

Contentment— Leader's Tip Sheet

The Big Idea

This week your group will be dealing with Contentment. This area of contentment is a very timely topic for our culture today. The word contentment almost sounds foreign. For someone in our culture to say enough is enough is totally unprecedented.

In this lesson the key issue is finding something WORTH living for. The opposite of living with contentment is living for status, power, money, possessions, activities, etc. The only thing in this life truly worth living for is God Himself. He tells us over and over in these passage two things to do.

1. To enjoy life. Ecc. 3: 12 *"I have concluded that there is nothing more beneficial for people than to be happy and to enjoy themselves as long as they live;"*
2. To find enjoyment in work. Ecc. 3:22 *"So I perceived that there is nothing better than that a man should enjoy his work, because that is his reward;"*

The only way to find true enjoyment and true contentment is with God. Ecc. 2:25b says *"For who can eat and who can have enjoyment without Him?"*

Probing the Scriptures

Ecclesiastes is a book written by Solomon that is very different from the psalms written by his father David. In the Psalms, David talks about Joy and Praising God. Solomon, in Ecclesiastes talks over and over about how futile life is and that everything is vanity and striving after the wind. Solomon had looked for significance, happiness and contentment in many things including: wisdom, pleasure, possessions/ riches and even his work. Basically he had the most of everything earth had to offer. And realized how it was vanity.

In Ecc. 2:24, 25 he says *"There is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink and tell himself that his labor is good. This also I have seen, that it is from the hand of God. For who can eat and who can have enjoyment without Him?"* Solomon realized that it was impossible to have peace and joy without God. Nothing on earth could fill his heart with joy and peace except the One who created him. It is amazing how things are really not much different today. People are still striving after all of these vain things! I confess am guilty! We now even have the security of Christ that Solomon did not yet have. Can you imagine living in this day and time and not experiencing the peace and joy we have in Christ? God wants us to enjoy a content life here on earth, share Him with others and keep our hearts set on eternity!

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Processing Together

Because this is the third week that your group is together, it would be valuable to spend some more time getting to know one another. Feel free to use the following icebreaker.

“Two Truths and a Lie”

Gather your group together and explain that each person in your group has to come up with two possibly unbelievable things they have done in their life, and one flat out lie. Each person in the group takes a turn sharing their two true accomplishments and the one fabricated accomplishment. Then the group tries to guess which accomplishment is the lie. Give everyone time to think of their two truthful accomplishments and one lie. Also start the game by sharing your example. This is a great way to get to know each other and also to see people be forced to tell a lie!

For example, I will share my two truthful accomplishments and one lie:

1. I have sky dived once in my life!
2. I am a germ freak!
3. I have bungee jumped five times!

Now you guess which one is the lie!!!!!!

As we have said before your job as a small group leader is to facilitate biblical discussion. What is the difference between facilitating and teaching?

Definition Facilitate – *“To make easy or easier”*

Definition Teach – *“To impart knowledge.”*

The key to being a good facilitator is asking good questions. The following are some tips on how to facilitate discussion and ask good questions.

1. **Be a Launcher of Discussion:** Ask simple questions about what they have observed or discovered. Questions starting with “what or how”
2. **Be a Guider of Discussion:** Here you are simply guiding question to involve everyone, to keep things moving, and to keep everyone on track. Example Question: *“Who else has something written down about that question? or Does anyone else want to comment?”*
3. **Be a Summarizer of the Discussion:** Sometimes to reinforce the information that has been shared in the group it is good to spend a small amount of time summarizing the materials covered. This is a great opportunity to let the group share what they have learned.
4. **Be an Assister in Application:** This is where how questions can help stimulate the group to remember what they have learned and how they might apply it to their daily lives. Example: *“How can we apply this biblical truth to our daily life?”*

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Use this time in your study to discuss the questions in the “Processing Together” section of your study. This is also a good time to bring in the questions discovered, while doing the study. This study is designed for each person to complete the first three sections before the group meets. The final two sections will then be completed together while drawing insights from the first three.

This issue of contentment could be a hard issue to swallow for some people in your group. Especially if they do not understand what Solomon is trying to say. Try to lead with a very confessional style. What I mean by this is that you can share your struggles with the issue of contentment. This will remove any roadblocks and open up the pathway for others to share.

As you process the study together with your group... make sure that your group members understand the importance and the impact of living a life of contentment.

Putting into Practice

Many say the most important part of studying anything is the application process. If we fail to apply what we have learned it is all-for-not!

Learning the art of helping your group apply what God is teaching them is probably the most important part of leading the study. Help everyone have their application to be something that is measurable. Making an application measurable gives you the opportunity to ask them, how they did. If their application is learning more about God, then ask.....How are you going to do that?