

Philippians 4:10-23

Study Questions - Lesson 10

1. This week's memory verse is Philippians 4:12-13

"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 the abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

2. Read Philippians 4:10-23. It had been some time since the Philippians had sent a gift to Paul. How would they have been encouraged by verse 10?
3. Describe some of the hardships Paul experienced:
 - o 2 Corinthians 11:23-28
 - o 2 Corinthians 12:7-10
 - o Philippians 4:12
4. What important truths did he learn through hardships according to Philippians 4:11, 13?
5. Use a dictionary to define:
 - o Content
 - o Discontent

6. How does our culture promote discontentment through advertising, worldly values, and its role models?
 - o What is contentment according to our culture?
 - o How can believers resist the influence of what the world calls contentment?
7. List a few of the consequences of discontentment.
8. What evidence of discontentment is seen in the Israelites? Exodus 16:1-3; Numbers 11:4-6
 - o How did the Lord view their discontentment? Numbers 11:1
 - o What does complaining reveal about a believer's attitude toward the Lord?
9. Believing God is at work in our difficulties help to produce contentment. What were a few reasons the Lord allowed the Israelites to experience hardships? Deuteronomy 8:2-5, 15-18
10. In verse 11 it states Paul *learned* contentment. How can you apply the following verses to learn contentment?

- **A growing desire for Christ to be all** – Psalm 34:8-10; Psalm 107:8-9; Philippians 3:8
(One definition for contentment is “being fully satisfied in Christ, regardless of life’s circumstances.”)

- **Trusting in God’s providence** – Isaiah 46:10; Romans 8:28
(Providence is the plans of God; He works everything out according to His will.)

- **A reliance on God’s strength** – 2 Corinthians 12:9; Philippians 4:13

- **Satisfied with God’s provision** – Luke 12:15; Hebrews 13:5

- **Godly priorities/goals** – Matthew 6:33; Romans 8:29

- Anything not listed.

Contentment is possible, regardless of circumstances.

One of the great lessons Paul gave us is that contentment *is* possible, regardless of circumstances. He didn’t say it came naturally to him; it was something he had to learn. The fleshly response is not something we have to learn. It comes naturally to complain, to blame others or demand our way in response to difficulties. Charles Spurgeon pointed out that contentment must be taught by the Holy Spirit. It is by His strength and power that we can have the godly response of contentment in the midst of trials.

How long did it take Paul to learn contentment? We can’t be sure. According to Blue Letter Bible, Paul’s conversion occurred in AD 34. It also states that he wrote the letter to the Philippians in AD 62. Almost 30 years had passed since his conversion on the road to Damascus. Throughout those years he had seen the Lord’s faithfulness to give him strength for all the difficulties he faced. Constant traveling, persecution, imprisonments and more would have worn most people out. Paul admitted his weakness, but it did not cause discontent. He was content even in his weakness because Christ was His strength. The hardships he faced only helped him to know Christ and His power in a deeper way.

Paul's heart was to know Christ and even share in His sufferings. Contentment is really a heart issue. Our discontentment is not the fault of others or our circumstances; it comes from our heart. We tend to focus on outward things when we think about contentment. But contentment comes from within. It ultimately comes from our relationship with Christ; with being satisfied with *Him*. Circumstances may change and people may come and go, but Christ promises to never leave us. Contentment in Him cannot be taken away.

11. Describe how Paul viewed the Philippians' giving in verses 14-18.

12. Why do you think Paul compared the gift from the Philippians to "an acceptable sacrifice?"

13. What do these verses teach about giving? Proverbs 11:24-25, 19:17; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5; Hebrews 13:16

14. Ken Hughes said, "What we do with our resources is a window into our souls. The question is, what does God see when He looks in?" How would you answer that question?

15. Believers are stewards of what the Lord has given. How would you define "steward?"

16. What qualities would be important for a good steward to have?

17. Paul commended the Philippians regarding their giving. What other areas of stewardship does a believer have?
 - o 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

- Colossians 4:5

- 1 Thessalonians 2:4

- 1 Peter 4:10

18. In verse 19, God promises to meet their needs according to His riches. How rich is God?
1 Chronicles 29:11; Psalm 50:10-12

- What does “according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” mean?

19. Verse 22 states that some of Caesar’s household had become believers. Nero (Caesar) hated Christians and yet the gospel had reached some in his household. How should this encourage believers?

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Discussion Questions – Lesson 10

1. Read Philippians 4:10-19. This is Paul's thank you note for the gift he received from the Philippian church. Does Paul express more appreciation for the material gift or the concern behind the gift?
 - How did you come to this conclusion?
 - What do you appreciate the most about receiving a gift?
 - Give some examples of your favorite gifts.

2. Read verses 11-13. Paul made specific statements about what he had learned. Make a list of those things.
 - What part did "experiential knowledge" play in Paul's learning to be content?
 - What has that taught you about your level of contentment/lack of contentment?

3. What are the signs of discontentment in a life?
 - What does discontentment reveal about the heart?
 - Is discontentment a sin? Why or why not?

4. Comment on the following quotes about contentment:
 - “It’s not how much we have, but how much we enjoy, that makes happiness.” (Charles Spurgeon)
 - “A self-centered man is a discontented man.” (John MacArthur)
 - “Contentment does not equal complacency.” (William Barclay)

5. How did Paul *know* he could do all things through Christ who strengthens him?

6. Read verses 14-16. Paul describes two groups: the Philippians who gave and the other churches who did not. What do you think it meant to the Philippians to know that they were the only ones who gave to Paul?

7. How did Paul describe their gift in verses 17-18?
 - Should we view giving as an obligation or an opportunity, or perhaps both? Explain your answer.
 - What insight does 2 Corinthians 9:6-8 give?

8. Read Philippians 4:19 and Psalm 23. Make a list from Psalm 23 of some of the ways that God supplies all our needs.
 - What promise is given in 4:19 to those who give?

- Give an example of how you have seen God supply your needs.
9. In the last 3 verses of the book of Philippians, Paul uses the words “greet” or “greetings” three times. Look up the word “greet” and write the definition.
- Who did Paul want them to greet?
 - What does it mean to you to be greeted at church?

Let’s continue to greet one another and may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

Here are some supplemental questions for your consideration:

How content are you with your life?

What area(s) are you discontent in, if any?

How can the following lead to discontentment?

- Waiting for those you love to be happy.
- Unrealistic expectations (of yourself and/or others).
- Looking at the past with regrets/looking ahead to the future with fear.
- Not accepting situations or people you can’t change.
- Daydreaming about a better life.

How have you grown in contentment in one or more of these areas?