

The Secret of Contentment

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Preacher: Don Coleman

[0 : 00] Well, on this first Sunday of 2015, I want us to look at the Psalms.

! I mentioned this if you were here last Sunday night, that last Sunday night, this Sunday! and tonight we're going to be looking at the Psalms. Then I'll be out next week and then when I get back, we'll get back to Luke on Sunday morning, Judges on Sunday night, and if you are here on Wednesday, and you should be if you're not doing something else with Awana and such, then on Wednesday we'll get back to Ephesians.

And for now, I want us to look at the Psalms and it being the beginning of a new year and look to the Psalms for some counsel on how to live out this new year.

We always need that, don't we? And not just at the beginning of it, we need it all the way through. And of course, the counsel that we need is in God's Word.

God has given that to us and so we need to take counsel as we look at His Word. And so, I want you to turn to a very familiar Psalm. I think, without any argument, the most familiar Psalm, and that would be Psalm 23.

[1 : 32] So turn to Psalm 23 with me, would you? And I'm going to read the entire Psalm. Psalm 23 with me, verse 1 and 2, but primarily verse 2.

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside the still waters.

He restores my soul. He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me.

Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a place before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil.

My cup runs over. Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

[2 : 42] Tremendous Psalm. And I don't think there's ever been a time that I have read Psalm 23 that I haven't been just impressed with it. And I guess that's why it is perhaps the most famous Psalm in the book of Psalms.

This one written, of course, by David. And it's just sweet. It's wonderful. It's full of encouragement. It's also full of counsel.

And that's going to be our focus here this morning. So my subject is going to be from this single verse, verse 2.

Not really verses 1 and 2, but primarily verse 2. Found in this most familiar of all the Psalms. And the subject is the secret to contentment.

Contentment. Did you find contentment in that verse? There's the secret to contentment. In one single verse in the Bible. Of course, I'm going to bring into play other verses that we find in other places in Scripture that are on the same subject that helps support what David is saying to us in this one verse.

[4 : 00] But I say to you that we have here the secret to contentment. To be really content. Contentment. Now, we've just experienced the Christmas holidays.

Just came out of that. And on into the New Year kind of festivities, if you had some of those. But coming out of the Christmas holidays, I think we would have to admit that many people were not content with it.

Not content. I'm not just talking about the kids who didn't get everything they put on their list. All right? I'm talking about adults as well. We've come out of the season and quite often many people come out of that very joyous season.

That time of giving gifts and getting gifts and celebrating and family gatherings and the food and all those things. And still come out of that time discontent.

And we have just finished the year 2014. We've kind of closed the book on it in a sense. And honestly, many people were not content with it.

[5 : 06] Now, many were, of course. You might be numbered among them. I hope that you were. And many people are not content with it. They didn't reach all of their goals, perhaps. Or didn't make as much money as they wanted to make.

Or they worked too much. Or maybe didn't work enough. And came out of the year experiencing perhaps too many problems, troubles, losses, heartaches, and on and on.

Things, overall, just to sum it up, maybe for many, things just did not work out the way they hoped. And so they came out of the year discontent. So it came out of Christmas without being content and finishing the year 2014 without content.

And for many, life itself has never made them content. You ever met anybody like that? I hope you don't look in a mirror and see one. Life itself is just, you know, I look back on it and never have really reached a place of contentment.

Too many regrets. Too many losses. Too many things I have not realized. And so forth. Now, some of you here will say, but now, Pastor, you're not talking about me.

[6 : 26] I am content. I have everything a person could ever want and more. I mean, I have plenty of food, plenty of clothes. I have plenty of money in the bank. I have a nice house and two cars in the garage.

And I have a great family. And I have health on top of all of that. I have everything a person could ever want and more. Maybe that would be your testimony here this morning.

And I would say, well, great. Good. And you ought to thank the Lord for that. Let me ask you something. What if in 2015 you lose some of that?

You see, what we've done is we've just defined contentment based upon the things we have and the things that we've accumulated and the things that we enjoy. But what if in 2015 you lose some of that?

It could happen. I would say it will happen to many. Perhaps you lose your job in 2015. I hope that doesn't happen to you.

[7 : 28] That would be a terrible thing. But what if you did? And maybe lose your home. Maybe lose your health. Maybe a family member. That would be very likely in 2015 that many of us would have losses such as that in our family.

