



# **A GLIMPSE INTO CONTENTMENT BIBLE STUDY**

*A One Week Word Study*

---

---

---

---

---



## BIBLE STUDY: A GLIMPSE INTO CONTENTMENT

---

### WELCOME.

Welcome to a study of contentment. I am so glad that you have joined me in this study—a study that burst into life because God forced me to face the deep dissatisfaction spreading in my own life. As a result of this discontentment, my peace and joy were slowly deflating and depression and hopelessness were growing. It is my desire that you may avoid such an experience and that this study can help you do so.

The hope for this study is that we gain an understanding of both contentment and discontentment. But, we will explore beyond mere definitions seeking an understanding of what discontentment leads to as well as how “ugly” we look when we are discontent. We will probe the causes for discontentment and develop techniques for preventing it. In the end, I hope that we each walk away refreshed and contented.

You will find that this study is more than just a word study. God’s word is a living, breathing word that brings healing to our lives. As we study it, the word should bring about change. However, if we are not asking ourselves tough questions as we study, we will not see such change. You will find two types of questions within this study.

1. Those that address biblical understanding marked with .
2. Those that require us to reflect upon our own lives marked with .

It is very tempting to skip the personal reflection questions. I urge you not to. When God revealed his plan for Joshua’s life, He said, *be strong and very courageous*. So today, I say to you **BE STRONG AND VERY COURAGEOUS**. Shy not from the tough life changing questions.

On a final note, please realize that this study is based on the use of the King James, New King James and the New International Versions of the Bible. It depends most heavily on the NKJ, so do not be surprised if scriptures vary slightly from your Bible. Remember, it is a wise practice to read scripture from several translations.

Let’s begin seeking change,

K



## BIBLE STUDY: A GLIMPSE INTO CONTENTMENT

### DAY 1: DEFINING OLD TESTAMENT CONTENTMENT & EVALUATING OURS

In these four studies, we will attempt to gain a biblical understanding of contentment. What is it? When do you have it? What keeps us from obtaining it? What do we look like when we are discontent? What are the consequences of discontentment? We are going to discover many answers, but before we begin our investigation: what do you think contentment is? Remember to take a quick moment to ask God for enlightenment and understanding.



How would you define contentment?

---

---

---

Merriam Webster Dictionary describes content as *feeling or showing satisfaction with one's possessions, status, or situation*. Contentment might imply that one is satisfied, appeased or gratified. A person that is not content may feel disappointed, disheartened, or displeased. Discontent, as described by Merriam Webster, *is a sense of grievance or a restless aspiration for improvement*. Oh, how this resonances in my soul.

We live in a time in which contentment, as defined by the world, is a hairs width from our reach. By worldly standards we seek more success, more stuff, and more self-indulgent relationships. Each day we darn our caps or lipstick in hopes of gaining more, and each night we slump into bed wondering where it went, feeling discontent. Stop for a moment and ask yourself: are you content?



Where would you rank your contentment today? Circle the appropriate rank.

Discontent      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10      Content



What areas do you feel most discontented?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work              | <input type="checkbox"/> Excitement/Adventure                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marriage          | <input type="checkbox"/> Status/Success                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children          | <input type="checkbox"/> Image                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friendships       | <input type="checkbox"/> Possessions (House, Car, Clothing...) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Church            | <input type="checkbox"/> Finances                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Ministry | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                           |

### Investigating the Old Testament Definition.



## BIBLE STUDY: A GLIMPSE INTO CONTENTMENT

---

In the Old Testament, to be content is generally associated with *moderation, a sense of God's guidance and readiness for obedience* (*Theological Dictionary*). This interpretation can easily be seen in Leviticus. Read Leviticus 10:1-2, 6-7, 12-20.

Imagine this day! Aaron's first day of high priestly ministry dampened with the death of his sons. I cannot help but think about the gruesome scene, horrible stench and heightened emotions. What a horrific moment for Aaron, and he was not even allowed to grieve. Instead he was to continue his task of attending upon the Lord without distractions.



What do you think his emotions were at this time? How difficult would it have been to continue? It's important to remember that these bible characters are real people—like us.

---

---

What a day? And now Aaron finds himself again facing the anger of Moses because his other sons failed to fulfill his brother's command regarding the eating of the sin offering. To Moses it seemed a broken record and lyric of repeat was rebellion. Aaron had not fulfilled his priestly regulations but he quickly explains that he *did not eat the sacrificial meat because he was afraid of what more God might do. He was not being rebellious as his dead sons had been in burning incense. Aaron was arguing that in circumstances such as the one he faced that day God would prefer priest to err on the side of caution rather than presumption* (*Nelson Study Bible*). Since Aaron was not in rebellion, but rather willing to be obedient, Moses was content.

Matthew Henry's Commentary explains Aaron's response to Moses as stating *on such a day like this ... he could not have eaten but in his mourning and with a sorrowful spirit and would this have been acceptable?*

Content. Shall we investigate that word? According to Strong's Concordance, this scripture couples two Hebrew words: *yatab* (yaw'tab) and *ayin* (ah'yin). *Yatab* literally means "sound" and figuratively means "right." In fact, 35 times in the Old Testament it is translated as "do well." The Hebrew word *ayin* means "an eye." *Ayin* is often translated as "outward appearance." Together they are translated content.



Based on this scripture and the biblical commentaries, how would you define Old Testament contentment?

---

---



## BIBLE STUDY: A GLIMPSE INTO CONTENTMENT

---



Based on Old Testament scripture, can you agree with most scholars that content is associated with a *sense of God's guidance and a readiness for obedience*?  Yes  No

Let's continue our Old Testament Study of contentment by visiting Gehazi (ge-hay'zi) who will give us insight into behavior patterns associated with discontentment. We'll find him among the pages of 2 Kings Chapter 5. Shall we set the stage? Naaman, commander of the Syrian army and leper, has been to visit Elisha, prophet of Israel and master of Gehazi. Elisha instructs Naaman that washing in the Jordan seven times would cure his leprosy. Naaman, after defeating his own pride, does so and is cured. In return he offers Elisha valuable gifts. Elisha responds, *as the Lord lives, before whom I stand, I will receive nothing*. The healed commander departs to Syria. Now enters Gehazi. Please read 2 Kings 5:20-27.

Look back at verse 23. In fact, read it using at least three different translations. In some translations, Naaman responds: *By all means...*, *Or of course*. But in others we see *Be pleased... or Be content...* Different translations beg an investigation into the original text. What we find is the Hebrew word *ya'al*. It is a primitive root meaning to show willingness, undertake to do, be pleased, or be determined. It is most frequently translated as "be content" in the authorized version. So we see that indeed Gehazi had a greed problem but perhaps the root of his greed was discontentment.



So, how did discontent manifest in Gehazi's life? Review the verses below.

- Verse 20: Gehazi's left behind Elisha, a man of God, to chase after \_\_\_\_\_, a foreigner.
- Verse 22: Gehazi \_\_\_\_\_ in order to obtain silver (approximately 140lbs of it). That's worth a lie right?
- Verse 24: Gehazi \_\_\_\_\_ the silver (the very image of his sin) and dismissed the men before they were observed by people who would know about Naaman's business with Elisha.
- Verse 25: Gehazi \_\_\_\_\_ to Elisha about his whereabouts.



Ah, what a beautiful image discontentment paints. How would you sum up the nature of man engrossed in discontentment?

---

---



Review the list above. Circle any patterns you have seen or do see now in your own life.

In this study, we have glimpsed into the meaning of contentment for an ancient Hebrew. We have an understanding that contentment would mean the outward appearance of obedience or willingly and determinately doing what is right according to God's law. Yet, there is a hint that contentment means to be satisfied or pleased. We have also seen that discontentment will result in a pattern of turning from God, lying and hiding sin.



## **BIBLE STUDY: A GLIMPSE INTO CONTENTMENT**

---



Our Old Testament scripture indicates we can find contentment how? Feel free to look back to Leviticus.

---

---

Before we end today's study, let's remind ourselves that we have only gained an understanding of the word according to Old Testament Covenant. Next week we will look at a radically different, yet faintly similar, New Testament Covenant, where contentment will move beyond legalistic obedience to a personal dependence. So let's not fall into legalistic patterns.



**Further Study:** Using the New King James or King James translation, read Exodus 2: 11-21 (key verse 21) and Judges 17:1-12 (key verse 11). Both verses, describe the men as "content." What do these passages share about contentment?



