

Enough: Discovering Joy Through Simplicity & Generosity

A Stewardship Devotional 2014
Week 1 – Cultivating Contentment
(Adapted from Adam Hamilton's book,
some contents written by Pastor Bob)

It may be helpful to write your reflections down - on paper, computer, or electronic device. It's an opportunity to engage in the spiritual practice of journaling. For the week of October 5 – 11. Do one reflection a day: either every other day or consecutively at the beginning or towards the end of the week, which ever suits your schedule. Do either individually or with another person. (Verses printed below are from the English Standard Version)

REFLECTION 1

Scripture: Philippians 4:11b-13

I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. 12 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. 13 I can do all things through him (Christ Jesus) who strengthens me.

Questions:

How was I brought low this past year? list instance(s)
How did I deal with it?
Was there a time of great need?
How did I experience deliverance or victory?

When did I experience the abundance this past year?
Was this abundance from my own doing?
Was God active in this abundance?
Say a prayer of thanks for getting through the lows and highs of this year and God's deliverance.

Prayer – read Psalm 16:5-11 as your prayer

5 The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. 6 The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; I have a goodly heritage. 7 I bless the Lord who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me. 8 I keep the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. 9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; my body also rests secure. 10 For you do not give me up to Sheol, or let your faithful one see the Pit. 11 You show me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy; in your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

REFLECTION 2

Scripture: Philippians 4:4-7

4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. 5 Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; 6 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

What am I anxious about for the remainder of 2014?
What are the causes of these anxieties or their sources?
How do I experience the peace of God?
In what kind of settings do I experience the peace of God?

Ask God to relieve your anxiety, to give you a balanced perspective, and to release you from fear. Make it a goal to go to a place where you can feel God's peace.

Prayer –read Psalm 40:1-5

I waited patiently for the Lord; he inclined to me and heard my cry. 2 He drew me up from the desolate pit, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure. 3 He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. many will see and fear, and put their trust in the Lord. 4 Happy are those who make the Lord their trust, who do not turn to the proud, to those who go astray after false gods. 5 You have multiplied, O Lord my God, your wondrous deeds and your thoughts toward us; none can compare with you. Were I to proclaim and tell of them, they would be more than can be counted.

REFLECTION 3

Scripture: Matthew 6:25-27

25 *“Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?”*

Questions for reflection

These verses make us think about God’s provisions through nature and the creation.

We rely so much on technology, materialism, and the media to provide us fulfillment and satisfaction. Reflect on how God provides for us in creation and in nature.

List some specific things we take for granted that God provides in nature.

Take some time during the day to commune with nature and recite Psalm 8.

Prayer: Read Psalm 8 as your prayer.

O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. 2 Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark because of your foes, to silence the enemy and the avenger. 3 When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; 4

what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? 5 Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor. 6 You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet, 7 all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, 8 the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas. 9 O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

REFLECTION 4

Scripture - 2 Corinthians 4:7-9; Romans 8:18-28

7 *But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. 8 We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;*

18 *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. 19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. 23 And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.*

26 *Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. 27 And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. 28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*

Questions for Reflection

Think of persons who you are close to who have been living in great difficulty, hardship, whether due to crisis, physical affliction, or major life shift.

Think of the freedoms and limitations that have been taken from them.

What losses have they experienced? Pray for the person(s).

Do you still have and/or enjoy those same freedoms?

Count/list your blessings that were unique to this past year.

Express thanksgiving to God for these blessing and the privilege of having them.

Prayer – Read Psalm 116