

How to Be Content with a Little

The Peace of God Part 10
Philippians 4:11-13 6/10/2017

Summary: Contentment is priceless, because it is needed for putting all the main principles of Philippians into practice. Let privation humble you (submit to providence), look to God for strength to let go of discontent (you'll need it!), and count on the promise that you can perform any feat of contentment through his strength.

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Philippians 4:10 I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you have been concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it.

11 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

14 Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. 15 Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; 16 for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need. 17 Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account. 18 I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. 19 And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

Introduction: The Value of Contentment

For Joy

Benjamin Franklin said “Contentment makes poor men rich. Discontent makes rich men poor.” That’s exactly right. It’s close to what Paul said in 1 Tim.6:6.

1 Timothy 6:6 But godliness with contentment is great gain.

If you have a million dollars, but you’re not happy with it, what good is it? He still doesn’t have enough money, so he’s poor. If you have a person with barely any money who is content, he does have

enough money, so he's rich – richer than the billionaire who doesn't have enough money. The guy who has enough is always happier and better off than the guy who doesn't have enough. And so contentment is priceless. What would your life be like if tomorrow you tripled your income? Learning contentment would help you more and make you happier than tripling your income. So contentment is priceless.

For All the Virtues in Philippians

And that's not the only thing that makes it priceless. Contentment is priceless, not just because it will increase your joy, but also because it will help you in every area of the Christian life. This is the perfect way for Paul to close out the book of Philippians, because contentment is necessary for every one of the principles he's taught us in this book. Just think of all the main themes. Chapter 1 - rejoicing in the Lord even during suffering – you can't do that without contentment. Chapter 2 - that selfless, humble, loving, Christ-like, "you-first" attitude that is so essential to church unity – you can't have that without contentment. Discontent makes you selfish, and coveting causes fights and quarrels (James 4:1), so unity and harmony are out the window if we don't have contentment. Chapter 3 - considering everything in this world loss in order to gain Christ, treasuring Christ above all – you can't do that without contentment. Chapter 4 – reconciled relationships, internal peace, gratitude – you'll never have any of that without contentment. You won't have gratitude, you won't have joy, you won't treasure Christ above all, you won't put others first – instead you'll have selfishness, anxiety, ingratitude, joylessness, and relational conflict. Lack of contentment will lead you into all kinds of different sins.

1 Timothy 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

Discontent can pull you into every kind of evil, and pierce you with many griefs, and ultimately end up causing you to wander away from the faith altogether. In Mt.19 Jesus challenged a rich man to choose between his money or Jesus, and the guy went away sad because he was very rich. He was coveting his own wealth and couldn't let go. And as the guy walks away...

Matthew 19:23 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. 24 Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

Having stuff in this world makes you so vulnerable to a hundred different sins. In Mk.4:19 Jesus said that the deceitfulness of wealth and the desire for other things will choke the Word of God right out of your heart so that you never bear fruit. And money will do that to you whether you have it or not. People are always talking about greedy rich people, or greedy corporations – as if having a lot of money automatically makes someone greedy. You never hear about all the millions of greedy poor people. (I think it's usually the greedy poor people who complain about the greedy rich people, because the greedy poor people are greedy for the greedy rich people's money.) But if you lack contentment, you'll run into spiritual problems no matter how much money you have.

Proverbs 30:8 ... give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. 9 Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the LORD?' Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God.

Our natural reaction to poverty is to sin in order to get more, and our natural reaction to wealth is to become self-sufficient and proud. So either way you get dragged into sin.

Now here's the amazing thing – Paul didn't have a problem with any of that. Being wealthy wasn't even dangerous to Paul, and neither was poverty – all because he had learned the secret of contentment. 12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. Wouldn't it be great to be like that? So are you convinced? Do you want contentment now? Ok, so let's look at how Paul learned it.

Paul Had to Learn This

And notice – he did have to learn it. It isn't something that came naturally to Paul.

11 ... I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.

In the past, Paul had really struggled with coveting.

Romans 7:8 But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire.