## BIBLE STUDY: A GLIMPSE INTO CONTENTMENT

---

### DAY 2: DEFINING NEW TESTAMENT CONTENTMENT

Contentment takes on a different perspective in the New Testament. Contentment in the Greek language refers to self-sufficiency. Content, in this perspective, was highly esteemed and became a favored doctrine of stoics. To be content, one *detached from outward circumstances and (had) resources in oneself to meet every situation (Bible Knowledge Commentary)*. Oddly enough in Philippians, Paul used this not-so-Christian terminology to illustrate that Christians could be independent of circumstances if trusting in God’s resources.

**Stoic:** A member of an originally Greek school of philosophy, founded by Zeno about 308 B.C., believing that God determined everything for the best and that virtue is sufficient for happiness. Its later Roman form advocated the calm acceptance of all occurrences as the unavoidable result of divine will or of the natural order. [www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com)

Let’s visit Philippians in an attempt to gain a better understanding of New Testament contentment. Philippians was written while Paul was in prison between 50-62 AD. This letter was addressed to a small town congregation that was suffering division as a result of a good old fashion “falling out” between two women. You men might call it a cat fight! Read Phil 4:10-13.

In this passage the Greek word referenced by the Greek English lexicon for “to be content” is *autarkes* (ow-tar’kace). The Greek English Lexicon defines it as *content with what one has, content with circumstances*, while the Intermediate Greek English Lexicon defines it as *sufficient in oneself, having enough, independent of others*. And, a quick flip through Strong’s Concordance reveals *sufficient for one’s self, strong enough or processing enough to need no aid or support, independent of external circumstances, contented with one’s lot, with one’s means*.



Put in context of this scripture, how would you now define contentment?

---

---



List a few characteristics we can learn about contentment from this passage.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

Upon reflection we can see that Paul has illustrated several characteristics of contentment. First, one can be content no matter the circumstances. Second, contentment is a spiritual principle of dependence on the Lord rather than on human help or self reliance. Thus, our third characteristic is that contentment can be learned. And praise the good Lord, once it is learned contentment leaves no room for need as illustrated by Paul. Because Paul had learned the lesson of



## **BIBLE STUDY: A GLIMPSE INTO CONTENTMENT**

---

contentment, he could place his financial and material need in God's hand and trust him. Can you imagine being that worry free?



According to this scripture, how do you gain contentment? What does this "how to" look like?

---

---



What keeps you from placing your needs in the hands of God?

---

---



Glance back at your check list on page one of the first study, what could you afford to place into God hands? How has not giving this area of your life to God increased your discontentment?

---

---



How does this New Testament definition compare and contrast the Old Testament definition for contentment?

Compare \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

Contrast \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

We have gained much knowledge of contentment, but I encourage you to stay with this study. In our following lesson, we will investigate the consequences of discontentment and in lesson four we will see the cause of discontentment which will provide us with an understanding of how to avoid it in the future.



## **BIBLE STUDY: A GLIMPSE INTO CONTENTMENT**

---



**Further Study:** Within this passage Paul uses the phrase “have I learned the secret.” Many commentaries support that this language is a metaphor for initiatory rites of the pagan mysteries. In essence when speaking about “being content,” Paul is saying he was initiated into contentment. Wuest’s Word Study refers to it as an “entrance into a new condition.” Is contentment a “right of passage” to our new creation?



**Further Study:** Willmington’s Bible Handbook uses this passage to define two types of Christians: The Thermometer and The Thermostat. What is the primary difference between these two devices, and how does it apply to our study of contentment?



## BIBLE STUDY: A GLIMPSE INTO CONTENTMENT

---

### DAY 3: CONSEQUENCES OF DISCONTENTMENT

In our previous sessions we appraised our contentment, delved into the definition of contentment, and most importantly we analyzed how to attain it.



In an attempt to review, how do you attain contentment? Feel free to look back at the last lesson.

---

---



What strategies did you employ this last week to attain contentment?

---

---

In today's study, we will analyze the flip side of contentment--discontentment. It is our intent to have a full understanding of the consequences of being discontented.

In a moment we will read 1 Tim 6:6-9, but first let's understand the context of the passage. First Timothy was written by Paul to... bet you can guess... Timothy. Young Tim was facing serious challenges to faith and doctrine within the church. Paul wrote this letter in an attempt to edify, direct and teach Christian doctrine, but he also takes a moment to warn Timothy of false prophets. Not just any false prophet, but those that are using the gospel for financial gain.

