

4-26-26 The Great Gain, Contentment 3

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Contentment, apathy, Philippians 4:11-13, First Timothy 6:6-10, godliness, love of money, impassivity, sociopaths, LifeWay Research, Barna study, ministry of reconciliation, prayer for the lost, serving others, sharing the gospel.

SPEAKERS

Pastor Dow Boyer

Um, we're going to continue this basically conclude, if you will, this short, little three week job here on contentment. Today we're going to talk about contentment versus apathy. So now that I've beat you up about being content the last couple weeks, I got to make sure that you don't become apathetic. So that's kind of where we're headed with this, and we look at that Webster's Dictionary, if we'll go back through it just for a second, it literally the word content means to be held or contained within limits, right? I mean, that's the big thing. They're satisfied, if you will. So when Paul talks in Philippians 4:11, through 13, he says, not that I speak in respect of want, for I have learned in whatsoever state I am there with to be content. And he says, I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound everywhere and in all things I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. And then he says, I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me. We looked at the thorn in the flesh and how the thing that should be, the thing that we're full of when, when Christ is sufficient enough, right? It is, it is His grace. We are so filled with His grace that we're like, there's no room to really need anything else. When Paul's three times saying, Lord, remove this thorn from my flesh, and the Lord responds with my strength is perfect and weakness, My grace is sufficient. It's getting to that point of understanding that Christ is all we need and all we will ever need. He is enough. Even if you have nothing else, you have everything, if you have Christ. And then last week, we talked about First Timothy six, six through 10. We talked about godliness with contentment is great gain. And then we talked about the second part of that is the love of money. With covetousness is great destruction, and that kind of leads us to this point all right, now that we've kind of, we talked about our finances and really the things that are our gods on this earth, right? We talked about him being enough in any situation that we have. But that contentment doesn't lead us to inaction. We can't be so content, which is the way things are going on, that we do absolutely nothing. More importantly, that we care about absolutely nothing. We cannot get to that point this word apathy, when you think about the background of meaning, we find its introduction into English in 1594, and then we find a translation by Philemon Holland in 1603 and it's basically pulling in from the word apatheia. Originally, it was a positive word. It's hard for us to think about like this, because the idea was freedom from suffering. So amidst persecution, I would have freedom in Christ. I care nothing about the other things going on in this world because of what I have in Christ. And it gave the idea of impassivity, impassivity, let's try this again. Impassivity to things that would distract us from our goals. So originally, it had a positive connotation. But then in 1733 we started seeing it come more negative. By the time we get to the Webster's 1828 it says a want of feeling, an utter privation of passion, an insensibility to pain applied either to the body or the mind as applied to the mind, it is

