

We're going to start with a game today: the "Gut Level Honesty Game." After each statement, check the box if it applies to you. Begin each with, "I'm not very satisfied with": my house or car , my current financial picture , my body or the way I look , my job , the way that I've been living my life . If you checked most, or all, of the boxes then be assured that you're NOT alone!

As a matter of fact, in 1965, there was a guy that felt a lot like you might today. He sat down and wrote the song, "I Can't Get No Satisfaction." You'd think that in the over 45-year period since, that the author, Mick Jagger, would've gotten some kind of satisfaction, right? No... the brother is 68 this month and he's still putting on his tight pants, his false teeth, and rockin' the world with his anthem. He still can't get no satisfaction! Believe it or not, this song by the Rolling Stones is a soundtrack for the book of Ecclesiastes, King Solomon's 'private journal' of sorts.

In a nutshell: King Solomon was full of purpose, had a plan, and was willing to do whatever God asked him to do... until one day when he just 'got in his car and drove away' from God. Wandering through life lost, Solomon drove through life on this 40-year journey just taste-testing life trying to find satisfaction and meaning in it.

His first taste-test was knowledge, greatness, power and security. The Bible says that people came from all over the surrounding countries just to hear the wisdom and see the power of King Solomon, and none of it satisfied. So King Solomon's next taste-test was all about the money—

possessions and status. He was the most powerful guy in the entire world and still, absolutely none of it satisfied. And so his third and final taste-test was all about the women and the wine—pleasure and entertainment. He tried it one night, thought that tasted pretty good, and tried it again. Then, 40 years later, he took his last drink of that, wadded up the cup and concluded that it didn't satisfy either. When all was said and done, Solomon had searched for the meaning of life for over 40 years!

Are you satisfied? Would you be satisfied with more? We look at King Solomon and say we'd never do that! I'd never go pursue satisfaction with power, money or sex—I'm beyond that. But, the reality is that we probably do it every single day. We don't do it in this huge type of a way; but, we play the taste-test game in small drinks. Maybe you're trying out religion to satisfy you, a new relationship, or a new job. Perhaps you keep telling yourself that if you could just acquire 'this' or achieve 'that' then you'd be satisfied. If so, like Solomon, one day you'll wake up, look around at your life, and just see empty cup after cup after cup—all these things that you've taste-tested only to find out it's all meaningless. None of it satisfies.

So, what is it for you? What's the cup that you continue to drink from day after day and week after week hoping it'll satisfy? King Solomon had it all, but still sought more. What he found is that the problem with having everything in the world is, well, having everything in the world! Solomon discovered that, even though he tried and he tried, he couldn't get no satisfaction. His ultimate conclusion was that following God and His commandments is all that matters—all else is meaningless.

***I can't get no satisfaction  
I can't get no satisfaction  
'Cause I try and I try  
and I try and I try  
I can't get no, I can't get no  
~Mick Jagger, Rolling Stones***

## Monday — Chasing Knowledge

**Today's Big Point:** Solomon's gift to us was that his own wasted life became the ultimate object lesson for listening to God rather than our own wisdom.

### **Intelligence is not the same as wisdom!**

A minister, a Boy Scout, and a computer expert were the passengers on a small plane. The pilot came out of the cockpit and said the plane was going down, but there were only three parachutes and four people. The pilot added, "I need one of them because I have a wife and three small children." So he took one and jumped. The computer whiz said, "I should have one of the parachutes because I am the smartest man in the world and everyone needs me." So he took one and jumped. The minister turned to the Boy Scout and with a sad smile said, "You are young and I have lived a rich life, so you take the remaining parachute, and I'll go down with the plane." The Boy Scout said, "Relax, Reverend, the smartest man in the world just picked up my knapsack and jumped out!"

