

SCRIPTURE: PHILIPPIANS 4:10-13

MAIN TAKEAWAY

Contentment is the art of detaching our joy from our circumstances and finding it in Christ alone. We must learn this as we lean into His strength in any and every situation and quietly trust His care over every detail of our lives.

Read: Philippians 4:10-13

Summary: Paul rejoiced that the Philippian church once again had a chance to help him and provide for him by sending a gift during his imprisonment. However, Paul wanted to assure them that he was okay and that they did not need to feel anxious about his condition. He had learned, through multiple circumstances throughout his life, how to be content in Christ, whether abounding or suffering. Christ's strength was enough for him in all situations.

Message Connection: The message focused on three main questions about the topic of contentment. We will look at each of these in a moment but first let's consider the issue together.

Discussion: What comes to mind when you hear the word contentment? Anything negative? What are the main questions you have regarding contentment? Also, what stood out to you in the message or the podcast from this weekend?

Teaching Point 1: What is contentment?

Read: *I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. (verses 10-11)*

Summary: We learned in the message that the word Paul uses for contentment is the Greek word that means (self-sufficient). Paul of course does not mean that he is sufficient in himself or that he can meet his own needs. He means that his joy and peace are not attached to his circumstances. He does not need things to go his way in order to be satisfied and fulfilled. And when things do go his way, he does not find his ultimate joy and satisfaction in those things. He is free (self-sufficient) from circumstances.

Discussion: How does Paul's contentment challenge you? What do you think he means that he learned this? How have you learned it? One way we can test our contentment is to look at our complaints (now), our regrets (past), and our anxieties (future). How are you doing in these areas?

Teaching Point 2: How does contentment work?

Read: *I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. (verse 12)*

Summary: Paul learned to be content in any situation, whether high or low, feast or famine, plenty or broke. We likely associate contentment with times of need or seasons of difficulty. But Paul also learned to be content in prosperity and abundance. This means Paul did not allow any blessings or successes to define him or be his source of joy.

Discussion: How might success, promotions, and abundance produce discontentment in us? Is contentment something our mind goes to when we've just received news of a significant career or lifestyle advancement? What does contentment look like in low circumstances? Should we just accept our situation and never seek to improve? How might we balance ambition (wanting to improve) with contentment (satisfied in any situation)?

Teaching Point 3: Where do we find contentment?

Read: *I can do all this through him who gives me strength (verse 13)*

Summary: Paul's ability to be content was not found in himself or in his particular personality: it was in Christ alone. He leaned into Jesus and the strength that He supplies. This is the only way we can unhitch our joy from our circumstances.

Discussion: What does it mean to be content in Christ's strength? How does His strength and power enable us to be content in highs and lows and everything in between? How does His death and resurrection in particular make us content?

Additional Notes:
