

Sincerely



I had an entire devotional typed out for you all, but here you are.. not reading that entire devotional. haha! Instead, I am going to (at the VERY LAST minute) give you a very long Bible study guide to work on. So open your beautiful Bibles and let's see what God wants to tell us today.

Before we go on to this study, I want you to first talk with your Creator with a humble and vulnerable heart. Confess your sins to Him, and ask Him to help you focus and clearly see everything He wants you to see through this study.

Now, let's begin.

As you study these passages, you will be focusing on four things - **repentance, peace, contentment, and thankfulness.**

Repentance

First off, what is repentance?

Matthew 21:32 ESV

“For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. And even when you saw it, you did not afterward change your minds and believe him.”

Matthew 3:8-12 NLT

“Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God. Don’t just say to each other, ‘We’re safe, for we are descendants of Abraham.’ That means nothing, for I tell you, God can create children of Abraham from these very stones. Even now the ax of God’s judgment is poised, ready to sever the roots of the trees. Yes, every tree that does not produce good fruit will be chopped down and thrown into the fire.

“I baptize with water those who repent of their sins and turn to God. But someone is coming soon who is greater than I am—so much greater that I’m not worthy even to be his slave and carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. He is ready to separate the chaff from the wheat with his winnowing fork. Then he will clean up the threshing area, gathering the wheat into his barn but burning the chaff with never-ending fire.””

- After reading through Matthew 21:32 and Matthew 3:8-12, what do you think repentance is?
- Read through 2 Corinthians 7 (flip to the end of study for longer passages), and take note of every time you think repentance is being discussed (even when the word “repentance” is not actually mentioned).
- Now, re-read 2 Corinthians 7, and meditate on this thought as you read through the passage. ***True repentance stems from a change of heart and mind.***
 - How is each person mentioned in this passage living out this belief or going against this belief. You do not have to go into extensive detail.

Peace

- In general, what does peace mean to you?
- How does God bring peace to mankind? List at least two ways.

2 Thessalonians 3:16 ESV

“Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all.”

- What is the title given to God in 2 Thessalonians 3:16?
- What does this title insinuate?

Psalm 4:8 NLT

“In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, O Lord, will keep me safe.”

- How does Psalm 4:8 show trust in God? (Hint: refer to the last six words of the verse)
- Why do you think that this verse says God **alone** will keep us safe?

John 16:33 ESV

“I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

- After reading through both Psalm 4:8 and John 16:33, what are at least two things you can take note of about peace. List as many as you think of.
- Read through 2 Corinthians 7 again, and take note of any time peace is mentioned in the passage (even if the actual word is not mentioned but only insinuated).
- Meditate on all that you have read and written down thus far. Now, write down why and how repentance leads to peace.

STOP

- Talk to God.** This is the part of the study where you stop reading and writing. Right now, all you need to do is meditate on what you have read and observed and talk to God about it. Ask Him any questions you may have, confess any sins you are feeling conviction about, vent about something you are going through that this study reminded you of, and simply thank Him for giving you the chance to live and live freely. Spend some quality time with your Creator, Father, and Friend. Do not move on to the next part of this section until you have done this. Once you have sincerely prayed, check off the box at the beginning of this sentence, and move on.

Contentment

- In your opinion, what does it mean to be content?

Quote: “Biblical contentment is an inward trust in God’s sovereignty and goodness that produces the fruit of joy and peace and thanksgiving in the life of a believer, regardless of outward circumstances.” (<https://wellwateredwomen.com/three-truths-about-contentment/>).

We often think of contentment as settling in the moment while we wait for the greener grass on the other side. Rather, contentment, in my opinion, is not settling at all. In fact, it’s the opposite. **It is when our inward peace (that comes from our repentance) has shown us what truly matters in life.** It shows us what our priorities should be. Our heart’s desires will be what God desires. This is how contentment is born. We are not waiting for the greater good to happen in our life because we already have realized the truth that the greater Good has already been happening and is happening and will continue to happen forever in our life. That greater Good is God. Nothing else can compare to Him. Nothing else matters compared to Him.

- Have you ever thought of contentment as settling?
- What do you think about what I said in the paragraph above?

Hebrews 13:5 ESV

“Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.””

- According to Hebrews 13:5, why should we be content with what we have?
- What does God never leaving us nor forsaking us have to do us with being content?

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 ESV

“But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

- In reference to 2 Corinthians 12:9-10, why is God’s Grace being sufficient for us a reason to be content? If you get stumped on this question, think of some specific examples in your life (or someone else’s life) where you have seen God’s Grace being sufficient for you in that current situation you were going through.
- How do peace and contentment relate to each other?
- Which comes first - peace or contentment? Do they switch places from time to time, or does one of them always go before the other? Think of specific examples in your walk with God.

