THE PATH TO CONTENTMENT

RMPP EVENT 43

SCHEDULE

Welcome and Zoom Etiquette

Opening Prayer

Speaker Introduction

Message: *The Path to Contentment*

Q&A and Discussion

Breakout Rooms

Closing Prayer

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THE PATH TO CONTENTMENT

SYNOPSIS

Many of us may desire contentment, but all too often, we may struggle with discontentment more. We can feel discontent with our lives, work, or marriages, and the list could go on. But there's a better way, and it's the path to contentment. Isn't it time you learn how to stay on this path consistently?

| *Event Messages and Devotional Booklets*

You can find RMPP messages and devotional booklets from events past and present on our website at:
themstproject.com/real-men-pursuing-purity

| *Scripture Reflection*

But godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world, andc we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs. - *1 Timothy 6:6-10*

EVENT 43

| *Personal Reflection*

1. When you read the passage above in 1 Timothy, how satisfied are you with your life today?
2. What measures do you take to find contentment in your life?

| *Personal Application*

1. Ask yourself, "On a scale between 1 and 10, 10 being excellent - rate how content you are with your life right now. What would you need to do to make your pathway to contentment better?
2. Sometimes, our material possessions become an unhealthy obsession. Have you ever considered taking an inventory of what you have and decided to either give it away or sell it? Then you could bless a friend or neighbor with those items or money!

| *Recommended Reading*

The Pursuit of God: *A.W. Tozer*
The Art of Divine Contentment: *Thomas Watson*

NOTES

A WORD FROM...

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Contentment is the state of being happy and satisfied. Contentment isn't an excited kind of happy, it's more like a peaceful ease of mind. It's being satisfied with what you have, whatever that is.

In 1 Timothy 6 the apostle Paul writes to his young disciple Timothy. Because Timothy is a young leader Paul wants to mentor this young man who is content in all things. When we love Jesus and follow Him he provides what we need from day to day.

Accumulating wealth, striving to make lots of money can cause humans to love things more than God. That is a pitfall He wants us to avoid. "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils."

As men pursuing purity and godliness we do not want material possessions to enslave us or cloud our judgment. Buying the latest cell phone, wearing fashionable clothing, having an

aggressive work ethic - these things are not evil, but they can enslave us.

King David's son Solomon was a wise king in Israel that we read about in the Old Testament. In fact, God gave Solomon a level of wisdom that surpassed all other men. He was also the wealthiest man in the world. While he ruled Israel for 40 years he wrote a book on contentment (Ecclesiastes). You'd think that a man like Solomon would be content all of his days because of all God gave him. But you'll be surprised what Solomon says at the end of his life about money and possessions.

So there is a fine line between how we accumulate things and how to keep good spiritual balance in our lives. This pathway of contentment includes the roles God has given us as husbands, fathers, sons and Christian leaders. God will lead and navigate our way as we trust Him. God is good - He is so good. He wants to give us good things but He doesn't want us to be enslaved by them. This booklet is our effort to provide some clear ways to be content in all things.

May God give us His grace to listen and together follow Him into all righteousness.

Mike B. Wood

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

DEVOTIONAL 1

Are you willing to see and learn how crucial a proper understanding of contentment is to your spiritual witness, responsibilities, and life?

I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. Because I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength (Philippians 4:11-13)."

Contentment is defined as a "state of happiness and satisfaction," specifically as it relates to one's life experiences. According to the above Scripture passage, one must learn to become content. Contentment doesn't mean you're indifferent to your circumstances, but that you're not controlled by your circumstances. Paul wasn't saying he didn't care whether

he had an abundance or was in need, but that his joy wasn't dependent upon his circumstances (from "The Art of Contentment" by Colin Smith).

Why is contentment so challenging?

"The very first temptation in the history of mankind was the temptation to be discontent. . . a questioning of the goodness of God" (from The Practice of Godliness by Jerry Bridges).

We think we know better than God what is best for us. So, like Adam and Eve, we desire something beyond what God has lovingly given us. If we don't receive it, we become discontent with what we have. This affects our relationship with our Heavenly Father, as well as our relationship with those around us. Discontentment can affect all areas of our lives - our careers, our lifestyles, and our families:

- Lot wasn't content with living in the desert (Genesis 13:10).
- Abraham wasn't content to wait upon God's timing for his promised son (Genesis 16:2).
- David wasn't content with his wives (2 Samuel 11:2).
- Judas wasn't content with Jesus' plans (Matthew 26:15).
- Ananias and Sapphira weren't content with their church's way of supporting one another (Acts 5:1-2).

Discontentment results from taking our eyes off Jesus, and being distracted by lesser, temporary desires - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2:16).

So, what is the "secret" of contentment?

Be anxious for nothing…let your requests be made known to God…then God's peace will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:6-7).

Go to Jesus…learn from Him…your "yoke" will be easy and your burden light…and you will find rest (Matthew 11:28-30).

Be still…cease striving…and come to know better your Heavenly Father and His plans for you (Psalm 46:10).