**Fear of the Lord is the  
foundation of true knowledge...**  
Proverbs 1:7 (NLT)

### **READ...What does the Bible say?**

#### **Ecclesiastes 1:13-14,18 (NLT)**

*I devoted myself to search for understanding and to explore by wisdom everything being done under heaven... <sup>14</sup>I observed everything going on under the sun, and really, it is all meaningless—like chasing the wind. <sup>18</sup>The greater my wisdom, the greater my grief. To increase knowledge only increases sorrow.*

#### **James 3:13-15,17 (NLT)**

*If you are wise and understand God's ways, prove it by living an honorable life, doing good works with the humility that comes from wisdom. <sup>14</sup>But if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish ambition in your heart, don't cover up the truth with boasting and lying. <sup>15</sup>For jealousy and selfishness are not God's kind of wisdom... <sup>17</sup>But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere.*

#### **1 Corinthians 1:26-30 (NLT)**

*Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world's eyes or powerful or wealthy when God called you. <sup>27</sup>Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And He chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful. <sup>28</sup>God chose things despised by the world, things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important. <sup>29</sup>As a result, no one can ever boast in the presence of God. <sup>30</sup>God has united you with Christ Jesus. For our benefit God made him to be wisdom itself. Christ made us right with God; he made us pure and holy, and he freed us from sin.*

### **THINK...Find the answers.**

Solomon leaves us wondering if we should even waste our time seeking wisdom. Then we read Paul's and James' words, realizing that it's not wisdom itself that's unfulfilling, but worldly wisdom that leaves us empty. Identify the differences between earthly wisdom and Godly wisdom in both James and 1 Corinthians:

**"I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom and that of those about me seemed insufficient for the day." ~Abraham Lincoln**

In light of what you read in 1 Corinthians 1:30, explain Proverbs 1:7:

## **LIVE...What will you do now?**

James 3:17 paints a picture of what we look like when our wisdom comes from above. When you take a hard look at how you interact with others in your everyday life, where do you think you're pulling wisdom from?

Would those around you say you're fixated on being "right" all the time, or do you patiently plant seeds of truth and love?

Think about where you have trusted in your own knowledge and wisdom and how it failed you. How have you experienced the grief and sorrow Solomon is speaking of by relying on your own knowledge and wisdom?

If real wisdom is the application of the knowledge and freedom contained in God's Word, then what do you think you need to do or change in your life in order to stop leaning on your own understanding?

## **PRAY...God, What do You want me to know & do?**

A very effective way to pray is to pray God's Word. Here's an excerpt from Proverbs 3 that you can personalize and pray: <sup>5</sup>*Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding.* <sup>6</sup>*Seek His will in all you do, and He will show you which path to take.* <sup>7</sup>*Don't be impressed with your own wisdom. Instead, fear the Lord and turn away from evil.* <sup>8</sup>*Then you will have healing for your body and strength for your bones.* (NLT)

\*(Another good one is Paul's "Prayer for Spiritual Wisdom" in Ephesians 1:15-23.)

### **Daily Bible Reading Commentary: Proverbs 25**

**v1** *This collection of 137 proverbs was originated by Solomon and copied into a collection during the reign of King Hezekiah over 200 years later.*

**vv2-3** **"God...kings..."** *The roles of God and the king are compared. God, whose knowledge is above all human knowledge and whose ways are unsearchable, keeps things to Himself because He needs no counsel. On the contrary, kings should seek to know what they must know in order to rule righteously.*

**vv6-7** *In the royal court, as in life, selfishness and pride bring a person down.*

**vv8-10** **"go hastily to court..."** *When conflict arises, the person with a contentious spirit is quick to go to court; but he is better off to talk it over with his neighbor than to expose himself to public shame in court where all will be told.*

**v20** **"vinegar on soda..."** *Pouring vinegar on baking soda produces a reaction like boiling water, or turning tranquility into agitation. So is the effect of singing joyful songs without sympathy to the sorrowful.*

**v26** *The righteous person who sins muddies the water for the wicked that see him and for whom he should serve as an example of righteousness.*

**v27** *Eating honey is like enjoying the sweetness of your own self-glory.*

**v28** **"city broken down..."** *They are exposed and vulnerable to the incursion of evil thoughts and successful temptations.*

## Tuesday — Chasing Pleasure, Possessions, Entertainment

**Today's Big Point:** Chasing the winds of self-gratification will never leave us fulfilled, or make us whole. Instead, God promises us peace and fulfillment when we trust and obey Him.

