



ABRAHAM LINCOLN

MY GREAT CONCERN IS NOT WHETHER YOU HAVE FAILED, BUT WHETHER YOU ARE CONTENT WITH YOUR FAILURE.

**BROKEN BREAD** Page 03



THE SECRET OF FEELING CONTENTED IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES

**DEVOTIONAL** Page 05



LIFE is Beautiful

**LENS IN THE LIGHT** Page 08



**Penguins on Ice**



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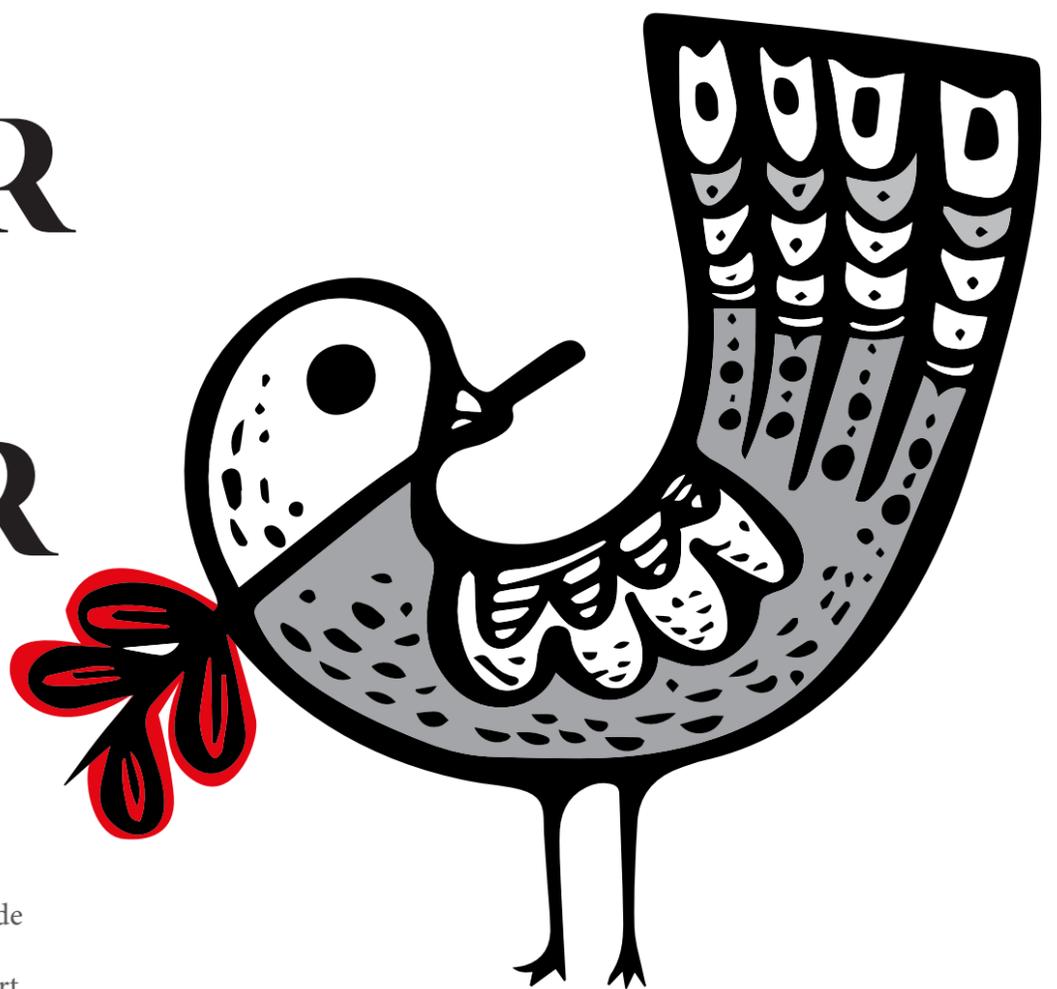
# ILLUMINER

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## BIRDS OF A FEATHER FLOCK TOGETHER



**T** rue to the proverb, 'Birds of a feather flock together', China and Russia are moving closer with a view to leverage their intimacy in the world, where their ulterior motives are otherwise being checkmated by the group of powerful democratic countries like the US, UK, Canada, Australia, France, Germany etc. Now Russia is over the moon at the fact that Beijing has agreed with Moscow in instructing the US-led NATO military alliance that they should not admit new members. It may be recalled that a raging issue is being snowballed into a flareup over the question of inclusion of Ukraine into NATO as Ukraine has been earnestly trying to be inducted into NATO for long. But Russia does not want Ukraine to be drifted away from its block as Ukraine was a province of Russia until 1991, when the disintegration of the USSR was completed. Moreover, Ukraine lies in a strategic position vis-à-vis Russia and it is less

likely that Russia would concede Ukraine's shifting to enemy camp. And with China's support in this strategic move, Russia is exceedingly happy and China and Russia would definitely move unitedly forward making the west jittery. To top it all, Moscow and Beijing hit out at what they said was Washington's destabilising role in global security.

The demand for NATO to stop expanding came after a meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping in Beijing. Meanwhile, Chinese President Xi Jinping hosted a banquet recently for heads of state and international organisations attending the Winter Olympics, part of a diplomatic blitz following nearly two years

without face-to-face meetings due to the pandemic. Beijing is keen to showcase a dazzling display of its rich cultural heritage coupled with its technological advancement in every field. But it may sadly be recalled that multiple countries including the US, Australia, Britain and Canada have announced diplomatic boycotts over China's alleged treatment of the Uyghur Muslims and human rights issues. Who are Uyghurs? Uyghurs are Muslims, who are a minority in Xinjiang province of China, and China has been persecuting the Uyghur Muslim community in the Xinjiang province for long and it

has been accused of committing crimes against the Uyghur population and other mostly-Muslim ethnic groups in the north-western region of Xinjiang. There is evidence that Uyghurs are being used as forced laborers and of women being forcibly sterilized. Some former camp detainees have also alleged they were tortured and sexually abused. But China denies all allegations of human rights abuses in Xinjiang, claiming its system of 're-education' camps are there to combat separatism and

*Continue on Page 12*



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**TO BE CONTENT  
DOESN'T MEAN  
YOU DON'T DESIRE MORE,**

**IT MEANS YOU'RE  
THANKFUL FOR WHAT YOU  
HAVE AND PATIENT FOR  
WHAT'S TO COME.**

TONY GASKINS

FROM THE  
**editor**



**LOVE AND  
CONTENTMENT**

**“The mind which finds satisfaction in what God has provided for life and godliness will be content.”**

**D**ale Carnegie, an American writer and developer of courses in self-improvement, said that “It isn’t what you have or who you are or where you are or what you are doing that makes you happy or unhappy. It is what you think about it”. Our thinking affects our satisfaction. The mind which finds satisfaction in what God has provided for life and godliness will be content. This does not mean we should not aspire for excellence. A heart that is content with what it already has will strive to excel in what is already given, if in ministry or leading or helping, as apostle Paul exhorts in his letter to the Romans. Daniel was content in what he already has but sought to excel in them irrespective of who was on the kingdom’s throne, based on a principle-driven and faith-based lifestyle, bringing promotions.

