



## Transcendent Joy: Learning How to Rejoice No Matter What

Message #21: **The Secret to Learning Contentment** (Philippians 4:10-13) – May 7, 2023 - Pastor Jeff

- One of the great virtues God has provided us in this life is contentment, yet so many seem to struggle with being discontent. We live in a culture that is consumed with trying to find contentment in all the wrong ways (having more, better job, new spouse, different location, better education, new government, etc.).
- This dissatisfaction shows up in greediness, complaining, resentment, coveting, never having enough and so many other ways. Proverbs 27:20 reminds us that *“Sheol and Abaddon are never satisfied, nor are the eyes of man ever satisfied.”* Paul wants the church to learn the secret of being content in whatever circumstances may come (and he writes this being in very restricted circumstances).
- As usual, this virtue, like all others, is best learned when it finds its ultimate satisfaction in a relationship with Christ. In this passage, Paul reveals the secret, and it is found in what we can learn to appreciate, accept and appropriate.

### ① Appreciate your providential care from God (4:10)

- Paul is joyfully thankful for the special gift the Philippians gave to meet his needs. They always had a *“concern”* for Paul's needs, but *“lacked opportunity”*.
- Paul recognizes the Lord is the one who orchestrates our opportunities at the time and by the means He arranges. He is the God who providentially oversees all the details of our life (Rom. 11:36). Just at the right time, God arranged the *“opportunity”* for the church to meet his need.

### ② Accept your personal circumstances from God (4:11-12)

- Paul's words *“not that I speak from want”* sound over the top since he himself was living life in chains, confined in his own rented quarters, without privacy and all the normal freedoms of life. Yet he had *“learned to be content”* (v. 11; 1 Tim. 6:8). The secret to contentment is accepting all the God-ordained or God-allowed circumstances you cannot control or change.
- Paul modeled the willingness to live satisfactorily with little (v. 12: *“humble means”*). Paul told Timothy *“godliness with contentment is great gain”* (1 Tim. 6:6) and we can learn to be content *“with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties for Christ's sake”* (2 Cor. 12:9-10).
- Paul modeled a willingness to be content *“in prosperity”* or *“any and every circumstance”* (v. 12). True satisfaction in life is not related to what is happening on the outside of life, but due to the rich resources of Christ in the inside (Psalm 107:9)

### ③ Appropriate your powerful capabilities from God (4:13)

- This popular verse is teaching us that we are Christ-sufficient, not self-sufficient. As believers, we cannot do whatever we want to do (Paul couldn't free himself from the chain and we are unable to live without food among many other things) nor can we say, *“I just cannot do”* what God has empowered us to do.

- The God who created all things (Isa. 44:24), controls all things (Isa. 43:13), orchestrates all things (Rom. 8:28) and provides all things (1 Tim 6:17) has infused His power in His children (“*through Him who strengthens me*”) to do whatever He calls us to do for His sake in the kingdom (e.g., be content, trust, persevere, grateful, hopeful, resist, love, forgive, bear, obey, renew, press on, suffer, overcome evil with good, etc.)