

Philippians 4:11-13 – Learning Contentment

TSK, GreekLexicon, Calvin, Handfuls, Rienecker, Geneva, Lightfoot, Poole, Clarke, Barnes, Henry, Gill, Robertson, Eclectic, JFB, Hanna, Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: **Rich people aren't often satisfied.** The more they get, the more they usually want.” But discontent is not limited to the rich. The **poor are often discontented as well.** And they will complain and whine about their financial state.

The effect of discontent is often nasty. **Discontented people would ignore their family, their faith, and even their future** to get more. And because they are discontented, they **aren't as thankful as they should!** But we are commanded to be thankful. So on Thanksgiving Day 2019, you will learn how to be content.

Our headings are:

The responsibility to be content

The results of learning to be content

The reason you are able to be content

Our goals are: **That you will learn to be content knowing you are rich in Jesus, and you will then share of the physical and spiritual gifts God has given to you.**

The responsibility to be content

11 **Not that I speak in regard to need,** for I have **learned** in **whatever state** I am, **to be content:**

1. What does it mean to be contented?

It means to be satisfied with what one has without murmuring or complaining. Of course **it did not mean** that the Apostle Paul **had no motivation** to work harder and improve. He worked really hard. He simply meant...

a. He stopped obsessing and complaining when he lacked physical wants

b. He did not become greedy when he had a lot.

2. The Apostle Paul had to learn to be content; it was his Christian responsibility.

Since he had to learn contentment, it means **this was not a normal part of his human nature!** (Ask your babies!) Literally, he had to take **contentment learning lessons.** So when he was in a cold Roman prison, he had to learn to be contented there. When he had his belly full, he had to learn contentment there.

3. Keep in mind the Apostle Paul wasn't desperate for the food, but he was thankful for the care and fellowship he enjoyed with the Philippians.

Knowing that the Apostle Paul wasn't desperate, it would have tempered the Philippians. They wouldn't think too much of themselves **seeing their gifts were not the most important things to the Apostle Paul.**

4. Lessons:

a. Learn to be content and teach your children to be content. Reflect on the riches you have in Jesus—**chosen by the Father, redeemed by the Son, and sealed by the Spirit!** Your **name is written in heaven,** your **new home.** You have **beautiful promises** – 2 of them. You have **family** and **friends.** You can **communication with God** of the universe! These things will make you content! And think of **living in North America** and all its blessings! This is the richest continent! Have you ever starved?

b. Some who have much always crave more and give less. Rich people give a lower % of their money. If you are rich, be warned!

c. Some who are poor tend to become covetous and may be tempted steal so they can get their wants

met. Some may not steal but they constantly complain they have little.

d. Don't be rich and greedy; don't be poor and whine? If you are, reflect back on your riches.

The results of learning to be content

12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

1. Apostle Paul stated the results of learning to be content.

He could take both being abased and abounding in (any and) all things without sinning. (He was not speaking here of spiritual humility but of physical abasement-poverty.) If he had nothing to eat or drink or was cold and naked, he would still be satisfied. If he were feeling sick, if he were alone, or if he had no money in his pocket, because he had learned contentment, he was fine. He did not fight for more. Look at what he endured.

1 Corinthians 4:11 To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless.

2 Corinthians 11:27 in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness —

And these things would have been even more difficult to take as he was a rich man before he became a Christian. He had power and influence. He was well-educated and was rich. But he was now contented. When he had little, he was contented.

When he had a lot, he was contented.

When he had a lot and it passed, he was contented. He did not crave for more.

The phrase “be full” is used in reference to animals filled with grass...and nothing satisfies animals more!

2. The Philippians themselves understood this as they were poor – quite poor, and yet they were not only contented, but they helped others who were poorer than they, including the saints in Jerusalem.

2Corinthians 8:2 that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. 3 For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, 4 imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

3. Lessons:

a. When your soul is satisfied, you will learn to endure physical hardships, even going without food, in this life- without complaining. Then and only then will you be satisfied. And you children, maybe you don't get the last piece of the pie, that's okay. You won't die. You already have the greatest satisfaction of all – your name is written in God's book in heaven.

b. If you have more wealth than others, guard your heart so that you do not become greedy and so fight for more, and more, and more. Guard yourselves, young people, as you think of your careers. Life is much more than the biggest paycheck.

c. Prosperity tends to puff-up the heart and poverty tends to depress the heart. Both are sins. Both hinder your ability to serve God like you should. This leads to our next point. How to fix the problem!

The reason you can be content

13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

1. Apostle Paul was able to be content because of the one who strengthened his soul.

Have you ever seen the meme of someone trying to open a jar with a tight lid and saying, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me?” Or saying that when you struggle open a siezed lug nut on a wheel...? That is a misuse of Scripture. You have to understand it in the context in which it was spoken. What does it mean to be strengthened? What this promise referring to physical strength? No! Christ strengthened him.

2. How did the Lord Jesus strengthen Apostle Paul?

The Lord **renewed Apostle Paul's will when he saved his soul** and moved Paul to rest in him.

Philippians 2:13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

Isaiah 45:24 He shall say, 'Surely in the LORD I have righteousness and strength. To Him men shall come, And all shall be ashamed Who are incensed against Him.

Ephesians 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

Didn't Jesus himself say that if you remain in him you will be nourished-strengthened-and bear much fruit?

John 15:5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

So he was able to be contented in poverty and plenty. He never complained about it nor became greedy.

3. Lessons:

a. So when God gives you a BMW don't wind down your window in winter so people could see you.

If you have riches, enjoy it. Don't rub your wealth in other people's faces! Keep in mind **they may have more than you in other areas**. And remember to say, "I have joy in my heart that comes from Jesus and if this BMW is burned up, I am contented with the better things I have!

b. And when you see others going on European vacations, don't say, "I will work more and ignore my family so I too can go to Europe!" Say, "As long as I am faithful to the Lord, whatever he gives me, I will enjoy." Remember, it is okay not to be rich like others. **Camping is okay too.**

c. Now let's say you don't have a wife, or you don't have a good husband, don't say, "I can't be contented until I have a wife," or "I can't be contented until I have a better husband." Rather, say, "My happiness is in Jesus, and while I don't have all things as people around me, I am **contented that Jesus is always with me and I will spend eternity with him.**"

2 Corinthians 1:7 And our hope for you is steadfast, because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also you will partake of the consolation.

Hebrews 13:3 Remember the prisoners as if chained with them — those who are mistreated — since you yourselves are in the body also.

The more you yield to Christ, the more he will equip you with strength to say "no" to sin!

Conclusion:

Those who are in Jesus Christ will learn they are already rich and therefore ought to be contented with what they have in this life, whether they have a little or a lot.

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Rejoice in all circumstances of your life. You are rich! Your name is written in heaven! You have a mansion waiting for you there. But the knowledge must never end with you.

2. Teach your children to be contented with what they have. Show them they deserved nothing.

3. Teach your children not to boast. Their new toy or cell phone means nothing in the long run. It will all go bad in the end. They will fall and screens will crack. Or they will get old and will have to be replaced.

4. Teach your children to be generous and to never get tired in doing well. Christmas is coming! Teach them this now! Teach them to share instead of receiving.

5. They can learn contentment when they are enabled through Jesus Christ. They will know he has done everything they truly need and has given them possessions that no one can take away – even eternal life.

Finally: If you are not a Christian, nothing you have will last. Everything will either get old, be stolen, or burn up. So if you are not a Christian, don't put your hope in things that perish. Put your hope in Jesus who will save you, give you assurance of eternal blessings, and give you full satisfaction in your heart.