A content heart is the result of a focused mind. When the focus is on God and His Kingdom, the priorities shifts from personal gain and enjoyment to what God desires and approves. What is of God’s approval is seen through what Christ displayed to us – contentment in earthly comforts, but discontent and be moved with compassion resulting in action at those who are sitting in darkness, at the sight of

sheep without a shepherd, at those who are sick and needy, and at those who are oppressed by the devil. We are generally content with our spiritual growth but never satisfied with the material comforts we enjoy. Discontentment and dissatisfaction concerning this world’s things can result in dishonest means to attain temporal gains. A true Christ-follower will seek to abstain from the lusts of this world system that war against the soul.

Discontentment in spiritual growth will drive a saint to seek God for a life of transformation. Such a deep-rooted dissatisfaction comes when the love of God fills the heart. Holy Spirit fills our hearts with the love of God, creating in us a longing to be more like Christ. In the love of God, will the love for this world melt away. In the love of God, will one love their spouse and children enough to say no to all other. In the love of God, can the saints love one another and also be angry at sin. Contentment and love are interrelated – we will be content in what we have if our love is set on God since we realize that God is the loving Father who knows what to give to His children. If we love what we receive, we will be content with what we have.

## THE SECRET OF FEELING CONTENTED IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES



**F**eeling contented is a relative state of mind that is different for every individual depending on nature and nurture. American Psychologist, Abraham Maslow's theory, the hierarchy of needs, explains the dynamics of human needs. Maslow asserts that individuals reach contentment as they move up on the hierarchy pyramid from the lower to the higher levels only after satisfying each stage of needs beginning with physiological needs (food and clothing) security need (financial, social); love and belonging needs (friendship, emotional); esteem need and finally self-actualization. He categorized the first four levels as deficiency needs (D-needs), and the top-most one as growth or being needs (B-needs). All needs except self-actualization are deficiency needs. They arise due to deprivation. Consequently, it motivates people to meet them. People feel discontent when deprived of physiological, security, belonging, and esteem needs. According to Maslow, as the needs are met, they aim to meet other needs. As a result, motivation decreases for the needs already fulfilled. In contrast to D-needs, growth needs do not arise from deficiency but from a desire to grow as a person. Motivation increases as the growth needs are met. Maslow admits that the progress in the pyramid may not always happen consistently on a progressive basis; rather, there will be ups and downs until one reaches self-actualization. Maslow's theory is widely accepted for its closeness to the reality of human behavior concerning needs. His observation that one attains contentment only when the deficiency is fulfilled is true for any average human. The most significant outcome of Maslow's theory - that even the scientific community acclaimed - is his proposal that human beings have a greater need beyond mere survival by meeting physical, mental, and social needs. True contentment will only attain when a person reaches the highest need of self-actualization that enables a person to become productive, creative, and spontaneous, contributing to the growth and development of other individuals. In Maslow's view, someone who has not met the D-needs would lack contentment; thus, they may not contribute to their societies.

Paul's life and ministry portrayed the Christian perspective of contentment that stands in stark contrast to Maslow's theory. Paul's D-needs were invariably unmet during most of his mission ventures (2 Cor. 6:4-10; 11:16-12:10). However, these deficiencies did not stop him from being highly productive in his missionary endeavors. Paul wrote to a church, where a group rejected his apostleship and authority, an unusual statement that transcends all worldly standards. "Know, yet regarded as unknown, dying and yet we live on... sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing and yet possessing everything" (2 Cor. 6:9-10). Paul lived up to his commitment as a servant of Christ by fulfilling His command, "seek first the kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be provided for you" (Mt 6:33) and

the mandate He gave to those who follow him, "loveless everything and everyone else" (Luke 9:56-60; 14:26).

Regrettably, the priorities and passion reflected in many ministers and believers today do not represent the genuine Christian perspective of contentment; instead, they agree more with Maslow's theory that defines the materialist philosophy of life. Paul reveals the secret of being content in every circumstance to the Philippian church. It is a virtue that he learned (Greek: emathon) by making Christ his foundation and relying upon the strength Christ bestows (Phil. 4:11-13). He acquired it through taming his desires and appetite for wants with his utmost devotion to Christ.

**“Paul reveals the secret of being content in every circumstance to the Philippian church. It is a virtue that he learned by making Christ his foundation and relying upon the strength Christ bestows. He acquired it through taming his desires and appetite for wants with his utmost devotion to Christ.”**



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## Contentment: A Christian Perspective



**“A contented person is patient and balanced, whether in plenty of need. He understands that regardless of circumstances, he can relish and find solace in the continual presence of Christ in his life”**

*“... for I have learned to be content regardless of my circumstances” (Phil. 4:11).*

‘Contentment’ is a state of being satisfied and happy, with peaceful ease of mind. It is an attitude or skill that can be acquired. The common belief is that possessions or positions bring forth contentment. But, for a Christian, contentment lies in the realization that our Lord Jesus Christ is all we need in every circumstance of life. Scripture reveals that contentment is essential for leading a victorious Christian life.

Contentment requires immense trust in the sufficiency of God’s provision and providence. Trustful handing over of all things to God, recognizing that what He does is the best, results in contentment. Apostle Paul requested God to remove the ‘thorn in his flesh.’ But God refused it, saying that His grace was sufficient for Paul. God knew that it was better for Paul to have the “thorn” to learn humility and dependence on Him. Paul acknowledges this with contentment and attributes his ‘zeal in ministry and survival during difficult times to the grace of God.

When we recognize that God is good and all things work for the

good of those who love Him (Rom. 8:28), our perspectives change, and we begin to rejoice in Him despite our circumstances and start to lead a contented life. The book of Job mentions that, initially, Job was disappointed at his plight. In his struggle, he kept up his queries to God to reveal the reason for his pathetic situation. Though Job did not accept the suggestion of his wife to curse God and die, he did want to know the rationale of the misery that was thrust upon him. He thought that God had forsaken him despite him being faithful to God. However, his tone and attitude undergo a massive change after God’s great revelation to him. Even though Job did not receive an answer to his queries, when he realized the majesty of the great God, he humbled and submitted to God’s sovereignty. He achieves the state of contentment upon recognizing that God was in perfect control of his situation.