stoicism, calmness of mind, incapable of being ruffled by pleasure, pain or passion. In the first ages of the church, the Christians adopted the term to express a contempt of earthly concerns. So even in 1828, he's pulling back into that old English where it still kind of had a positive connotation, in the Bible. Does the Bible even use the word apathy? Well, it doesn't, but it does have the word pathos, which is the last part of the word apathy. Now the word A means without, so, without passion, if you will, pathos. Check out these three verses Romans, 12:6 for this cause God gave them up unto vile affections. There's your word there. For even the women did change the natural use into that which is against nature. Or in Colossians, 3:5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection. There's that word, again, evil, concupiscence and covetousness, which is idolatry, not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles, which know not God. And there's the word would be translated, lust. There those are all the words pathos. So basically, those are describing this uncontrolled passion and lust. So. The word apathy basically says without passion, without feeling, without emotion. It kind of is where this goes into. And so what we want to make sure that our contentment does not lead us into is apathy, where we are, without feeling where we are, without any passion where we are, without caring for the things going on in the world and the souls for others. It is said in studying sociopaths that they behave badly to feel something we were created to be emotional beings. We were meant to feel things. Even Jesus wept when Lazarus died. It's not a bad thing to be emotional. We are emotional beings. So we get to this point here, and we're like, Well, really, where is the dividing line between the two? Well, one feels fulfilled, the other frustrated. So contentment would lead to fulfillment, and apathy would lead to frustration. One is positive, the other is negative. One has channeled focus in what they've learned the other indifference and a lack of emotion. Now, let me give you guys some boring stats. So in 2022 the LifeWay Research did a study, and they started out with 200 pastors to get these initial 44 things that they think were the problems of the church. And eventually this spread out to 1000 pastors once they got these 44 things, 22% of these pastors said, now this is coming right out of covid. 22% said people dynamics was the most challenging issue. In fact, the only issue that had more of a percentage was skill development. But when you look inside of this people dynamic, you start seeing something a bit broader. Because really what they were saying is the people don't care, the people won't serve. The people don't come. The people don't share the Gospel, the people have grown apathetic. The second biggest concern on the research was the fact that the people just don't feel anything, because if they did, then wouldn't that reflect in the behavior? They couldn't get anybody to care enough when they need volunteers. They couldn't get people to change diapers. They couldn't get people to come into the church when they need help with the food pantry, right? They couldn't get people to want to do anything when it comes to things of God. But they were saved, and that becomes a real issue when we think we're okay, you're just gonna have to find your path. Let's just hope you become okay one day. The inability, or the lack of desire to want to be able to come and serve, was the second biggest thing that they saw. There was a Barna study that said that roughly 70% of high school students who enter college as professing Christians will leave with little to no faith. These students usually don't return to their faith even after graduation. As Barna projects that 80% of those reared in the church will be disengaged by the time they are 29 there's another dynamic. So we've got pastors talking. We've got this study which basically led to that already gone book that that ham wrote. Right? It is this observation that as we have another generation pull in as they were raised differently than the previous generation, there is a lack of caring, a lack of passion for the things of God, a lack of service for the things of God, a lack of winning souls. And it makes sense, because we've modeled it for them, remember? And I use this verse all the time because I think it is that important. But Ephesians 4:14 talked about this even teen class today. And this is Paul addressing the Ephesians, and he says that we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sight of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lie and wait to deceive. We don't give them a good enough Foundation, or the foundation never really translates to being their own foundation. They go off and they. They get indoctrinated by professors who tell them something different, that then they're not prepared to be able to answer those

