



The Secret of Contentment: Trusting in God's Character and Plan

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And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. — Genesis 2:9

Beginning Story: As a young woman, I often struggled with the idea that my happiness depended on my circumstances, and I frequently compared myself to others. I had a job in ministry but worked behind the scenes in the office and was often jealous of others who had different gifts or personalities or were getting to do the things I longed for. In my search for contentment, I began to study what it means to be content and quickly realized that its opposite is envy. This led me to reflect on the story of the Garden of Eden in Genesis, where God provided Adam and Eve with an abundance of trees, not just for sustenance but also for beauty and delight.

Biblical Encouragement: This passage highlights how God didn't just provide Adam and Eve with a few trees to meet their needs; He gave them a garden full of variety, beauty, and abundance. These trees were pleasing to the eye and good for food—designed by God to be both beautiful and desirable. Yet, during all this abundance, God placed one tree—the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—and commanded them not to eat from it. This story illustrates God's abundant provision, but also the importance of trusting in His boundaries for our good.

Application: Imagine walking into a candy store filled with countless varieties, each one pleasing and delightful. You're free to enjoy all but one candy, which the owner has warned you not to eat because it would make you sick. Now, imagine a fellow customer telling you that the owner is lying—that the forbidden candy won't make you sick and, in fact, is the key to everything you desire.

In the Garden, what was observable about the tree was the same as all the rest, yet Satan shifted Eve's focus away from the abundance God had provided to the one thing He had withheld. Satan questioned God's goodness and trustworthiness, leading Eve to believe that the thing withheld was what would truly make her happy. We can be tempted to think that if God withholds something we desire, it means He doesn't love us or He isn't good—but nothing could be further from the truth. Contentment is about trusting God's provision and His timing, focusing on the many blessings He has given, rather than the few He has withheld.

Let's Chat!

- When have you experienced feelings of envy or discontentment because you were focused on what others had that you didn't?
- How does the story of the Garden of Eden challenge your perspective on the things God has provided versus the things He has withheld?
- Reflect on a time when you questioned God's goodness because something you deeply desired was withheld. How did that affect your relationship with Him?
- Since this study, I've started writing out a list of all the "good trees" God has given me, focusing on His abundant blessings rather than what's been withheld. Take a moment to create your own list of the "good trees" in your life—nothing is too small. How does this practice of gratitude shift your perspective and transform your heart towards contentment.

Take-away Truth

Contentment is found in remembering God's character and trusting His provision and plan, rather than focusing on what is lacking, knowing that His love and wisdom guide all that He gives and withholds.

Find more conversation starters: <https://women.pcacdm.org/made-for-more>

