

## 2 Cor. 11 Paul's secret of being content

Paul went through very difficult emotional, spiritual and physical situations as described in 2 Corinthians 11 yet he could say in Philippians 4:11-12 that he *knows the secret to being content in any and every situation*. He says it twice in those verses but he uses 2 different words for "learned". *Manthano* means a gradual understanding over time through experience and teaching, so it's a process over time. The 2<sup>nd</sup> (*mueo*) is an initiation into insight that is largely experiential. Purely school of hard knocks and is usually learning through a set of circumstances. What are Paul's secrets to being content even in unjust shipwrecks, beatings, imprisonments, etc?

- 1. Foundation of Faith.** Faith is based on evidence of what Jesus did in the past and results in trust that God has a higher purpose, is in control, and I can submit to whatever is happening in the present based on the foundation of a sovereign Lord. (Galatians 2:20) *I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*
- 2. Present Positivity:** Gratitude's Greatness Phil. 4:6-7 *With thanksgiving and In everything give thanks.* Secret: Power of praise and gratitude that everything is as it is right now is key.
- 3. Eternal Eyes:** Glimpse of glory 2 Cor. 12 - Paul experiences our future hope. 2 Corinthians 4:17-18: *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory...* Paul weighed everything according to our future eternal hope.

### Grow Group Questions:

1. Do you think it is wrong to learn to be content in my circumstances yet striving to improve them or solve an issue?
2. What do I say to someone who says, "If God is in control over everything, then He must not be good because of the tragedy I am going through". Why might God allow or even be the source of difficulties for us?
3. Why is it so important to gain the head knowledge (*manthano* learning), but then have an experience where I must go through the wringer to gain *mueo* learning?
4. Why is an act of the will to give praise and thanksgiving in difficult situations so incredibly powerful for transforming our relationship with God? What are the obstacles to choosing to praise or give thanks in tough times? (Why don't we?)