Developing an attitude of thankfulness also leads to contentment in life. It comes from the right perspective of looking at what we possess and being thankful for that instead of longing for what we do not have. Generally, when we

get anxious, we do not exercise our trust in God and are not grateful for His deeds. The apparent result is complaint and discontentment. In Phil.4:6, Paul commands us to worry about nothing, pray about everything, and be thankful for anything. The ensuing peace and contentment are the fruits of thankfulness.

Complacency on life’s important matters should not be considered as ‘contentment.’ Likewise, a person’s aspirations to strive and achieve fundamental, noble, and better things in life should not be treated as discontentment, as long as those aspirations do not deviate from God’s will. Even in such aspirations, a faithful Christian life demands a shift in the focus from ‘materialism and greed’ towards a ‘life of joyous contentment in Christ.’

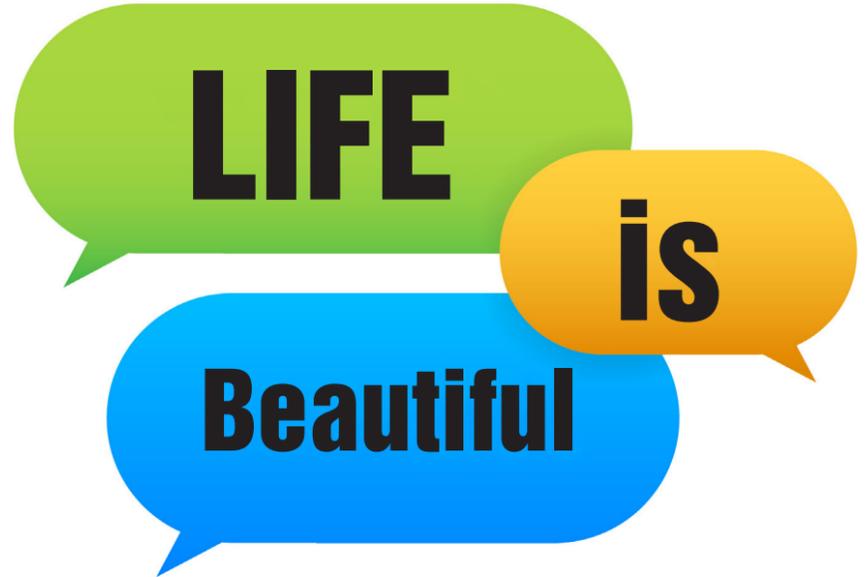
In the book ‘The Art of Divine Contentment,’ Thomas Watson comments that “contentment is a remedy against all our troubles, alleviation to all our burdens and the cure to every worry.” A contented person is patient and balanced, whether in plenty of need. He understands that regardless of circumstances, he

can relish and find solace in the continual presence of Christ in his life. We are called to inherit the kingdom of God (Luke 12:32) as the royal priesthood, holy nation, and God’s very own possession (1 Peter 2:9). Therefore, let us encourage each other to set our minds on things above (Col. 3:2) and lead a life of poise and contentment.



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**T**he very nature of man is to worry about everything frequently. Question after question hits him now and then. What will happen to me tomorrow? What would be my children's future? When am I going to become rich enough to satisfy all my needs? The 2018 Global Wealth Report from Credit Suisse Research Institute discovered a great truth. If a person has just four thousand two hundred- and ten-dollars net worth (around three lakhs in Indian rupees), he is far better off than half of the people around the globe. Net worth is the value of all the non-financial and financial assets owned by an individual minus the value of all its outstanding liabilities. If you consider this amount as the base, how many of us are included in the top fifty percent of the rich people in the world? But still, we worry about the future.

What is the reason behind this? We have unlimited wants and we are not able to meet these unlimited wants with our limited income. This leads to disappointment and later leads to trouble. But the Bible says in Prov. 19:23, "The fear of the Lord leads to life; then one rests content, untouched by trouble." According to economic theory, food, clothing, and shelter are the basic needs. The available resources in the world are not sufficient to meet even these basic needs. Then how is it possible to satisfy our unnecessary needs and

wants in our life? Here starts the theory of scarcity in economics. The economists and political leaders worldwide are pondering over this dilemma, and still, the problems remain unresolved and will remain a puzzle until the end of this earth. Moreover, this problem will aggravate in the years due to people's greed to satisfy their unlimited wants.

In this context, the relevance of the word of God is very applicable in our life. Our short tenure of eight or ninety years here in this world is not meant without happiness and joy. People are still searching for ways and means to find happiness so that they would have a contented heart. A contented heart does not mean enjoying a significant position in one's life; it does not mean that one can buy everything he wants. It is a state of mind where you are trying to find happiness in everything that you presently have in your possession.

A person with a contented heart will not bother about things he has not acquired in his life. If you are in such a state of mind, all unnecessary sorrows will not create problems in your life. Heb. 13:5 "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." Such a golden promise has been given to us. But nobody cares about this golden word but still looks for an opportunity to find shortcut

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methods to getting rich to get a "contented heart". We will get a contented heart only through faith in God and when we are guided by our God.

