

The Secret of Contentment

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[0 : 00] Well, as they depart, I want to invite you also as I pray for us, because we ourselves need prayer to hear and respond to the word of God.

So let me pray. Father, I know that your word is faithful, it's true, it's rich, it's deep, it's good. Lord, we confess, though, that we often do not have eyes to see, ears to hear, or hearts to understand. So give us your eyes to see what you are seeing in your word.

Give us your ears to hear what you are hearing. Give us your heart to receive your understanding. Lord God, I pray that if there are words that I've prepared that are not honoring to you or not helpful to us, that you would hold me back from saying them.

And if there are other things that would be helpful, grant me that wisdom and help. Lord God, may you open our eyes to see the good of a life of contentment, and to know it and to understand it.

[1 : 06] Amen. Well, what if I were to tell you that there is a secret way to live, a secret better way to live your life, a secret power to life that could be yours?

Oh, goody. Everybody wants to sell you on secrets, right? There are best-selling books simply titled The Secret. There are secret societies like the Freemasons.

There are secret mystery religions like Scientology. They promise that if you want further access, and especially if you give them your money, they will grant you secret, hidden mystery knowledge, exclusive access to that better life, to that empowered life.

Now, did you know that the Bible promises a secret too? The Bible actually promises a secret as well.

Now, you might think, well, Dave, you're starting to sound like an infomercial. Well, yeah, okay. But it's a secret of a different sort because the Apostle Paul, in the book of Philippians, he is going to tell us that you too can be inducted into a realm of hidden knowledge.

[2 : 22] You too can learn the know-how to life that Jesus Christ possessed. You too can learn the capability to life that Paul himself speaks of.

And he describes the secret with one word, and that secret word is contentment. I know maybe some of us wanted something a little more dramatic, a little more exciting, but this word contentment is a powerful word.

Here's how Paul writes about it. You'll find in Philippians 4, verses 10 through 13. And here's what Paul says. He says, I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now, at length, you have revived your concern for me.

You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. Not that I'm speaking of being in need, for I have learned, in whatever situation I am, to be content.

I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need.

[3 : 39] I can do all things through him who strengthens me. So, the secret of contentment.

Who wants it? If you're still like, well, yeah, I mean, maybe, maybe, maybe I want it. Let me sweeten the deal for you. Let me paint a picture for you of what contentment looks like when a person has got it.

How do you know that someone is content? Well, the first place that we can look is just, well, let's look at Paul himself. He says he knows that he's learned the secret. What does it look like on Paul when he's got contentment?

Well, the signs of contentment, the signs of contentment appear in the way that Paul writes. Not just the content of what he writes, but just the manner in which he writes.

Look at verse 10. He says, I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. I rejoiced.

[4 : 39] He is enjoying. Paul actually enjoys the people that he is writing to. His contentment shows up in the way that he enjoys, the way that he celebrates the good that he sees in other people.

Now, Paul, if you read his letters, he's not afraid to recognize there are flaws in the churches that he's writing to. But flaws and all, he enjoys the church at Philippi.

He's not walking around irritated and frustrated that they're not the way they ought to be. If you read the entire letter to the Philippians, there is joy on every page.

And as we continue on to verses 14 through 20, we see more signs of contentment popping up left and right. Look at verses 14 through 16. Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble.

And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving except you only.

[5 : 44] Even in Thessalonica, you sent me help for my needs once and again. So here, Paul is expressing gratitude. Gratitude for the Philippians' kindness.

Because Paul has been living under house arrest at his own expense. Now, you might think, well, how does that work? Well, yeah, it doesn't work very well.

If you're under house arrest, you don't have the ability to earn money. So you're relying on whatever financial reserves you have, whatever money your family has, or your friends can get to you to keep you fed while you are waiting trial.

Paul has been imprisoned and unable to provide for his own needs. And his money has been running lower and lower and lower and lower. Maybe you're starting to ration your money, your food.

And in the nick of time, the Philippians have sent him a financial gift in the hands of a good friend named Epaphroditus. And Paul's contentment, this whole letter is written back to the Philippian church after receiving that gift.

[6 : 46] Paul's contentment comes out in his gratitude. Not only for the gift, but he says, just for your whole partnership in the gospel. Your partnership with me. And then he goes on to say in verse 17, not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit.

So notice that what Paul is excited about, it's not what he is getting out of his relationship with them. It's not what he's getting. It's the good things that he sees happening in the lives of the Philippians. He sees, wow, they are growing in generosity. They're growing in care. Their faith is bearing fruit. Paul is seeking the good of others. That's another sign of contentment.

