNING GOALS	<p>The learning goals are the knowledge and skills the study guide lesson will endeavor to equip you with as you work through the lecture content.</p> <p>How to use: Familiarize yourself with the goals of each lesson before engaging its contents. Keeping the overall purpose in mind as you watch each video and reflect on or discuss the questions will help you get the most out of each lesson.</p>
KEY IDEAS	<p>The key ideas are the major points or takeaways from the lecture.</p> <p>How to use: Use these ideas to prepare yourself for each lesson and to review previous lessons. They describe specifically the knowledge each lecture is communicating.</p>

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS	<p>The questions are the guided reflection and/or discussion component of the lesson that are intended to help you prepare for, process, and organize what you are learning.</p> <p>How to use: Reflect on individually or discuss in a group the questions in the order in which they appear in the lesson. The timestamps in the right margin indicate where the answers to questions during the video can be found.</p>
PRAYER	<p>The prayer section offers suggestions for how to close the lesson in prayer with respect to what was taught in the lecture.</p> <p>How to use: Consider using each lesson's prayer section as a guide to personal or group prayer. These sections follow the ACTS prayer model, which you can learn more about in R.C. Sproul's Crucial Questions booklet <i>Does Prayer Change Things?</i> This helpful guide is available as a free e-book at Ligonier.org.</p>
REVIEW QUIZ	<p>The review quiz is a set of six multiple-choice questions that appear at the end of each lesson.</p> <p>How to use: Use each quiz to check your comprehension and memory of the major points covered in each lecture. It will be most beneficial to your learning if you take a lesson's quiz either sometime between lessons or just before you begin the next lesson in the study guide.</p>
ANSWER KEY	<p>The answer key provides explanations for the reflection and discussion questions and answers to the multiple-choice questions in the review quiz.</p> <p>How to use: Use the answer key to check your own answers or when you do not know the answer. Note: Do not give in too quickly; struggling for a few moments to recall an answer reinforces it in your mind.</p>

Study Schedules

The following table suggests four plans for working through the *Contentment* video teaching series and this companion study guide. Whether you are going through this series on your own or with a group, these schedules should help you plan your study path.

	Extended 10-Week Plan	Standard 8-Week Plan	Abbreviated 6-Week Plan	Intensive 4-Week Plan
Week	Lesson			
1	*	1	1	1 & 2
2	1	2	2	3 & 4
3	2	3	3 & 4	5 & 6
4	3	4	5 & 6	7 & 8
5	4	5	7	
6	5	6	8	
7	6	7		
8	7	8		
9	8			
10	*			

* For these weeks, rather than completing lessons, spend your time discussing and praying about your learning goals for the study (the first week) and the most valuable takeaways from the study (the last week).

Biblical Contentment

INTRODUCTION

Contentment is not a new longing. It has been desired and written about throughout history. Time and again, Scripture encourages believers to take heart through their circumstances and find contentment in the Lord. But what are the qualities of such a contentment and why is contentment important for believers today? In this lesson, Melissa Kruger explores what true contentment is and why it is important for us to study the topic of biblical contentment.

LEARNING GOALS

When you have finished this lesson, you should be able to:

- Describe three reasons why contentment is important
- Give a biblical definition of contentment
- Summarize three characteristics of contentment
- Recognize in Scripture where contentment is demonstrated and illustrated

KEY IDEAS

- Contentment cannot be found in anything—even in good things—apart from our eternal God.
- Our inward contentment should be outwardly apparent, so that we might be “spectacles of glory.”
- True contentment is contingent not upon outward circumstances but upon the inward assurance of God’s sovereignty.
- Jesus is the source of our contentment, just as the stream nourishes the tree in Psalm 1.

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

Take a moment to answer the following questions. They will prepare you for the lecture.

- Why are you undertaking this study? What do you hope to learn about contentment?
- How have you responded in the past to the hardships in your life?

Scripture Reading

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

—Galatians 5:22–26

- How might this passage motivate us to abide in the Word of God?

During the Video

Answer the following questions while you watch the video. They will guide you through the lecture.

Why Is Contentment Important?