French author Guy de Maupassant was one of the greatest writers of short stories the world has ever known. He rose from relative obscurity to fame quickly—just what he thought he'd always wanted. His material possessions showed a life of affluence: a yacht in the Mediterranean, a large house on the Norman coast, a luxurious apartment in Paris. It was said that, "critics praised him, men admired him and women worshipped him." He had all the trappings of what the world would call the "fulfilled-dream life." Yet at the height of his fame he went insane, brought on by what those close to him called a "promiscuous lifestyle." On New Year's Day in 1892, he tried to cut his own throat with a letter-opener, and lived out the last few weeks of his life in a private asylum on the French Riviera. He died at the age of 42, but before he went insane he prophetically wrote what was to be his epitaph. Guy de Maupassant wrote, "I have coveted everything and taken pleasure in nothing."

### READ...What does the Bible say?

**Ecclesiastes 2:1,4-8,10-11 (NLT)**

<sup>1</sup>I said to myself, "Come on, let's try pleasure. Let's look for the 'good things' in life." But I found that this, too, was meaningless. <sup>4</sup>I also tried to find meaning by building huge homes for myself and by planting beautiful vineyards. <sup>5</sup>I made gardens and parks, filling them with all kinds of fruit trees. <sup>6</sup>I built reservoirs to collect the water to irrigate my many flourishing groves. <sup>7</sup>I bought slaves, both men and women, and others were born into my household. I also owned large herds and flocks, more than any of the kings who had lived in Jerusalem before me. <sup>8</sup>...I hired wonderful singers, both men and women, and had many beautiful concubines. I had everything a man could desire! <sup>10</sup>Anything I wanted, I would take. I denied myself no pleasure... <sup>11</sup>But as I looked at everything I had worked so hard to accomplish, it was all so meaningless—like chasing the wind. **There was nothing really worthwhile anywhere.**

The seeds that fell among the thorns represent those who hear the message, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the cares and riches and pleasures of this life. And so they never grow into maturity. <sup>15</sup>And the seeds that fell on the good soil represent honest, good-hearted people who hear God's word, cling to it, and patiently produce a huge harvest.

Luke 8:14-15 (NLT)

Once we, too, were foolish and disobedient. We were misled and became slaves to many lusts and pleasures. Our lives were full of evil and envy... <sup>4</sup>But—"When God our Savior revealed his kindness and love, <sup>5</sup>he saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy... Titus 3:3-5 (NLT)

### THINK...Find the answers

Circle each time Solomon uses the pronoun "I" in the Ecclesiastes verses above. What does this indicate about his focus in life?

What did Solomon conclude regarding his pursuit to discover the "good life"?

According to Luke 8, how can chasing the 'winds' of self-gratification limit our spiritual growth?

## **LIVE...What will you do now?**

*When we are spiritually adrift, rather than in the center of God's will, and futile patterns begin to develop in our lives, many things begin to occur. One of them is that we become 'driven' in all of our activities (i.e. pursuing pleasure, possessions, endless entertainment...).*

**Solution:** Remember, only God gives purpose to our lives!

How much of your time do you spend on activities or pursuits each day that might just be meaningless (from an eternal perspective); and, how does that amount of time relate to the amount of time you spend pursuing God?

### **CHALLENGE:**

This week, determine not to focus on what you want. Attempt to live this week with the mindset of how you might bless someone else in the name of Jesus.