He is seeking the good of others. In verse 18, he adds, I have received full payment and more. I am well supplied. Having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.

Maybe the Philippians are worried that their gift is just not enough. They're ashamed that they don't have a lot to give Paul. They just give him what they have. And they're thinking, oh man, is that going to really, is he going to be happy with that?

[8 : 03] And Paul expresses satisfaction. There's a satisfaction. He is satisfied by what the Philippians have done. He reassures them, hey, I am well supplied. You've given me full payment and more in my eyes.

A satisfied heart, that too is a sign of contentment. Verse 19, and my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

So here Paul's confidence comes out. He has that quiet confidence. My God has all the resources in the world at his disposal.

He owns the cattle on a thousand hills. They're all his. And he is going to grant to me, he's going to grant to the Philippians, whatever we need to live the life that he has called us to.

He has that confidence. And then this leads Paul to write in verse 20, to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

[9 : 05] And there, that sign of contentment, the final signature and capstone on it is worship. Heartfelt worship. He has this desire to put God first, to put God above all, to honor God rather than trying to elevate and honor and promote himself.

Paul is saying, I don't need to be first. It doesn't need to be all about me. That is God's place. He can be first.

And I'm happy with that. That's the way things ought to be. Notice the way that Paul is writing this. He doesn't display in his letter things that we might think contentment includes. So here are some things that are not contentment. To be content does not mean that you are, you know, detached

from the world.

You're disengaged. You're floating above it all. That you're in this serene bubble. Everything is water off a duck's back. La, la, la, la, la. Right? It doesn't mean that the hard situations of life don't bother you.

[10:11] Paul absolutely has preferences about the way his life, he'd like to see his life go. The preference about the way he'd like to see things happen. Things affect him. Difficult people grieve Paul.

Difficult people, difficult situations might provoke anxiety in you. You're still affected by them. You're still affected by the world around you. Paul is affected. To be content.

Also, it does not mean that you are in denial. That you're in denial about the hardships of life. It doesn't mean you're wearing rose-colored glasses. It doesn't mean you're a blind optimist.

Your head's in the sand. Lost in a Disneyland. Refusing to deal with reality. When you are truly content, you can look the very hardest things in the eye.

And if you read what the Apostle Paul writes, oh boy, does he look the hardest things in the eye. He does not shy away from difficult subjects such as his own imprisonment. His upcoming trial.

[11:13] A possible death sentence at the hands of Caesar. He mentions them in his book. He knows this. In awful circumstances like that, a truly content person still maintains and even deepens in their ability to enjoy other people, to express gratitude, to seek the good of others, to be satisfied, to be confident, to be worshipping God.

Did you notice how naturally these signs of contentment flow from Paul in these verses? And this doesn't mean that there are not griefs and sadness and deep sorrows, frustrations in Paul's life. Those are all present in all his letters. And yet, under it all, he is content. Somehow at the same time. And he doesn't just tell us he is content.

He shows it by the way that he writes. And so you can have confidence as you read this. Paul is not selling you on a fake secret. He is not marketing a mystery religion.

He has learned the secret and he is not faking it. And he shows it. Now, maybe you hear that and think, well, okay, great. Good for Paul. But he is an apostle.

[12:35] He was, he saw the Lord Jesus Christ. He had this special relationship with God. So maybe that's just for him. Maybe that's just for the super holy, righteous people who are on another level. Maybe that's for those evangelists and missionaries and pastors and super Christians out there.

But I don't know if that's really for me. Did you know that the secret of contentment is indeed meant for every Christian, for everyone who has put their faith in Jesus Christ?

If you have put your faith in Christ, you are meant to learn it. That means it doesn't all come automatically the moment you're saved. Paul says he had to learn it. There was a time in his life when he had believed in Christ, his faith was in Christ, and he was kind of just beginning to learn it. But he says, I've learned it. You are meant to be inducted into this secret. And it is important. In fact, it is vital that you do.

Because here's the reality. Why? Discontentment is easy. Discontentment is everywhere. We easily drift into discontentment. That is our default.

[13:46] And it is everywhere, even in the church. The signs of discontentment. Let's talk about that briefly. The signs of discontentment are all around us. Because even in the book of Philippians, this is one of the healthiest churches that Paul has founded.

And if you want to see an unhealthy one, just read Galatians or 1 and 2 Corinthians, and you'll read that and go, okay, whoo, I thought my church was bad. Those were messed up places.