What if you lose some or all of what makes you content? How you would define contentment?

I heard a story about a certain king. And this king was suffering a strange kind of mysterious illness. And so he got together all of his wizards and magicians and such, his counselors, and they came up with the solution.

They advised the king that all he had to do to be cured was to wear the shirt of a truly contented man. That's kind of strange, strange advice.

Wear the shirt of a truly contented man. And well, the king sent out all of his servants to scour his kingdom. And they looked high and low. And they kept looking for months upon months.

[8 : 38] They were looking for the truly contented man. And finally, after several months of searching, they found him. Perhaps the only one in the entire kingdom. The only truly contented man.

And they found him. And to their utter amazement, he did not even own a shirt. What is the basis of your contentment?

How do we really get to thinking about it? I don't think that we do think about it as we ought to.

What's the basis of it for you? What is it that has to happen? What is it you have to have in order to be truly content?

It's something to think about. And so as you look forward to 2015, what will it take this year to bring you contentment?

The story has been told about a certain Puritan minister who sat down to eat his supper. And he was a very poor minister. And he looked down at the table and he saw that he only had a small piece of moldy bread and a glass of water.

[9 : 49] And that was it. That's all he had. And as he looked down at this meager amount of food on the table, he said to himself, What? All this and Jesus too?

Think about that. And that kind of gives us an indication where we really ought to be going in our thinking when it comes to the true source of contentment.

And you think about that poor Puritan minister and, you know, that's just so outside and beyond our world that it would be very difficult, maybe even impossible for us to get our minds to thinking that way.

But we have just read the writings of one man who thought that way. David. King David. King David understood the secret of contentment. He said, The Lord is my shepherd.

I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside the still waters.

[10:59] And it's meant to be a picture of peaceful contentment. To lie down in the green pastures.

To walk beside the still or literally quiet waters. I have a book in my library that was given to me.

I think it was my grandmother who gave it to me years and years ago. Actually, it was given to me.

It belonged to my grandmother. And after she died, many of her books were given to me.

And the book was written by a man by the name of Philip Keller. And some of you will, I think, be familiar with this book. It's become quite a classic over the years.

And it is entitled, The Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23. Any of you ever heard of that book? You ought to get it. Read it. A shepherd looks at Psalm 23.

[11:53] And Philip Keller, who was himself a shepherd, he wrote that getting sheep to lie down and to rest, to be quiet, was a pretty difficult thing to accomplish.

And he discovered over the years that sheep will not lie down until certain conditions are met. Until they're just right. Three conditions, as a matter of fact.

First of all, the sheep must feel safe before they will lie down. Secondly, the sheep must be full.

They must be satisfied in their bellies.

They must be full. And then third, they must just kind of have an overall sense of contentment, feeling of contentment. They must be content. Not stressed out about anything.

And so those three conditions must be met, according to Philip Keller, before he can get the sheep to lie down. Now, taking what Keller said about sheep, you can see the parallel between that and what David wrote here in the second verse, really the first and second verses, of Psalm 23.

[13:05] And we could reduce the secret to contentment down to three words. First of all, security. Security. The sheep will not lie down until they feel safe.

Secondly, sufficiency. Sufficiency. The sheep will not lie down until he's full. And then third and finally, serenity. Serenity.

The sheep will not lie down until the sheep feels good, content. A serenity. So security and sufficiency and serenity.

So first of all, contentment is found in the security the sheep have in the shepherd.

The security the sheep have in the shepherd. And when I speak of sheep, I'm speaking of you and me. The security that we have in our shepherd.

[14:06] Now, pay close attention, though really it's very obvious. David said what? He said, he makes me to lie down in green pastures. He, with a capital H, he leads me beside the still waters.

Now, who is he? Well, he's already named him. In verse 1 of the psalm, the Lord is my shepherd. And he uses two words, two names or two descriptions.

The Lord, which is a name. And a description of him. That is, a description as to his function, as to his work, his purpose, his place in our lives.

And that is shepherd. Lord, shepherd. The Lord, shepherd. Now, the word Lord is in all capital letters, if you've noticed that in your Bibles. And that points to a certain Hebrew word that has been translated there.

And that is the word Yahweh, which is the most sacred name for God. So, what is David saying?

David is saying that my shepherd, that is the one who cares for me, the one who takes care of me, the one who's responsible for my life as one of his sheep.

