

## INTRODUCTION

Contentment is a central characteristic of a Jesus-powered lifestyle. Francis Schaefer said that contentment is important evidence of our love for God: "...I am to love God enough to be contented; ... I am to love men enough not to envy." <sup>(1)</sup>

## DISCUSSION

1. Think back to when you were a child. What did you think that you HAD to have that you never got - a certain toy, a date to the school dance, etc.
2. What is a funny or irrational fear that you tend to worry about?
3. Pastor David told us that Buddhism teaches its followers to eliminate all desires, whereas Christianity teaches us to control our desires. Discuss this. How might this help us live more abundant lives through Christ.
4. Money, stuff and worries keep us from walking consistently in contentment. Which is most difficult for you?
5. Discuss "If you spend all you have on you, you will not find contentment." Is that true? See *Proverbs 27:20* <sup>(2)</sup>
6. What are some signs that would indicate that someone is owned by their stuff?
7. What is Jesus' command to us in *Matthew 6:19*? <sup>(3)</sup> What is Jesus instructing us to do with wealth?
8. Immediately following His words about money, Jesus talked about the eye. See *Matthew 6:22-23*. <sup>(4)</sup> Pastor David suggested that the "bad" eye could also be translated as "stingy." Is there a connection between our eye and our attitude towards money? How can the eye keep us from contentment? Or help us find contentment?
9. Discuss David's paraphrase of *Matthew 6:21*: "Your heart follows your stuff. If you surrender your stuff, God has your heart." Have you seen this principle worked out in your own life? Share examples.
10. Pastor David suggested 4 solutions <sup>(5)</sup> for dealing with money and stuff. Which are most helpful to you?
11. Discuss the statement, "God doesn't need your money. He wants your heart." Why should we give generously?
12. Jesus said, "...do not worry about tomorrow" (*Matthew 6:34*). Are there any things that are OK to worry about?
13. Read *Matthew 6:33* <sup>(6)</sup> and discuss the command Jesus gives us to obey. What is the promise He expects us to rely upon? Do you think over-concern about our own stuff is a big problem for us today? The Apostle Paul once complained (see *Philippians 2:20-21* <sup>(7)</sup>) that he knew few people who cared about the Kingdom of God more than their own stuff. How can we as a group help one another to seek after God's things more consistently?
14. If you tithe or beyond, talk about what prompted you to take that step of faith. What did you worry about? What compelled you to start tithing?
15. What is a worry "starter" for you? Is there a way to turn this from a destructive worry to a constructive one?
16. In what specific ways do you not participate with the Holy Spirit when surrendering your worries or unhealthy desires? Do you dwell or ruminate on the problems? Do you compare yourself to others? Do you not trust that God is for you?
17. David mentioned that it is not God's plan that we worry and quoted numerous Scriptures about peace. Was this a revelation to you? What is your favorite verse to support this idea?

## FOOTNOTES:

- (1) Page 9, *True Spirituality*, Francis Schaefer; 1971, Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, IL.
- (2) "Sheol and Abaddon are never satisfied, nor are the eyes of man ever satisfied." *Proverbs 27:20*; New American Standard Bible; 1995, The Lockman Foundation.
- (3) "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal." *Matthew 6:19*; New American Standard Bible, *ibid*.
- (4) "The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness..." *Matthew 6:22-23*; New American Standard Bible, *ibid*.
- (5) The 4 solutions: don't let money own you (avoid covetousness); put God first by practicing the tithe; follow the treasure principle; control your urge for more.
- (6) "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." *Matthew 6:33*; New American Standard Bible, *ibid*.
- (7) "For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare. For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ." *Philippians 2:20-21*; New American Standard Bible, *ibid*.