But even in a relatively healthy church at Philippi, the seeds of discontent are present. Paul writes about conflict in verse 2.

You can read that there's two women in the church who are butting heads, who just can't get along. Back in chapter 2, verse 14, he writes that there is grumble.

He warns about grumbling and disputing. Watch out for that. A discontent person is always finding problems. Always finding problems with other people.

[14:44] Always irritated. Always just unhappy. Especially with those in authority. Always pointing the finger at what someone else is doing. Always criticizing others for what they aren't doing.

Discontentment. Discontentment comes out of a heart full of demands. We could call this first set of demands the if-only demands.

The if-only demands. If only things were different, then I would be content. If only my parents let me get my way, then I would be content.

If only I had a better boss, then I would be content. If only I had a newer phone, or a flashier car, or a bigger house, then I would be content.

If only my church did things according to my own preferences and practices, then I would be content. If only our church had air conditioning in here, then I would be content.

[15 : 52] If only I had more likes on social media, then I would be content. If only I could get married or have a family, then I would be content. If only I had more friends, then I would be content.

If only everything in my life changed, then I would be content. Now, those are pretty obvious, aren't they? The if-only demands.

Let's talk about something. Those are obvious signs of discontent. I mean, we laugh because, okay, yeah, yeah. That's clearly discontentment there. But discontentment can also hide itself.

It can exist in a person who genuinely feels happy and at ease. You know, someone can feel happy and at ease, and yet, believe it or not, they're discontented. It's possible to have a counterfeit contentment.

It's a little like when you think you have patience, right? A friend recently reminded me of this comment saying, I thought I was a patient person, and then I had children.

[16 : 58] You think you're patient. Well, of course I'm patient. And then your patience gets exposed as conditional. It's a condition.

I am patient as long as people aren't too demanding. And so it is with contentment. The counterfeit contentment, as long as.

As long as things stay the way they are, then I am content. As long as my body is strong and healthy, then I am content.

As long as my spouse plays the role I need them to play, then I am content. As long as my children are well behaved, I am content.

As long as I have plenty of money in my savings account, I am content. As long as my business ventures are going well, I am content.

[17 : 58] As long as I can get out into nature or go on regular vacations, I am content. As long as this town stays exactly the same as when I grew up, I am content.

Good luck with that one. As long as nothing in my life changes, I am content. Hey, these as long as?

That's welcome to the town of Squamish. This is a town built on that. Right? This is the town where people, well, they either grew up here and wish things were the way that they used to be. Or they move here so that their as long as demands start working for them.

Right? This is a town hardwired for counterfeit contentment. But that fake conditional contentment. I move here so that I'm good as long as I get out on my mountain bike and go and hit the ski slopes. And I'm able to live my life all right and I'm content as long as I get to do all of that and live an adventurous life. But this fake conditional contentment gets exposed when those demands that once were met are met no longer.

[19 : 12] You have a good, contented marriage. And then you lose your job or you have a child or everything changes. Then your discontentment grows.

Soon your marriage starts to fall apart. You start taking financial hits at home or in your business and your confidence that you once had just starts to slip away.

You get injured and now you can't escape into the woods or onto the slopes every weekend. And soon you become this irritable person at home. You get injured and now you're going to come out.

You're going to be involved in your life. And we use tactics. And we pursue our if only demands. We want them. We need them. And to get what we want, we use tactics. We appease people. We attack them. We run away from them. we want to protect our as long as demands and to get what we want those same tactics the appeasement the attacking the avoiding we don't look anything like paul in these verses and we don't look anything like the person of jesus christ in the gospels that's what happens when we view life through the lens of needs i have needs that need to get filled i have my physiological needs needs for security needs for love and belonging needs for self-esteem and self-worth needs for self-fulfillment needs for authenticity needs needs needs needs got this whole host of needs and a lot of those are really good and important things but as long as you look