So Paul didn't automatically have contentment right when he became a Christian. He had to go through a learning process to get it. When he says in v.12 **I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation**, that phrase translated **learned the secret** literally means to be initiated. Like when someone went through a series of rituals to be initiated into an order or society that had special, transcendent knowledge. Paul says, "I was initiated into the exclusive club of the people who have this special knowledge of knowing how to be content."

The Perspective: Submission to Providence

Review: Contentment with a Lot

And there were two things he had to learn specifically. There are two different situations in life that make contentment hard. The first one is having stuff. The other one is not having stuff. And so Paul had to learn how to master those two situations. His earned degree in contentment required a double major – being rich and being poor. Three times he describes the two extremes.

12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. ... whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.

He knew what it was like to be poor – so poor that he had to go without food (something we have no concept of in our culture – we think we are struggling financially if we can't eat out as often as we would like, and we have to have home cooked meals instead. None of us know what it's like to go long periods without any food because of poverty). And he also knew what it was like to be rich and have an over-abundance of money. Some people have read this and thought, *When was Paul ever rich?* I can tell you one time – when he wrote this letter!

18 I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent.

How often do you ever hear a missionary say that? "We've got way more money than we need at this point." But that's exactly what Paul is saying here.

And it's a little surprising given the fact that Paul is in prison. He could probably carry all his possessions in a backpack at this point. Hardly a situation that most of us would consider a time of great wealth. But he had more money than he needed, and so for him, that was a time of abundance and wealth.

How could Paul do that? How do you sit there in chains, dependent on gifts arriving in the mail to even eat, and think you're in one of those times of special financial prosperity? By focusing on what God gave him instead of on what God hadn't given him. And by setting his heart on the progress of the gospel, rather than on comfort. You and I live in so much luxury, that we assess how well we are doing by our level of comfort. Instead of asking, "Can I get from point A to point B to carry out my calling?" we want heated leather seats and a backup camera. We're so wrapped up in comfort – which is deadly. But for Paul, it wasn't a question of whether he was comfortable. It was a question of whether he could carry out the work of the ministry effectively.

Ok, so the first part of our double major - learning contentment when you have a lot, and when you receive blessings, is all about seeing God's love in the blessings, so that your happiness is joy in the Lord, not joy in the blessing. He rejoiced *in the Lord* because of the *Philippians'* love.

Contentment with a Little

So that's how to be content when you have a lot, but what about the other side – being content with a little? How can we learn that? Because that's the one that really scares us, right? So how do we learn how to be content with a little? It has to do with your perspective, and Paul gives us insight into that perspective in v.12.

Humbled by Suffering

And it's really clear in the ESV translation of v.12. 12 I know how to be brought low That's the perspective that enables contentment – a perspective of lowliness and humility and submissiveness to God's providence. The NIV translates v.12 - **I know what it is to be in need** I think the ESV translation is more helpful because it's not the same Greek word translated **need** in the previous verse. This word in v.12 means more than just being in need. It means to be humbled. In fact, it's the exact same word used back in 2:8 where it says Jesus **humbled himself and became obedient to death...** So back up and look at what Paul is saying here. He describes the two extremes three times, each with a little different wording. Going hungry vs. being well-fed. Living in want vs. living in plenty. And being humbled vs. having abundance. So on the rich side of the spectrum, he describes that as being well-fed, living in plenty, and having abundance – three ways of describing the same thing. On the poverty side, he says going hungry, living in want, and *being humbled*. So do you see what he's doing there? When you learn the secret of contentment, being poor, going without, not getting what you want – those are all synonymous with being humbled. You allow those things to humble you. You place yourself in a submissive posture to what God is doing. That's what I mean by the perspective of contentment. The perspective of a contented heart is one that sees itself as under the providential hand of God, rather than above it.

That is important, because it's the exact opposite of the prevailing attitude in Paul's time. The word Paul uses for contentment here was frequently used by a group known as the stoics. It's the only time this word is used in the Bible. All the other times contentment is referred to, it's a different Greek word. That other Greek word simply means *to have enough*. 1 Timothy 6:8 But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. If we have food and clothes, that's enough. That's the term the Bible writers always use, and I think I have an idea why. If they used this stoic word, people might think they are defining contentment the same way the stoics do.