questions, and they don't know what's right, what's wrong. They're questioning everything. They're using people and authority over them, manipulating them, and then they finally just give up. How can I really know truth? And when you see this, you're like even our children have grown apathetic to the things of God because they've seen it in us, and then they want to deconstruct their faith. Your apathy just left untreated, will be disastrous, and we have to look at the church like, why don't we care? Why don't we feel? Why don't we have any passion? What are we? What are we lacking? Are we just a bunch of puppets? The apathy will destroy any organization. Why would it be any different than the church? If the body of Christ is apathetic, it cannot do what it was designed to do, and that is to see all men saved and come to knowledge of the truth in Judges, chapter two, verse 10, it says, And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers, and there arose another generation after them which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which He had done for Israel. The result. In the next verse, the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and served Balaam. You're always one generation away from losing it all the way we raise our children matters, even if it was different than you were raised. Then the pattern gets broken, right? But we've now have a whole generation that did not grow up with the importance of the Lord, maybe in church on Sundays, but outside of that, not so much. And I question things even in my own life. And we become a generation where everything else becomes a distraction, and everything else we worship. It's our programming, it's our sports, it's it's all these other things. They are things that can be swept away in the blink of an eye, and they are the things that have our heart, and we've passed that down. There was another Barna study that was released a few months ago, and this was research over 25 years, and maybe some of you have seen this, and they said the importance of faith has dropped 20 percentage points since 2000 more than any other Christian commitment measure. Practicing Christians have declined from 46% to 24% of US adults over the last 25 years. What does that look like in 25 more years? Only one now this is crazy to me, only one in three Christians say they strongly feel a responsibility to share their faith one in three, and as as upset as that may make you start in start with the mirror and the people closest to you would they represent the two thirds or the 1/3 it doesn't take long before you realize those numbers are real, and I want to read it one more time just for emphasis, only one in three Christians say they strongly feel a responsibility to share their faith. If that's not a degree of apathy, I don't know what is, because we're essentially saying we're either too busy or we don't care about where somebody is going to spend eternity. I don't know how many other options there are, but if you truly, if there's been a moment in your in your lifetime, right, where you realize you're a sinner and that your sin separated you from God, right, you realize there was no way you could work yourself to Him, because the Bible says that we've all sinned and come short of the glory of God, and as a result of that, the Bible says the wages of sin is death. That's not just the physical death we have here. It's a spiritual death, a separation from God for all eternity, you've got to that place where you're like, I could never be good enough, because it takes perfection, because sin cannot enter God's presence and I give up. I just I give up. I know I can't get there on my own. Him. But God made a way. He sent Jesus to die on the cross for your sins. And the moment that his blood shed there, there was now a solution, right? And he died, but three days later, rose again, proven that he's God. And God looks down. He goes, that payment of His shed Blood is enough to wash away every sin in this building, in this world, every sin, even the stuff you haven't done yet. And he says, This is my gift to you, if you will receive it that Jesus died on the cross for your sins and was buried and rose again three days later, you will have eternal life. In fact, at that very moment, I'm going to give you the Holy Spirit inside of you. I'm going to take you out of Adam, and I'm going to place you in the body of Christ, and there is therefore now no condemnation to you, which are in Christ, Jesus, and there's nothing that can separate you from God's love. So if you are one of those today, one out of three of you think that that's not important enough to tell somebody else about, let that sink in. It's like, what are we doing? I'm talking to myself as much as anybody. Sometimes I think we as communicators get a pass because we feel like we're doing it to all of you, I have a responsibility with my neighbors, family members. I'm not owning up to that like I should. This is convicting for me. It's like, am I a little bit apathetic towards the individual person? Because what? Because I have a platform that's not going to

work, and I don't want it to work. And so I'm looking at this. I'm like, what do we do about this? Because apathy, impassive, impassivity and indifference, they all denote a lack of responsiveness to something that might normally excite interest or emotion as such a good statement. One of the most exciting things that we get to do as believers is see somebody come to the Lord as He uses us to share the gospel, and they respond in faith that should be the thing that excites us. But when we have a lack of responsiveness to something like that, we have apathy and indifference. You are not displaying contentment by staying on the sidelines. That's not what Paul did. He was out. He was constantly talking about it. He was suffering, thrown into jail, he was beaten, and yet he constantly said, I do all this for the furtherance of the gospel. Even though he learned and was instructed to be content, he used the contentment and the Lord to look for every opportunity to be able to tell somebody about Jesus. Do we do that? Because it's not just because he was the apostle to the Gentiles. It's not just because he had all these revelations. It's not just because Jesus met him on the road to Damascus, but it is also said of us. Second Corinthians 5:17, says, Therefore, if a man be in Christ, he's a new creature. Old things are passed away. And behold, all things are become new. But after that, it says, all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation. To wit that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now, then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God, for he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him, we are an ambassador given the ministry of reconciliation to see all men saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. That is our job. Now, I think everybody in here. There might be a few of you fortunate women, but the majority of you in here have jobs, or have had jobs. What happens when you don't do your job? What does your employer do? Fires you? Right? I'm glad we have a gracious employer. Right in every other aspect of life, there are consequences for apathy, and it affects those around us in the same way that Jesus isn't coming back down and doing miracles and doing earthly men. History. You know, he's not coming back down to Israel for that. Next time he comes down, it's going to be to rule for 1000 years. It was left to us to share that message if we don't share it, or if there's a generation that doesn't share it, it doesn't get shared right? I think it's important that we understand we have a job to do. I love what Paul says in Philippians, three, seven through 10. But what things were gain to me those I counted loss for Christ. He says, yea, doubtless, and I count all things, but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, Jesus, my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ and be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God, by faith that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings being made conformable unto his death, I love how Paul, who has Revelation After revelation With the risen Savior, says that I may know him. Now I heard something earlier. I thought, ooh, that would be a really good object lesson in here, but I didn't want to embarrass anybody. But that person decided to raise their hand and say, it's mine. So this is not indictment on Becky, because I'm sure they probably have 30 Bibles at home. I 30 Bibles at home. But I'm saying this, that what she represents, what that illustration represented there take away all the Bibles they have at their home, alright, but, but think about this. I haven't had the word for four weeks, and most people don't even notice. But here Paul saying that I may know him, is that your desire I love in Galatians, when he says that, that I know of him, that I'm known to him, is, is it a desire for us to know Him? And it might be part of the disconnect, because if you don't have a desire to know Him, then how do you have a desire to make Him known? You won't. You can't fake it to someone else if it's not there for you. Part of the reason we're apathetic towards other people is because our faith is dry. It's apathetic, and like I've told you guys before, if you're waiting on me, if you're waiting on me, to jump start the car on 30 minutes, 40 minutes on a Sunday morning to make up for the other 167 and a half hours, then your car is constantly going to be stalled. Imagine that you'll give your pillow probably 40 hours this week. At least some of you guys do get eight hours. So maybe you, maybe you give your your pillow 56 hours.

