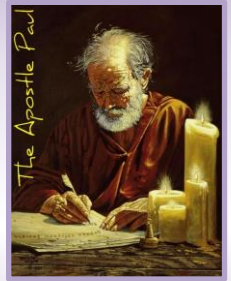


# PHILIPPIANS

## Joy In Christ



### Lesson 13: The Joy of Contentment ... [PHILIPPIANS 4:10-23]

#### PREVIEW

Paul commends the Philippians on their renewed support of him financially. He explains that, through the strengthening of the Lord, he is able to be content in prosperity or in humility. His concern, however, is not for the money but for the Philippians to gain blessings from their faithful giving. He closes with heartfelt greetings to all the brethren, emphasizing that all of our needs are met through the riches of the Lord bestowed on us.

One major cause of anxiety is money – too much of it or too little of it. The rich worry about losing it and the poor worry about getting it. Money in itself is morally neutral – it is the love of money that is the root of all kinds of evil (1 Timothy 6:10).

God has promised to provide us with our needs, not our desires. Christ assured His disciples that the heavenly Father would always supply food, drink and clothing for His own (Matthew 6:25, 31). In this section Paul rejoices in God's faithfulness to meet his financial needs through their gift sent to him by the church.

#### PHILIPPIANS GENEROSITY: (4:10-20)

The church sent Epaphroditus as its messenger to give Paul some financial assistance. His return afforded the apostle an opportunity to thank the church in writing.

#### PAUL'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE GIFT (4:10-13)

Paul rejoiced in the Philippian's renewal of interest (4:10). He rejoiced in the Lord greatly when he received their gift. Rejoicing is usually not self-initiated; it is caused by someone or something. Paul rejoiced when he saw the believers' personal interest in him. The phrase **WERE CONCERNED** literally means "*the act of thinking on behalf of me*". He was in their thoughts constantly. Their care for him was **RENEWED**.

#### PAUL REJOICED IN THE LESSONS OF CONTENTMENT (4:11-12)

Paul uses **three** verbs to describe his total acceptance of his condition.

(1) **CONTENT**: he learned to be self-sufficient regardless of whether he had much or little. Paul had learned to manage his financial affairs properly. He controlled the money and did not permit money or the lack of it to decrease his effectiveness of his ministry or the joy of his heart (1 Timothy 6:6-8).

(2) **GET ALONG WITH HUMBLE MEANS**: Paul knew how to get along with humble means and how to live in prosperity. He knew how to get along with little and how to get along with much. He did not become depressed when he found himself in want (2 Corinthians 11:27). The apostle also knew how to receive gifts and how to use that financial assistance.

(3) **HAVE LEARNED**: Paul was instructed to trust in God regardless of his financial circumstances. Food and money, in either shortage or abundance, did not alter Paul's spirituality.

#### PAUL REJOICED IN CHRIST'S ENABLEMENT (4:13)

Paul's statement of confidence (**I CAN DO**) did not originate from egotistical pride. The Greek verb refers to possessing enough strength of will to control the feelings and the body. Divine strength is made perfect through his human weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9). The more dependent on God he became, the stronger he developed. Paul's strength came from his union with Christ, who had told His disciples that they could do nothing apart from Him (John 15:5).

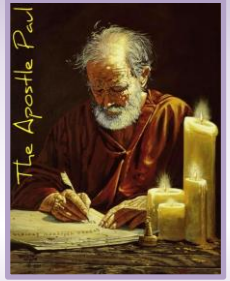
#### PAUL'S EVALUATION OF THE GIFT (4:14-20)

#### PAUL REJOICED OVER THE PHILIPPIANS' PRESENT GIFT (4:14)

To the Philippian believers Paul said with thanksgiving, **YOU HAVE DONE WELL**. Whenever people complete a task and do it well, they can have a sense of personal satisfaction and joy (Galatians 6:4). At the judgment seat, Christ will reward good and faithful servants for doing well (Matthew 25:23).

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#### PAUL REJOICED OVER THE PHILIPPIANS' PAST GIFTS (4:15-16)

Paul remembered **two** things they had done for him during his second missionary journey about ten years earlier (~AD 49-52).

(1) They had written to him about his financial needs after he left their city (4:15). Paul never asked for support, but he did not refuse it if it came voluntarily from outside sources. He never took money from the people he was presently ministering. Only the church at Philippi had **SHARED** with him via letters, messengers, and gifts.

(2) The Philippians sent gifts on **two** separate occasions during the time Paul ministered in Thessalonica (4:16). Paul's next missionary stop after Philippi was Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-9), where he again experienced need, including lack of funds for food and lodging. Their gifts permitted him to give more time to evangelistic outreach, both in the synagogue and among the pagan idol worshipers (1 Thessalonians 1:9).

#### PAUL REJOICED OVER THE PHILIPPIANS' FUTURE REWARD (4:17)

Paul was criticized for both his refusal to take money from one group and his willingness to accept it from another. When he labored in Philippi, he did not take their money; but when he moved on to the cities of Thessalonica and Corinth, he gladly received Philippi's financial support (1 Thessalonians 2:3-8).

Paul now denied that he sought their money. He did not seek, or desire, to add one gift upon another. They had already given to him twice; now he dispelled the notion that he was after a 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> gift or even more.

#### PAUL REJOICED OVER THE PHILIPPIANS' SACRIFICE TO GOD (4:18)

Paul now looked at how their gift affected him and God. **Three** verbs are given to describe its impact upon him.

(1) **I HAVE ALL.** He received a full payment from them for his total investment of time in their lives. This is a business term that speaks of total reimbursement.

(2) **AND ABOUND.** Paul actually received more than he expected or deserved.

(3) **I AM FULL.** Paul now was in a financial position without any immediate need. He did not need any more money from them.

#### PAUL REJOICED OVER GOD'S SUFFICIENCY (4:19-20)

By making the apostle full, the church had created a financial need for itself (**ALL YOUR NEED**). They had poured out of the container of their lives into the vessel of Paul. He informed them that God would fill them back up to the brim. A person always receives more than what he/she gives. God will always make up the difference (2 Corinthians 9:8). Paul gave praise to God for meeting the needs of both the church and himself (4:20). He deserved the glory for that which He had done.

#### GREETING AND BLESSINGS: (4:21-23)

##### GREETING FROM PAUL AND THE BRETHREN (4:21)

Paul saluted **ALL GOD'S PEOPLE IN CHRIST JESUS**. He spoke to the entire church as a whole, but he now wanted to be remembered to each individual believer.

##### GREETING FROM THE SAINTS (4:22)

The saints in Rome would include the membership of the church in that city. When Paul announced the greetings of the next group, the Philippians probably gasped in amazement. The Romans also wanted to greet them, (**ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO BELONG TO CAESAR'S HOUSEHOLD**). Through Paul's imprisonment and witness, some servants, soldiers, and relatives in the emperor's household had been saved. Paul wanted them to rejoice with him over what God had accomplished.

##### BENEDICTION (4:23)

Paul always magnified the grace of God. He wanted the church to experience the daily sustaining grace that all people need (John 1:16). Such grace is for all believers, not just a select few. The theme of the grace of God begins and ends the epistle.