Solomon was in charge of building the Temple of the Lord. It took him seven years to build God's house. Solomon spent fourteen years building his own house. What does this say about Solomon? Do you find yourself investing more in your own pleasures and kingdom, than investing in the pleasure of God and His kingdom and work? What can you do to change your focus from you—to the Lord?

## **PRAY...God, What do You want me to know & do?**

Ask God to help you get back on track and rescue you from being spiritually adrift. Lay down your fruitless pursuits and envious ways, and ask Him to fill you instead with His good blessings from above.

### **Daily Bible Reading Commentary: Proverbs 26-27**

**26:1-12** Aspects of natural order that are violated by the behavior of a fool.

**26:2** “**undeserved curse...**” A bird's aimless motion without landing is compared to a fool who utters an undeserved curse – it does not land either.

**26:4-5** “**answer a fool...**” Taken together, these verses teach the appropriate way to answer a fool (an unbeliever who rejects truth). He shouldn't be answered with agreement to his own ideas and presuppositions, or he'll think that he's right; rather, he should be rebuked on the basis of his folly, and shown the truth so he sees how foolish he is.

**26:11** Peter quotes this disgusting proverb in 2 Peter 2:22

**26:17-28** A picturesque discourse on the evil speaking of fools and lazy people, and their harmful effects.

**26:17** “**grabs a dog by the ears...**” The dog was not domesticated in Palestine so to grab any dog was dangerous. Therefore, the aggressor deserved to be bitten.

**26:23** “**like a coating of glaze...**” A cheap coating of silver over a common clay pot hid its commonness and fragility—like deception spoken by evil people.

**27:1** “**boast about tomorrow...**” Fools think they know the future or can affect its outcome, but the future rests with sovereign God.

**27:4** “**jealousy...**” The most uncontrollable sin.

**27:10** Adhere to tried and true friends. The ties of blood may be less reliable than those of genuine friendship.

**27:11** A wise son accredits his father and also helps him in difficulty with appropriate answers. This proverb is true in reverse as well.

**27:17** “**iron sharpens iron...**” The benefits of intellectual discussion encourage joy through a keener mind and the improvement of good character.

## Wednesday — Chasing Power

**Today's Big Point:** *We're doomed to failure if we seek satisfaction by achieving greatness, security, or status. Power is at its best when it is used to serve and lead as Jesus taught.*

*Power. Even the word is seductive. A love of power can separate the most resolute of Christians from the true nature of Christian leadership, which is to serve others. This truth is perhaps most graphically illustrated in the world of politics. Power corrupts, but power itself is not necessarily corrupt. God has given power to the state to restrain evil and maintain order. It's the use of power, whether for personal gain or for the state's ordained function, that is really at issue. Jesus Christ turned conventional views of power upside-down. He not only offered mankind redemption, He also washed the dusty feet of His own followers.*

*Nothing distinguishes the kingdoms of man from the kingdom of God more than their diametrically opposed views of the exercise of power. One seeks to control people; the other seeks to serve people. One promotes self; the other prostrates self. One seeks prestige and position; the other lifts up the lowly and despised. Through this upside-down view of power, the Kingdom of God can play a special role in the affairs of the world. When we practice this view of power, we're setting an example for our neighbors by modeling servanthood—and exposing the illusions worldly power creates.*

*This doesn't mean that Christians can't use power. In positions of leadership, the Christian uses power with a different motive and in a different way: to serve, to seek the common good, and to seek justice. Those who accept the biblical view of servant leadership treat power as a humbling delegation from God, not as a right to control others. The challenge for the Christian in a position of influence is to follow the example of Jesus, who knelt down to wash His disciples' feet. (Mark Early)*

### READ...What does the Bible say?

#### **Ecclesiastes 2:8-9 (New Living Translation)**

*I collected great sums of silver and gold, the treasure of many kings and provinces...<sup>9</sup>So I became greater than all who had lived in Jerusalem before me, and my wisdom never failed me.*

### THINK...Find the answers

God gave wisdom to Solomon. How did he use it?