[15:18] My shepherd is none other than Yahweh God himself. That's what David is saying. And really, it is a simple matter to prove from the New Testament that Jesus is the Yahweh of the Old Testament.

Jesus is our Yahweh shepherd. In fact, Jesus said in John chapter 10, I am the good shepherd. So, Jesus is the shepherd.

Now, what kind of shepherd is he? And when we discover what kind of shepherd he is, and really, we've already discovered it. I'm sure you have. When we realize and we consider what kind of

shepherd Jesus is to us, then we will find the security that we need.

And that security is the secret to contentment. What kind of shepherd is our shepherd, Yahweh's shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ? Well, in the first place, he's a compassionate shepherd.

He's a compassionate shepherd. Do you know that about Jesus? That he has compassion for you? That he has compassion for you, his sheep.

[16:26] He is the compassionate shepherd. The Bible tells us in Matthew 9, 35, that Jesus went about all the cities and the villages teaching, preaching, healing.

We know how he conducted his ministry. And he went throughout all the villages doing such. And the Bible says in this passage, but when he saw the multitudes, he was, the Bible says, moved with compassion.

He was moved with compassion for them, the multitudes. And why? Well, because, it says, they were weary and scattered and like sheep having no shepherd.

Now, we're familiar with that passage. He was moved with compassion. And we could expand upon that. Jesus saw that they were running from God. That they were without God.

They were frantic about everything. And they were fainting in life. And they were falling apart. And they were failing God. And they were full of stress.

[17:26] In short, they were discontent. In the most paramount way. In a spiritual sense. And the Bible says he was moved with compassion for them.

Now, it was not just simply kind of experiencing some emotion. You know, got a little emotional. No, it's much more than that.

It was not that he was just feeling a little discomfort. Because he looked at them and, you know, and he was feeling uncomfortable. Because of their state of being. No, it's much, much more than that.

The words moved with compassion are translation of a single word in the Greek text. It's splagnizomai. You're going to forget that word. But it means that he was moved in his bowels.

Now, that's not a very pleasant word. I understand we've dealt with this word before. But we find it other places in Scripture. He was moved down here in his guts. That's probably not a very pleasant word either.

[18:34] But that's what the word points to. And the reason is because to the Jewish mindset, the place where feeling, emotion, where love, where compassion was felt, was down deep inside.

And we can understand that. I mean, we feel that ourselves. We have pity towards someone. We have love towards someone. We have compassion. We grieve. All these emotions are felt, are experienced, deep down inside of our bowels, our guts.

And so, literally, the Bible means that Jesus was convulsing inside. convulsing deep down inside as he looked upon the people and saw that they were shepherdless.

A compassionate Jesus. Now, the wonderful thing is that in Jesus, we have a shepherd. We're not shepherdless. We have Jesus as our shepherd.

So, what should we do? Lie down. That is, don't be all stressed out. Be content. Lie down. Be content.

[19:46] Be quiet. We have a shepherd who is deeply, deeply concerned for us and compassionate towards us, his beloved sheep.

And so, we are secure in him. It's a simple, simple concept from God's Word. He's not only a compassionate shepherd, but he is also what I would call a carrying shepherd.

Now, he's a carrying shepherd, but I mean carrying shepherd. And I want you to take your Bibles and look at a very interesting passage, an awesome passage of Scripture out of the book of Isaiah. In Isaiah chapter 40, and I'm going to start reading with verse 8, but I want us to look really all the way down to verse 11, when I end with verse 11, but just listen to these words.

Isaiah chapter 40, and starting with verse 8, the grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of our God stands forever. So, we can know that what comes after, we can bank on it.

[20:50] And not just what comes after this verse, but everything from cover to cover. It stands forever. O Zion, you who bring good tidings, get up into the high mountain, O Jerusalem.

You who bring good tidings, lift up your voice with strength. Lift it up. Be not afraid. Say to the cities of Judah, Behold your God. Behold, the Lord God shall come with a strong hand, and His arms shall rule for Him.

Behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him. Now, verse 11. He will feed His flock like a shepherd. He will gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead

those who are with young.

Now, let me ask you something. Have you ever sensed that Jesus, our shepherd, was carrying you? Have you ever been to that place?

