



I Can Do All Things

In our passage today we have one of the more famous verses in Philippians (4:13), but as diligent students of the Bible let's spend a few minutes digging in to see the truths we can glean from it.

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. Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. 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. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. Philippians 4:10-13

Paul began this passage with a commendation to the church of Philippi, applauding their heart and care for him. He says they were concerned before but ***lacked opportunity***. As we read on to verses 15 and 16, we learn that this church was the only one that supported Paul's ministry. While scripture doesn't detail this lack of opportunity, what is important is that they did step up with a generous gift and he was very thankful.

Paul goes on to say, ***"not that I speak from want."*** The word "want" in this passage (Greek: *husterēsis*) can also be rendered as *poverty*, so even though other churches had not supported him (and remember he was in prison when this was penned), Paul was not desperate. The Philippians gave an offering that exceeded his basic needs.

He continues with, ***"for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am."*** In several of his letters, Paul spoke about being content (cf: 2 Cor. 12:10; 1 Tim. 6:8). Scripture tells of the importance of contentment, from the tree in the garden (Genesis 3), to the Tenth Commandment where the LORD ordered that we do not covet (Exodus 20:17), to what is said in Deuteronomy 6:5 and Matthew 22:37, in that we must *love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, and mind*. Contentment is important in true worship of God as it rises from a grateful and joyful heart.

Paul expounds on this subject of contentment, saying, ***"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."***

We may think of contentment as being happy with a little, but that's not always the case. Most of us have far more than we actually need, blessings that are too many to count. It might be



harder to find contentment when we are rich with blessings because we stop appreciating them like we do when we lack. For example, a cup of cold water that comes from the fridge is not nearly as magnificent as it is to a parched man who has been lost in the desert. Is it any wonder that, from time to time, God withdraws certain blessings so that we can better appreciate the ones we still have? While this hurts, it often recenters where our hope and joy reside.

Paul says that he has ***learned the secret*** of contentment. The secret of being content in every circumstance, whether rich or poor, filled or hungry, having abundance or need. And what is that secret? That he ***“can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”***

This last statement is often quoted out of context. What Paul is saying here is not about winning a football game or building a successful business. It is about being *content in every circumstance*. Paul was able to be content because *Christ strengthened* him in this area.

We see again that our own power is remarkably limited. Even the great apostle, who brought the gospel to the Gentiles, could not find contentment within himself. Only in Christ’s power can we find it because He is the one who strengthens us. The Lord provides us with everything we need and, if within His will, the things we want. In return, we should be content with whatever He has providentially decided to give us in this season.

God desires that we be content and grateful in every situation because there is *always* something to be thankful for (cf: Phil. 4:6). Again, we can’t do this in our own power – the strength to be content in every circumstance comes from the Lord. And when He grants this to us, through prayer, petition, and rejoicing, we can be even more appreciative because of the subsequent peace we have every day by being content in everything.

~Associate Pastor Jeremy Preece

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