at life through the lens of my needs and how are my needs met you will never learn the secret of contentment it is unavailable to you in philippians 4 verse 10 we realize that paul is enjoying life and he is enjoying people and needs are not on his radar screen not in his mindset he is not thinking how do i get my needs met how do i get how do i get these philippians to start meeting my needs because that mindset produces entitlement not the joy that we see in verse 10 when he says i rejoice in the lord greatly let me let me illustrate imagine that you own a restaurant okay rest owning a restaurant is hard business most of them fail you want to keep your customers happy you need to just have a really good reputation and good business to keep this thing going and so you have customers sitting at a table and you want to see hey what's their dining experience like and you go to them and you ask them how's your dining experience with us and imagine that customer says to you my needs are being met my needs are being met now does that sound like a person who is enjoying your restaurant does it sound instead like a person with a mindset of entitlement a person who will be content as long as the food and service meets his needs whatever his needs are now will such a person will such a customer leave a glowing five-star google review of your restaurant will such a person go and tell all their friends go and eat at this restaurant it's it's wonderful i enjoyed it no that's not their mentality and so it is with us so it is in our own relationship with god and his church an entitled christian who's focused on how can i get my needs met will never have the joyful spirit of an evangelist in order for us to begin to show people the gospel the way that paul speaks of the gospel we must show that we enjoy god and we enjoy his gospel even in the middle of sorrow even in the middle of hardship there is a contentment and a joy in us that is present one of the best witnesses to the christian faith is a person who has come to learn the secret of contentment contentment so let's summarize again what contentment doesn't mean and what it does mean contentment discontentment says if only things were different then i would be content discontentment also says as long as things stay the way they are then i am content but true contentment says this god is with me even if things aren't the way they ought to be god is with me even when things are not

the way they ought to be god is with me even when money isn't god is with me even when my health isn't god is with me even when success isn't god is with me even when my spouse and friends aren't god is with me even when i've lost my freedom and i'm stuck in house arrest in a roman prison and i'm going to appear before caesar to decide whether i live or die there is a secret of contentment that paul says i had to learn it i had to learn it this means that there was that time in his life paul was a christian he had not yet learned the secret this knowledge did not come easy for him in second corinthians he actually gives a parallel account of that of how hardship suffering betrayals shame disgrace through them he learned that secret and now he is turning and telling to telling us you can learn it too so here is the secret of contentment there are three things you need for contentment first contentment requires knowledge contentment requires knowledge now that does include knowledge about theological truth getting your doctrine right and so as an aside because this sermon will not have everything that you need to know about contentment and so i'm going to give you a resource that if you want to really grow in this this will help you uh in your bulletin there is a blurb on the inside of your bulletin the left flap for right now media that's an online video streaming service that we have a we offer free subscriptions here at our church if you don't have one then contact our office and there is a series on there and a qr code that takes you there to a series of videos by john piper on the doctrine of god's providence so god's providence is his sovereign control of creation and his goodness that in his sovereign control he is seeking the good of those who love him that's a rich and comforting doctrine that if you soak yourself in it is going to provide a good and healthy theological foundation a good framework on which the secret of contentment can be built but contentment takes more than just knowing things about god it takes what we might call know-how you know how to live life in both it's good and it's bad you have that wisdom that know-how this is exactly what paul says in verses 11 through 12 look at the way he talks about the knowledge he says not that i am speaking of being in need for i have learned in whatever situation i am to be content i know how to be brought low and i know how to abound in any and every circumstance i have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger abundance and need paul has the know-how to live life well even when he's been beaten down by imprisonment and hunger and failure and slander and the demands of other people paul knows how to live he says in hunger and in need and conversely paul also knows how to live life well when things are going great when he is well fed when he is embracing a life of freedom and abundance and success he knows what to do with that he knows how to live faithful to god even in good conditions

as well many of us don't that's when we forget god and wander away from him but paul doesn't he knows what to do when things are good

[27 : 55] he knows how to enjoy good things without needing them to be okay he knows how to enjoy good things without making them idols he knows how to enjoy good things as a gift from the hand of a gracious god without taking them for granted he knows how to hold them with an open hand and let them go when the time comes paul is saying i know how to do it what if you could face any situation in life good or bad both in times when you were gaining good things and in times when you were losing them what if you could face any situation in life with a thought i know how to do this how would that change things and you really believed it i know how to do this even if my if only's aren't met i know how to do this even if i lose my as long as demands i know how to do this i know how to be faithful to god i know how to flourish this know-how leads to a second step on the path capability there's capability here paul tells us in verse 13 i can do all things that's quite a statement i can do all things right that sounds like something maybe a boastful football player would say after winning the super bowl we can do anything i can do anything everything if you set your mind to a you can do anything too right you're five foot two you can be a linebacker sure why not if you read the entire letter to the philippians paul is capable and confident but not boastful at all rather he's very humble he is capable any situation in any relationship but his capability comes out as there's a quiet confidence to him and that quiet confidence is what he calls being content that's what he calls the secret it is not the brash confidence of human pride and self-affirmation it is not the self-confidence of a stoic philosopher or a mindfulness practitioner who they turn inward and they find within themselves the resources to handle life no that's not what paul's like at all i mean we could try we could try to boast in our own self-sufficiency rely on our own self-sufficiency in jeremiah chapter 17 jeremiah says cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength whose heart turns away from the lord paul has abandoned that mentality paul has only one boast and in chapter 3 verse 8 he says i count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing christ jesus my lord paul's only boast his only confidence is that he knows and he belongs to jesus christ the name that is above every name before whom every knee will bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue will confess him as lord that's the one paul knows the one he is connected to the one whom he belongs to and so he says in chapter 4 verse 13 i can do all things through him who strengthens me now this is probably one of the most famous and quoted verses in the bible you know it's famous like tim tebow nfl athlete has like this eyeshadow philippines 413 on there and and all these athletes uh professing faith love to quote this one and they quote it as though it is a verse about ambition about all the big and amazing and glorious things i can do because god has made me super awesome and capable