He may be there right now. Maybe He's been carrying you for quite a while, and for whatever reason. Have you ever sensed that, ever known that, ever felt that, ever experienced that, that my shepherd, my Lord, my Jesus, in this time of my life, He's carrying me.

[22 : 12] Like a shepherd would carry His sheep. And I would ask this question, have you ever trusted Him to carry you? You say, well, I can make it on my own.

You say, that's our problem. We think, you know, we're self-sufficient. And yeah, things are tough, but I'll make it. I'll do it. I'll stand on my own two feet.

When you really need to let Him carry you. Have you ever trusted Him to just carry you when you could not make it on your own? I don't mean that we could ever live a moment without Jesus.

God has given us strength at times where we can walk on our own just like the sheep can walk on their own, guided by the shepherd. Sometimes the sheep have to be carried.

Sometimes you and I have to be carried. Have you ever trusted Him for that? This is secret to contentment. And that is our security.

[23 : 11] We're secure in our shepherd. He's compassionate. And He carries us. And then also He's courageous. He's a courageous shepherd.

Courageous shepherd. John chapter 11 records the story of Lazarus. And you know the story quite well. I'm not talking about the Lazarus and the rich man. I'm talking about the story of Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, who were beloved friends of Jesus, who lived in Bethany.

And you remember the story. Lazarus had become very, very sick. And they sent a note to Jesus.

And really effectively, He had died even before the note got to Jesus.

Of course, nobody knew that but Jesus. And you know the story. And so then Jesus... Remember, Jesus was in Galilee at the time when He received the word about Lazarus.

But Lazarus was in Bethany of Judea. That's just right outside of Jerusalem. And Jesus said to His disciples, Let's go to Judea. Let's go to where Lazarus is.

[24 : 15] And His disciples protested. Do you remember? They protested. In fact, they said, Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone you there. And are you going there again?

They were saying, Jesus, don't go to Jerusalem. Oh no, not there. Because they will kill you there. And what did Jesus do?

He went there. He went there. In fact, Luke 9, 51 says this very interesting thing about Jesus. Jesus set His face to go to Jerusalem.

That means He was resolute. He was courageous. He was going to the cross. He set His face to go to Jerusalem. A courageous shepherd. He's courageous for us. And John chapter 10, I quoted part of John chapter 10 a moment ago, but it's usually called the great, excuse me, the good shepherd chapter.

And for good reason, because it's all about the good shepherd. And in verse 7, Jesus said, I am the door of the sheep. You remember that? I'm the door of the sheep.

[25 : 26] And then a little bit later, just a few verses later, in verse 11, He said what I quoted a moment ago, I am the good shepherd. Now these are two of the several great I am passages that John gives us in his gospel.

I am the door of the sheep. I am the good shepherd. Now it's interesting that Jesus is both the good shepherd or the shepherd of the sheep.

He's the shepherd of the sheep. He's our shepherd. He's not only that, but He's also the door of the sheep. Now what does He mean by that? I mean, in the first place, how can He be both?

But more importantly, what does He mean by the door of the sheep? And this is important to understand. During Bible times, and I would suppose in many places in the world, this is still done today, but in Bible times, the shepherd would build an enclosure for his sheep, and it was called the sheep fold.

He would build it usually out of rock and be high enough so the sheep couldn't get out and no wild animals could get in, and it was the sheep fold. Sometimes it was a circle, sometimes a square, and it would have an opening, just one opening on one side of it.

[26 : 38] And at night, of course, the shepherd then would lead his sheep into the sheep fold to bed them down for the night, and he would bring them through that opening, which was just

effectively wide enough for one sheep at a time to enter in.

And the shepherd would count all of his sheep, make sure they were all in for the night, and then he would also examine them to see if any of them were injured, and he could minister to them to see if they had any other problems.

So he brought all the sheep into the fold, and then when they were all in, bedded down for the night, the shepherd would lie down in that opening.

The shepherd became the door, the door to the sheep. Nobody got in, nobody got out, unless the shepherd knew it, gave permission, let it happen.

The shepherd is the door. And so what is Jesus saying to us? He's saying, I'm the door of my sheep. I'm the door. Nothing can happen to my sheep unless I give permission, and nothing can, or nobody can get to my sheep without going through me.

[27 : 52] He is our courageous shepherd. We're secure in him. And knowing this fact is the secret to contentment. We find contentment when we realize the security the sheep have in their shepherd.

