



Brown Community Group

Discussion Guide

To Be Content: In All Things - Philippians 4:10-23
November 8, 2020

I. Starter Thoughts:

How many times have we chased after possessions, things or relationships to be content? While possibly giving us a brief happiness or satisfaction from these items or things, where you truly satisfied and spiritually content to the inner core of your person? Did they really satisfy your purpose in life, your spiritual peace or ability to accept whatever God has planned for your life? Can you think of a brief or extended period whereby you could truly say you were content?

Today we will be continuing our series on Contentment with Paul reaching his penultimate message and application.

II. Scripture Philippians 4:10-23

But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity. [11] Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. [12] I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. [13] I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. [14] Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction. [15] You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone; [16] for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs. [17] Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account. [18] But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God. [19] And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. [20] Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen. [21] Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. [22] All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household. [23] The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Explanation:

Paul began this epistle by sharing some personal information about his situation in Rome (1:12-26). He has now switched back from his concerns for the Philippians (1:27—4:9) to his own circumstances (4:10-20). First, Paul thanked his brethren for their recent gift that Epaphroditus had delivered to him, but Paul did not want the Philippians to misunderstand him. He was not

rejoicing primarily because their gift had met his need, but because their gift expressed their love and concern for him. Paul had "learned to be content," and to rejoice regardless of his physical "circumstances." Such contentment is not a natural gift. Specifically, Paul could be equally content with little or with much, materially, because he was *rich spiritually*. Both poverty and wealth bring temptations with them (Prov. 30:7-9). The apostle had learned how to handle both "need" and "abundance" in every individual situation, and in all types of situations. We cannot read this (vv. 10-20) thoughtfully without appreciating the apostle Paul's sensitivity to his Philippian readers. He was careful to balance what he said. He wanted them to understand his genuine gratitude for their gifts, on the one hand, and his contentment with whatever God sent his way on the other. In our day, we tend to go to one of these extremes or the other in dealing with those who give us gifts. We may give these people the impression that we do not appreciate their gift, or we may lead them to conclude that we are greedy. A proper balance must rest on genuine contentment and should communicate both appreciation and faith. How could Paul be content? His contentment did not come through will power or the power of positive thinking. It was Jesus Christ who enabled him to be content.

III. Discussion Questions:

1. In verse 10, why was Paul rejoicing? What does it mean "you have revived your concern for me" (hint look at Vs 17-18)?
2. Why would Paul bring up these points to the Philippians concerning their gifts?
3. Verses 11-13 are some of the most important, deep spiritual and important verses in the Bible, let's look at the following questions to understand more depth:
 - a. How did Paul's circumstances affect his contentment? Describe some of the terrible and good things that had recently happened to him?
 - b. What is the root cause of discontentment?
 - c. Let's discuss example characteristics of discontentment: (Envy, jealousy, anger, coveting, complaining)
 - d. Does Paul teach that having an abundance is not good? What turns "abundance" into a trap in our lives?
 - e. What are some common areas of discontentment? What is the world's solution to discontentment?
4. Let's discuss the possible outcomes when a person sets his/her heart on the things of this world?
 - a. They get what they want, but soon find out that they are left wanting more, creating discontent.
 - b. They do not get what they want, and thus create discontent.
5. What is the core truth of Paul's contentment?
6. Paul's ending in Verses 19-20 are again some of the most famous verses in the Bible with deep meaning. What lessons can we apply immediately from these words in our life?