Next the devil took him to the peak of a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. <sup>9</sup>“I will give it all to you,” he said, “if you will kneel down and worship me.”  
<sup>10</sup>“Get out of here, Satan,” Jesus told him.  
Matthew 4:8-10 (NLT)

In contrast, how did Jesus react to Satan's offer of power, wealth, and glory?

### LIVE...What will you do now?

C.S. Lewis' *Screwtape Letters* contains fictional correspondence between a young demon, Wormwood—who is just learning how to vex Christians—and his more powerful demonic uncle, Screwtape. Toward the end of the book, Screwtape advises his young nephew on how to derail a Christian: “Let him begin by treating patriotism...as a part of his religion. Then let him, under the influence of partisan spirit, come to regard it as the most important part. Then quietly and gradually nurse him on to the stage at which the religion becomes merely a part of the “cause,” in which Christianity is valued chiefly because of the excellent arguments it

can produce...Once he's made the world an end, and faith a means, you have almost won your man, and it makes very little difference what kind of worldly end he is pursuing."

In Chuck Colson's book, *God & Government*, he argues that the temptation to think we can change the world by acquiring political power is the very temptation Jesus resisted when tempted by the devil. How easy it would have been for Jesus to accept Satan's offer to reign over all the governments of the world! If Jesus accepted Satan's offer, Colson notes, he "could enforce the Sermon on the Mount: love and justice could reign". But rather than rule, Christ chose to go to the cross for us, sacrificing his very life, and in giving of himself, gave everything to us.

With a commitment to live as Christ taught us, how can you have as big an impact on the world as any political leader?

We all serve in leadership roles of some sort. CedarCreek is an active sponsor of The Global Leadership Summit. Is this the time for you to investigate how you can lead in a way that serves Christ by attending the Summit?

## **PRAY...God, What do You want me to know & do?**

Ask God's blessings on our leaders, both those in political power and those who have other power in the world. Pray that those leaders might have the wisdom of Solomon and the servant heart of Christ. Ask God to empower you in ways that will allow you to do His will to serve others, seek justice, and care for those who need it. And ask God to help you "Lead Where You Are" by being a living example of Christ's love.

### **Daily Bible Reading Commentary: Proverbs 28**

**v1** *A guilty conscience imagines accusers everywhere, while a clear conscience has the boldness to face everyone.*

**v2** **"it has many rulers..."** *Unrighteousness in a nation produces political instability with many vying for power; thus, the tenure of each leader is shortened. Wisdom promotes social order and long rule.*

**v3** **"oppress the poor..."** *When the poor come to power and oppress their own, it's as bad as a violent storm flooding the fields, instead of watering the crop.*

**v8** **"by exorbitant interest..."** *The law forbade the charging of interest to fellow Jews, but this was often violated.*

**v11** **"rich man is wise in his own eyes..."** *This contrasts the discerning poor with the rich man, who is deceived by his self-confidence. Riches are not always possessed by the unrighteous and wisdom by the poor. But more often than not, this is the case due to the blinding nature of wealth.*

**v13** **"conceals...prosper..."** *Sin must not be covered but confessed.*

**v20** **"richly blessed..."** *Blessings are the product of honest labor.*

**v21** **"a piece of bread..."** *A small bribe.*

**v23** *Flattery has no value, but reproof does—it leads to gratitude.*

**v25** *This is arrogance that satisfies itself at the expense of conflict with others; it never knows the prosperity of humble trust in God.*

**v27** **"closes his eyes..."** *A person who doesn't respond to the needs of the poor.*

## THURSDAY— Chasing God: Life IN Christ

**Today's Big Point:** *There are a lot of choices we can make about what to pursue, but the wisest choice is to pursue God first—above all other things.*

What was your first thought when you woke up this morning? Some of you were thinking about another day at work, and others were pondering how to keep toddlers and children from tearing up the house. Maybe you didn't sleep well last night because you are overwhelmed with some problem or obsession that hasn't been solved or satisfied. No matter what you were thinking about when your eyes opened this morning, please answer the following question: When did you first think about God? The question isn't when you started asking Him for stuff or perhaps addressing Him angrily for what's not going right—but when did you first think about God Almighty and engage with Him as such?