Second, contentment is found in the sufficiency. The sufficiency the sheep have in the shepherd.

Now what did David say? Did he say, he makes me lie down in brown, dried pastures? Did he say, he leads me beside the polluted streams or the dried up creek beds?

He didn't say that, did he? No, he said, the Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want for anything. He makes me lie down in green pastures.

He leads me beside the still waters. Among other things, the idea is, all you need and all I need, we find in our relationship with the shepherd, with the Lord Jesus Christ.

[29 : 05] Now just ask yourself this question, why am I not content some of the time? Maybe you'd have to say most of the time. I don't know. Why am I not content? And the answer is, basically, we're worried about not getting all we think we need.

And added to that, what we think we want and should want. But what did Jesus say? Jesus said in Matthew 6, 25, do not worry 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 meat and body than raiment and the body more than raiment? That's clothing. He said, look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap.

That is, they don't plant, they don't harvest and gather their harvest into barns. Yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not more?

Are you not of more value than they? Of course we are. Jesus said in Matthew 4, in verse 4, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

[30 : 21] Now we all know we need bread. But what is the bread that we really need? More than any other of this world's breads. We need every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

We need His word. Jesus said in Matthew 5, in verse 6, blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled.

That is, satisfied. And what is the, does the word blessed mean? It means to be satisfied, to be content. You see, this is what David is getting at.

The green pastures of His word, of God's word. It's the still waters of His spirit, God's spirit. And so do you know why so many people in the world today are discontent?

They're seeking for happiness rather than seeking for God, for His person, for His word.

[31 : 24] Someone has said that happiness is never found when you're looking for it. Happiness is something you stumble over when you're on your way to seeking God. Interesting.

I need to add something here. We need to understand that God has planned for some unhappiness to come into our lives. And why? So that we could discover that our sufficiency is not in us and not in this world.

Our sufficiency is in Him. And let me just point out something I think is kind of interesting. In Genesis chapter 3 verse 17, God said to Adam and Eve after they had sinned and after they had been expelled out of the garden, God said to them, cursed is the ground for your sake.

Now that could either mean it's cursed because of what you did and there is some sense of that. or it could also mean that I've cursed the ground because there's a certain amount of that that will be good for you.

It'll be good for you. Do you understand? He said for your sake, not for your misery, but for your sake, cursed is the ground. He said thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you.

[32 : 45] And so here's the idea. Sometimes life is loaded with thorns and thistles. And it's for a reason. And it's for a good reason many times because God wants your path to have some thorns and thistles in it in order to say to you that, you know, there's something wrong down there in that world in which you're living.

It's never going to satisfy you. There are going to be troubles. And if you think that you're going to get your satisfaction from the things of this world, you're mistaken.

And I've sent the thorns and thistles to remind you of that because your only satisfaction is in a relationship with me through Jesus Christ. I tell you, there's a ministry, I think, a ministry lesson here for those of us in ministry and really for all of us believers because, you know, sometimes we work a little bit too hard to deliver people from all of their thorns and thistles.

You say, how could that be possible? Well, you see, the problem is some people need some thorns and thistles. In fact, we all do from time to time.

And if all the thorns and thistles were removed from our lives, we would be in big trouble. And then we get to thinking that all of our contentment contentment and sufficiency is in the things of this world.

[34 : 10] Some people need to suffer. We all need to suffer from time to time. Suffering is God's way of bringing people to the end of themselves when they're all wrapped up in themselves and to then draw them to God and to Christ who is our only sufficiency.

Suffering reminds us of our need for God to show us that our sufficiency is in the shepherd of our souls, the Lord Jesus Christ. All right, so we're talking about the secret to contentment.

Contentment is found in the security the sheep have in the shepherd. Contentment is found in the sufficiency the sheep have in the shepherd. And then finally, one more, contentment is found in the serenity the sheep have in the shepherd.

And you can just get this from these words. Lie down. Still were quiet waters.

Remember what Philip Keller said about sheep. He said, sheep will not lie down until their safety is secure. That's security. Sheep will not lie down until their hunger is satisfied.

[35 : 27] That's sufficiency. And the sheep will not lie down until they are overall content. That's serenity. Serenity.

There's not a whole lot of that in our world. Serenity. You know, driving in Bartlesville has become quite a challenge of late.

