



Empowering People to Change the World

## **Leverage Point #13**

### **Paul's Secret to Contentment**

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## Paul's Secret to Contentment

- Finishing up this awesome book of Philippians. Our theme is “Joy Leverage.”
- We have looked at this fabulous powerful book 16 times.
- If anyone should have lacked joy it would have been Paul—shipwrecked, beaten times unnumbered, betrayed many times by friends, yet so full of joy.
- And here at the end we see the secret to Paul's joy—contentment. He is absolutely the most content guy in all of the Scripture!
- **Theme:** (Philippians 4:4) Rejoice in the Lord—change of mind! Everything falls under that rubric.
- Old Adage: Sow a thought, reap an action. Sow an action, reap a habit. Sow a habit, reap a character. Sow a character, reap a destiny.
- How you think really matters. Not our feelings. Sow our feelings, we reap a roller coaster life! Rejoice in the Lord!!
- We want our feelings to become slaves to our thinking. Paul understood that—change your mind, rejoice in the Lord.
- Last week, we looked at how joy overcomes worry, and now Paul is showing us the secrets to contentment!

## Paul's Secret to Contentment

### Philippians 4:9

***<sup>9</sup> The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.***

- Paul is saying I'm an example to you—you see the peace of the Lord on me, now imitate me!

- The things you've learned and seen in me, put them into action.
  - Build joyful relationships in your life.
  - Be vulnerable and open.
  - Pray about everything.
  - Renew your mind with beauty.
- So many of you are incredible examples of contentment and peace in your life—I think of Don Hulin and his cancer and Billie Boogard and her cancer and Jan losing her leg.

### **Philippians 4:10-12**

***<sup>10</sup> But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity. <sup>11</sup> Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: <sup>12</sup> 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.***

- Contentment is a learned thing. You may not lack Contentment 101 and 102 but it seems to be a mandatory course and not an elective.
- “I have learned contentment.” I made up my mind no matter what happens to me. He writes to Timothy, “Godliness with contentment is of great gain.” That’s true riches! Riches cannot be taken with us but we can send it ahead—laying up treasures through the lives that are transformed.
  - Both poverty and prosperity come with serious snares.
  - Poverty can leave us bitter, resenting the lack of whatever it is we want.
  - Prosperity can trigger pride, self-reliance and complacency.

- For example, we live in a nation where catalogues are sent to our house. Covetousness is right before our eyes! You order anything and you will get a thousands of catalogues. If you buy something for your house, or vitamins, you get piles of catalogues. Constant temptation to lack of contentment. Bigger house, nicer car, better clothes, etc.
- For example, you are how tall and you weigh what? You are how old and you have grey what? You see the photos of the woman who weighs 900 lbs and now after one week she looks like Barbie! Before and After. And now it's the guy who is 80 years old and he looks like the Hulk! Taking Botox, shooting into our wrinkles which paralyzes the muscles. The wrinkles go away because they just lay down and die! You can't move your face any more but your wrinkles are gone. Hey, I worked hard for these wrinkles and this grey hair! Every one of them has a story.
- No one is content. I mean look at this woman, before she was 4'11 and weighed 400 lbs and now she's 6'4 and thin! Surgery and vitamins did it. There is a discontent that is not good! It used to be our possessions but now it's our person.
- I love you just the way you are!! Makes me feel right at home.
- Paul "learned to be content" whatever his state.

**How can we be content? What is Paul's secret that we can learn from?**

### **Philippians 4:10 A Rejoicing Spirit**

- I'm rejoicing that your care is blooming (like a flower opening up.)
- Rejoicing that they took opportunity to help him. They have sent offerings to him several times. It was a financial gift because the prison did not provide for him. He had to have these gifts to survive.

- Rejoicing not that his needs are met because he was already content. He is thankful for the gift, but then he says I am content even if I did not have it.
- Rejoicing for their sake! For the blessings they will receive for giving—that they cared enough, loved enough to give!

### **Philippians 4:13 Christ Conquering Faith**

**<sup>13</sup> *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.***

- This is one of those passages that is tattooed on so many athletes. It is kind of a “spiritual rabbit foot” that has more superstitious beliefs than “God helps those help themselves.”
- Important to note that the point is not the achievement of something (because Paul is content to be abased or abound) but rather to allow Christ’s power to sustain in difficulty and scarcity, and enhance the enjoyment of abundance and prosperity.
- Here is what it literally means: I can find contentment in great defeat, scarcity, even poverty as well as victorious abundance, through Christ’s power working in me!
- The first part of this letter seems to be Paul taking credit for his ability to be content: “I know how to be abased and I know how to abound” but now he explains his power—Christ gives him the strength.
- So we are required to be *strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might* (Eph. 6:10), and to be *strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus* (2 Tim. 2:1); and we are *strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man*, Eph. 3:16.
- The word in the original is a participle of the present tense, *en toū endynamounti me Christou*, and denotes a present and continued act; as if he had said, “Through Christ, who is

strengthening me, and does continually strengthen me; it is by His constant and renewed strength I am enabled to act in every thing; I wholly depend upon Him for all my spiritual power.'

- Paul had found an anchor to his soul. One of the great secrets to Paul's mind and heart was that Christ would strengthen him during dark times.
- Nothing happens to us, it only happens for us! We are not just to endure hard times, but to grow from them!
- ***“Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” (James 1:2–4)***

#### **Philippians 4:14-18 Abundance Mentality**

***<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress. <sup>15</sup> Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. <sup>16</sup> For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities. <sup>17</sup> Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. <sup>18</sup> Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.***

- You cannot be content without an abundance mentality! He says, “I am full,” “I have all and abound.”
- “There’s always more” mentality. Paul is saying there’s more and a lot more available.
- Most people are deeply scripted in a “Scarcity Mentality.”

- They see life as having only so much, as though there were only one pie out there. And if someone were to get a big piece of the pie, it would mean less for me.
  - The Scarcity Mentality is the zero-sum paradigm of life. People with a Scarcity Mentality have a very difficult time sharing recognition and credit, power or profit—even with those who help in the production.
  - They also have a hard time being genuinely happy for the success of other people.
- Paul has an “Abundance Mentality” which flows out of a deep inner sense of personal worth or security.
    - It is the paradigm that there is plenty out there and enough to spare for everybody.
    - It results in the sharing of prestige, recognition, profits and decision-making. It opens possibilities, options, alternatives and creativity.
    - Learn to see opportunity—look for it; believe God for it and step into it.
    - Remind yourself that there is plenty! There is plenty! We have a God of plenty—the glass is not half-empty but half-full.

A grateful heart is at the center of an abundant life. In his book, *Life, the Truth, and Being Free*, coach and speaker Steve Maraboli says, “Those with a grateful mindset tend to see the message in the mess. And even though life may knock them down, the grateful find reasons, if even small ones, to get up.”

## **Philippians 4:19-20 Kingdom Economics**

***<sup>19</sup> And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. <sup>20</sup> Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.***

- The wealth to cover your needs comes from the riches of Christ. He is our provider.
- We are actually commanded to pray, “Give us this day our daily bread.”
  - That prayer is calling down God’s resources in heaven into our lives on earth.
  - It is reaching up and begging God for His power, His gifts, His wisdom.
- "He shall do it, not only as your God, but as my God, who takes what is done to me as done to Himself. You supplied my needs, according to your poverty; and He shall supply yours, according to His riches.'

## **Philippians 4:21-23**

***<sup>21</sup> Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. <sup>22</sup> All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar's household. <sup>23</sup> The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.***

**Paul concludes with the joy of a church that loves one another!  
It's all about Jesus and it's all about grace**