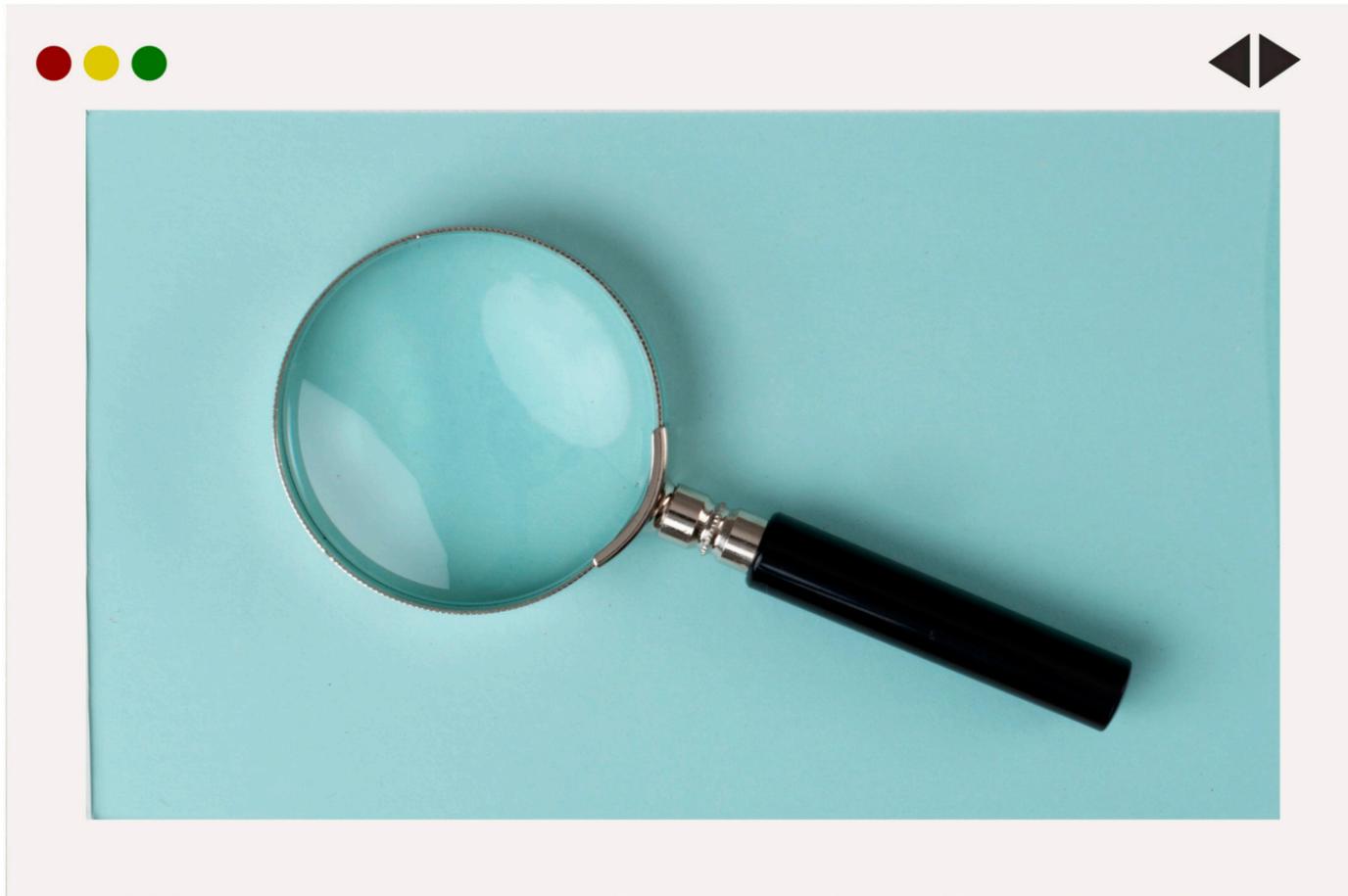
"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you (Matt. 7:7). This does not mean that God will fulfil all your unnecessary wants and needs. Whatever is required at a particular time will be provided by God if He knows that you need it and will not create any

damage to your contented heart. A contented heart is a gift of God. Let us try to be content with whatever situations, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or want.



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Dr. Binu Daniel is a management consultant, teacher, author, and educationist. He has written numerous articles in well-established English dailies on Economics and Management issues. He lives in Germany with his wife, Reena, and two daughters.



## Finding Contentment in God

**W**e live in a competitive world full of opportunities. It is hard to say - “No,” when circumstances might tempt us to grab every opportunity in front of us and strive to keep our life secure from a worldly perspective. But for a believer, not every desire that comes into our heart needs to be satisfied. The primary question we need to ask is - whether it is Godly to pursue all our desires and if it passes the Scriptural test. That is where contentment plays a crucial role. 1 Tim. 6:6 says – “Godliness with contentment is great gain.”

According to Webster’s dictionary, contentment means to be satisfied in one’s state, possession, or situation. But if we look at Scripture, contentment not only means to be pleased with our circumstance but to fully submit ourselves to God regardless of our circumstances. Contentment starts with the fact that Christ is enough for us. He is our greatest treasure. Apostle Paul reminds us that whatever we gain from this world is nothing compared to “the surpassing worth of knowing Christ” (Phil 3:8). So, our contentment should be rooted in Jesus Christ, who can satisfy us with all we need.

Everything else will fall into place when we pursue Christ and his kingdom. That is the assurance God has given to us through the Scripture. We don’t have to go behind every opportunity to satisfy our desires. We just need to yield to his will, and the doors destined for us will be opened in accordance with the will of God. Temptations will come along the way where our society might question us and compare us with our brother/sister. But in all those circumstances, we have to trust in the Lord and delight in the possessions patiently He has freely given us. The Lord knows what we exactly need, and if we humbly surrender to Him, He will provide our needs at the right time. He is never late but always on time.

One of the biggest problems of discontentment is anxiety and greed. And those two issues are pretty serious as they may destroy our life. There won’t be a finishing point for what we try to pursue if we have a heart of discontentment. We will keep on running after our unfulfilled desires, and that will take a toll on us by resulting in severe consequences. The first thing at stake will be our relationship with God. We cannot serve God faithfully with a disappointed heart. Hebrews 13:5 says – “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.” He is always with us in every situation we encounter in our life, so as loyal children of God; we are expected to always trust in God’s providence and rest in his promises.

Finally, we should always remind ourselves that everything in this world will perish one day. Jesus commands us to “lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven” (Matt. 6:20). If we look at our spiritual blessings, which lead us into eternity, we can recognize what Christ purchased for us outweighs everything the world can offer us. A day is coming where earth and heaven will be united in a new creation. That is the living hope of a believer in Christ. Phil. 3:20 says – “But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it, we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.” Christ is our hope, and he helps us endure all circumstances and situations we face on this earth so that we will be conformed to his image in a complete sense at our glorification. Let that energize us to lead a life with a contented heart and help us glorify God.

**“If we look at our spiritual blessings, which lead us into eternity, we can recognize what Christ purchased for us outweighs everything the world can offer us.”**



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## AM I CONTENT?

“In that dark prison in Ephesus, ‘contentment’ found its true meaning through the epistle Paul wrote under duress and extreme human difficulties to his friends in distant Philippi. He found contentment in the very person who he sought to torment. The one who found contentment of fait accompli in his darkest hour of pain, exhaustion, and solitude enabled Him to pray for forgiveness for those who nailed Him to the tree.”