“What was the stoic idea?” The word the stoics used means *to be independent* or to be self-sufficient.¹ And the idea was, “We are untouched by things that happen to us. Nothing can get us down, because we become totally indifferent.” That was their key to contentment – indifference. One ancient writer, Epictetus said, “Begin with a cup or a household utensil, if it breaks say, ‘I don't care.’ Go on to a horse or a pet dog, if anything happens to it say, ‘I don't care.’ Go on to yourself and if you're hurt or injured in any way say, ‘I don't care.’ And if you go on long enough and if you try hard enough you'll come to a state when you can walk your nearest and dearest suffer and die and say, ‘I don't care.’”² So the goal was indifference, and reaching that goal was a matter of pride, because it gives you mastery over circumstances.

So you can see why the Bible writers avoid using this term, because they wouldn't want the readers to think they were promoting the stoic idea. Paul goes ahead and uses that term, but then goes on to talk about it in ways that couldn't possibly be confused with stoicism. Instead of talking about his pride and

¹ *Autarkes*. It comes from *auto* (self) and *arkeo* (sufficient).

² Cited by John MacArthur <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/50-43/The-Secret-of-Contentment-Part-1>

power and strength and rising above the circumstances like the stoics , he talks about the fact that he has learned to be humbled by suffering. He placed himself beneath the circumstances, not above them. Instead of defying them with indifferent resistance, he submitted to them in humble acceptance.

That concept of being humbled was never, ever used in a positive sense by the stoics. They used that word a lot, but always in lists of vices. For them, really bad people were people who were dishonest, lazy, weak, ignorant, stupid, or humble. That's how they thought about humility - it always appears in lists of bad character traits. So Paul commandeers their word for contentment, but then totally turns their thinking on its head by connecting it with being humbled by suffering. So picture some stoic of that day. Both that guy and Paul stand strong and fearless before a persecuting world. The stoic with a look of rigid, defiant scorn resulting in indifference; the Christian with a bowed head and humbled, broken heart, resulting in joy. That's the perspective of contentment.

So if you checked out for the last 5 minutes because you aren't interested in Greek word usage in ancient philosophies of stoicism , you can come back to now and I'll get back to the point of Philippians 4. Here's the point that will help you tomorrow in your spiritual life: the way to learn how to be content with a little – how to be content in those areas where you are lacking something you really wish you had, is to allow your heart to be humbled by that privation. Don't just try to suck it up and become calloused or pretend you just don't care. Some of those things you desire are really good things, and going without them really is painful. Don't pretend that isn't the case. If it hurts – that's ok. That's not necessarily a lack of contentment. The key isn't to eliminate the pain. The key is to allow the suffering to humble your heart. Instead of trying to rise above the circumstances like you are the master of the universe, admit that circumstances really are greater than you. Look at them as coming from the providential hand of God, and submit to them.

I watch my granddaughter Sadie. She'll be sitting on the floor playing with some toys, then suddenly, she is whisked up into the air and carried off into another room. She's on the couch with her dad, then suddenly she being put in a car seat and taken who-knows-where. That's her whole life – things just happen to her, and 99% of them she has absolutely no idea why. And the great majority of the time she just submits to it. If her mom just suddenly picks her up and takes her somewhere, that's fine, because mom loves her and always takes care of her. But once in a while, mom does something that conflicts with her desires, and she resists. Mom knows she needs a nap, or needs to eat, or needs a diaper change or whatever, but she thinks she knows better, and so she resists. And, of course, that results in nothing but a lot of unhappiness.

The perspective of contentment is when we are like Sadie is most of the time. “Oh, God is picking me up and whisking me off to this different situation? He's taking those toys away? He's taking me into a different situation? Ok.” That's the perspective of contentment. The perspective of discontent is that moment when the child thinks she knows better than mom about what is best , and throws a fit when you take something away or put her in a situation that isn't comfortable.

