

# Flourish with Contentment

## Learning to be Content

Recently I spent 5 days watching a 3-year-old little girl, Nora, while her parents were out of town. One day we spent quite a bit of time where she walked on the 4 cement bumpers like a balance beam gymnast and then would step onto the wooden dock and then run down the little ramp, squealing with delight every time, and then she would do it all over again. She continued to do this for quite some time (she would have lasted a lot longer than I would have; eventually I was the one that said it was time to go on to something else). In that moment, she was perfectly content. She had nothing fancy—no toys, no technology—simply ordinary objects that she could climb on, walk over, and run down. As I watched her repeat her path over and over again, I felt the Holy Spirit nudging my heart and saying, “Why can’t you be content with what you have right in front of you at this very moment?”

Paul writes in Philippians 4:11, ***I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances.*** Paul’s circumstances were less than ideal when he wrote these words; He was in jail awaiting the verdict on a crime he didn’t commit. Despite this, he was satisfied with what the Lord had provided. Paul repeats himself in verse 12, ***I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.*** What was the secret? He shares it in verse 13, ***I can do all this through him who gives me strength.*** Paul had learned to depend on God, and knew that God would give him the strength he needed to meet whatever circumstances and situations he faced.

Paul had learned that contentment is developed by being thankful for what God had provided, whether he liked it or not. English Bible teacher A. W. Pink wrote, ***“Contentment is the product of a heart resting in God. It is the blessed assurance that God does all things well and is, even now, making all things work together for their ultimate good.”*** Paul had learned that through all the difficulties he encountered—beatings, being pelted with stones, being shipwrecked three times and being in jail—he had the assurance of God’s presence, peace and provision. He was certain that even in the bad and ugly times, God was at work, working all things for his good.

Discontentment usually develops from a place of want or desire. Hebrews 13:5 says, ***Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”*** Contentment is a choice. Contentment is found in Christ alone, and we will be content when we truly embrace the fact that we have Jesus, who is forever enough and forever with us.



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## Territorial Women's Ministries Department

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## Flourishing in Relationships: Conversation Starters

Here are some great conversations starters as you gather with your friends and family to celebrate Thanksgiving.

- ◆ How did you celebrate Thanksgiving growing up?
- ◆ What is your favorite Thanksgiving tradition?
- ◆ If you were a turkey and got caught for a Thanksgiving meal, what excuse would you use for the people to let you go and not eat you ?
- ◆ What holiday movie is first on your must watch-list?
- ◆ If you could have only one dessert this entire holiday season, what would it be?
- ◆ If you had to get rid of one holiday in order to keep Thanksgiving, what holiday would you get rid of ?
- ◆ If you could invite anyone to Thanksgiving dinner, who would you want to invite and why?
- ◆ What are you most thankful for this year? Why?
- ◆ How have you learned to thank God even in hard times this year?

*“We would worry less if we praised more. Thanksgiving is the enemy of discontent and dissatisfaction.” Harry Ironside*

### Additional Resources

Check out our website for more resources to help you flourish in the ordinary season:

<https://usw-womensministries.org/>

Bible Study: *Flourishing with Contentment Right Now*, looking at Philippians 4:11-13

Devotional: *Contentment at the Feet of Jesus* focusing on Luke 10:38-42

Craft Idea: *Handmade FLOURISHING Paper*

Flourishing Story: Captain Taneya Garrett how she is flourishing contentedly in the season she is in right now.

## Flourishing in Prayer: Prayer Idea

A key to flourishing in every moment of our daily lives is by staying connected to God. Prayer is the way we connect with Him. Here are some thankfulness prayer ideas for you to connect with God this month.

**Thank you Card Prayers.** November is the month we focus on thankfulness. Take the time each day to pray for someone in your life, and then take the time to send them a thank you note, telling them how much you thank them for being in your life, and that you prayed for them. Perhaps even share a verse of Scripture with them (such as a verse from the daily readings of the *Flourishing in the Word Bible Reading Plan* for this month).

**A Psalm of Thanksgiving.** Read through Psalm 103 and notice all of the ways David expressed his thankfulness to God. Pray through this Psalm being sure to “**praise the Lord, my soul**” at the beginning and end, as David demonstrates for us. Write your own Psalm based on David’s format in Psalm 103, by being specific about ways God has transformed your life and your own gratefulness for His blessings. Perhaps go verse by verse as the Psalm is laid out.

