

# 25. THE SECRET TO FACING ALL THINGS WITH JOY: Philippians 4:10-13

by Brett Baggett on Sunday, November 22nd, 2020

**INTRO: Q.** Do you like secrets? What about happiness? In this passage of Scripture the most joyful man to ever live clues us in on his secret to happiness.

**BIG IDEA:** “The secret to facing all things with joy.”

**PHILIPPIANS 4:10-13** “10 I *rejoiced* in *the Lord* greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. 11 *Not that I am speaking of being in need*, for I have learned in whatever situation *I am to be content*. 12 I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. *In any and every circumstance*, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. 13 *I can do all things through him who strengthens me.*”

- Oh see what the Apostle Paul can face and still have joy in Christ Jesus his Lord!
- **Q.** How can he do that? **A.** Because he possesses the rare jewel of **Christian contentment**. Look at v.11! You Christian can have it as well.

## I. SINFUL DISCONTENTMENT IS A COMMON DISGRACE

- **In Phil. 4:6** Jesus commands us, through Paul, “do not be anxious about anything.” **Oh how many are shocked by this command!**
  - **ME:** “Christians are forbidden the sinful indulgence of anxiety!”
- **In Phil. 2:14** Jesus commands, “Do all things without grumbling or disputing.” **Oh how many are wounded by this command!**
  - **SIBBES:** “Our murmuring is the devils music.”
- **Sinful discontentment is the soil** from which both grumbling & anxieties sprout! It is their mother. And it is an epidemic!
  - **WATSON:** “Discontent is the devils delight.”
- **Indwelling sin in a Christian believer is a boil that must be lanced with the two edged sword.** It is not pleasant at first, *to cut a blister open*; but *OH* the relief of confession, repentance, & of assurance of pardon in Christ. The relief’s elation is incomparable to the razor’s edge! **(CHILDREN)**

## II. CHRISTIAN CONTENTMENT IS A RARE JEWEL (v.11c)

**PHILIPPIANS 4:11c** “I have learned in whatever situation *I am to be content.*”

The rarity of Christian Contentment is evident in the fact that grumbling and anxieties dominate many peoples’ lives!

### Q. What is Christian contentment *NOT*?

**AI)** Christian contentment is *not being content outside of Christ*—*you must be discontent until you are born again and have faith in Jesus!*

**AII)** Christian contentment is *not being content to live a certain way or work a certain job or have certain friends that dishonors God*—*if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out!* *Let there be no contentment with wicked habits, wicked vocations, nor wicked friends!*

**AIII)** Christian contentment is *not laying down in the trenches of battle, being satisfied that you are simply in Christ*—*you must be like Christ!*

### Q. What *IS* Christian contentment?

- **JEREMIAH BURROUGHS:** “Christian contentment is that sweet, inward, quiet, gracious frame of spirit, which freely submits to and delights in God’s wise and fatherly disposal in every condition.”
- **I)** Christian contentment is being **SATISFIED with all that God IS for you in Christ** in spite of the roller coaster that is life!
- **II)** Christian contentment is being **SATISFIED with all that God HAS MADE YOU in Christ** in spite of your own sins and lack of current sanctification!
  - **JOHN NEWTON:** “I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I want to be, I am not what I hope to be in another world; but still I am not what I once used to be, and by the grace of God I am what I am.”
- **III)** Christian contentment is being **SATISFIED with all that God HAS PROMISED to do** even when it seems impossible!
- **IV)** Christian contentment is being **SATISFIED with all that God IS DOING in your life by His providence** even when you do not understand! **(CHILDREN)**
- **CLARIFICATION:** Christian Contentment is not **BEING** stable, steadfast, and immovable in Christ; Christian Contentment is **HOW YOU ARE ABLE TO BE** stable, steadfast, and immovable in Christ!

### Q. Why should I desire Christian contentment?

- You should desire Christian contentment so that you can *face anything with joy* as well as *be glorifying God in any situation!*
- **1 Timothy 6:6** “godliness with **contentment** is great gain.”
  - **Do you want a sweet, inward, quiet, gracious frame of spirit?** Then labor to get Christian contentment.
  - **Do you desire to be safe from despairing despondency when you suffer?** Then be serious in your pursuit of Christian contentment.
  - **Do you want to be protected from greed?** Then be diligent to acquire Christian contentment.
  - **Do you long to be guarded from coveting in the midst of draining poverty?** Then make it your aim to gain Christian contentment.
  - **Would you care not what men think about you and care only for God’s smile?** Then labor to get Christian contentment.
  - **Would you be as happy as possible?** Then be serious in your pursuit of Christian contentment.
  - **Do you want to glorify God as much as possible?**

- Oh Then be diligent to *obtain* and *maintain* this rare jewel of Christian contentment!