All those motivational speakers, the action heroes in the movies, the person who spoke at your graduation – despite all their rhetoric about how you can rise above any problem that comes your way; the truth is, this world is bigger and stronger than you. You can't control your own destiny. Even if you did everything right, things still might not work out the way you want. At any moment, you could inhale a germ that could end up taking your life. You're not in control, you don't know what's best for you, and when you realize that, guess what it does? It makes you dependent on God and submissive to his providential hand. Unlike the self-sufficient, proud stoic who thinks he's the captain of his own ship , every hardship reminds you that you are weak, vulnerable, and 100% dependent on God.

When you see yourself as being above your circumstances, and in control – life is frustrating because you're not in control. You expect the world to revolve around you and comply with your will, and it doesn't cooperate, and so life is constantly frustrating. It's frustrating to be in a kingdom where you're the only one who believes you're the king. That's why discontent, and coveting and envy are so incredibly draining. Is there anything more draining in life than pining after something you can't have? But if we allow our privation and disappointments to humble us, we can find our rightful place. If you just rest from your discontent and accept your place as a creature – a being created by God, dependent on God,

responsible to God , existing for the pleasure of God – that’s a role that you can fulfill without frustration. And when we acknowledge that role and accept it, that is the greatest pathway to contentment and joy.

People who are control freaks – they have to be in control of everything – those are people who forget that there’s already someone in control of everything. And he’s doing a far better job at it than we would even if we did have unlimited power. So when I find myself lacking something I wish I had (“I wish I had this career achievement, or that money, or that body, or that person’s hair, or kids that were different...”), the more painful that longing is, the more I can let it humble me. I can ask, “Darrell, if you want that thing so badly, why don’t you have it?” Answer – because I don’t have the power to make it happen. Or I don’t have the character or the wisdom or the money or the opportunity. “What does that tell you?” It reminds me that I’m not God – and that Someone else is God. Someone who has infinite wisdom and infinite power and unfathomable love for me. And that wise, powerful, loving Father is the one who decided I would be in this situation I’m in. I can trust him.

The Power Source

It all goes back to dependence on God. And that’s exactly where Paul ends up in v.13. Look how he concludes this whole paragraph on contentment:

13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

He just used that word **everything** twice in the previous verse. That phrase **in any and every situation** - literally, it’s **in everything and in everything** So it’s crystal clear what the **everything** in v.13 refers to. I’ve learned to handle poverty or abundance in everything and in everything. I can do everything through him who gives me strength. So when he says I can do everything, he’s referring to the everything in v.12 – contentment in any and every situation.

That’s important to know, because this is such a misunderstood, misused verse. People try to apply it to physical things rather than spiritual things. Athletes especially. When Evander Holyfield fought Mike Tyson for the heavyweight title, Holyfield had Php.4:13 embroidered on his shorts. Even without studying the Greek, I think most people can read this and say, , “Somehow I don’t think the ability to knock out Mike Tyson was what God had in mind here.” When Paul wrote v.13, he wasn’t saying, “Through him who strengthens me, I can body slam all these guards, break the chains, and run out of here with 4.4. speed.” When he said “I can do everything” he wasn’t talking about feats of strength. He was talking about feats of contentment. He wasn’t saying, “I can defeat any foe, throw any touchdown pass, knock out any opponent...” He was saying, “I can pull off any feat of contentment. Throw the hardest conceivable situation at me, beat me up and throw me in prison, and I can still pull off contentment. So the popular use of v.13 is the exact opposite of what it’s teaching. People use this verse to basically say, “I can rise above my circumstances and force life to be the way I want it.” And it’s saying the opposite. It’s saying, “I’m capable of humbling myself beneath the things that are out of my control.” So instead of using this verse to say, “I can get an A on this final exam, because I can do all things through him who strengthens me, ” a more accurate application would be, “Even if I study all night and get an F on the final and fail the class, I can still be joyful in the Lord.” Christ may not strengthen me to be able to score the winning basket , but he will strengthen me to be fully content and happy in him whether my team wins or get creamed. Whether I run it in for a touchdown or take a hit that makes me a quadriplegic – I’m fully capable of contentment either way.”