Now that we understand the context of the scripture, let's review the Greek word used for contentment. Remember it had connotations of self-sufficiency in Philippians; however, in First Timothy it goes deeper. According to the Greek English Lexicon *autarkeia* used in this passage means *to be satisfied, to be happy or content as the result of having what one desires or needs to be content.*



Now, let us Read 1 Tim 6:6-9. According to this scripture, what are the consequences of discontentment?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

We can easily see that temptation, snares, and harmful desires are the fruit of discontentment. Sounds like rotten fruit, eh? Especially since each, in there own right, leads to man's (and let's not forget woman's) ruin or destruction.



## BIBLE STUDY: A GLIMPSE INTO CONTENTMENT

---



Feel free to jot down your own examples of how discontentment lead to temptation, traps, desires and even your demise. \_\_\_\_\_



How does this understanding of discontentment affect your reading of James 1:14-15.

---

---



Returning to 1 Tim 6. Why do you think Paul used money as an example for discontentment? How did it apply to Timothy's church?

---

---



Do you think Paul is limiting his discussion of contentment to finances since he used money as an example? Yes No



According to Paul's passage, what are the needs that must be fulfilled to guarantee contentment (that's if we have the right attitude)?

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

Thoreau once wrote, *A man is rich in proportion to the number of things he can afford to let alone.* A spirit filled author wrote, *For a little which a righteous man has is better than the riches of many wicked (Ps 37:16).*



How does Thoreau and our Psalmist's remarks relate to our passage in 1 Timothy 6?

---

---

In our attempt to explore the effects of discontentment, let us take a glimpse into the life of Joshua. Quickly review Numbers 14:1-9.



What set Joshua apart from the other Israelites?

---

---



## BIBLE STUDY: A GLIMPSE INTO CONTENTMENT

---

Now, let us turn to a not so favorable time in Joshua's life. After the defeat of Jericho, Joshua's army lost the battle of Ai because Achan had sinned against the Lord's command.



Can you remember Achan's sin? Feel free to cheat and look ahead to Joshua 7:21.

---

---

Read Joshua 7:6-7 which depicts Joshua's reaction to the lost battle. It is very apparent that Joshua was discontent with the results of the battle.



What does Joshua do that is reminiscent of the Israelites?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

It is important to understand his reaction, because it reveals to us human nature—our nature. The obvious is that Joshua complained and blamed God, but more intriguing, suddenly Joshua had selective memory! He could be content with the other side of the Jordan? Numbers 14 revealed that he sure was not satisfied when he was there! It is shocking how willingly we will settle for something less than God's best when we are discontent.



When have you willingly accepted something less than His best because you were discontent?

---

---



**Further Study:** Check out God's response in Joshua 6:10. *Get thee up!* God does not seem to tolerate discontentment. He also explains that the crisis is not owing to His unfaithfulness but the sin of the people. 1 Timothy 6 tells us that discontentment leads to sin, but Joshua 6:10 implies that sin causes discontent. This would imply a dangerously dizzy spiral downward—a self-perpetual cycle. How can the cycle be broken? Feel free to revisit the previous lesson.

We will investigate this further in our next lesson.



## BIBLE STUDY: A GLIMPSE INTO CONTENTMENT

---

### Day 4: Understanding the Cause of Discontentment.

In our first two studies, we attempted to gain an understanding of contentment. In our third, we flipped the coin and investigated discontentment. Today we will look at the causes of discontentment, but first let's review.



Glance through lessons one and three. What are the consequences for discontentment?

---

Obviously these patterns are not desirable, so we want to avoid discontentment. The most obvious way to do so is to understand the causes.



What do you think is the most common causes for discontentment?

---

Now let's see what the Bible says on this matter. We will begin our study with Hebrews. This epistle was written to Christians that were being urged to return to Judaism. There are many unknowns regarding this book. Both the city of receipt and the authorship of this book are highly disputed. Possible authors are Paul, Luke or Barnabus. It was written between 65-70AD.



Using the King James or New King James Version read Hebrews 13:5. According to this scripture what is the origin of discontentment?

---

---



Define covetousness.

---

---

Perhaps Isaiah 56:11 best describes covetousness, *They are dogs with mighty appetites; they never have enough. They are shepherds who lack understanding; they all turn to their own way, each seeks his own gain.* It becomes clear that covetousness has no limit. Never forget, covetousness wrapped up in human nature knows no bounds!