this is not a verse about ambition this is a verse about contentment i can be terribly humiliated through christ who strengthens me i can be wonderfully successful through christ who strengthens me i can be well fed through christ who strengthens me i can go hungry through christ who strengthens me i can have wealth and possessions through christ who strengthens me i can live in poverty through christ who strengthens me this is the secret of contentment it is not self-sufficiency it is christ-sufficiency contentment isn't about filling up an empty tank of needs and demands contentment is about whether you are facing away from christ or facing toward christ it's about saying jesus christ is with me even when money isn't jesus christ is with me even when my health isn't jesus christ is with me even when other people aren't jesus christ is with me even when fill in the blank isn't a more literal translation of verse 13 would say i can do all things in him who strengthens me in him and that phrase in him in christ in the lord that is one of paul's favorite phrases if you read his writings he just says it again and again and again in christ in christ in him in the lord for years i read the bible i never noticed it because he says it so much it almost feels like a throwaway but it's not a throwaway line for paul he means something rich and deep and significant he's talking about union with christ our oneness with jesus christ by faith in christ we are identified with him and we are and we belong to him the cross is where jesus died and we died with him there too we died to the penalty of sin that he took for us we died to the power of sin over us the grave the empty tomb is where jesus rose again and we rose with him there risen to forgiveness risen to honor risen to new life everyone who has entrusted themselves to jesus christ is in christ and belongs to him forever i am his and he is mine the secret of contentment is that we can learn the know-how to life and we are capable of handling whatever life throws at us in christ what if you really believe that was true down to your very heart that i have the know-how to life whatever comes

at me i'm capable of handling in christ not in myself in christ with the wisdom and the strength that only jesus christ can give us now your life is filled with difficult circumstances your life is filled with difficult relationships okay let's just be honest you guys know difficult people okay you know you're all laughing you know you've got that person in mind you know who i'm talking about and you don't have a clue what to do half the time what do i do with this person why were they behaving that way why how do i respond to that what do i do in this situation man i need to find a way to make sure this never happens again and i'm never here again and i don't have people like this around or maybe i'll just find a way to you know get back at them or i've got my ways of handling this but you know deep down they're wrong they're wrong ways of handling them and if you're in christ your conscience tells you there's something not right here now if you're the kind of person who says i don't know what you're talking about dave i always know what to do well then you uh i'll be straight with you you are a confident fool people who always know what to do right away do the dumbest things we need help because we do not have the know-how we do not have the capacity for difficult circumstances and difficult people to handle life in the flesh we have to have our relationships and our circumstances set up just so so that we can be okay and we can handle life apart from christ the secret of contentment is that god says we need the wisdom that is only ours in christ in james chapter one here's what we were told this is one of the best this is my favorite verses in the bible because it's so helpful james 1 verse 5 if any of you lacks wisdom you don't have the know-how you don't know what to do you're lost you're confused you're disoriented what do i do with this person what do i do with this circumstance if any of you lacks wisdom let him ask god who gives generously to all without reproach and it will be given him many of us grow up in environments where if you don't know what to do the last thing you want to do is ask somebody because you'll be told how do you not know that how can you have not figured that out what's wrong with you is that god's heart for you does he not say he gives generously to all does he shame you for it no without reproach his heart is to eagerly and generously give you what you need and you do not have to worry about i should have known this by now i should have mastered this by now i should have figured this out by now god says i don't care just ask me please i want to help my heart is to give you wisdom for life and the know-how that you need when we ask god for wisdom when we are slowing down asking for wisdom waiting on the lord trust and trusting ourselves to him the funny thing is we might find ourselves responding differently to the difficult people in difficult circumstances in our life we might find ourselves the person that we used to just we would just attack instinctively we might find ourselves yielding to them at times the person that we used to just avoid all the time we might find ourselves confronting the person that we used to just appease all the time we might find ourselves withdrawing for a little bit to ponder and consider how do i honor and love this person better we replace self-preservation all the appeasing and the attacking and the avoiding of self-preservation we replace it with love we find that through god's wisdom there is a know-how there is a way forward so let me ask kind of the confrontational question here how often do you ask god first for wisdom before reacting to someone's bad behavior how often do you ask god first for wisdom before making a big decision how often do you ask god first for wisdom before writing that email or making that phone call i mean how often do we just make decisions on our own and then oh god would you just bless what i have already decided to do just make it successful lord no wonder we keep screwing it all up right no wonder we have lost confidence no wonder we we think we need people in circumstances to be oh just so so that i can be okay no wonder discontentment takes such root in our hearts when god becomes the god of last resort rather than the god of first resort the secret of contentment is a deep dependence on god for help in whatever situation in any and every circumstance help when you are brought low help when you're doing great this is something that must be practiced that's how we prove over and over and over to ourselves the power and the wisdom of jesus christ there's a long road to contentment for each of us it might look a little bit different how we learn to live this way often i like to give people a first step on the road something practical because what i've just given you sounds really great but you're like okay what do i do with that so i'll give you something i often give to people when i'm counseling them um as because they're facing difficult circumstances and difficult people who would be maybe their heart they would be hard for anyone but for this person it's especially hard so what do we do well this practice i call inquiry prayers because it reflects how the saints of old would inquire of the lord how they would seek god first so first step one you buy a little notepad with pages that you can tear out at the start of your day take all of your anxious thoughts and all your feelings all the worries and cares all the