Strength is Needed

And how can I do all that? **Through him who strengthens me.** God strengthens me to be content. I have to say – that is not what I would have expected. It actually sounds a little odd. I asked a question on my FB page: I asked people to finish this sentence: “I can be content in any situation because of God who...” And people said things like, ... God who loves me, God who is sovereign, God who is the source of my happiness , God who satisfies, God who is infinitely good and who works all things for my

good, etc. Those are right on – the Bible says all those things. They are exactly the kinds of answers I would give if someone asked me to answer that question. But of all the people who responded, no one gave the answer that Paul gives here. Paul’s answer is this: “I can be content because of God who *strengthens* me.” Elsewhere Paul makes the points about contentment coming from looking to God as my provider and my satisfaction and comfort, etc. But here he wants to make a different point.

He wants us to understand that this requires strength. Contentment is not easy. If Paul said, “I can be content in any situation through him who provides all my needs,” I might walk away thinking that I can’t really be content until God provides the thing I’m lacking. If he said, “I can be content through him who satisfies the cravings of my soul” I might walk away thinking that I can’t really be content until I feel comfortable and satisfied. But Paul wants us to understand, contentment requires strength, because there are powerful forces pulling you in the direction of discontent. There is resistance that needs to be overcome. Covetousness, greed, self-pity, self-confidence, materialism, desire for comfort – those are some very powerful forces that need spiritual muscles of iron to resist. When I’m playing with my toys and God suddenly picks me up and carries me off somewhere else, and my soul wants to latch on to those toys and resist what God is doing, the attachment can be very powerful. Letting go of my idea of what would make me happy in life can be excruciating.

Discontent is kind of like anger. Anger is miserable, it doesn’t make you happy, it eats up your soul, it distracts you, it ruins relationships, it causes you all kinds of problems, it’s not pleasurable, and yet, for some bizarre reason, we can’t bring ourselves to let go of it. It’s like you’re giving a bear hug to a great big cactus, and someone says, “Hey, it’s the cactus that’s hurting you.” “I know it is!” “Well, maybe you should let go.” “No! I won’t let go!” That’s the insanity of anger and unforgiveness – something in us wants to hold on to it and it actually feels like it would hurt to let go of it. Discontent is the same way. It’s making you miserable, and yet something inside you demands that you keep clinging to it. And so letting go requires tremendous power and strength. Learning contentment is going to hurt, loosening our grip on worldly pleasures will be painful, we’ll have to fight our own flesh, fight the trends of our culture, fight the enemy, fight temptation, fight our cravings and impulses – it’s going to be really hard and we’re going to need a lot of strength to pull it off.

Look to God

So what do you do? You look to the Lord for strength. Paul says, “I can be content through him who strengthens me.” That’s the most important part of the sentence. Paul doesn’t just say, “I can do everything.” It’s **I can do everything through him who strengthens me**. The converse of that is in Jn.15:5.

John 15:5 ... Apart from me you can do nothing.

Apart from him you can do nothing of spiritual value, but with him you can do everything – if you learn how to be strengthened by him. When you feel the burn of discontent – that sadness, or anger, or fear, or anxiety, or however discontent typically plays out in your emotions – when you feel that over some circumstance in your life that you wish were different; don’t just live with it. Don’t just live with that emotional distress. Look to the Lord for strength to let go of that discontent.

And do that, whether it’s something extreme, like abject poverty where you don’t even have food to eat, or something really small, like your dinner rolls got overcooked, or your hotel room smells like cigarettes, or your piece of junk dishwasher keeps leaving bits of food on the dishes. Root out those areas of discontent in your life, and then turn to the Lord for strength.

Scripture has a whole lot to say about how to do that. In ch.3 we Paul taught us that the power to handle suffering like Christ comes from deeper knowledge of Christ. Knowing him, which comes through faith – believing what he said and trusting in what he has done. It comes from abiding in him, coming to him as the food and drink that satisfies and sustains and gives life. Remembering that he is with you and loves you and only does what is best for you. We could do a whole series of sermons on how to draw strength from God, but that’s beyond the scope of this passage. The point here is just the very basic idea

that we have to be reminded of constantly – don't just live with your discontent. Seek strength from God to overcome it. Seek empowerment to God to be humbled by it.

