Mom2Mom
Discontentment and Self-Pity
TEACHER Notes

I. ((click)) **A biblical description of discontentment is "covetousness".**

Defining Discontent (http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/discontent?s=)

- Not satisfied with what one is or has
- Wanting more or different, a restless desire or craving for something one does not have

A. ((click)) **Covetousness is the inordinate and sinful desire to have the things that we are convinced will satisfy us or make us happy**.

We are often convinced that we know what will make us happy, and consequently we believe that God is a hoarder who keeps from us the things that will truly satisfy us. God, the omniscient, loving, and kind Father, knows better than we what will make us happy, and he knows exactly how much of those good things we can handle without becoming sinful.

Luke 12:15 And he said to them, "Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

I Timothy 6:10 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.

B. ((click)) **The Bible makes it clear that the love of temporal pleasures will damage us.**

God warns us to guard against covetousness, because the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. God says that it is more important to be content with what we have, most importantly Jesus, who will never desert us or forsake us.

Heb 13:5 5 Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,"

II. ((click)) **The biblical description of self-pity is "lover of self."**

Defining Self-Pity (http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/self-pity?s=t)

- The act or state of pitying oneself, especially in an exaggerated or self-indulgent manner

- Thinking sympathetically or sorrowfully about your own suffering, distress, or misfortune, often leading you to find relief or aid from your distress

A. ((click)) **Being a lover of self leads to boasting, arrogance, and lack of self-control.**

2 Tim 3:1-5 But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. 2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, 4 treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these.

I John 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

B. ((click)) **A self-focused person will hate hard things and complain a lot.** Scripture says that God uses suffering to accomplish his good in our lives and to shine His glory. A person with a self-focus will feel sorrow for themselves when they have to go through hard things, but God tells us to think otherwise about suffering.

Deut 8:2-3 2 You shall remember all the way which the Lord your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. 3 He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord.

III. ((click)) **We can learn to be content no matter what our circumstances are like.**

A. ((click)) **God has already provided all that we need to glorify and enjoy Him, and we don't need anything more.** Most importantly he has given us Jesus, who will never leave us or forsake us.

Heb 13:5 5 Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,"

2 Cor 9:8 8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed;

Psalm 23:1 The Lord is my shepherd. I lack nothing.

B. ((click)) **Contentment comes from seeing and believing that the only way to have true satisfaction is from building a life around what can never be taken away or destroyed**.

Matthew 6:19-21 19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; 21 for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

C. ((click)) **Contentment willingly submits to God's wise and loving sovereignty in every life condition.**

Job 1:20-22 Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped. 21 He said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." 22 Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God.

IV. ((click)) **We can learn to be thankful stewards in all circumstances.**

A. ((click)) **Contentment allows us to adjust our own desires to fit God's purpose and conditions.** Self-Pity is a significant form of complaining and arguing. When you feel sorry that you are being forced to endure suffering or discomfort, you are arguing with God that what life conditions he has given you are not good. Self-Pity charges God with neglect and mistreatment and convicts him of unlovingly hoarding what you really need for success and happiness in life.

Phil 4:11-13 Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. 12 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. I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength.

James 1:2-5 2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. 4 And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

B. ((click)) **We have to learn how to be content.** If that is true, then we can assume that our natural (sinful) state is to be one of complaining and pessimism.

*Phil 4:11-12 11 Not that I speak from want, for **I have learned to be content** in whatever circumstances I am. 12 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.*

C. ((click)) **We are stewards of all that God has given us to use during our time on earth.** Contentment sees how to use the good gifts in this world without becoming obsessed with them. But those possessions are simply tools, used to accomplish his purposes while we are on earth, and one day we will answer to God for how we used all that he entrusted to us.

I John 2:15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

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 16:10-13 10 "One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. 11 If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? 12 And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? 13 No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money."

I Corinthians 4:2 2 Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.

Optional Memory Verse

Phil 4:11 Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.

((click)) **Homework**

Read The Freedom of Self-Forgetfuless by Timothy Keller

((click))**Table Discussion Questions**

1. How does discontentment lead to covetousness?
2. How does self-pity lead to complaining?
3. How does God's provision for us (especially Jesus) help us be content?
4. Why is it dangerous to build our lives around what can be taken from us or destroyed?
5. How does trusting in God's sovereignty help prevent discontent and self-pity?
6. How do you learn to be content?
7. How does Biblical stewardship affect our tendency to be discontent and pity ourselves?

Table Time Prayer Request Question:

In what specific ways can we ask Jesus to help you grow in contentment?

((click)) **Large Group Discussion Question**

Table time discussion questions 3 and 4 will be used for large group discussion.