## BIBLE STUDY: A GLIMPSE INTO CONTENTMENT

---



Have you ever experience a time when covetousness was without bounds in your life? How content did you feel at this time?

---



What types of things do people covet? If you need help, visit Exodus 20:17, Joshua 7:21, 1 Samuel 15:9, 19 and Micah 2:2.

---



Is coveting limited to money? Yes No



Revisit your list above and circle the items that you find yourself coveting most frequently. Why is it important to ask ourselves these tough questions? When you find yourself on the slippery slope of covetousness, not only is your contentment, happiness and peace about to slide into the abyss, but covetousness can actually destroy something of much greater value.



According to 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, what does covetous take away? \_\_\_\_\_

We can see that covetousness is indeed a dangerous attitude for a Christian. By definition it has its root in envy.



What methods could be used to avoid envy and thus covetousness? Use the following scriptures to further your discussion regarding the avoidance of covetousness and thus solidify contentment in your life.

---

---

2 Corinthians 10:12 states, *We do not dare to classify or **compare** ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves with themselves, they are not wise.*

Romans 12:6 says, *We have **different** gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith.*

Jeremiah 29:11 *For I know the plan **I have** for you, declares the Lord, plans for wholeness and not for evil, to you a future and a hope.*



## BIBLE STUDY: A GLIMPSE INTO CONTENTMENT

---

Philippians 4:8 *Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—**meditate** on these things.*

I cannot help but think about the difference between a donkey and a horse. Donkeys are extremely cautious and protective creatures, so they are often used on dangerous trails. They are aware of their feet and the path they are following. Donkeys seldom slip over. A horse--now that's another story. My daddy use to say, "A horse is just stupidity wrapped up in leather." They are often slipping down the slope before they ever realize they have stepped off the path. If we are not careful, we will horse around and slip down the slope of covetousness before we know it. We should strive to be more donkey-like: watching the path for obstructions to contentment like comparison, questioning our gifts, doubting God's plan, and rehearsing negative thoughts.



Let's close our study of contentment with one final note. Hebrews 13:5 ends with "I will never leave you nor forsake you." How does this passage relate to contentment?

---

---

God's promise not to forsake us should give us the assurance and confidence we need to be content with who we are, what we have, and what our future holds. With that thought in mind, let's be content!



**Further Study:** Read Genesis chapters 29-30. Note as you read the passage that Leah envied Rachel, but Rachel envied Leah. Use the story to explain how comparison steals contentment and finally, leads to destruction.



**Further Study:** Read Jonah 4. Use this story to illustrate how not accepting and being obedient to the plan that God has for your life leads to discontentment.



## **BIBLE STUDY: A GLIMPSE INTO CONTENTMENT**

---



**Further Study:** Read Numbers 14:1-29. The Israelites immediately started rehearsing “if onlys.” Use this scripture to illustrate the importance of positive thought patterns in attaining contentment.



## BIBLE STUDY: A GLIMPSE INTO CONTENTMENT

---

### DAY 5: A REVIEW

Our study together has now come to an end, but it is important to remember that learning material to the level that we can see life changes requires that it be reviewed frequently. Today's study will simply review the concepts we have learned. Feel free to flip through previous lessons to develop your answers.



Using both Old Testament and New Testament language define contentment.

---

---



How does discontent manifest itself in our lives? Review Gehazi and Joshua's stories.

---

---



Would it be fair to say that an "attitude of contentment" is a choice? Explain. Feel free to revisit the Further Study for Lesson One.

---

---



According to scripture how do we obtain contentment?

Old Testament: \_\_\_\_\_

New Testament: \_\_\_\_\_



Discontentment has its source in covetousness. What four behavior patterns are roots to covetousness or envy leading to discontentment?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_



What types of things do people covet?



## BIBLE STUDY: A GLIMPSE INTO CONTENTMENT

---

---

Leviticus 3:40 says, *Let us test and examine our way, and return to the Lord!* So it is time to reflect upon our own lives. Let us also remember that David very candidly asked God to examine his heart, we can do the same. Take a moment to ask God for discernment of your own heart as well as wisdom to know what to do next.