Trust in God's plans for you…for your welfare…to give you hope and a future (Jeremiah 29:11).

Trust your Heavenly Father to give good things to His children who ask Him (Matthew 7:11).

Fix your eyes on Jesus and His joy set before you…and don't grow weary and lose heart (Hebrews 12:2-3).

Let the joy of the LORD be your strength (Nehemiah 8:10).

Wait patiently on the LORD and take courage in Him (Psalm 27:14)

Living in contentment

In order to be content in all areas of your life, your focus must rightly be upon your loving Heavenly Father, your Good Shepherd, and the Holy Spirit within you. Living in contentment enables you to trust God to take care of you, so you are then free to worship Him, praise Him, and allow Him to use you for His purposes in the lives of others.

Take time to think about how you are greatly blessed by God, and you won't give in to the enemy's temptation to be dissatisfied, disappointed, and discontent with your life. God longs to show you how good and faithful He is! Take the time to see and acknowledge His goodness, beauty, and faithfulness in your life. If you do, you will find yourself at rest and at peace in His presence.

Roger is living in Bangkok, Thailand with his wife Siri. They are members of Evangelical Church of Bangkok, where they serve together in small group ministry and discipleship.

| *Discussion Questions*

1. In what area of your life do you find contentment to be the most challenging?
2. How has God shown you He desires His best for you?
3. What might help you to be more content with God in your life?

| *Read*

1 Timothy 6:6-8

| *Reflect on This*

"The contented person experiences the sufficiency of God's provision for his needs, and the sufficiency of God's grace for his circumstances. He believes God will indeed meet all his material needs, and that He will work in all his circumstances for his good...(The contented person) has found satisfaction and rest for his soul." - *Jerry Bridges*

WHY IS IT SO DIFFICULT?

DEVOTIONAL 2

How does the Bible show us to pursue contentment even when it feels challenging to do so?

Being content isn't easy. It is hard to achieve it and when we think we have it, it slips away again when we aren't looking. Sometimes it seems like discontentment is hardwired into us. So why is this and what can we learn from the Bible on how to effectively pursue contentment? First of all, let's put a definition to it so that we know what we are talking about. It's hard to hit a target unless you first define what the target is. A quick look for the definition of "content" produced this: "In a state of peaceful happiness." That sounds pretty good. I want that. Do you?

Peaceful happiness. This seems like a good thing. So why is it so hard to achieve? I believe it is because there is something else that is competing with it in our hearts. How can that be? Well, as great as "peaceful happiness" sounds, there is a

simple, one-word alternative that we desire: "more." We all want "more." More of what? More of everything. We have this desire that creeps into us for more money, more status, more popularity, more attention from the opposite sex, more cars, more comfort, more hobbies, more accomplishments, more of it all. You name it, we want more of it. As the Bible says, "Death and Destruction are never satisfied, and neither are human eyes." - Proverbs 27:20 (NIV) This isn't a new problem. It hasn't suddenly appeared in the last few hundred years of human existence. It has been around since the beginning. It was there in the Garden of Eden when the serpent tempted Eve with "more" knowledge. The serpent played on her insecurity that God was holding out "more" from them. And because of this desire for more, we are not satisfied with what we have. We cannot be content, at the same time that we want more.

I found this to be true in my own life. One of my life goals was to own a home. This goal represented many important things to me. I worked very hard for it and was disciplined in my finances. I met with setbacks over the years, but, eventually, I was able to purchase a home with a bank loan. I was so happy when I achieved my goal. However, I was shocked at how quickly I found myself thinking about what it would be like to have a different house. I thought about working hard and

saving so that one day I could buy a bigger house, with more conveniences and upgrades. I could not believe that after fulfilling a dream that had lasted more than a decade, I was already moving on to wanting more in less than a year's time.

So, how do we pursue contentment when we have this desire for more? What does the Bible teach us? First of all, God knows that we have this inclination toward wanting more. He knows all. And so, He also knows the answer for it. As is often the case, it comes down to submission. This desire for more that we experience, must be stewarded and brought under the submission of God. We need to take this desire for more and direct it to Jesus. As it says in John 3:30 "He must become greater; I must become less." We need to take this desire for more and seek more of Jesus. More of His example being represented in how we live our life. This is how we can steward this desire for more. Turn it away from the things of this world and turn it toward the things of heaven. During His sermon on the Mount, Jesus talks about just that when He says,

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your

heart will be also." Matthew 6:19-21 (NIV) Later in the same chapter, Jesus instructs us not to worry about the things of this world. He tells us, "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." (Matthew 6:33 NIV) This should be our goal. Seek more of God's kingdom, more of God's righteousness. These are the things that satisfy and bring contentment. And in putting heavenly priorities first, the other things will fall into place.