I just think, I just have noticed a marked difference really actually since I moved here. I don't know why that is. I mean, how much traffic there is.

I used to think that it was Memphis. You know, we came from Memphis. And I used to think that I had escaped all of that when I moved here to Bartlesville. I'm telling you, I dread having to make a left-hand turn on to Highway 75.

I just dread it. Well, I don't. I'd almost rather turn right and go all the way around the world to get to my destination than to have to make a left-hand turn on to Highway 75, Washington Boulevard.

[36 : 34] I mean, there's so much traffic and there's so many people and they're all in a hurry and they're trying to get somewhere and I guess I'm one of them. I heard about a fighter jet that was traveling so fast that when the pilot shot his rocket, he shot himself down.

And there are a whole lot of people who are just like that pilot, aren't there? I mean, they are so busy with life that they shoot themselves down. Too busy.

They don't have time to be quiet. No time to be still. No time to spend with God. Have you ever heard someone quote, and I say quote, quote, the verse, idleness is the devil's workshop as if somehow it were in the Bible, but it's not in the Bible.

I guess it's right next to the verse that says cleanliness is next to godliness. You'll find both of those in, I think, 1 Hezekiah. The simple fact is it's not a sin to be idle sometimes.

Now, we've forgotten about that. It's not a sin to be still, to be quiet. In fact, it may be a sin not to be.

[37 : 53] Not to be idle sometimes and not to be quiet. Isaiah chapter 30, verse 15, for example, for thus says the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, in returning and rest you will be saved.

In quietness quietness and in confidence shall be your strength. Do you know what the sheep are doing when they are lying down in the green pasture?

Well, you say they're eating the grass. No, they're not. They've already eaten the grass. While they're lying down, they're chewing the cud.

They're really chewing what they've already eaten. Sheep have a second stomach, you know, and so then when they eat that sweet grass, it goes to the second stomach and then when they lie down, the shepherd says lie down and digest what you have.

He doesn't actually say that but he makes them lie down. Then they kind of bring that up. You know, they bring it up and start chewing on it again. That sweet grass is chewing the cud and it's at that time that the sheep are getting all of the nutrients out of that grass and the sheep are then growing the most effectively during that time and they're putting on the fat and putting on the wool and they're being the most productive of sheep.

[39 : 14] During that time they're lying down and chewing on the cud. That quiet time, that serene time. Now, if the green pasture represents for us God's Word, then symbolically, what is the sheep doing when they are chewing the cud?

They're meditating. That's symbolic of meditation for us. Meditating upon the Word of God. And you'll find the admonition of Scripture to meditate upon God's Word all throughout the Bible and especially in the Psalms.

David wrote in Psalm 1 in his law, that's just simply the Word of God, he meditates day and night.

He's talking about the upright man, the righteous man. He does what?

He meditates upon God's Word day and night. David wrote in Psalm 19, Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.

David wrote in Psalm 104, My meditation of Him shall be sweet. It will be, I will be glad in the Lord.

In Psalm 119, verse 15, I will meditate on your precepts.

[40 : 31] That's another word for His Word. I will meditate upon your precepts and have respect for your ways and on and on and on we could go. Now, I fear that we read too little of God's Word in the first place, but we certainly spend too little time meditating upon God's Word, chewing the cud, thinking about it and taking it all in and rethinking it and it's chewing the cud.

It's lying down in the green pastures of His Word. It's walking beside the still waters to get quiet and to get still and think about what God has said.

That's the secret to contentment. Elizabeth Elliot told a story about a little child who was very ill, sick with an incurable disease.

As a matter of fact, everything was hopeless really from man's perspective, from the world's perspective. She was going to die. There was nothing anybody could do about it.

But this little girl had learned something about contentment. She had sought God's Word for contentment and she had learned to recite the first part of the first, this first verse of Psalm 23.

[41 : 57] And she did so using her fingers on one hand, her five fingers. And so she would start with her little pinky and then she would grab each finger as she said each of the words, The Lord is my shepherd.

And she would hold on to her thumb. Shepherd. And one morning after a long hard fight with her illness, they found her dead in her bed.

And she was clasping her thumb. She had a smile, kind of a look of tranquility in her face and she was holding tight to the thumb of her other hand.

The shepherd. The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside the quiet waters. What an example of contentment all the way to the end.

[43 : 15] Thank you.