Chasing God is an on-going pursuit that is characterized by a dogged determination to know who God is and not give up on the daily quest to know God a little more than the day before.

Interestingly enough, as we chase God that actually diminishes our desire to chase other things because our relationship with God fills us and sustains us in all situations. Contentment is a natural by-product of pursuing God. Therefore, we can deduce that lack of contentment is probably a good indicator that we need to redouble our efforts to pursue God.

### READ...What does the Bible say?

#### **Philippians 4:4-9 (New Living Translation)**

Always be full of **joy** in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice! <sup>5</sup>Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. Remember, the Lord is coming soon.

<sup>6</sup>Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. <sup>7</sup>Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

<sup>8</sup>And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. <sup>9</sup>Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you...

**Joy** comes as a gift from God. The command obviously is not for believers to manufacture or try to imitate it, but to delight in the blessing they already possess. The command is to gratefully accept and revel in this great blessing!

**Everything you were taught can be put into a few words:  
Respect and obey God!  
This is what life is all about.  
Ecclesiastes 12:13 (CEV)**

### THINK...Find the answers

Philippians 4:4-9 is a jam-packed, rich scriptural passage. Underline all of the portions that you connect most with. Now, try to sum up these six verses from the Apostle Paul into three sentences:

What is the difference between the joy that belongs to Christ-followers and the happiness that the world seeks?

Why isn't joy something a Christ-follower has to wait to receive? Furthermore, what is the sole source of our joy to be?

## **LIVE...What will you do now?**

Read Ecclesiastes 12:13. What makes this difficult for us? What is one step you can take to move in the direction of fearing God and keeping his commandments?

Do you chase God? How has your pursuit of God impacted your level of contentment and satisfaction?

## **PRAY...God, what do you want me to know & do?**

What are you not content about today? Has your source of discontentment wooed your thoughts and efforts away from pursuing God? Today is the day to refocus—think about the joy that you've been given and choose to pursue God, rather than fixate on the reasons for any discontent.

### **CHALLENGE: FOR THOSE WHO NEED IT!**

Here's a challenge, should you choose to accept it! Consider putting your physical nourishment off until you've been spiritually nourished each day. This means that you won't eat a morsel of food until you've spent time with God. For those of us who get so busy that we put off spending time with God, this is a compelling tactic to help us prioritize our relationship with God over other things.

If you think you need this challenge, are you willing to try it out tomorrow? Y N

### **Daily Bible Reading Commentary: Proverbs 29-30**

**29:1** *“remains stiff-necked...”* This refers to a case of increasing obstinacy, along with an unteachable spirit.

**29:9** *“there is no peace...”* A fool may respond to wisdom with anger or laughter; but, in either case, no agreement can be reached.

**29:12** *“listens to lies...”* A corrupt leader will draw around him corrupt people. Allow lies, and you will be surrounded by liars.

**29:13** *“The Lord gives sight to the eyes...”* This phrase means to sustain life. God gives life to both the poor and the rich oppressor, and He holds each responsible for His truth.

**29:19** *“cannot be corrected by mere works...”* The verse views the mind-set of an unprincipled and foolish person who is unresponsive and irresponsible.

**29:24** *“the accomplice of a thief...”* By refusing to testify with full disclosure to avoid incrimination, a person commits perjury which leads to punishment.

**30:1-33** *“the words of Agur...”* This is a collection of proverbs written by an unknown person who was likely a student of wisdom at the time of Solomon.

**30:2-3** This is a statement of humility and recognition of the reality that, apart from divine revelation, there would be no true wisdom.