So, will you put aside worldly pursuits? Will you seek the kingdom and righteousness of God above all else? Will you allow the desire for more material and selfish things as well as the worries of this world to become less and fall away? Through pursuing God's will, we can find contentment. "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it." 1 Timothy 6:6-7 (NIV)

Nicholas is a husband and father of two boys. He is passionate about seeing men walk in God-given freedom and purpose. He has been involved with The MST Project in various ways, but in June, 2024 Nicholas moved to Thailand for the purpose of joining The MST Project as staff. He is originally from Maryland, USA.

| *Discussion Questions*

1. What worldly things do you want more of in your life? Could the desire for these things be keeping you from consistently being content (peaceful and joyful)?
2. What would it look like for you, in your life, to put the desire for God's kingdom first?
3. How can you do a better job of putting your relationship with God first, so that you can better pursue His righteousness?

| *Read*

Matthew 5:6

| *Reflect on This*

"It is a simple formula really: If you want to be content, think less about yourself and more about Christ." - *Erik Raymond*

IS CONTENTMENT A FEELING?

DEVOTIONAL 3

How does the Bible teach us to see contentment as a posture of the heart instead of a fleeting feeling?

"I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 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 any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength." - Philippians 4:11-13

"The grass is always greener on the other side" is an American idiom that means the opposite of what it communicates. For example, suppose I'm tired of my job and say, "Perhaps the grass is greener on the other side", I'm suggesting the possibility that I would be better off working elsewhere. However, as a sensible person would soon realize, I would only find myself feeling discontent as well: the grass is not "greener" on the other side.

This is because the problem is not with the place but with the person. The issue at hand goes deeper than materialism, for beneath the surface of this compulsive consumption for more and the compelling desire to have the new, we discover a heart that is deceitful, and desperately sick. So, with the odds stacked against us, how can we learn the secret of being content in any and every situation?

In the above verse, Paul uses an interesting word when referring to contentment: learn. I don't consider myself very wise, but this leads me to believe that contentment is a virtue. In other words, contentment is not a feeling, but an acquired skill. Contentment is a choice, just like the command Jesus gives us to love. I choose to be content as I choose to love my wife. Despite at times not having the feelings to love her, I do so because that is the command the Lord has given us. Out of respect and reverent fear for my master and Lord, I choose to trust that his Holy Spirit will aid me when my strength fails: that is the blessed faithfulness of our God.

To continue, unhealthy comparison breeds discontentment. For example, when I look upon another woman and either my thoughts or the enemy say, "Wow, look at her body, imagine what she looks like unclothed", my heart can proceed to betray my wife and my thoughts sin against God. The scenario can look a million different ways but the principle is the same: an

ungrateful heart produces covetousness and with covetousness comes discontent. If this is true then the opposite must be as well: A grateful heart produces joy because we remember what the Lord has accomplished for us. So, when our hearts are pressed by the pressures of pessimism, let us be found in gratefulness toward God.

Furthermore, God is teaching me that there is true joy in delighting in the simple things. My boy recently turned a year old, and it's funny how a cardboard box will entertain him more than a $20 toy. God is also teaching me about the blessings of obedience. When my son obeys my command, it brings me immense honor and delight. Through this example, God teaches me too that when we honor his commandments, it brings him immense honor and delight. To know that I make my Heavenly Father proud is enough to bring me contentment, but God does not stop there. As a reward he pours out his approval upon us.

In conclusion, I believe that the above verse refers entirely to money for basic necessities, but there is a general lesson to be learned from Paul's inspired writing. He chose contentment because he had learned to make that a daily part of his Christian walk. Despite enduring hardship, persecution, and ultimately death for God, he successfully remained content under trial. Paul made contentment a choice; he chose gratefulness over

unhealthy comparison. And lastly, Paul greatly understood blessings are derived from obedience. So, with odds stacked against us, how can we learn the secret of being content in any and every situation? Let us learn to choose contentment.

"Some of you are laboring after happiness. You think to find it in gain —hoarding up your pence and your pounds and seeking for rest in the abundance of your beloved wealth. Ah, you will never have enough till you get Christ; but when you have him, you will be full to the brim. Contentment is the peculiar jewel of the beloved of the Lord Jesus. All the Indies could not fill a human heart: the soul is insatiable till it finds the Savior, and then it leans on his bosom and enters into perfect peace." - Charles Spurgeon

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Erik has been working as a cross-cultural missionary for nearly 3 years. He is on staff with YWAM and is pioneering a base (with a team) in the south of Thailand.

| *Discussion Questions*

1. What was your view on contentment before this devotional? Do you believe that contentment is a choice?
2. How does discontentment apply to you in your fight for purity, how would being content affect that?
3. What are some applicational methods mentioned above regarding contentment?

| *Read*

1 Timothy 6:6-7

| *Reflect on This*

"If God doesn't want something for me, I shouldn't want it either. Spending time in meditative prayer, getting to know God, helps align my desires with God's." - *Philip Yancey*

WHY IS CONTENTMENT IMPORTANT?

DEVOTIONAL 4

How does the Bible explain to us the importance of learning contentment as part of our Christian growth and maturity?

