

Day 1

November 25



Pray | Ask God to open your heart to see where your true treasure is.

GOD WANTS TO BE your greatest treasure.

Have you ever seen a hearse with a trailer behind it? No, you can't take it all with you. So why are we so caught up in all our accumulated "stuff"? Also, there will always be someone more accomplished than you or better than your child. So why are we so consumed with trying to impress or compare?

It's easy to see why Paul said in Philippians 3:8, "I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ..."

This is the treasure that lasts. Let's pursue him today!



Read | Hebrews 13:5-6, Matthew 13:44-45



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

Reflect on Philippians 3:8 and any 'garbage' that is cluttering up your life. What do you need to rid your life of in order to see Christ more clearly?

Will you ask God to give you strength and power to leave worthless things and take on more of him? That can seem like a daunting ask of God. Do you believe he will provide all that you need?

Day 2

November 26



Pray | Ask God to help you to live today filled with expectation and hope.

AS WE WAIT for all things to be made right in this world, we must adopt an attitude of patience and hope.

It can be frustrating living in the “already, not yet” of today’s world. Yes, we are moved from death to life when we surrender our heart to Jesus.

However, we walk away into our normal life with its struggles and trials.

With the Holy Spirit’s power, we walk forward but we still groan as we see injustice and disappointment. Along with Paul, we must keep our eyes on the eternity we are headed toward, living daily life in Christ’s strength. This is living in the already/not yet.



Read | Philippians 4:13, Romans 8:18-25



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

Do you find yourself increasingly upset about things in your life? If so, what steps do you need to take to be strengthened by Christ?

Romans 8:21 speaks of us being liberated from our bondage to decay and brought into freedom and glory as children of God. Is there something you need to surrender to God today?

If you have not surrendered your life to Jesus, please consider talking to a small group leader, a trusted friend, or one of our pastors at Five Oaks about this step.

Day 3

November 27



Pray | Ask God how you can alleviate loneliness or hopelessness in your world.

THE CAUSES OF DESPAIR are often loneliness and hopelessness, not suffering itself.

“A number of people in our churches suffer from chronic sickness or disease. Some are afflicted in more visible ways than others, but many suffer greatly. The need for contentment brings unique challenges for these dear brothers and sisters. And those with little or no hope for recovery can find themselves tempted to depression or despair” (Chasing Contentment, by Erik Raymond.) This is why God reassures us repeatedly that he will be with us. Beyond his own presence, he has also organized believers into groups to carry the burdens. We don’t need to fix the problem, just walk through it with the person who is suffering.



Read | Matthew 28:20b, Hebrews 3:13, Hebrews 10:23-25



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

If you are suffering, look around to see the small ways God is with you today. Take a moment to focus on the blessings in your life, and on the ways God may be stretching you in your suffering. Thank God for these things.

Hebrews 3:13 tells us to encourage each other. If you know someone who is struggling, what is a practical way you can “bear their burden” today?

Think of how amazing it is that Jesus wants to be with you in your suffering.

Day 4
November 28



Pray | What is your part in a broken relationship? Pray about this.

THERE IS NOTHING MORE HURTFUL than a shattered relationship in our lives.

The people who know you best should love you most. However, these relationships can be broken because of sin on both sides. How can we find contentment in these awful times? Look at the response of Jesus toward his close friend, Judas, who wanted to sell him out! Jesus lovingly gave Judas a seat next to him, and every opportunity to repent. He even explained that his body and blood would be poured out for Judas, too. Jesus knew his friend would betray him, and still he treated him with love.



Read | Psalm 55:12-14, Luke 15:11-21, Luke 22:1-6, 17-23



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

If there is a broken relationship in your life, will you choose to pray for that person, and let go of the offense toward you? Take time to ask God to help you through this struggle.

How can God encourage you to offer words of reconciliation? All you can do is your part.

If you have offended someone, will you humble yourself and ask forgiveness? Begin by asking Jesus for his forgiveness, for once you have asked his forgiveness, you can ask forgiveness from others.

Day 5

November 29



Pray / Ask God to show you where you need to look today: around, back, ahead, or at Christ.

STEPS TO contentment are:

- Look around
- Look back
- Look ahead
- Look at Christ.

Notice that in these suggestions, there is no looking inward for too long. As we look around, we see others we can reach out to help or pray for. When we look back, we see who we used to be and who we are becoming as we follow Jesus in belief. Looking ahead, we know the glorious hope we have been promised. Finally, looking at Christ, we must step aside, as John the Baptist did, and let him increase in our lives. But it is only when we *decrease*, that is, we put aside our agenda for God's agenda, that he might *increase* in our lives.



Read | Mark 1:7, Ephesians 2:3-4, 12, John 1:26, 34



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

Discontentment can be caused by becoming consumed with ourselves. Today we see four other areas to focus on rather than thinking of ourselves. Practice looking at how far you've come in your faith journey.

Look around! Ask God where he needs you today. Ask him for the strength to step in where someone needs him.

With whom can you share Jesus? Who in your life could use some encouragement? Ask God for the words to say this will point your friend toward Jesus instead of toward him or herself or toward you.

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