big things you anticipate and even the things like i don't even know why i'm all just really wound up this morning i'm not sure and you write them out as questions that you are asking god so as an example you might write lord what do i say to so and so what does this person need what would love and honor look like lord should i pursue this opportunity before me if so what first step should i take is there anyone i should be asking for advice lord what if man our lives are full of what ifs what if this terrible thing happens will my family be okay will i be okay and you write these down every every one of these things can be phrased as a question that you are asking god you write them down you fill up a page of your notepad whatever however long it takes just fill it all out empty your brain onto that notepad all the questions throughout the day step three throughout the day keep adding questions as you feel them coming up or as a situation changes keep adding them to your notepad step four at the end of the day tear out that page of questions and then destroy it shove it in the shredder set it on fire in your driveway crumple it up and throw it away whatever it takes cast your anxieties away from you and onto the lord who cares for you physically put them on the lord and walk away step five next morning start all over again on the next page now i do these myself every day and i recommend just trying that out see what it feels like see what happens in your heart because the beautiful thing about it it cultivates a posture in our hearts of i don't just automatically know what to do or automatically inward spiral in my mind about what to do or just be like oh i know what to do and just charge into things and solve them i slow down i ask god first i cast my anxieties on him and obedience to him that's humility and it cultivates this practice where i learn how to do things in christ who strengthens me i learn to ask him ask him for wisdom for all of this stuff in my life and it cultivates a heart of contentment it's just one step on the road but a good first step my personal experience is that it more or less keeps me sane and i think that staying sane is a really great starting place to learning the secret of contentment now if you want to explore farther down that path if you want to gain the know-how the capability the prayer the preparation the dependence on the lord that leads to contentment hey you can come talk with me but how can i become that kind of person who prays prepares for pursues what god has called me to now it's my prayer for you that one day the secret of contentment will be yours to know and that as time goes on you will learn it because it was paul's to know it is christ to know and he wants to give it to you what if this town that is full of fake contentment what if it got to see in our church the real thing people in difficult circumstances people in difficult relationships and yet they are enjoying others they are expressing gratitude they are seeking the good of others they are living satisfied and confident and above all they are worshiping god as their only boast even if through tears that is how you look when you know the secret of contentment let me pray our god and our father i thank you you want our good you challenge us with truth for our good we settle for counterfeits lord we settle for conditional contentment for the as long as is but lord you love us more than that you want to save us not just just from our circumstances you want to save us from our discontent would you do that for us lord make us a people who are known as rich and full of contentment well supplied who have that quiet confidence for life who are affected struck down but not destroyed lord god grant us these things make us people after your own heart in the image of your son jesus christ amen you uh