"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." - Philippians 4:13 (NAS)

Contentment is not innate; it is a learned discipline. To lead a contented life, we must commit to cultivating an intimate relationship with God daily. I believe the three main attributes of contentment are humility, patience, and rejecting selfish ambitions. Being content requires a conscious effort to place our lives, decisions, and desires in God's hands. God has a purpose and a divine destiny for our future. This type of trust is not something we are born with.

Living a contented life is not about passively accepting "whatever happens, happens." It is not a slothful attitude devoid of goals, dreams, or pursuits. Instead, contentment is

an attitude of faithfulness—a wholehearted dependency on God. We can cultivate this faith only through a persistent daily pursuit of a deeper relationship with God, our Father.

I often struggle to stay content and can be very impatient at times. This lack of trust allows impatience to control my mindset. I sometimes resort to a self-ambitious attitude to validate my self-worth. I doubt myself when I fall short of my goals, face challenging circumstances, or experience setbacks. I lose sight of God, making my relationship with Him feel distant, negatively impacting my connection with Him.

A powerful example can be found in Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." When we read this verse in isolation, we may instantly associate it with success. It has been popularized by athletes and public speakers to motivate individuals to persevere. However, when we consider verses 11-12, we gain deeper insight: "Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means and how to live in prosperity; in every circumstance, I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need." The Apostle Paul teaches us that it's a learned discipline to be content in all situations.

His contentment was forged through experiences of both abundance and suffering. His faith, ambitions, patience, and humility were cultivated through the daily pursuit of his Savior. To walk in contentment with the Lord, we must remain humble, exercise patience for His perfect timing, and control our desires for selfish ambitions. How do we successfully draw closer to God? How do we find the strength to climb the daunting and steep mountain? When the storms of life are crashing in on us, do we have the faith, courage, and perseverance to maintain peace and contentment in our daily lives?

We must decide that our priority is to seek contentment through Christ and discipline our time to be with Him. Acts 13:22 says this about King David, "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after my heart, who will do all My will."

King David had an impressive resume. Before becoming Israel's king, he killed a lion, a bear, and Goliath, the Philistine giant. He was a victorious warrior and the leader of Israel's army. By the time of his death, he had defeated all of Israel's enemies. Although he faced trials and setbacks, his faith was strengthened by his commitment to doing God's will. People can look at David's victories in life, but the one thing that stands out is his desire for God. He was a man after God's own heart. (1 Samuel 13:14)

In Psalm 23, David acknowledges what he is focused on. He is not focused on the blessings or the setbacks; he acknowledges his need for God, his Shepherd.

To achieve a life of contentment and peace, we must seek God with all our hearts. A few key verses can guide us on this journey.

We must bless God with a thankful heart. - Psalm 100:4
We must humble ourselves before God. - James 4:10
We must be patient and wait on the Lord. - Psalm 27:14
We must not seek selfish ambitions. - 1 Corinthians 10:23-24
We must be patient and wait on the Lord. - Psalm 27:14
We must not seek selfish ambitions. - 1 Corinthians 10:23-24

Rich is a researcher, investigator, and freelance writer based in Southeast Asia. He supports missionaries in spreading the message of Jesus Christ and works towards ending child trafficking and sexual exploitation. Rich is well-educated in Biblical Studies, Historical Studies, and Political Science, which equips him to comprehend the intricacies of cross-cultural missions and anti-trafficking efforts.

| *Discussion Questions*

1. What is the purpose of living of life of Godly contentment?
2. How can we cultivate a humble and patient heart for God?
3. How will Godly contentment allow us to be a blessing to others?

| *Read*

Psalm 23

| *Reflect on This*

"Frequently, too, we exercise ourselves in great matters by having a high ambition to do something very wonderful in the church. This is why so very little is done. The great destroyer of good works is the ambition to do great works." - *Charles Spurgeon*

CAN I EVER TRULY BE CONTENT?

DEVOTIONAL 5

How does the Bible guide us in avoiding the pitfalls that keep us from genuinely experiencing contentment?

Discontentment causes many Christians to bear less fruit in their lives. Discontentment is a sin that every person deals with, despite how "put together" or content a person may look. It causes many of us who daily seek to kill our sin wonder, "Can I ever truly be content?" Thankfully, the Bible answers this question for us. If Paul and Silas were able to sing hymns in prison after a severe beating by the magistrates (Acts 16:25), and if early Christians "joyfully accepted the plundering of (their) property" (Hebrews 10:34), then surely it is possible to be genuinely and joyfully content.

Most of us are not being beaten with rods or having our property stripped away from us (although many Christians today face these threats, and perhaps even some Christians within the many RMPP groups around the world), yet we all have the small, subtle, irritating thought that says, "What if you just had

a little bit more?", or "What if things were just a bit better?" Pitfalls to discontentment lie everywhere. However, one major pitfall is the love of money. Hebrews 13:5 says "Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you'."

Money is referenced in roughly 2,350 verses in the Bible. Jesus spoke about money continuously, mainly because it is a major pitfall that leads to discontentment and fruitlessness. Ecclesiastes 5:10 says, "He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity." Jesus tells us in Luke 12:15 to "Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

That means when we have a thought in our head that thinks, "I want what they have!" alarm bells should be ringing; we should be "on guard." These thoughts take discernment and wisdom to process through the Bible and wise counsel so we can come to an informed and firm decision in what we really do and do not need.

