

Day 1

November 11



*Pray | Praise God the Father, Son and Spirit for their majesty
and greatness*

WE DESIRE TO BE CONTENT because God our Creator is content.

As humans, we share a desire to be content, a state of satisfaction and fulfillment. Where does that innate desire come from? As followers of Jesus Christ, we look to the Bible for answers to such questions. The Bible makes it clear that all humans were created in God's image, so we possess much of the nature of God. The Bible also makes it clear that the one true God, for all of eternity, has existed as three distinct persons (Father, Son, Holy Spirit). Each of these persons serves and glorifies the others, and this community of three is complete and content. Since it is in God's nature to be content, it follows that our drive for completeness and contentment originates from the fact that we were created in the image of God. This week we'll be looking more closely at that critical link between our desire for contentment, our ability to be content, and our connection to our Creator.



Read | Genesis 1:26-27, Luke 3:21-22



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on one or more of the following:

What other words would you use to describe or explain contentment? Take a few minutes to reflect on the things that you seek out to bring you contentment. Are you seeking to increase your dependence on Jesus as the source of your contentment, or are you seeking contentment through things like money, safety, security, power, acceptance? Go to God in prayer and ask for clarity on how you can increase your contentment through increasing dependence on him.

Being created in God's image is an amazing thing, but it can be difficult to really grasp the implications without thinking more deeply about it. What does it mean to you to be created in God's image? How does it impact your day-to-day life? If you haven't thought about this much before, spend a little time doing some research on this topic.

The baptism of Jesus, found in Luke 3:21-22, shows a wonderful image of the connected and loving nature of the 3 persons of God. Take a minute to reflect on how you view and engage with each member of God's person. Conclude with a time of prayer where you engage with each person.

Day 2
November 12

Read | Acts 17:24-25, 1 John 4:7-8, Psalms 19:1-2



Pray / Thank God for his boundless love and mercy

GOD CREATED THE UNIVERSE to receive his overflowing abundance of love.

As you read and learn more about God, it's natural to wonder why he even bothered with creating the universe. People who don't understand the nature of God might be tempted to think that God created these things to fill a void - to entertain or provide companionship. We know that is not right, because the Bible makes it clear that God is complete and content in his triune community (Father, Son and Holy Spirit). Nothing is lacking in that community. So why did God create the universe and humans? While we will never fully understand the mind of God, we can gain some understanding through his words revealed to us in the Bible. The Bible shows us that God IS LOVE, and that the universe was created from an overflowing abundance of love from God's triune community. The universe was created to share in God's love and to magnify his glory. Viewed in that light, the source of lasting contentment in our lives can only come from God's love and when we experience that contentment we will naturally produce greater glory to God.





Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on one or more of the following:

The question of why God created the universe and us is a difficult one to grasp because we cannot know the mind of God completely. It's difficult for us to resist bounding God with human thoughts and perspectives. Why do you think God created the universe and humans? Why is it important for us to have clear thoughts on this?

Psalm 19:1-2 touches on the greatness of God's creation and how creation declares the glory of God. Where do you most clearly see the glory of God in his creation?

1 John 4:7-8 reminds us that God is love. We normally think of love as an emotion or a behavior. What does it mean to say God IS love? If you are a child of God, spend a few minutes thinking about how you emulate your Father who IS love. If you are not yet a child of God, please know that God, who is love, loves you and desires you to be in relationship with him. If God is speaking to you, please respond today. Go to him in prayer and share your heart.

Day 3

November 13



Pray | Confess your sins to God and ask for strength to resist them

CONTENTMENT IS ELUSIVE because sin is pervasive.

Out of the overflow of his great love, God created the universe, including humans, created in God's image, the crowning glory of the creation. God honored his most precious creation with the most precious gift of free will - the ability to choose whether to love and obey him as Lord. Humans failed that test, choosing self-love and self-honor instead. Despite that failure, humans still are instilled with many aspects of God's nature, but because of our rejection of God, it's now impossible for us to experience the full joy of God's nature. Our lack of contentment is a perfect example. Because we're created in God's image, we desperately desire to be content, but because we are sinful beings and live in a sinful world, we will never achieve complete contentment on earth. Praise God that isn't the end of the story. Because of Jesus' life, death and resurrection, those who choose to make Jesus their Lord have renewed hope for restoration and perfect contentment.