**30:6** *“do not add to His words...”* To add to God's word is to deny God as the standard of truth.

## FRIDAY — A Secret Worth Sharing...

**Big Point:** Being content is about believing God's promises to care for us—no matter our circumstances.

**Question:** How content are you these days? Rate yourself on a scale of 1 (not content) to 5 (very content):

1	2	3	4	5
not content		somewhat		content

What factors do is your answer based on? How do you feel about your rating?

What do you think might be the source of your discontentment?

*Author and former Yahoo.com executive Tim Sanders believes that there are two types of people: those who live in fear of scarcity, and those who embrace abundance. Scarcity is the belief that there isn't enough to go around, and therefore, there's a fear that one won't have enough. Sometimes we develop scarcity as a result of our upbringing or through circumstances, including perceived threats like potential job loss. We know that we're experiencing scarcity when we become reactive—quick to jump at others in efforts to protect what we have left. However, we find we're angry when others experience success because we're jealous that they are accumulating more than we are—and we fear we may not catch up.*

*Those who embrace abundance believe there is enough, even enough to share with others. An abundance mindset celebrates the success of others and a willingness to let go of our desires in order to help someone else achieve his or hers.*

### Philippians 4:12-13 (New Living Translation)

*<sup>12</sup>I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. <sup>13</sup>For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.*

Read Philippians 4:12-13. Which verse impacts you the most, and why?

In Philippians 4:12-13, the Apostle Paul sums up the experiences of his life with the stunning revelation that he's satisfied with his life, no matter where the road's taken him — prison, a shipwreck, house arrest, as well as before high officials and sophisticated audiences.

Based on what you've learned this week, what has God taught you about how you've lived your life so far?

What have you felt the need to re-evaluate or change?

### Weekend Reminders: Upcoming Fall 2011 Classes and Seminars!

- **Financial Peace University registration is OPEN!** Our popular financial class by well-known author and top-rated television host Dave Ramsey is back!
- **Are you single?** We've got a new Andy Stanley DVD-based seminar for single adults titled "The New Rules for Love, Sex and Dating"
- **Truth Project starts in September!** A 13-week series designed to help you establish a solid biblical worldview. A top-notch series that will challenge you!

## **Daily Bible Reading Commentary: Proverbs 31**

**vv1-31** This concluding chapter contains two poems: 1) *The Wise King (vv2-9)* and 2) *The Excellent Wife (vv10-31)*. Both are the teachings of a godly mother to King Lemuel, whom ancient Jewish tradition identified as King Solomon.

**vv2-9** The godly king is addressed (v2) and told that his reign should be characterized by: 1) holiness (v3); 2) sobriety (vv4-7); and 3) compassion (vv8-9). This section is filled with succinct and solemn warnings against vices to which kings are particularly susceptible—immorality, overindulgence, unrighteous rule, and indifference to those in need.

**v2** “**my son...**” Repeated 3x’s to indicate the serious passion of a mother’s heart.

**vv8-9** “**speak up for those who cannot...**” Plead for those who cannot plead their own case, namely those who are otherwise ruined by their condition of weakness.

**vv10-31** This poem offers a beautiful description of the excellent wife as defined by a wife and mother. Spiritual and practical wisdom, plus moral virtues, mark the character of this woman in contrast to the immoral women of verse 3.

**v25** “**strength and honor...**” These words describe the character of the woman who fears the Lord. Her inward clothing displays divine wisdom, giving her confidence to face the future with its unexpected challenges.

**v31** While she receives material reward, the praise and success she labored to bring to her family and community will be her praise.

## **Homepointe Family Activity**

**Big Point for Families:** Materialism—Life without God is meaningless!

**Read:** Ecclesiastes 2:1-24; and 12:13.

**Activity:** (Materials: Gift-wrap several empty boxes in bright, attractive paper—try to use boxes that look like things that are recognizable and that kids enjoy.)