The love of money is one example, but the principle is the same for all forms of discontentment. Whether it be status, position, looks, possessions, relationships, or work, our Hebrews 13:5

passage gives us a promise when we face discontentment. We are told by God "I will never leave you nor forsake you." This promise was true for Paul and Silas in prison suffering from terrible wounds, it was true for Christians who lost their property or had it ransacked and destroyed, and it is especially true for you right now in whatever situation you are in. Jesus will never leave nor forsake us.

All hopes rooted in this world will leave us disappointed and discontent, because ultimately, we were made not for this world but for another world. Jesus has told us not only that he will not leave nor forsake us, but that it is our Father's "good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32). Our heavenly Father doesn't grudgingly bring us into eternity with him, or hesitantly lavish his love on us (1 John 3:1), rather he offers himself freely and in complete abundance to us. And furthermore, we have a great reward in heaven that is stored up for us, a reward that will far exceed what we could ever imagine. How do we avoid the pitfalls that lead to discontentment and be truly content? Fix your eyes and your heart on true treasure that never fades, and remember the promises that Jesus gave us.

To wrap up, please consider a few verses that tell us of the promises we have in Christ, and fix your eyes "not on what is seen, but what is unseen" (2 Corinthians 4:18).

Revelation 21:4: He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.

2 Corinthians 5:4-5: For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened - not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

Luke 12:33-34: Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Luke 12:7: Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows.

Peter has been a part of the RMPP ministry since 2019 after six months of serving with The MST Project in Bangkok as part of a college internship. He currently works on his family farm in Alberta, Canada, continuing to serve the Lord where he is at.

| *Discussion Questions*

1. Identify an area of discontentment in your life.
2. Why do you think you feel discontent in this area?
3. What promise does Jesus give you that, if you believed it, would yield contentment rather than discontentment?

| *Read*

Psalm 37:3–4

| *Reflect on This*

He is no fool who gives up that which he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose. - *Jim Elliot*

HOW DO I STAY CONTENT?

DEVOTIONAL 6

How does the Bible encourage us to stay content amid an ever-challenging and temptation-filled world?

I have come to realize that there is much we can learn in life from children and even from babies, despite their lack of experience. They have a hold on the issue of trust - which we have somehow lost as adults - that is simply amazing. When my son was a toddler and he got hurt, became hungry or was bored, he would run up to me knowing in his heart that I had the answer to whatever was troubling him. In the last few months, I have seen how when he picks up his new-born baby, the baby stops crying, trusting that his father knows what to do for him. I believe that the whole issue of contentment revolves around this element of trust. No wonder that as infants we are taught the song that calls us to "trust and obey", and that we in turn teach it to our children. Kids are easily content because they learn to trust, to depend on someone.

When the apostle Paul claims to have learned to be content, he

is simply confessing that he has re-learned to trust God for everything, so he does not spend time worrying about what will happen to him if he falls into a situation of lack or what he should do if he has plenty. Many of us desire to be like Paul and seek contentment, but all too often end up struggling more with discontentment. We are discontent with our jobs, our lives, our marriages, our dreams, and so on.

The question I have for us is this is: how can we return to that path of complete and utter trust where we were easily content - that path that leads to contentment? Brothers, Christ has not left us as orphans, so how does the Bible encourage us to stay content, to return to or remain on the path of contentment?

In Matthew 6:25, Jesus said, "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?" I believe that it was the late Dr. Myles Munroe who said that when we worry, we are actually interfering with God's plan for us, that we do not trust Him enough to do what is good for us. The key to overcoming our discontentment is to discover or rediscover who God really is and remind ourselves of how He has been faithful in the past in supplying all that we have needed.

You see, the seed of unnecessary fear in a Christian is really forgetfulness – an inability to remember and trust what the God of the universe has said and done (Marshall Segal). Contentment is not simply about settling for what we have, but more about trusting in what God has said and done.

Along the path to contentment, you will encounter greed, dissatisfaction, anxiety, pride, confusion, materialism and many other obstacles waiting to rob you of your peace and sense of proportion. The Bible tells us to seek first God's kingdom and His righteousness and all other things that we need will be given to us as well. In other words, as we embark on the path to contentment, our compass should be God's kingdom and righteousness, our trust should be in Him alone, because He knows even better than we do what we truly need in life. As hard as it might be to believe, this is not about us and our needs, but rather about God's ambitions for us. If we put our trust in Him, He will provide us with what we need to accomplish His purposes for us. When that happens, we experience a level of peace and contentment that is almost unreal.

Yes, the path to contentment is a challenging one, requiring profound strength, lionhearted courage, and consistency, but not so much because of what the world has to offer. It is an arduous journey because of our own cravings and desires

which we must overcome and replace with God's promises. Remember brothers, intimacy with God loses its value as we fall deeper in love with what the world throws at us. We need to know and remember what He has said: "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5), and then counter every enticement of the enemy with "but He has said." Then we will discover that our deepest joy on this path to contentment does not rise and fall with what we have, and that instead of allowing our heart to yearn endlessly for what we might have one day, we begin to cultivate consistent satisfaction in what God has given us for today.