- **HENRY SMITH:** “Such a commander is [contentment], that wheresoever she sets foot, [a] hundred blessings wait upon her. In every disease she is a physician; in every strife she is a lawyer; in every doubt she is a preacher; in every grief she is a comforter.”

**Q.** Are you content in Christ?

**Q.** Do you want Christian contentment and to be ever growing in it? **A.** Then you must **LEARN** how to be content in whatever situation.

### III. CHRISTIAN CONTENTMENT

## IS A DIVINE ART TO BE LEARNED (v.11b-12)

**PHILIPPIANS 4:11b** “*U* **have learned** in whatever situation I am to be content. **12** *I know* how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need.”

### You must LEARN to be content

- **Christian contentment is so opposed to the sinful flesh that it will not come naturally to you!**
- **Sibbes:** “Nature never teaches [Christian contentment]. It is learned in the school of Christ, and not without many stripes.... [Contentment] is a learning not of *great* persons, or of *learned* persons, but of *holy* persons.”

### II) How to LEARN contentment

Take Paul as an example!

**2 Corinthians 12:10** “For the sake of Christ, then, ***I am content*** with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

### IMAGINE WITH ME HOW THIS ART OF DIVINE CONTENTMENT PLAYS OUT WITH PAUL:

- “**We are going to take away your money, Paul.**” “Fine. I have Christ. He is my Treasure and you cannot take Him away!”
- “**We are going to give you a boatload of money, Paul.**” “Fine. I will not set my heart on it but I will use it for Christ’s glory and the gospel!”
- “**You are a great sinner, Paul.**” “Fine. I admit that I am the chief of sinners & that Christ Jesus died to save even a wretched sinner like me!”
- “**You are a great saint, Paul.**” “Fine. By the grace of God I am what I am!”
- “**We are going to take away your food, Paul.**” “Fine. Christ Jesus is my food—He is the bread come down from heaven that satisfies my soul!”
- “**We are going to give you plenty of food, Paul.**” “Fine. Whether I eat or drink or whatever I do I will do everything to the glory of God!”
- “**We are going to throw you in jail, Paul.**” “Fine. I will preach the gospel to your guards and God will save them for Christ’s sake!”
- “**We are going to let you out of jail, Paul, & give you safe conduct throughout the empire.**” “Fine. I will plant churches and train pastors!”
- Christian contentment is being satisfied with ***your lot in life*** because you know your Father in heaven is control! (**CHILDREN**)
- Christian contentment is being satisfied ***even in the midst of poverty*** because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus your Lord!
- Christian contentment is being satisfied ***even when you are humbled to the dirt...*** because you know that God is humiliating you so that you would treasure Christ Jesus and His satisfaction in your place all the more!
- Christian contentment is being satisfied ***even when you are hated by all for Christ’s name sake...*** because you have your Savior’s smile!

## IV. THE SECRET TO LEARNING AND PRACTICING CHRISTIAN CONTENTMENT: GET STRENGTH FROM CHRIST (v.13)

**PHILIPPIANS 4:12b-13** “**12b** I have learned the secret... **13** I can do all things through him who strengthens me.”

- **If Christ be the fuel the fire will never burn out.** If Christ be the float I will never drown. If Christ be the pilot I will never crash.
- **If Christ be my strength, in no pit shall I sink!** Only when I look for strength in myself or something else do I indulge in discontentment!
- “*I can be brought low* and yet be content...through Christ who strengthens me! *I can abound* and yet be content...through Christ who strengthens me! *I can face plenty or hunger* and yet be content...through Christ who strengthens me! *I can face any need and be content!*”

### Would you draw strength from Christ? Then think about what you deserve for your sin and that you have not received it:

- **Romans 6:23** “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

### Would you draw strength from Christ? Then think about Jesus trading places with a sinner like you on the cross to pay your debt:

- **1 Peter 3:18** “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God,”

### Would you draw strength from Christ? Then think about His promise to sanctify you—making you more like Him:

- **1 Thess. 5:23-24** “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely...He will surely do it.”

### Would you draw strength from Christ? Then think about His promise to “never leave you nor forsake you”:

- **Heb. 13:5** “Keep your life free from love of money, & be content *with what you have*, for [Christ] has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

### Would you draw strength from Christ? Then think about the providence of God in getting Jesus to the cross for you:

- **Acts 2:23** “Jesus [was] delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God,”
- **If you are in Christ**, He is wisely ordering all things—even the terrible things—for your eternal good and His glory!
- **If God in His providence sent Jesus to the cross for your salvation**; do not lose heart when He sends you to the cross for your sanctification!

### Would you draw strength from Christ? Then think about His promise to bring you to completion:

- “I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.” **Phil. 1:6**
- **If God got Jesus to the cross to justify you, He will get you to heaven to glorify you!**  
Be content with the path He chooses. This will teach you to be so content that nothing can take your joy!
- **END:** If you want *strength* you must go to the Scriptures and trust Christ! If you want *tenacity* you must think on Christ; if you want *might* you must meditate on Christ; if you want *power* you must pray for strength from Christ!

“I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.”

## Q. What about \_\_\_\_\_? “You may say…” (OBJECTIONS)

- **J.I. PACKER:** “There is a difference between knowing God and knowing about God. When you truly know God, you have energy to serve Him, boldness to share Him, and contentment in Him.”
- **FLAVAL:** “Under all providences maintain a contented heart with what the Lord allots you, be it more or less of the things of this world. This grace must run parallel with all providences. Learn how to be full, and how to suffer want, and in every state to be content (Philippians 4:11-12).”
- **FLAVAL:** “We can do this and all things else, however difficult, through Christ that strengthens us (Philippians 4:13). But without Him we can do nothing (John 15:5). He does not say, Without me ye can do but little, or without me ye can do nothing but with great difficulty, or without me ye can do nothing perfectly, but ‘without me ye can do nothing’ at all.”
- **WATSON:** “The devil has often deceived us, the best way to deceive him.”
- **WATSON:** “Discontent is the devils delight.”

I can be content because my salvation is more secure than Fort Knox and more solid than the Rock of Gibraltar.

- **Richard Sibbes** wrote *The Art of Contentment* in 1629; **Jeremiah Burroughs**, *The Rare Jewell of Christian Contentment* in 1648, and **Thomas Watson**, *The Art of Divine Contentment* in 1653.

**Watson:** “Having seriously considered the great dishonor done to almighty God by the sin of discontent (a universal and epidemic sin), it put me upon the study of this subject at first…”

**Watson:** “Discontent is to the soul as a disease is to the body; it puts it out of temper and its regular and sublime motions heavenward…”

**Watson:** “the disease is not to be excused because it is natural, but resisted because it is sinful.”

**WATSON:** “Let us beg God to be our reward. Be earnest suitors, and God can’t find it in his heart to deny you. Prayer is the key of heaven, which, being turned by the hand of faith, opens all God’s treasures. If God is our reward, this may teach us contentment. If we have but little oil in the cruse, and our estate is almost boiled away to nothing, our great reward is yet to come! Though your pension is small, your portion is large. If God is your deed of gift, this may rock your hearts quiet. God lets the wicked have their pay beforehand, but the saints’ reward is given later; the robe and the ring is yet to come. May not this tune our hearts into contentment? Christian, though God does not give you a goat to make merry with, you can be content with ‘all I have is yours!’ How can you complain of the world’s emptiness when you have God’s fullness? Is not God reward enough? Does a son have any grounds to complain if a father denies him a flower from the garden when he makes him heir to his estate? So Christian, if you do not have much of the world, you do have God, an inexhaustible treasure! Who should be content if not he who has God for his portion, and heaven for his haven? If God is so great a portion, let those who have an interest in him be cheerful. Let the birds of paradise sing for joy. Shall a carnal man rejoice whose hope leans on earthly crutches? Shall not he rejoice whose treasure is laid up in heaven? Be serious, yet cheerful; a dejected, melancholy temper unfits for duty, especially praising God. Will others think God is a great reward when they see Christians drooping? It is a sin not to rejoice as much as not to repent! Let God take away what he will, he will at last give you better! Be not too much troubled at the diminishing of earthly things—heaven is yours. There you shall tread upon stars, make friends with angels, and commune with the holy Trinity.” — **Thomas Watson, Puritan Sermons 1659-1689, iii:76-78**