Read | Romans 1:20-25, John 3:16-21



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on one or more of the following:

In Romans 1:25, Paul describes the problem with the sinful human condition in very straightforward terms, "They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the created rather than the Creator." We all have areas of our lives where we are caught up in serving the created instead of the Creator. Take a few minutes to reflect on your life and where that is the case. Confess that condition to God and ask him for strength to change.

John 3:16 is a very familiar and encouraging verse. It assures us of God's love and gives us clear evidence of that love. Go back through the words of the following verses (John 3:17-21). Contrast the words are used to describe the condition of the world and the condition of those who believe in Jesus. How do these words encourage and assure you to seek your contentment in Jesus Christ?

As it relates to the elusiveness of human contentment, C.S. Lewis observed that "the presence of an unsatisfied and unabated longing would seem to indicate that we were created to be satisfied by something from another world" [Mere Christianity, 26]. What unsatisfied longing do you need to take to God in prayer?

Day 4
November 14



Pray | Give God thanks for his relentless pursuit of you

Contentment is only possible because of God's loving pursuit of his creation

The entire story of God, starting in Genesis 3 and continuing today, is a rescue story – God working to rescue humans from their sin-induced separation from him. We see it immediately in the Garden of Eden after Adam and Eve first chose themselves over God. God went to the garden and pursued them. We see it in the God's rescue of the people of Israel from Egypt. We see it in the judges and prophet that God sent to draw the people of Israel back to him. We see it in Jesus' life, death and resurrection. We see it in the establishment of the Church of Jesus Christ. We see it in the miracles, small and large, in our lives every day. If you truly stop and think about it, the idea that the God of the universe would pursue us is truly astounding. Your journey to true contentment starts with recognizing God's loving pursuit of you, turning back to him and pursuing him as your Lord.



Read | Job 36:5-12, Luke 15:1-10



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on one or more of the following:

Take a few minutes to simply reflect on the fact that the Almighty God is pursuing you. Are you able to feel and recognize the awesome nature of that reality? How does it impact your ability to be content with your circumstances here on earth, and what does it motivate you to do?

What words would you use to describe the heart and emotions of the seeker in the parables in Luke 15:1-10? What a beautiful image of God's passion for us. Go to God in prayer and give him thanks for his pursuit of you.

God's pursuit of humans takes many forms, but the primary means of pursuit is through other humans – those who have already been “found” and have made Jesus their Lord. Are there people in your life for which God is calling you to be his agent of pursuit? Are you feeling some discontent about that calling? Remember God promises to never leave you or forsake you (Hebrews 13:5). Step out in courage, trusting God's promises. The results could be your greatest contentment ever!

Day 5

November 15



Pray / Praise God for his promise to always be with us

TRUE CONTENTMENT is a matter of the heart, not of the mind

God created us in his image, with a desire to be content, but that contentment is elusive because of our sin-filled nature. Because of his great love for us, despite our rejection of him, God has been relentlessly pursuing us throughout human history. His greatest desire is for us to be restored to him - for us to live in dependence on him and for his Spirit to live inside of us. That is how true contentment can be experienced.

Here's the challenge. Too many people know all of this in their minds but the information has not transformed their hearts. We continue to pursue contentment through our own efforts, seeking it through possessions, power, comfort and safety. Today, open your mind AND your heart to the reality that the God of the universe is pursuing you – let it fill you with awe and let it transform your heart. That is the only path to true contentment both here on earth and in eternity.



Read | Hebrews 13:5-6, Romans 8:37-39



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on one or more of the following:

If your heart has not yet been transformed by the love of God and his great gift of forgiveness and salvation, today is the perfect day to make that change. Open your heart up to God in prayer, let him know that you want him to be Lord of your life, and ask him to transform your heart, your mind and your life through the presence of the Holy Spirit inside of you. Then, share your decision with a Christian friend, and if needed, have them help you get connected to a local church that preaches the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Pray through the familiar words of Psalm 23 (NIV), and commit / recommit your contentment to the hands of God.

*The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul.
He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.
Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil,
for you are with me, your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
Surely your goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my
life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

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