Thankfulness

Here we are. The main point of this study. Thankfulness. Gratitude. Well, for it being the main part of this study, I don't have a lot that I feel lead to say about it. haha!

You have read a lot of scripture throughout this study. You have made several observations and thought through different parts of your life with repentance, peace, and contentment. So, for thankfulness, I am simply going to give you some more verses to look through, and ask you two questions. After you answer these questions with as much or as little detail as you wish, I want you to stop and talk to God - humbly, vulnerably, and with a heart FULL and OVERFLOWING with gratitude.

Ephesians 5:20 ESV

“giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”

1 Samuel 12:24 ESV

“Only fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart. For consider what great things he has done for you.”

Psalms 118:24 ESV

*“This is the day that the Lord has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.”*

1 Thessalonians 5:18-18 ESV

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

Proverbs 19:23 ESV

*“The fear of the Lord leads to life,
and whoever has it rests satisfied;
he will not be visited by harm.”*

Habakkuk 3:17-19 ESV

*“Though the fig tree should not blossom,
nor fruit be on the vines,
the produce of the olive fail
and the fields yield no food,
the flock be cut off from the fold
and there be no herd in the stalls,
yet I will rejoice in the Lord;
I will take joy in the God of my salvation.
God, the Lord, is my strength;
he makes my feet like the deer's;
he makes me tread on my high places.”*

- Remembering all that you have read and observed in this study, where does sincere gratitude/thankfulness stem from?
- Remembering all that you have read and observed in this study, how does repentance lead to thankfulness?

2 Corinthians 7 ESV

“Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God. Make room in your hearts for us. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have taken advantage of no one. I do not say this to condemn you, for I said before that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together. I am acting with great boldness toward you; I have great pride in you; I am filled with comfort. In all our affliction, I am overflowing with joy. For even when we came into Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were afflicted at every turn—fighting without and fear within. But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, and not only by his coming but also by the comfort with which he was comforted by you, as he told us of your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced still more. For even if I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it—though I did regret it, for I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while. As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us. For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter. So although I wrote to you, it was not for the sake of the one who did the wrong, nor for the sake of the one who suffered the wrong, but in order that your earnestness for us might be revealed to you in the sight of God. Therefore we are comforted. And besides our own comfort, we rejoiced still more at the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all. For whatever boasts I made to him about you, I was not put to shame. But just as everything we said to you was true, so also our boasting before Titus has proved true. And his affection for you is even greater, as he remembers the obedience of you all, how you received him with fear and trembling. I rejoice, because I have complete confidence in you.”

2 Corinthians 7 NLT

“Because we have these promises, dear friends, let us cleanse ourselves from everything that can defile our body or spirit. And let us work toward complete holiness because we fear God.

Please open your hearts to us. We have not done wrong to anyone, nor led anyone astray, nor taken advantage of anyone. I’m not saying this to condemn you. I said before that you are in our hearts, and we live or die together with you. I have the highest confidence in you, and I take great pride in you. You have greatly encouraged me and made me happy despite all our troubles.

When we arrived in Macedonia, there was no rest for us. We faced conflict from every direction, with battles on the outside and fear on the inside. But God, who encourages those who are discouraged, encouraged us by the arrival of Titus. His presence was a joy, but so was the news he brought of the encouragement he received from you. When he told us how much you long to see me, and how sorry you are for what happened, and how loyal you are to me, I was filled with joy! I am not sorry that I sent that severe letter to you, though I was sorry at first, for I know it was painful to you for a little while. Now I am glad I sent it, not because it hurt you, but because the pain caused you to repent and change your ways. It was the kind of sorrow God wants his people to have, so you were not harmed by us in any way. For the kind of sorrow God wants us to experience leads us away from sin and results in salvation. There’s no regret for that kind of sorrow. But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death.

Just see what this godly sorrow produced in you! Such earnestness, such concern to clear yourselves, such indignation, such alarm, such longing to see me, such zeal, and such a readiness to punish wrong. You showed that you have done everything necessary to make things right. My purpose, then, was not to write about who did the wrong or who was wronged. I wrote to you so that in the sight of God you could see for yourselves how loyal you are to us. We have been greatly encouraged by this.

In addition to our own encouragement, we were especially delighted to see how happy Titus was about the way all of you welcomed him and set his mind at ease. I had told him how proud I was of you—and you didn’t disappoint me. I have always told you the truth, and now my boasting to Titus has also proved true! Now he cares for you more than ever when he remembers the way all of you obeyed him and welcomed him with such fear and deep respect. I am very happy now because I have complete confidence in you.”