0:00–14:24

- How does Mrs. Kruger’s analogy of the woman standing before the ocean allude to how we can wrongly view contentment?
- Why does it matter that we be a people who exude hope?
- What does it mean that contentment is sourced inward and works outward?

Contentment Defined

14:24–23:04

- How does God’s character inform our contentment?
- How is it that true contentment is independent of circumstances?
- How do trusting in the Lord and delighting in His Word relate to each other?

After the Video

Answer the following questions after you have finished the lecture. They will help you identify and summarize the major points.

- How does contentment influence how we pray?

If you are in a group, have the members discuss what their prayer lives would look like if they asked that their hearts be changed before their circumstances.

- With the truth of God’s grace in mind, why do you think we still struggle with viewing ourselves as “dry brittle branches”?

If you are in a group, have the members consider the imagery of the tree in Psalm 1 and the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5 and ask what they think these metaphors say about us as people.

- What does Mrs. Kruger want us to learn from the story of her friend and her son’s illness?

If you are in a group, have each member discuss how they can help and serve the people they know who are going through hard circumstances.

PRAYER

Commit what you have learned from God’s Word in this lesson to prayer.

- Praise God for His sovereignty over all things, His working all things according to His purposes.
- Confess how often you look to what is created to satisfy us in a way that only the Creator can.
- Thank God for not leaving you in your despair but giving you hope in Christ.

- Ask God to help you understand what contentment would look like in your life today.

REVIEW QUIZ

Use these multiple-choice questions to measure what you learned from this lesson.

1. Which of the following statements was *not* presented as a reason why contentment is an important topic to study?
 - a. Our hope matters to the watching world.
 - b. Christians need to be happy all the time.
 - c. The church would be encouraged.
 - d. Jesus cares about our joy.
2. In Psalm 1, why will the tree prosper and not wither?
 - a. The shade protects it.
 - b. A gardener tends to it.
 - c. It is planted by the stream.
 - d. It is in the area with the most sun.
3. Which of the following is *not* an accurate statement about contentment?
 - a. It is an inward assurance of God's sovereignty.
 - b. It is passed from one person to another.
 - c. It is rooted in God's character.
 - d. It is dependent on circumstances.
4. What must we also delight in to have true contentment?
 - a. Ourselves
 - b. God's Word
 - c. Earthly blessings
 - d. Loved ones
5. Contentment is a new desire that believers in the modern world are grasping for more than past generations did.
 - a. True
 - b. False
6. What does Mrs. Kruger describe this lesson on contentment as an intersection of?
 - a. Real life intersecting with hard doctrine
 - b. Real life intersecting with emotions
 - c. Real life intersecting with real truth
 - d. Real life intersecting with theory

Answer Key—Biblical Contentment

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

These are personal questions. The answers should be based on your own knowledge and experience.

Scripture Reading

- How might this passage motivate us to abide in the Word of God?

This passage demonstrates that it is those who abide in God's Word that actually come to know God better, and find that true joy, peace, and patience come from Him. If we really want to possess the fruit of contentment, then we must seek the Lord where He has revealed Himself.

During the Video

Why Is Contentment Important?

- How does Mrs. Kruger's analogy of the woman standing before the ocean allude to how we can wrongly view contentment?

Just as the woman wrongly thought that the ocean could quench her thirst, we can wrongly look to things to provide us joy and happiness other than the Lord. The ocean can be enjoyed and seen in a positive light in many different ways, but it is actually harmful to us if we look to it to provide things that it is not meant to. Looking for contentment in the wrong places will actually make us long for contentment more.

- Why does it matter that we be a people who exude hope?

It matters that we be a people who exude hope, because the world watches how we live before it asks why we live the way that we do. To see a person living with joy in the midst of hard circumstances in a broken world is intriguing to the those who do not know Christ. Living in hope allows us to be able to give an answer for our hope.

- What does it mean that contentment is sourced inward and works outward?

To trust that the Lord is sovereign is to be fully convinced inwardly that God is able to do all that He has promised (Rom. 4:21). The heart that trusts in God's rule and faithfulness is like the heart that is pumped with the life of Christ, which flows into all of our members. Contentment is an outward example of an inward work in our hearts.

Contentment Defined

- How does God's character inform our contentment?