1. Hold up the items one by one and ask your child(ren) to guess what’s in each package (no touching). When they guess, respond with an excited, “Maybe!?!”
2. Have a question and answer quiz game and award them with the gifts.
3. After all gifts have been distributed, allow them to open their gifts. (Of course they will all be disappointed that the boxes are empty—be prepared).
4. Give each family member a few minutes to calmly share their disappointment and how it’s affecting them. **Optional:** Have a small, wrapped gift waiting for them at the end of the lesson—a reward for good-sportsmanship. Focus on things with some eternal value (a small devotional, or a handwritten letter from you, Mom and/or Dad, expressing how that child has blessed your family or made you proud).

**Lesson:** We spend a lot of time, money, and effort on things we think are going to bring us joy...only to finally get them and still feel empty and disappointed, as with these empty boxes. Yet Jesus promises us a gift of eternal life. We don’t have enough money to pay for it, but he paid for it with his life on a Cross so we could have eternal life—full of purpose, meaning and fulfillment. We can try to find meaning in life through all kinds of *things*; but, in the end, we can only find any real meaning by loving and obeying God. The disciples were disappointed when they discovered the empty tomb. But disappointment turned to joy when they discovered the Risen Savior. And everyone gets the same reward!

**Pray:** *Blaise Pascal, a famous inventor & philosopher, said that inside every man there is a god-shaped vacuum that only God can fill. We can try to fill that void in our lives with many things, but only God will bring us contentment and happiness. Ask God to point out anything that’s taking up “His space” in your lives; then, that He help your family focus on filling emptiness with more of Him—not more “stuff”.*

## **Living It Out: Scripture Memory** **July 2011**

*<sup>5</sup>Live wisely among those who are not believers,  
and make the most of every opportunity.*

*<sup>6</sup>Let your conversation be gracious and attractive  
so that you will have the right response for everyone.*

**Colossians 4:5-6 (New Living Translation)**

### **Living It Out**

*It is the dream of CedarCreek that everyone who calls this their church home will be reading and studying the same topics, both individually and in groups. Each week, join with thousands of others at CedarCreek Church in applying God's Word, the Bible, into your daily life. Our hope is that while we learn and grow together, as individuals and as a church, we will collectively live out the weekend message.*

*Living It Out resources, such as the Daily Bible Study, Daily Bible Reading Plan, Discussion Questions and Scripture Memory Verses, are designed to help us embrace a missional mindset...a mindset that compels us to love Jesus, serve others and tell the world about Christ.*

**Living It Out: Daily Bible Study...**Daily Bible study activities to reflect on the weekend message

**Living It Out: Daily Bible Reading Plan...**Read through the New Testament in a year

**Living It Out: Discussion Questions...**Weekly questions to discuss with others

**Living It Out: Scripture Memory...**Memorize one Bible verse per month

*All of these resources are also available electronically at **www.livingitout.tv**, where you can subscribe to have any or all of them emailed to you as they are updated.*

#### **We Want Your Feedback!**

**Tell us about any questions or comments you have about this week's *Living It Out: Daily Bible Study*. Forward them to [barbr@cedarcreek.tv](mailto:barbr@cedarcreek.tv).**

<p><b>CedarCreek Church</b> 29129 Lime City Road Perrysburg, Oh 43551 Phone: 419.661.8661 Fax: 419.661.8665  <b>www.cedarcreek.tv</b> <b>www.livingitout.tv</b></p>	<p><b>RESOURCES:</b> <b><i>The Bible</i></b>  <i>Old Testament Commentary compiled by: Rick Kinney</i>  <i>Homepointe Family Activity: Jamey Koralewski</i></p>	<p><b>Living It Out: Daily Bible Reading Plan scriptures are listed for each day. By completing each of the daily readings, you will read the entire Old Testament in 1 year. These readings are separate from the Daily Bible Study.</b></p>	<p>This week's <b><i>Living It Out Daily Bible Study</i></b> written by:  <i>Doug Haynam Chantele Henry Jamey Koralewski Barb Roose</i></p>
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