Then, although we live in a world driven by wanton desires and cravings, the path to contentment will become covered with the comfort, joy and peace that becomes ours through an intimate relationship with Jesus.

After serving on the pastoral team of the Evangelical Church of Bangkok and Alpha for a number of years, Steve returned to his native Kenya where he and his wife are serving God in various capacities, including the family enrichment ministry.

| *Discussion Questions*

1. Why is it important to understand that contentment is not based on circumstances?
2. How do you define "contentment"? In your own experiences, what have you discovered to be the key to contentment?
3. How do you define "contentment"? In your own experiences, what have you discovered to be the key to contentment?

| *Read*

Proverbs 19:23

| *Reflect on This*

"Contentment is one of the most distinguishing traits of the godly person, because a godly person has his heart focused on God rather than on possessions or position or power." - *Jerry Bridges*

LOOKING BACK...

DEVOTIONALS 1-6

During this connect group cycle, we pray that you have been challenged, encouraged, and inspired as you pursue greater sexual purity, spiritual wholeness, and Christlike maturity in your life. We want to encourage you to now take some time to reflect on the last six devotionals and see how you can consistently apply the many truths that have been shared and that you have learned in your life.

Devotional 1

What are 1-2 truths from this devotional that you would like to reflect on from time to time? What is one aspect from this devotional that you will commit to applying in your life? Invite one other person to hold you accountable in this area.

Devotional 2

What are 1-2 truths from this devotional that you would like to reflect on from time to time? What is one aspect from this devotional that you will commit to applying in your life? Invite one other person to hold you accountable in this area.

Devotional 3

What are 1-2 truths from this devotional that you would like to reflect on from time to time? What is one aspect from this devotional that you will commit to applying in your life? Invite one other person to hold you accountable in this area.

Devotional 4

What are 1-2 truths from this devotional that you would like to reflect on from time to time? What is one aspect from this devotional that you will commit to applying in your life? Invite one other person to hold you accountable in this area.

Devotional 5

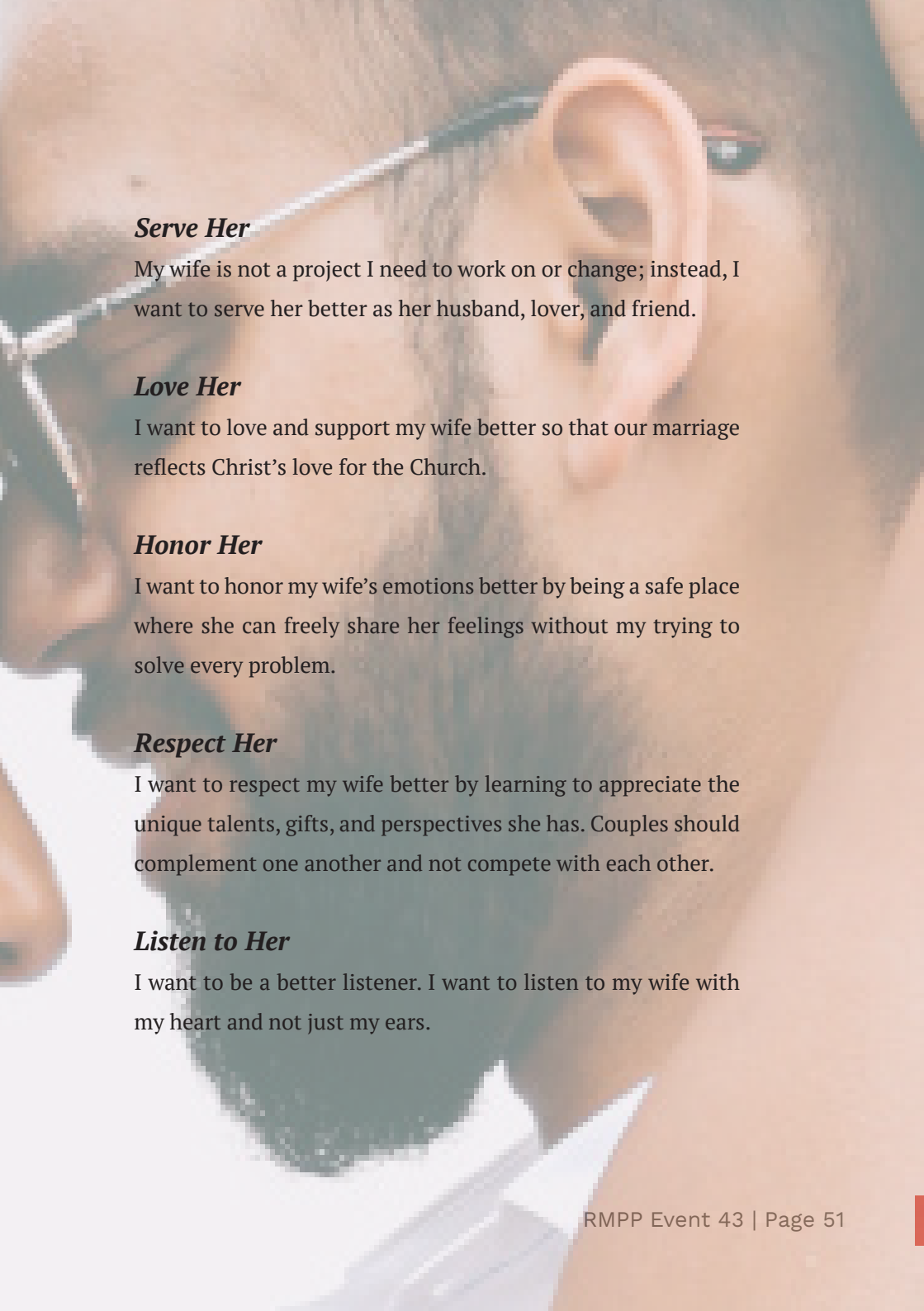
What are 1-2 truths from this devotional that you would like to reflect on from time to time? What is one aspect from this devotional that you will commit to applying in your life? Invite one other person to hold you accountable in this area.

