

**A STUDY ON PHILIPPIANS**

**Week 4**

**Philippians 4:2-23**

**Joy in the Lord and Contentment**

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## Philippians 4:6-9, Getting Unstuck. Even Better: Prevent getting Stuck!

This is how we can get unstuck with one another...or even better, prevent getting stuck with each other and our issues (vv. 6-8):

- *Stop fretting and worrying* about stuff—rather *talk with God* about it.
- *Thank God* that you can ask Him *Who truly knows best*—this will *bring relief and contentment*.
- *Embrace the Truth: You belong to Jesus and He is with you*—this will stop you from getting all worked up, and prevent all kinds of worries from either starting or running away with your emotions.
- *Replace time spent on brooding and worrying* with contemplating: *What matters to God; what is really good and right in God's eyes; what would be pleasing to God?*
- *Stop wasting time* on dwelling or doing things that are worthless—*stay busy with what has worth and holds God in high regard*.
- *Follow good examples* of God honoring spiritual mentors and leaders—remember what they taught you and follow their Godly advice.

*Through it all remember: God will not leave you alone. He is absolutely with you. Without a doubt you are safe with your God and in Him you can have joy (v. 9).*

- ❖ Reread this list of possible actions to help us get along well with our brothers and sisters in our faith communities—and also in our Christian marriages, families, and friendship circles. *Which one(s) resonated with you the most? Which do you feel could best help you either address conflict when it arises or prevent it from growing in the first place?*
  - ❖ A lot of the focus in this passage and elsewhere was to truly find joy in the Lord, in His presence, in the ability to talk with Him, in the knowledge that He knows best and will never leave us, and more. *How is this helping you to be more content with situations, leave it with God, and move forward with peace and wisdom?*
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## Philippians 4:10-20, Being Content

We have learned so much so far now from Paul presenting the Gospel to us. One of many would be that he truly found all of his *joy in the Lord*. The other that we'll focus on in this passage is truly being *completely content in the Lord* (v. 11b).

Paul starts with *expressing his gratitude for the Philippian believers' support* towards him, even though he understands that they couldn't help him for a while due to circumstances. Both he and the Lord are pleased with this (v. 10).

Paul uses this opportunity though to explain that he has learned to deal with difficult times even without any support (v. 11). He has learned what it feels like to be terribly poor and on the other hand to have enough or even sometimes a bit in excess (v. 12a).

*Never has lacking caused him to be discouraged or to run away from life. He rather learned to be content, no matter what comes his way (vv. 11-12).*

Whether he would go to bed completely hungry, or with more food than he could eat, whether he would have only the clothes on his back or a whole house filled with stuff—none of this ever mattered to him (v. 12b).

*He could always face both the good and the bad in life, simply because Jesus and nothing else has always been his source of Strength (v. 13).*

*This doesn't mean that Paul isn't appreciating their help in a time when things were pretty hard (v. 14). He still remembers how he would go and share the Gospel in the northern parts of Greece and nobody would support him, except the Philippian believers (v. 15a)! He had moved on to Thessalonica when they still continued to send it (v. 16a)! Several times they sent support when he really needed it (v. 16b).*

Yet, it was never for Paul about the money. What was far more important is this (v. 17):

*The blessings they would receive from God for being so good to him!*

Paul felt so blessed that he now had enough due to *the support reaching him* via Epaphroditus (v. 18a). Paul described this as a *fragrant offering, pleasing to God* (v. 18b). And now out of God's grace Paul knows that *He will also provide for all the needs of the Philippian believers*, and there is nobody in a better position than God to help them (b. 19)!

*The Truth is: Our God has all the riches and power at His disposal. All the honor, respect and the most important position ever all belongs to God forever and ever. This is so and so it will be (vv. 19-20)!*

- ❖ *I would argue that many of us really struggle to live in total contentment. We often get very easily frustrated, irritated or bored with what we've got, what we own, situations that we're experiencing, careers, friends, hobbies, food, electronics, and of course the list goes on and on. How are you doing with being and living in total contentment?*
- ❖ *What about the way Paul viewed life—and life with God and fellow believers—is helping you in your journey toward contentment?*
- ❖ *Giving is such a blessing! Think with care about the Philippian believers' giving to Paul and how Paul responded to this. How is this changing, challenging or transforming the way that you are looking at your giving?*

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