“Not that I’m alluding to want, for I have learnt to find resources in myself whatever my circumstances. I know what it is to be brought low, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have been very thoroughly initiated into the human lot with all its ups and downs-fullness and hunger, plenty and want. I have strength for anything through Him who gives me power” (Phil. 4:11-13)

Contentment, a feeling of happiness or satisfaction, is a relative state of mind like happiness. It is an almost identical twin sibling. In mathematical terms, happiness + satisfaction = to contentment. However, litterateurs use satisfaction and happiness as synonyms of contentment. Whatever be it, man, at some point in life comes eye to eye with that question, which either he asks himself, or, which someone else asks him; ‘Are you content?’. Along with attempts to answer that inevitable question, a man tries

to achieve contentment in all its fullness using methods he or she is equipped with. But the bottom line is; what makes Tom content need not make Harry so! Maybe it takes a lot to make Harry content, or maybe Tom can find contentment in whatever he is blessed with.

As we grope in the dark for the meaning of contentment, the dim light that trickles in from the window high up on the wall silhouettes an unkempt man. He is enchained to the iron bars of what is seemingly a prison. He moans as the chain has torn into his flesh in his attempts to free himself. The wounds hurt him. On closer look, he is Paul. Saul of yesteryears. The blue-eyed tormentor of early disciples of Christ, who had just risen from the grave made fool proof by the Romans. Saul who later preached the ‘new life’ to the gentiles, was influenced by the very Christ he sought to torment by persecuting His early followers.

It is 62 CE, and we come face-to-face with the bleeding and enchained Paul in prison in

Ephesus. He was imprisoned for preaching the gospel of Christ. Painfully, he attempts to write something in the sparse light of the new dawn trickling in through the window high up on the cellar wall. He is writing an epistle to the congregation he had established in Philippi. This chained, imprisoned man who will be executed anytime soon writes that he’s contented because he has seen it all. He finds contentment in the solitude of confinement in prison, as he has experienced the exhilaration of freedom. He is content despite the meagreness of his possessions in the dark cell, as his hands had once overflowed with plenty in his heydays. He finds contentment in hunger, as he knows what it is to be sated by choicest food. With trembling hands, he manages to pen ‘I have strength for anything through Him who gives me power. In that dark prison in Ephesus, ‘contentment’ found its true meaning through the epistle Paul wrote under duress and extreme human difficulties to his friends in distant Philippi.

He found contentment in the very person who he sought to torment. The one who found contentment of fait accompli in his darkest hour of pain, exhaustion, and solitude enabled Him to pray for forgiveness for those who nailed Him to the tree.



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## Penguins on Ice

**T**he saying, ‘The grass is always greener on the other side’ does not apply to penguins’ thoughts and behaviour. Have you ever seen a penguin sitting somewhere worried? Penguins spend their life in some of the harshest environments on earth. They go without food for up to two months as they must shuffle up to 60 miles from the hard ice of their breeding and moulting grounds to the open sea. Without a nest, they manage to balance their single egg in their webbed feet to keep it off the ice and warm it with their body heat. All these stressful processes don’t slow them down. Penguins enjoy outdoor activities such as sliding through the ice on their stomachs into the ocean, diving, and fishing. Even without snow, Penguins have fun waddling along the beach for a swim. They are cheerful and content little creatures who look cool despite their circumstances.

People are constantly driven to desire more and are dissatisfied with themselves. We often struggle to find contentment, which leads to discontentment. So, what exactly is contentment? Contentment simply expresses appreciation and acceptance for the way things are

right now, whereas discontentment is dissatisfaction with God and focuses on temporal rather than eternal things. Let’s have a look at the Children of Israel who murmured against Moses frequently. The Israelites witnessed God accomplish wonderful things for them, such as conquering the Egyptian army and giving them the best food, but their hearts yearned for more. The sin of discontentment hindered the Children of Israel from entering the Promised Land.

Aren’t we the same sometimes, yearning for more, yearning for what God hasn’t provided, even though we know He is our Heavenly Father, who knows when to provide the best to His children? It should not be what you have that makes your heart happy, but rather Who you have. It is grievous in God’s eyes to be drawn to something other than God and to desire His gifts rather than to desire Him. We lose sight of the enormous everlasting realities when focusing on the visible, temporary reality. Understanding and loving God more profoundly teaches us that all other desires pale in comparison. Let’s realize His love for us rather than our love towards our Father’s possession.

**“It should not be what you have that makes your heart happy, but rather Who you have. It is grievous in God’s eyes to be drawn to something other than God and to desire His gifts rather than to desire Him. We lose sight of the enormous everlasting realities when focusing on the visible, temporary reality.”**

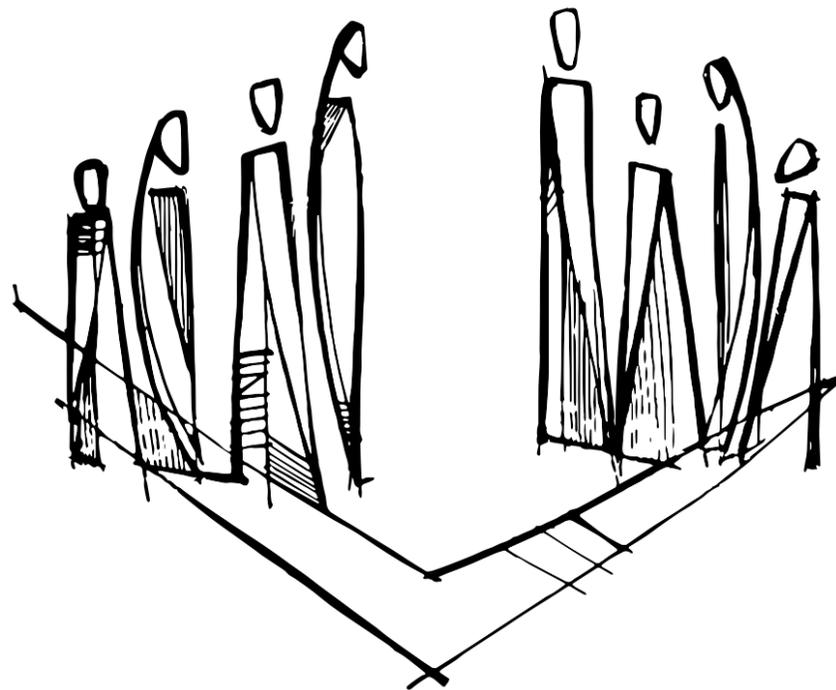


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# Teaching Children Contentment through Gratitude Journaling



**“The term contentment in itself is difficult for children and most adults to understand and explain as it requires a deliberate and critical analysis of our present situation in life. In other words, it requires intentionally practicing mindfulness and positive thinking.”**

**A**s a parent, I often wonder if my children are truly content. If I asked them if they are happy, what would they tell me? More importantly, would they be able to identify what makes them happy? The term contentment in itself is difficult for children and most adults to understand and explain as it requires a deliberate and critical analysis of our present situation in life. In other words, it requires intentionally practicing mindfulness and positive thinking.