You'll give your employer 40 hours or more, and you'll give God 30 minutes for somebody else to tell you about him on a Sunday morning. I think that's where these numbers are coming from, the reason that one in three think it's not really that big a deal, because they probably think it's my responsibility. But the issue is second, Corinthians is not a pastoral epistle. So what I just, I guess, read to you in verses 17 through 21 of chapter five, that is written to a group of some of the most carnal saints from First Corinthians, that he's addressing all these divisions, yet calls them saints. And then he tells them that they're ambassadors. He tells them that they've been given the ministry of reconciliation. He tells them that they've been given the word of reconciliation. He tells that group, the group that probably should say, I have all the excuses in the world of why I can't do this, but yet, it's them, it's us, it's the body of Christ. So as I was thinking through this, the last few minutes that we have together, I'm like, Well, okay, what do we do about it? I don't like to just sit there and say, oh gosh, here's the here's the stats. What do we do about this? It's going to be really, really simple today, but sometimes a good thing to repeat is the simple things, because these are repeatable steps. The first thing you want to start starving the apathy, right? You want to start igniting the passion, although basically clothed in contentment. But then here's the first thing you do get in the Word. Remember we talked a few weeks ago about that study that showed what just getting in the word four times a week does for you. It wasn't one, it wasn't two, it wasn't three, but things started changing when if you get in there at least four times a week, and I'm not saying you have to read four hours a day, but man, that habit of getting in there, and knowing the one who has died for you, and knowing the instructions that He has for you today and what he how he wants you to live your life. That is so important. We know in Second Timothy 215 it says, Study to show thyself approved unto God a workman in thee it not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. So not only is it getting in the word each day, but it's understanding what is for you and what is to you, right? There's a big difference there. We don't do everything in the Bible. We have to know what is for us today. I'm sorry, what is specifically to us today. And that's what Paul's talking about there in Second Timothy 215 so getting in the word, knowing it rightly divided, is huge. Not just it's not just about devotionalizing The Word of God. You've got to be able to get in there and study it and know what is for you and what's not for you today. And then second Timothy 316, just know it has an answer for everything. It's not obsolete. Second Timothy 316 says all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and instruction in righteousness. You start with that foundation of believing that this thing here isn't just the next murder mystery, right? This living Word of God is God. It's God's word in here, and it means something, and it has something for you. There's nothing in your life that cannot be solved, either through practicality or principle or principle, that's not inside the Word of God. Took me a minute to get it out. You might be like, Yeah, but it doesn't talk about the internet. It doesn't talk about those things. About those things. I'm like, All I know is somehow Sodom and Gomorrah without the internet, without live chats, without live stream and FaceTime, all were very corrupt. Do sometimes tools make things a little bit more easily accessible, yes, but there's always been the flesh, and there has always been the adversary we need, the word of God. It needs to be the thing we cannot live without. Many of us in here are on vitamin regimens, or you take 414, pills a day. You wouldn't miss those pills if there was a condition in your body, do not miss the Word of God because there is a sin condition that needs to be dealt with. The next one that's gonna be really simple, how to break free from the apathy, get in the Word. Next thing is pray for the lost. And you might be like, That's pretty elementary, if we're really honest in this room, if somehow I had a device that could replay every thought you had this past week, first of all, nobody would come back to church. And then we put it on the screen, you're right. And we're like, okay, and I call out a name, and boom, there it is. And we just got to see every thought. And I just said, well, let's just do a search. How many times they pray for the lost this week? I think we'd probably be a little embarrassed. We all time talk about First Timothy, two, four, rightfully so. But there are a few verses before that starting verse one, it says, I exhort therefore that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men, first of all, for kings and for all that are in authority that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and