The Promise: You Can Do This!

So, the *perspective* of contentment: humility and submission to providence. The *power source* for contentment: the Lord. Now one more point: the *promise* of contentment.

13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

When you seek that strength from the Lord, he will give it to you. He won't be stingy with his grace. He will provide every bit of grace you need to be content in absolutely any life situation. So if you remain discontent, it won't be for lack of available strength. It will only be because of unwillingness.

All Spiritual Feats

And knowing that as a fact is crucial for success in the Christian life. When people try to apply this verse to physical things, it ends up being meaningless. I say that because we all know that we can't do all physical things. That's obvious. If you just think about it - what happens if Mike Tyson also has Php.4:13 on his shorts – then who wins? What if both teams get the Php.4:13 speech at halftime – one of those teams still loses. If you think about it for 2 seconds, you realize that if it's talking about physical things, you can't take the verse literally at all, and it becomes meaningless. But it's not meaningless, and it is very literal. It's not a figure of speech, it's not an exaggeration. But it's talking about contentment, not athletics.

And not just contentment, but any virtue. Everything God commands us to do, he provides us the ability to do it.

1 Corinthians 10:13 ... God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

You can do anything God commands you to do. And it's so important to understand that promise, because one of Satan's most effective weapons against us is to convince us that obeying God, in some area, is just too hard. You tell someone, "God's Word is very clear. God requires that you go, right now, humble yourself, admit you were wrong, apologize to that person, and ask forgiveness." "No, I just *can't*." God calls you to give in proportion to your income – like 10%. "Oh, I can't do it. I don't have the faith." God says you can't sleep with your girlfriend – you have to move out. "I just don't think I can do that." Someone hurt you and you're mad at them, even though they have repented. God requires that you forgive that person immediately, completely, from your heart. "Oh, I just don't think I can do that. I'm not ready for that." God calls you to sing and shout for joy to the Lord. "That's just not my personality – I'm not really the singing and shouting type. I'm not capable of that level of emotion about God. I can't do it." Those are all lies from hell. God won't let you be tempted beyond what you can bear, you can resist, you can do the right thing – in absolutely any and every situation you can do everything God calls you to do through him who strengthens you. That's the promise of Php.4:13. Paul is saying, "I know for sure I can be content in any situation, because I can do anything God calls me to do."

It's so important to know that as an indisputable fact, because otherwise you'll be vulnerable to Satan. When God calls you to do something hard, and it feels like you can't do it, you'll think, *Oh, I'm not capable of this right now* and you'll give up. World class athletes often say that most of us have no idea what we are capable of physically. They say that when you get to the point where you think you are absolutely at your limit, and you can't take another step – you've only used about 70% of your capacity. But most people never have enough motivation to push beyond that, because it feels impossible. If your life is at stake, or your child's life, you find you can do things you never dreamed you could do. But most of the time we give up well before that point because it really does feel like we've reached our absolute limit. The great athletes learn to push past that because some coach or trainer somewhere shows them that

they are capable of more than they thought. Our spiritual situation is similar. You run into something that feels impossible, and if there is the slightest possibility in your mind that maybe for you it is impossible, then you'll think, "Yeah, it's impossible," and give up. So it's crucial that you know – it's never impossible. Obeying God, doing what he calls you to do, is never impossible because you can do everything he wants you to do through him who strengthens you. Submit to his providence, look to him for strength, and cling to his promise.

Small Group Discussion

Three other passages in the New Testament directly mention contentment. Read each passage.

- 1) Hebrews 13:5
 - What is the relationship between the two commands in the verse?
 - After the two commands, he gives a reason. How does that reason help us obey the commands?
- 2) 1 Timothy 6:4-11
 - Verses 9-10 talk about ruin, destruction, foolishness, harm, evil, and griefs that result from loving money. Everyone enjoys money, so how can you tell when your enjoyment of money crosses the line to the kind of love for money that causes all these problems?
- 3) Luke 3:14
 - John told these soldiers to be content with their pay. If he knew your heart, what do you think he would have told you to be content with?