Contentment is placing our trust and our hope in a God who is both good and sovereign. Discontentment breeds trust in false gods (money, relationships, etc.) and only intensifies our spiritual thirst. God's character speaks to who God is, so knowing that God is good and sovereign helps to root our contentment.

- How is it that true contentment is independent of circumstances?

The thought that getting our circumstances right will solve all the problems in our lives is a lie that we often believe. We can tend to view our circumstances as the things we can control, but a contented heart recognizes our desperate condition and seeks to live in light of God's grace. This means that we pray for circumstances and care about circumstances, but we also understand that our contentment is rooted in the One who controls our circumstances no matter how our circumstances turn out.

- How do trusting in the Lord and delighting in His Word relate to each other?

A person who trusts in the Lord is going to want to know the Lord more intimately. This means that someone who trusts in the Lord will meditate on His Word. Contented people will rightly be people who are regularly in the Word and meditating on it.

After the Video

- How does contentment influence how we pray?

Having a heart that is content in our sovereign Lord allows us to examine ourselves before our circumstances. Instead of praying that our situation would change, we are first able to ask that the Lord would change our hearts and mold them more and more into the image of Christ. It is prayers like these that demonstrate our dependence on the Lord and acknowledge that He is working all circumstances for our ultimate good.

- With the truth of God's grace in mind, why do you think we still struggle with viewing ourselves as "dry brittle branches"?

The answer to this question will differ slightly based on personal experience. One reason could be that we doubt God and think too lowly of His changing and sustaining power through the work of the Holy Spirit.

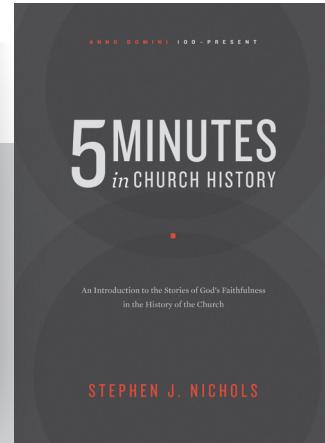
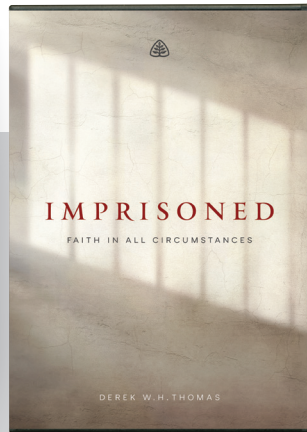
- What does Mrs. Kruger want us to learn from the story of her friend and her son's illness?

Mrs. Kruger wants us to learn that, though her friend and her son are going through hard circumstances, God promises that He will be with her and strengthen her for everything she needs. Her friend realized that her joy comes from God, so she can pray fervently that God would change her hard circumstances while also shining as a spectacle of glory to the watching world.

REVIEW QUIZ

1. **B.**
Christians are not expected to be happy all the time. Jesus was sorrowful and angry at times. As believers face difficult situations, real and numerous emotions are normal. Contentment goes beyond emotions and is not dependent on emotions.
2. **C.**
The tree is planted by the stream and gets its nourishment from the constant source of water. While other trees wither during drought, this tree is rooted near its source of nourishment. Believers are to be rooted in Christ, who provides our nourishment so that we can prosper.
3. **D.**
Hard circumstances come for every believer, however, contentment is not dependent on living an easy life. We should be content in spite of difficult circumstances.
4. **B.**
Scripture is how God reveals Himself to and comforts believers. Without finding comfort and trust in the Lord from His Word, we cannot find true contentment.
5. **B.**
The topic of contentment is addressed throughout Scripture and has been written about by Christian authors throughout history. In fact, humanity was created with a need for contentment. Every person who has ever existed longs for something to quench his need and provide contentment.
6. **C.**
Contentment is not just a nice idea that is impossible to obtain. Real life gets messy and hard times come, but contentment is still obtainable. Our real, messy, difficult lives can still intersect with the truth of contentment.

We want to see men and women around the world connect
the deep truths of the Christian faith to everyday life.



Order your copy of this title, download the digital version,
or browse thousands of resources at **Ligonier.org**.



LIGONIER MINISTRIES