



“The Secret of Contentment”
Philippians 4:10-13
The Joy of Unity: The Book of Philippians

Philippians 4:10-13 – “But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity. ¹¹ Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. ¹² I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. ¹³ I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”

It’s been said that all the world lives in two tents – content and discontent. Which one are you living in?

6 Lessons About Contentment

LESSON #1: Practice the art of joyful generosity.

Verse 10: “But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity.”

Two conditions necessary to help another person:

1. You have to be concerned.
2. You have to look for opportunities.

The essence of discontent is greed – always wanting more than you have. Giving is an antidote to discontentment (Acts 20:35).

LESSON #2: Recognize contentment is something that has to be learned.

Verse 11: “Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content...”

Contentment is a matter of perspective. How we choose to look at things determines our attitude. Do we focus on the positives or negatives in life? Are we thankful for the things we have, or do we spend our time complaining about the things we don’t have? People who are content always find something to be grateful for.

LESSON #3: Realize contentment is not based on circumstances.

Verse 11: “... I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.”

1. Humble means vs. prosperity (v. 12)
2. Being filled vs. going hungry (v. 12)
3. Having abundance vs. suffering need (v. 12)

Definition of Contentment:

- *Greek: autárkēs* – literally means “self-sufficient.”
- Biblical contentment is a sense of inward sufficiency and satisfaction that comes from Christ and transcends our circumstances.

LESSON #4: Love God more than your dream of a prosperous life.

Verse 12: *"I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity..."*

The reason material things can never make us content is because we never have enough of them. Contentment is not having everything we want. It's enjoying everything we have.

LESSON #5: Trust the sovereignty of the omnipotent God.

Ephesians 1:11 – "In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will..." (cf. Rom 8:28)

Do you trust that God is good, even when bad things happen in your life?

- Paul had learned to be content because he had learned to trust.
- Discontentment is a manifestation of unbelief.
- Jerry Bridges: "Contentment is believing that God is good to me right now."

LESSON #6: Learn the secret of God's strength.

Verse 13: *"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."*

Strengthens: Greek *endunamōō* – to be able, to have power, to infuse with strength.

God meets us in every moment and provides exactly what we need. His strength is equal to the task. His grace is sufficient (2Cor 12:9).

- *"For nothing will be impossible with God" (Lk 1:37)*
- *"Is anything too hard for the Lord?" (Gen 18:14)*
- *"There is nothing too hard for You" (Jer 32:17)*
- *"Be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power" (Eph 6:10)*
- *"Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us" (Eph 3:20)*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Would you say that you are more of an "I can" or "I can't" kind of person?
2. Share a time when God strengthened you and enabled you to do something you thought you couldn't do.
3. Why is contentment a matter of perspective – how you choose to look at your circumstances?
4. Why are giving and gratitude antidotes to discontentment?
5. Jerry Bridges said: "Contentment is believing that God is good to me right now." How is contentment related to the sovereignty of God?