honesty. Speaking of that, last night was scary, and I for one, I was thinking about this. I was like, talk about you, imagine if the Secret Service were all apathetic to what was going on, if they were just people of apathy. This thing is becoming way too common. But anyway, I saw that with four kings, you know, Pray do we pray for those that are in leadership, pray for all that are in authority that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and honesty, For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God, our Savior, who will have all men to be saved and come into the knowledge of the truth. Right in that passage, in the context, talks about praying for the lost. And we just we beat that drum. Verse four, absolutely. But do we pray for the lost? Do you pray for. Tunities, those loved ones of yours, those co workers of yours, those neighbors of yours, those people in close contact that I lost on their way to hell. Do you pray for them? We're told, first, Thessalonians 5:17, to pray without ceasing. Second, Thessalonians three, one, Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of Lord may a free course and be glorified even as it is with you. Are you praying that the word of God through the channels and through the commitment that grace point has that the gospel will spring forth unto lost souls? The third thing we can get in the Word, we can pray for the lost, but we can get busy serving other people see, the reason apathy grows is because it focuses on self, but it's void of emotion. It has become so frustrated and angry because of its lot in life that it feels nothing. One of the ways to break free from that is to serve other people. Philippians two, three and four says, Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind. Let each esteem others better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Oh And for good measure, verse five says, Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ. Jesus, verses six through 11, is going to give the most optimal example of putting other people first. Get busy serving other people. Ask how you can serve? Ask that question, how can I help you today? Is there anything I can do for you today? Because it gets you off of yourself. And then you start finding in other people prayer requests from serving others. You start developing a love for other people. Get busy serving. And then lastly, the fourth one is get busy sharing, specifically the Word of God. When you've been in the Word of God, you've been praying for the lost, you've been serving other people. Look for those opportunities to share the gospel. Paul says in Romans, 1:16 I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, but it seems like two out of every three are he says, I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. And then he tells you why. He says it, the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. He says, How can I be ashamed of this? It is the power of God unto salvation. Maybe it's writing tracks. It's handing out tracks. It's praying for the lost. It's doing whatever we can do to get the gospel message in other people's hands. But there has to be a point where you are ready to say the words. You've got to be willing to share it and start by sharing what happened to you. Colossians, four, three. Again. I love this verse too. I use it a lot, but you would have thought Paul's prayer request in prison would have been, hey, pray that God would spring me from the jail. Seems to be ours, right? We're all time like, hey, pray that God will get me out of this trouble. But verse three, it says, With all praying also for us that God would open unto us a door of utterance to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds, not deliver me from but continue to give me opportunities to do the very thing that's put me in prison. Why? Because it's the gospel, and it is the power of God unto salvation. Now wrapping this up. Second, Corinthians five, nine through 11, says, Wherefore we labor that, whether present or absent, that we may be accepted of him, For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. But then verse 11 says, Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men, it doesn't mean we're sales people and we've manipulated somebody into saying some prayer, but knowing the terror of the Lord, it should give us a drive inside of us to persuade men of what the truth is, that true gospel message, but then the whole context is we're going to stand before Him one day and give an account, not of our sins, because those have already been taken care of, but what we did in his body. And this is the thing here. This is part of the reason we're so apathetic, because while this is going on, something else is going on. Second, Corinthians four. Four says, and whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the