**Fill in the Blank Thanksgiving prayer.** Once everyone is seated for the Thanksgiving meal, instead of saying one thing for which they are grateful, ask each person to complete the following sentence as a prayer: “Thank you, God for \_\_\_\_\_.” Or, for a little variety, suggest alternatives: “Thank you that \_\_\_\_\_” and “Thank you for not \_\_\_\_\_.”



*Spend the month in the Psalms praising and thanking God*

## Flourishing in the Word

The best way to flourish in ordinary days is to be in the Word each and every day. Contentment comes easier when our hearts are filled with gratitude. This month we will be reading Psalms and focusing on offering God praise and thanksgiving.

Nov 1—Psalm 7:1-17

Nov 2—Psalm 9:1-20

Nov 3—Psalm 28:1-9

Nov 4—Psalm 30:1-12

Nov 5—Psalm 34:1-22

Nov 6—Psalm 35:1-18

Nov 7—Psalm 56:1-13

Nov 8—Psalm 57:1-11

Nov 9—Psalm 75:1-10

Nov 10—Psalm 86:1-17

Nov 11—Psalm 89:1-18

Nov 12—Psalm 92:1-15

Nov 13—Psalm 95:1-7

Nov 14—Psalm 100:1-5

Nov 15—Psalm 103:1-22

Nov 16—Psalm 105:1-11

Nov 17—Psalm 106:1-3

Nov 18—Psalm 107:1-22

Nov 19—Psalm 107:23-43

Nov 20—Psalm 111:1-10

Nov 21—Psalm 112:1-10

Nov 22—Psalm 113:1-9

Nov 23—Psalm 116:1-19

Nov 24—Psalm 117:1-2

Nov 25—Psalm 118:1-14

Nov 26—Psalm 118:15-29

Nov 27—Psalm 135:1-21

Nov 28—Psalm 136:1-26

Nov 29—Psalm 147:1-20

Nov 30—Psalm 150:1-6

## Flourishing Ideas from the Territory

**Bakersfield, CA** held a foot washing ceremony. The lesson was “Hope in Distress,” and showed the parallel of grief, love and redemption in Ruth’s story and Jesus’ last days.

**Fairbanks, AK** ladies are learning to play the ukulele, and they are flourishing in music.

**Gilroy, CA** have been holding nutrition classes so the ladies can learn to provide

themselves and their families with delicious, nutritious food. **Grants Pass, OR** had their first annual meeting and enrolled a new member. The corps treated the ladies to lunch.

**Kenai, AK** had a program about self-care, as in personal hygiene. To make it fun, they did trivia including the world record for longest nails (358 inches) and the top shampoo brands.

**Mat-Su Valley, AK** have been busy refreshing and redecorating spaces at the corps.

**Mat-Su Valley, AK** made “blessing bags” for the homeless. The bags had snack items and hygiene products.

**Newport, OR** has a weekly “Sally’s Lunch Bunch” with lunch, program, and a time of fellowship and a Scrabble game.

**Pendleton, OR** held a local WM Retreat with the theme “Treasured.” Using the illustration of Diamonds and their transformation process, they learned they are diamonds in the rough.

**Santa Rosa, CA** started a study on *Awaken* by Priscilla Shirer.

## Keys to Contentment

In her book, *Calm My Anxious Heart*, Linda Dillow speaks of a missionary woman she knew. The missionary woman was one of the most contented people she had ever met. Linda asked the missionary woman for her secret to contentment and this was her response:

1. Never allow yourself to complain about anything, not even the weather.
2. Never picture yourself in a different circumstance or someplace else.
3. Never compare your lot with the lot of another.
4. Never allow yourself to wish this or that had been otherwise.
5. Never dwell on tomorrow. Remember it is God's, and not ours.

Paul gives some great tips for being content in Philippians 4:4-7 ***Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.***



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***“Praise the Lord, my soul; all my inmost being, praise His holy name. Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all His benefits.” Psalm 103:1-2***

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## Flourishing Fun in November

Here are ten fun ideas to help you flourish this November.

1. Spend the month of November finding at least one new thing to be thankful for everyday.
2. Start planning your Thanksgiving menu early. Also look up new recipes to try with the leftovers.
3. Make your favorite Fall Crockpot meal.
4. Decorate for Thanksgiving.
5. Donate food to The Salvation Army Food Bank or volunteer to assemble Thanksgiving food boxes or serve a Thanksgiving meal.
6. Join a Turkey Trot by yourself or with a group of friends.
7. Take a cold weather walk or hike.
8. Host a Pie Swap.
9. Plan a “Friendsgiving” Celebration
10. Rake your leaves. Go ahead, and jump into the pile!