At the beginning of this year, my husband and I decided to have our children maintain a weekly gratitude journal. It was a decision we made after realizing that our children did not quite realize or truly appreciate just how blessed they are. A month into the process, we are beginning to see a pattern. Our children seem to think that something fairly big or exciting needs to happen for it to qualify as a moment worth noting down. They haven't quite grasped the concept of being thankful and content with the little things. So we began setting time aside every week to discuss their gratitude journal and in doing so, we decided to

focus on three main aspects:

**Modeling What This Looks Like** - My husband and I began our gratitude-based conversations with talking about the small things that made us happy that week. We explained to them why these little moments had far more value and impact than waiting for the big moments. We hope that our children will eventually realize that life is not necessarily made up of the big moments, but rather a mix of the simple, often unappreciated, and undervalued moments.

**Setting Self-Expectations and Limitations** - We took a deep dive into what we each expected for ourselves and what we felt we needed to achieve to feel happy. For my children, I have noticed that this often revolves around immediate, tangible gratification. It is a constant work in progress to help them understand that the expectations they set for themselves before they reach the level of self-contentment or happiness can sometimes be impractical, harmful, or unrealistic.

**Cheerful Giving** - Since children often associate happiness with having and possessing something,

it tends to affect them deeply when they have to share and let go of something. So we began to remind our children that if they don't see themselves playing with a toy or using a gift within a few months, they should consider passing it down or donating it. Our goal is for them to understand that they don't necessarily need material things to make them content and at the same time, allow them to experience the joy that comes with cheerful giving. It is easy to give away something you don't need or no longer want. But it is far more difficult and pleasing in the Lord's eyes to give away something you hold close to your heart like Abraham did in being willing to sacrifice his son or the poor widow who was willing to give away her last two copper coins.

A gratitude journal is not by any means the only way to teach young children about contentment, nor is it what works for everyone. However, for us, it has allowed our family to rethink what contentment means and we pray that with time, we can teach our children to be better about being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want (Philippians 4:12-13).



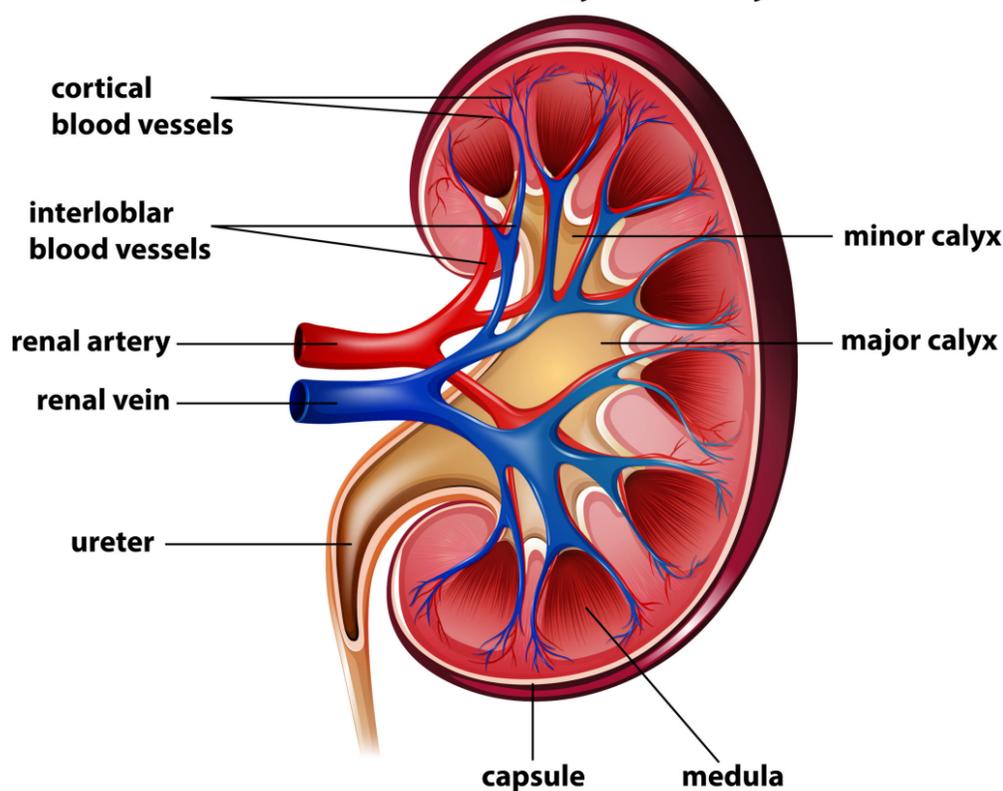
**DIVINE LEONARDO**  
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Divine Leonardo is an educator with the New York City Department of Education. She holds a B.A. in Communicative English, a B.A. in English, an M.S. Ed. in Adolescent Education/English, and an M.S. Ed. in Educational Leadership. She resides in New York with her husband, Eapen Leonardo, and her two children.

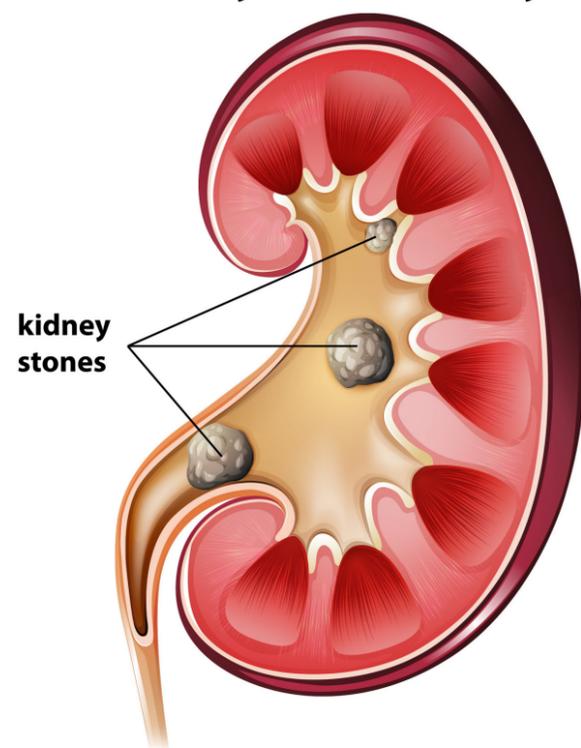


# Kidney stones in adults

**Healthy Kidney**



**Kidney with Kidney Stones**



**K**idney stones are common and can affect almost 1 in 5 men and 1 in 10 women by age 70 years (UpToDate, 2021). There are effective treatments available to manage and treat most kidney stones. In addition, there are steps to take to prevent kidney stones from happening.