Devotional 6

What are 1-2 truths from this devotional that you would like to reflect on from time to time? What is one aspect from this devotional that you will commit to applying in your life? Invite one other person to hold you accountable in this area.

FAST AND PRAY FOR YOUR WIFE

Each month, we encourage you to set aside a time to fast and pray for your wife (or future wife) for one or all of the following points. As husbands (or future husbands) commit to praying and fasting for their wives, we will see a significant spiritual breakthrough and a spiritual legacy created.



Serve Her

My wife is not a project I need to work on or change; instead, I want to serve her better as her husband, lover, and friend.

Love Her

I want to love and support my wife better so that our marriage reflects Christ's love for the Church.

Honor Her

I want to honor my wife's emotions better by being a safe place where she can freely share her feelings without my trying to solve every problem.

Respect Her

I want to respect my wife better by learning to appreciate the unique talents, gifts, and perspectives she has. Couples should complement one another and not compete with each other.

Listen to Her

I want to be a better listener. I want to listen to my wife with my heart and not just my ears.

INTRODUCING RMPP

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

| *What Is RMPP?*

Real Men Pursuing Purity (RMPP) is a community of men who are committed to growing in integrity, purity and wholeness through relevant teachings, accountability, mentoring and honest dialogue. You might not be sure that you really need to be part of a community like this because you don't struggle with compulsive addictions or sexual sin. While it is very important for many men to focus primarily on resisting sexual temptation and sin, we want to inspire and challenge you to pursue more. Although growing in purity is a big part of the vision for RMPP, it's much more than that. It's also learning about deep-rooted insecurities, developing proper work boundaries, embracing our identity in Christ, confronting fears and anxiety, expressing ourselves emotionally in a healthy way, and pursuing holiness in a safe environment with like-minded brothers. We believe that when we invite Him into these areas, He will extend His healing hand and bring about wholeness. Max Lucado says this very well.

EST. 2014

"Our Savior kneels down and gazes upon the darkest acts of our lives. But rather than recoil in horror, he reaches out in kindness and says, "I can clean that if you want."

We are men who are not willing to settle for a life of spiritual mediocrity. We choose to relentlessly pursue greater depths of purity and wholeness for ourselves and for our families. Welcome to the RMPP community.

| *How does RMPP support the local church?*

RMPP does not intend to replace or represent a church; it only creates a safe place for men who want to stay active in their own church community. When a man joins the RMPP community he joins other like-minded men who desire to pursue greater spiritual growth and Christ-likeness. He is choosing to walk out in greater honesty and vulnerability. He is choosing to pursue purity in all aspects of his life. Aspects such as deep-rooted insecurities, developing proper work

boundaries, embracing our identity in Christ, confronting fears and anxiety, expressing ourselves emotionally in a healthy way, and pursuing holiness in a safe environment.

We then pray that as these men grow in greater maturity that they would influence their families. That they would impact their communities and their work places, and that they would be an example for other men in their home church. We believe that as men take hold of the awesome and holy call to live lives that reflect Christ, that the church will be inspired and the world will take notice.

| *What happens next?*

If you have ever attended a men's retreat, you probably remember being deeply impacted by worship, challenged by teaching, and being in community with many men who shared your excitement and enthusiasm for growth and change. A few weeks or months down the road, the gathering became a distant memory as you settled back into the routines of daily life. We don't want to create just another mountain top experience. We are committed to creating a long-term mentoring relationship for everyone who attends an event. That is why you are holding this devotional book in your hands. As you flip through these pages you will see that there devotionals with corresponding

questions. Each devotional is meant to solidify the teaching of the event by encouraging and challenging you, as well as helping to stimulate discussion through thought provoking questions, verses and quotes.

| *Who writes the devotionals?*

Christian men from around the world have written these devotionals and have overcome real issues in their life through God's grace, goodness, mercy and love. We hope and pray that their testimonies and stories inspire, challenge and point you to Christ.

| *What are RMPP connect groups?*

RMPP connect groups are a safe place for men to pursue both purity and wholeness within an environment of peer support and encouragement. The journey to greater purity and wholeness is a journey that involves inviting other men to walk alongside of you. It is a place where you can share your prayer requests, victories, and struggles and where you can be heard, prayed for and challenged to grow in all areas of life. A connect group is designed to be a support system for you for as long as you want.