image of God, should shine unto them. And that was left to us, there's a God of this world blinding the minds of them which believe not. And one out of three Christians. Are carrying a torch. The rest are saying, I concede Satan, you've won, but I have eternity. Hopefully somebody reaches them. I'm hoping that there'll be new research that shows in the next 20 years that two thirds, the other two thirds are feeling that it is important, it is vital. It is of the utmost importance to share the gospel. And finally, your responsibility is to share it. If they choose not to believe it, that's okay. That's not on you, and you're going to have your heart broken a lot of times, maybe 99 out of 100 I'll never forget the great passage in scripture in Acts 26 where Paul is talking to Agrippa, and Agrippa in verse 28 says one of the most saddest statements in the Bible is almost had me, Paul, you almost had me, almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. And you might hear that, you might see that. But do not be discouraged because we're to plant or we're to water, but it's God who gives the increase. The thing is, Agrippa heard the truth. There will be no, so to speak, blood on Paul's hands. He told the truth. And there'll be people who almost get saved. There'll be people that ridicule you. There'll be people that will mock you. But then there'll be that one that says, Tell me more. There will be that one that says, I don't want to have this hanging over me any longer. I don't want this uncertainty. I want to know this Jesus that you're talking about. And it will all be worth it. And you might be just planting seeds that somebody else comes in waters later, but you got to do something. You cannot be apathetic to this situation. So with that not meant to be a somber message, but it's a challenge, you guys, we have to break out of the apathy that has integrated into the body of Christ today, and we can all just control ourselves. So even if a third of you today say, I want to be different, I want to break out of this that helps the body of Christ, that changes everything, is my hope and prayer, that it starts with me. I'm gonna have everybody Stan at this point, I'm this time, you want to come forth. You want to talk more about this message. You want to make sure that you understood it, or what your next steps are. Now that you are a child of God, we'd love to talk to you. If you want to join the church, be a part of what we're doing. You want to serve. We'd love to talk to you. So feel free to come up at this time. We're going to have a word of prayer. Then we're going to sing a course, and I will dismiss you, Dear heavenly Father. We thank you for this day, Lord. I thank you for your grace. When I hear things like this, I think, think about how gracious you are. There are so many times I read under a different covenant with Israel's program where, where there's a group of them that couldn't go into this place, or a group of them here that the ground fell underneath them and and there was just this constant disobedience, but then it was the wrath of God that was being poured out on them. But Lord, we live in this dispensation of grace, and although you're not mocked, Lord, you're a gracious God. And Lord, you do want all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, but you will not make anybody Lord, I am thankful Lord that every breath that we have and every beat in our chest is another opportunity to want to do something different. So we're at a crossroads. We either say the same or we change. And I pray, Lord, that we at Grace point would not be part of the apathy problem that is affecting the entire body of Christ today. Lord, I pray that there would be that desire to be in your word to praying for the lost, Lord, to be able to serve others and share the Gospel. Very simple things, Lord, to break us out of our apathy. Lord, I pray you just be with the people now we love you and praise you Jesus. Name Amen.