## HOW DO KIDNEY STONES DEVELOP?

- Kidney stones are formed when salts and high levels of minerals like calcium, oxalate, cystine, or uric acid which are normally present in the urine build up and harden.
- Kidney stones can be formed even when these minerals are at a normal range when someone does not produce lots of urine or does not drink enough fluids.
- These stones can remain in the kidneys for years without any symptoms or damage to the kidneys.
- Typically the stone will move through the urinary tract and pass it out in the urine. If a stone gets stuck on its way may cause pain and could block the urine flow. Mostly, large stones will not pass by themselves but will need minimally invasive procedures to remove them.

## WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS FOR KIDNEY STONES?

- Certain diseases like primary hyperparathyroidism, gout, diabetes mellitus, obesity, Crohn's disease, gastric or intestinal bypass surgery.

- Dietary habits like not drinking enough fluid, a diet with low levels of calcium, use of calcium supplements, food with high levels of animal protein, high levels of sugars, low levels of phytate (found in wheat, rice, rye, barley, and bean products), high sodium diet, frequent spinach consumption.
- Certain medications like loop diuretics, laxative abuse. (Medscape, 2021)
- History of previous kidney stones.
- Family history of kidney stones.

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF KIDNEY STONES?

- Sometimes, kidney stone does not cause any symptoms; instead, it is an incidental finding. Stones may remain silent without causing any symptoms, but when it moves from the kidneys to the urinary tract, most will experience some symptoms.
- Pain in your side or lower part of the abdomen, blood in the urine (urine looks pink or red), passing gravel or sand, nausea, vomiting, pain with urination, urgency in urination

## HOW CAN KIDNEY STONES BE DIAGNOSED?

- Kidney stones are mostly diagnosed based upon the person's symptoms, physical examination, and imaging tests.

- Computed tomography (CT) scan, usually non-contrast is the best way to see the kidney stone.
- Ultrasound can be ordered for pregnant women or children who need to avoid radiation exposure. This test can miss small renal stones or ureteral stones.

### HOW CAN KIDNEY STONES BE TREATED?

- The treatment of kidney stones depends on different factors like size, type, and location of the stone; how bad is the pain, or other symptoms.
- If the stone is large or causes severe symptoms or obstruction, that may need to be treated in the hospital. If the stone is small and has mild symptoms, then the person may be treated at home to pass the stone provided the person is drinking a lot of fluids, pain medication, and medicine that make it easier to pass the stone and straining the urine to catch the stone for study.
- Stone larger than 9 or 10 millimeters rarely pass on its own and generally requires a procedure to break up or remove the stone-like ureteroscopy, shock wave lithotripsy, percutaneous nephrolithotomy (UpToDate, 2021).

### HOW CAN SOMEONE PREVENT FUTURE KIDNEY STONES?

- Increase fluid intake (if you have kidney or heart condition that has fluid intake limitation please follow the provider advice).
- Watch your diet depending on the type of stone a person produces. Cut down the soda and other soft drinks, low sodium intake.
- Moderate consumption of animal protein and dairy products.

- For those with recurrent stone production, preventative medication can be taken if your doctor prescribes it depending on what type of stone someone produces and 24-hour urine collection result.
- Please reach out to your healthcare provider if you are experiencing kidney stone problems.

### SPIRITUAL NUGGETS

- We are fearfully and wonderfully made. It is our duty to keep a guard on what we eat or drink which will have an impact on our health.
- We are made for eternity. If even diet can influence our life on earth, how much more our actions in this short span of life have it on eternity. Let us ask ourselves if we are made for eternity, what one thing we could do or not do which will impact our life with Christ forever. Blessing.



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Dr. Jaisy is a Family Nurse Practitioner at Veteran Affairs Medical Centre, Dallas, Texas. She migrated to the USA in 1997. She earned her bachelor's and master's degree in nursing from the University of Texas, Doctor of Nursing Practice from Chamberlain University. Dr. Jaisy resides in Rowlett, Texas with her husband, Sonny George, and three beautiful daughters.



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## OLD BISHOP POLYCARP

**T**owards the end of the first century, or perhaps even at the beginning of the second century A.D., the apostle John died after years of ministry to the churches of Asia Minor, the region now occupied by modern Turkey. John was the last of the original apostles, but the truths of Christianity did not die with him. His spiritual children continued to stand firm in the faith in Christ as the Son of God that John had heard, seen, and even touched (as John tells us in 1 John 1:1-2).

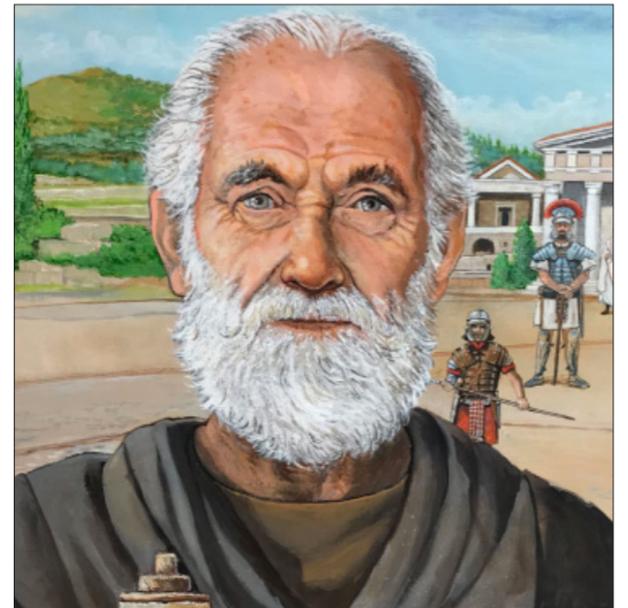
One of John's spiritual sons, Polycarp, was born about 69 A.D. He lived in Smyrna and learned much by listening to John. Polycarp became a leader of the church at Smyrna, and in many ways his character reflected that of his teacher. He had the same noble Christian spirit, full of gentleness, yet inflexible in speaking out against error.

The Church at Smyrna, of which Polycarp was the bishop, was one of those addressed by Christ in the Revelation. Christ told them that persecution was about to come upon them and promised a crown of life to those who were faithful unto death. The promise was undoubtedly repeated by Polycarp to many in his flock to encourage them as the Romans hauled them off to face wild beasts or death by fire.