In what areas do you compare yourself to others?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work              | <input type="checkbox"/> Excitement/Adventure                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marriage          | <input type="checkbox"/> Status/Success                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children          | <input type="checkbox"/> Image                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friendships       | <input type="checkbox"/> Possessions (House, Car, Clothing...) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Church            | <input type="checkbox"/> Finances                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Ministry | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                           |



In what areas do you complain or rehearse negative thoughts the most?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work              | <input type="checkbox"/> Excitement/Adventure                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marriage          | <input type="checkbox"/> Status/Success                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children          | <input type="checkbox"/> Image                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friendships       | <input type="checkbox"/> Possessions (House, Car, Clothing...) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Church            | <input type="checkbox"/> Finances                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Ministry | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                           |



In what areas do you doubt God's plan for your life the most?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work              | <input type="checkbox"/> Excitement/Adventure                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marriage          | <input type="checkbox"/> Status/Success                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children          | <input type="checkbox"/> Image                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friendships       | <input type="checkbox"/> Possessions (House, Car, Clothing...) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Church            | <input type="checkbox"/> Finances                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Ministry | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                           |



In what areas are you most discontent?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work              | <input type="checkbox"/> Excitement/Adventure                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marriage          | <input type="checkbox"/> Status/Success                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children          | <input type="checkbox"/> Image                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friendships       | <input type="checkbox"/> Possessions (House, Car, Clothing...) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Church            | <input type="checkbox"/> Finances                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Ministry | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                           |



Do you see a pattern? Yes No



## BIBLE STUDY: A GLIMPSE INTO CONTENTMENT



In Gehazi's life, discontentment manifested itself as a sin of greed. What sin has been introduced into your life as a result of discontentment?

---

---



What techniques will you choose to counter your discontentment?

---

---

---

Let me take just a moment to thank you for sticking to this study especially these last pages. It takes great fortitude to evaluate the "ugly" in our lives. I pray that you have the same determination to change your attitude of discontentment. May you find freedom from discontentment as you learn to depend upon God. Remember that contentment is indeed a choice. It is an attitude. It is a decision.



**Further Study.** We have seen that rehearsing negative thoughts (negative self-talk) is an obstacle to our contentment, so it is important that we deal with it appropriately. *Self-talk* is what we say to ourselves in response to a frustrating situation. Self-talk can be triggered with a simple word, image, or memory. It is often illogical but we believe it anyway. The amazing thing about self-talk is that it becomes so automatic that we do not even hear our thoughts, but rather believe that the situation causes the feelings. However, in reality it is our thoughts about the experience that is controlling our emotions. Anyone who practices negative self-talk will begin avoiding situations that make them think and feel negatively. Self-talk eventually leads to depression because it is associated with feelings of helplessness and hopelessness. But most importantly, self talk is nothing more than a BAD HABIT!!!

Science is quickly showing us that your brain can be reprogrammed. If you have trained your neurons to "fire" in a negative pattern, then you can retrain your brain to "fire" in positive patterns. Let's introduce a technique for "attacking" negative self-talk.

**C<sup>2</sup>R<sup>2</sup>**

C<sup>2</sup>R<sup>2</sup> is a memory devise that helps us remember four actions to take against negative thought patterns. It is short for capture, check, replace and rehearse. The following illustrates each step.



## BIBLE STUDY: A GLIMPSE INTO CONTENTMENT

C = Capture it! Identify the negative thought.

C = Check it! Test it with the questions below.

1. What is the evidence for this thought?
2. Is this always true?
3. Has this been true in the past?
4. Does this thought line up with the Bible?

R = Replace it! Develop positive thoughts (affirmation) using the following rules.

1. Use the first person (I am, I can, I will....)
2. Don't use negatives in the statement (I am **not**, I will **never** ....)
3. Make the positive statement believable. (Instead of I'm going to ace this test, use I am going to pass this test.)

R = Rehearse it! Practice the new thoughts

1. Write the affirmation repetitively.
2. Write the affirmation in giant letters with a magic marker on a sheet of paper and attach it to your mirror.
3. Write on several post-it notes and distribute them all over the house, car, and place of work.
4. Rehearse them each morning and evening by reading them aloud.
5. Record them on your mp3 player and listen to them as you fall asleep.
6. Have a partner look you in the eye and repeat them to you replacing the pronoun "I" with "you".



What negative thought patterns do you often rehearse?



What affirmations (positive counter thoughts) could you rehearse to combat this negative self talk?



How will you rehearse your new affirmation(s)?