

## Can Contentment Truly Be Found? - Part 1 Philippians 4:10-18

### Introduction:

1. There are some people who are like a thermometer, but there are others who are like a thermostat.
  - A thermometer is always going up and down depending on the temperature around it. It doesn't change things, but allows things to change it. Some people are like this. They are always a "victim" of their circumstances.
  - A thermostat regulates the surroundings and changes them when they need to be changed (A/C in house). Which one best describes you?
2. The apostle Paul was a thermostat. Instead of going up and down, as situations changed, he remained steady and his inner attitude was one of contentment. vs. 11
3. Today, we live in a very discontent society. By the world's standards, most people in America are affluent and wealthy, yet with all our materialistic prosperity, people don't seem happy and content.
  - There always seems to be an insatiable desire for more.
  - The ever elusive contentment - people just can't seem to find it.
4. When a person has learned the secret of contentment and there is an inner peace inside of them, they have a treasure that is priceless.
5. Let's read verse 11 again and notice a couple of insightful truths:
  - *"For I have learned"* - contentment isn't something that comes natural. We must learn to be content. Contentment will not find you, you must find it. You don't stumble on it accidentally. It goes against our fleshly nature and must be learned.
  - *"in whatsoever state I am"* - contentment has nothing to do with our circumstances. Paul is in prison while writing this. Sometimes we mistakenly think, "If this would just happen or that, I would be content and happy." But it doesn't give a lasting contentment. Circumstances may give a mountain top along the way, but nothing lasting.
6. Wouldn't it be incredible if contentment could become a way of life? Where contentment is the "norm" instead of the exception. I've got great news - it can be! This text will explain to us how we can live life in a state of contentment.

### First, we must learn to rejoice in the Giver, instead of the gift. vs. 10

1. Paul is thanking the church for a love gift that they had sent him, but notice that Paul rejoices in the Lord, not their gift.
2. He receives this gift and the first thing he does is rejoice in the Lord. Look at verse 4. Paul practiced what he preached.
3. When you receive a gift or blessing, what is your first reaction?
  - Do you get excited over the gift?
  - Or, do you immediately rejoice in the Lord and give thanks to him?
4. Our reaction to blessings is so important because it creates in us a mindset that will determine whether we are content or discontent. Let me explain:
  - If we rejoice in the gift, this means we get an emotional high from that gift or blessing. This high can become addictive and can create an unquenchable thirst

for more, and more. We develop an addiction to blessings, and when there isn't visible evidence of them, we become discontent.

- But if we rejoice in the Giver, then we view every blessing as a gift of God's grace that we don't deserve. If this is our attitude, than we aren't always looking for more. We just stand amazed at the blessings God does give and aren't always looking for more.
5. If we are to learn to be content, like Paul, we must learn to rejoice in the Lord (the Giver), not the gift.

**Second, we must look to Christ for strength in every situation. vs. 12-13**

1. Notice verse 12. Paul realized that life has its ups and downs. We have experienced this.
  - A person can be prosperous one day and penniless the next.
  - A person can be healthy one day and in the hospital the next.
  - A person can have a great job one day and be unemployed the next.
  - A person can be happy and not have a care in the world, and the next day be grief-stricken over the death of a loved one (my dad).
2. Paul didn't expect to be basking in blessings constantly. He realized that life has its share of hard times. But he also realized that whether it was good times of prosperity or bad times of adversity, he knew where his strength came from. It came through Jesus Christ who lived within him. vs. 13; cf. **Colossians 1:27; Galatians 2:20**
3. Paul understood that as long as Christ's power was flowing in and through him, there was no situation that he couldn't be victorious over. This brought an inner peace and contentment.
4. Let's apply this principle to our lives. We have to accept the fact that there will be times of blessing, but also be times of heartache and adversity. It is easy to get false expectations of the Christian life.
  - Pray this little prayer and you have constant blessings.
  - Exercise enough faith, and you will have wealth and prosperity.
  - You can speak into existence whatever it is you desire.
5. These are all false notions that come through wrongly dividing God's Word, but God did promise His sustaining power in every situation (times of abasing and abounding, times of fullness and hunger, times of blessing and suffering).
6. Do you know this power? Does Christ live within you? If not, you can know the reality of His resurrection power today.
7. Next week we will continue this message.