During your time in a connect group you will be:

***Challenged*:** You will be challenged to grow in your love for Biblical truth. The men in your group will challenge you to grow in your knowledge and application of God's Word thereby enabling you to stand firm in the midst of life's trials.

***Encouraged*:** You will be encouraged to persevere when life, work, and numerous responsibilities may seem overwhelming. The men in your group will support you through prayer, encouragement and a listening ear.

***Inspired*:** You will be inspired to pursue greater spiritual growth and Christ-likeness. While pursuing Christ-likeness may not always be easy, it will also be worth it. The men in your group will be there to inspire you on that journey.

***Accountable*:** The men in your group, as well as your group leader, will support you and hold you accountable as you pursue greater freedom and victory. Be assured that whatever you share in your group will be strictly confidential.

| *When are the events held?*

RMPP events are held online 4x a year in February, May, August, and November.

| *Who can attend?*

RMPP events are open to all men worldwide.

| *What about privacy?*

Because of the sensitive nature of RMPP events, video or audio recording by participants is not allowed. Also, details of personal testimonies are not to be published via email, social media, or in any other form. Thank you for contributing to a safe and secure environment that helps build honesty and vulnerability.

| *Who started RMPP?*

Real Men Pursuing Purity was founded in 2014 and is an initiative of The MST Project.

MEET THE TEAM

THE MST GLOBAL BOARD

Christian Lenty is the founder and director of The MST Project, a ministry that seeks to mentor men into a pursuit of sexual purity, spiritual wholeness, and Christlike maturity. Christian has lived in Thailand for over 21 years and resides in Bangkok with his wife.

Rex DeKoning is the 60-year old husband and father of a large family. A former nurse and pastor, he now works in Thailand with New Counseling Service as a counselor. Rex has experienced great healing of addictive behaviors after he confessed everything and began to live an accountable life. Rex is highly motivated to inspire other men to seek out a mentor, as it has helped him to walk freely, build honesty and vulnerability.

Nick Chilver is married and is part of a blended family containing 6 children. He is grateful for the people God has brought into his life and across his path. And as he continues to learn to better reflect Him, it is his prayer that God will grant

him the privilege of helping others on the path to freedom and into the Light. He resides in Thailand with his wife.

Mike B. Wood is married to his wonderful wife of 28 years. He is a Pastoral Counselor in the area of sexual recovery therapy. He is a man in process, passionate about bringing men together to share life together. This is where we study God's Word together and share the challenges we face. This inspires us to accept what God has freely given us: His love, mercy, grace and acceptance. He and his wife have lived in Thailand for 18 years.

Steve Odera has been happily married to Liz for the last 43 years and they have two wonderful adult children. After serving as a pastor in Bangkok, Thailand, for seven years, Steve returned to his native Kenya in 2023, where he and Liz are involved in the family enrichment ministry – their sweet spot - in their local church.

EVENT DATES AND RESOURCES

WE'RE HERE TO HELP

| *2025 Event Dates and Zoom ID*

Mark your calendars, plan to attend, and invite a friend to one or all of the events below.

Event 44: February 22
Event 45: May 17
Event 46: August 16
Event 47: November 15
Zoom ID for all events: 561 433 8821

| *The Pursuit of Purity*

The book, The Pursuit of Purity, is meant to transform the way you think and live, putting you on a lifetime path of purity and wholeness leading to consistent victory.

***W*:** themstproject.com/pathway-to-purity
***E*:** hello@themstproject.com

THANK YOU

| *With Gratitude*

We would like say thank you to the following for their contribution to RMPP.

Financial Donors

Thank you for generously providing funding that allows for RMPP events, seminars, and translation of materials.

Devotional Authors

Thank you for writing devotionals that inspire, encourage and challenge each of us to pursue greater sexual purity, spiritual wholeness and Christlike maturity.

| *Scriptural Oversight Team*

RMPP has a Scriptural Oversight Team consisting of several pastors from local churches that review all devotionals for theological integrity.

CONNECT GROUPS

RMPP connect groups are a safe place for men to pursue sexual purity, spiritual wholeness, and Christlike maturity within an environment of peer support, encouragement, and accountability.

Connect groups are held worldwide on a weekly basis. To inquire about joining a group or to find out more information please email **hello@themstproject.com**.

If you are interested in starting an RMPP connect group at your church, men's ministry, Bible study, college group, etc., please contact us. We'd love to support you and have the resources to help you.

JOIN ONE
TODAY!

NOVEMBER 2024