When the authorities searched for Polycarp, friends persuaded him to leave the city and hide in a farm-house. There he spent his time in prayer. A letter written by the Church of Smyrna told that: "while praying he fell into a trance three days before his capture; and he saw his pillow burning with fire. And he turned and said to those that were with him, 'it must be that I shall be burned alive'

"When his pursuers were on his track he went to another farm-house. Finding him gone they put two slave boys to the torture, and one of them betrayed his place of concealment. Herod, head of the police, sent a body of men to arrest him on Friday evening. Escape was still possible, but the old man refused to flee, saying, "the will of God be done". He came down to meet his pursuers, conversed affably with them, and ordered food to be set before them. While they were eating he prayed, 'remembering all, high and low, who at any time had come in his way, and the Catholic Church throughout the world.' Then he was led away."

The proconsul (an important magistrate) ordered Polycarp to renounce Christ and give obedience to Caesar as Lord. Polycarp answered: "Eighty and six years have I served Christ, nor has He ever done me any harm. How, then, could I blaspheme my King who saved me?"



You threaten the fire that burns for an hour and then is quenched; but you know not of the fire of the judgment to come, and the fire of eternal punishment. Bring what you will."

Polycarp, the last one of those personally taught by the apostles, was burned at the stake on this day, February 23, 155. As the Lord required, Polycarp was faithful unto death; he did so in expectation that he would receive a crown of life from Christ.

Source: [www.christianity.com](http://www.christianity.com)

*Continued from Page 01*

## BIRDS OF A FEATHER FLOCK TOGETHER

Islamist militancy in the region. There are about 12 million Uyghurs, mostly Muslim, living in Xinjiang, which is officially known as the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR). The Uyghurs speak their own language, which is similar to Turkish and see themselves as culturally and ethnically close to Central Asian nations.

A couple of months ago, the US had said that no official delegation would be sent to the Winter Olympics. The US decision came after Washington had spent months wrangling over what position to take on the Games over what it termed China's genocide of the Uyghur minority.

The US took this revengeful decision so as to express solidarity with those of Uyghurs whose rights are being suppressed and put them to untold miseries. But America's announcement that no official delegation would be sent to the 2022 Winter Olympics because of concerns about their human rights record drew fiery opposition from Beijing, which called it a self-directed political farce and threatened unspecified countermeasures. China said, "The US would pay the price for its wrongdoing."



**TK NANDANAN**  
Freelance writer

TK Nandan, a freelance writer, is presently employed with an Indian Government Organization. Married to Jayasree, who is a nurse by profession, he lives in Kochi with their children. He is a regular contributor of articles to several English dailies in India.



## Canada tries to end protests

The Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau activated emergency powers on Monday in an attempt to end protests by the truckers which have paralyzed parts of the capital city of Ottawa. Under the Emergencies Act, the government have undertaken measures to cut off the funding for the protesters and have taken steps to reinforce law enforcement with federal police. But the Canadian Civil Liberties Association said that the government's decision is not sufficiently met since the Emergencies Act is to deal with threats to the sovereignty, security, and territorial integrity of the country. The "Freedom Convoy" started by Canadian truckers who oppose the COVID-19 vaccinate-or-quarantine mandate for cross-border drivers have drawn people in large numbers who oppose Trudeau's policies on everything. Similar trucker protests have sprung up in France, Australia, and New Zealand. The protesters shutdown the Ambassador Bridge which connected Windsor, Ontario in Canada with Detroit in USA for six days before police cleared the protest on Sunday.



## US Embassy in Kyiv is being closed

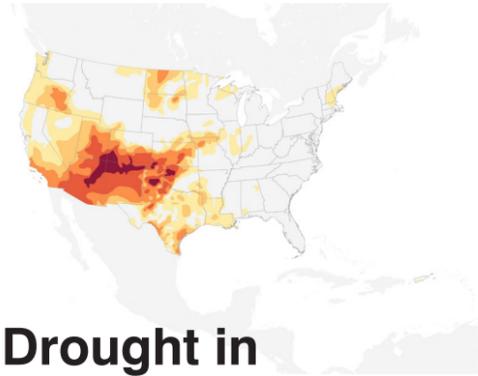
The US is closing its embassy in Kyiv, Ukraine and is relocating the remaining diplomatic personnel in the country to a city in western Ukraine due to the dramatic acceleration of Russian troops being built up near the border. Secretary of State Antony Blinken have strongly urged any remaining US citizens in Ukraine to leave the country immediately amid fears of an imminent Russian invasion. There is an anticipation based on information received from various sources that a Russian attack on Ukraine may happen sometime this week. If Russian President Vladimir Putin decides to invade Ukraine, there would be widespread human suffering. Blinken have spoken twice already with his Ukrainian counterpart Dmytro Kuleba to assure support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. The US have also held conversations with Moscow in an attempt to de-escalate tensions through dialogue.



## 'Broken heart syndrome' can be dangerous

According to University of Washington Medicine, "Broken Heart syndrome" is real and should not be ignored. It is said to cause severe short-term heart muscle failure, which be even fatal in rare cases. The symptoms include chest pressure, palpitations and weakness, which are similar to a heart attack. Most cases are associated with either personal emotional trauma or natural disasters. This syndrome is caused by stress hormones – an inflammation caused by stressful emotions in our brain. Powerful emotions produce chemicals and hormones in the body which may cause a part of the heart to enlarge temporarily and pump poorly, while the rest of the heart functions normally. It was also noted that women are more likely to experience the condition after a stressful event, than men. Although tests may show no signs of blockages in the coronary arteries, it can reveal the ballooning and unusual movement of the lower left heart chamber. Studies show that recovery time is usually within few days or weeks when compared with a month or more as time needed for recovery in case of a heart attack.

## World News



### Drought in Southwest US is extreme

The extreme heat and dry conditions persisting for the past many years in the southwestern part of US is a historic disaster and is considered the driest period of the past 1200 years. The past 22 years witnessed temperatures that have been warmer than the average in all of the years but one. The study done by scientists at the University of California at Los Angeles found that the 21st century has been substantially drier than the previous five decades.



### AMD purchases Xilinx for \$50 billion

Semiconductor designer AMD (Advanced Micro Devices) said that it has finalized the purchase of Xilinx in a deal valued at about \$50 billion. It was said by AMD's CEO Lisa Su that the two businesses are complimentary between AMD's processor technologies and Xilinx's system on chips and field programmable chips. With this acquisition, it is expected that AMD will be able to increase into foothold in key markets like data centers, 5G communications, automotive, industrial, aerospace, and defense; all of which need high performance computing capability. The combined company will have more than 15,000 engineers. AMD who have long been rivals for Central Processor Units (CPUs) in the personal computer (PCs) business is now intensifying its battle with Intel in the data center chip market.