

THE SECRET OF CONTENTMENT



OUR QUEST — TO LIVE TO THE GLORY OF GOD

OUR KEY TO SUCCESS — LEARNING THE SECRET OF CONTENTMENT

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- A quest is a long, difficult, adventurous journey undertaken to find, achieve, or obtain something important.

1. The secret of contentment is a firm belief that God will strengthen us to do everything to which he calls us for his gospel and to his glory, 4:10-13.

- (Philippians 4:10–13 ESV) 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.**

Paul wanted to thank the Philippians for their revived concern for him while at the same time helping them to understand that ultimately he was dependent on God's provision, not theirs. Paul was thankful for the Philippians' generous spirit and it brought him great joy, but they needed to realize that he was not speaking of his need but of their opportunity.

A. We must learn the secret of contentment to live to the glory of God.

- (1 Corinthians 10:31 ESV) So, whether you eat or drink, or **whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.**
- (1 Peter 4:11b ESV) ... **whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.** To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

B. Paul had learned the secret of contentment and wanted to pass on what he had learned.

4:11 Content ... αὐτάρκης [autarkes] – satisfied or showing satisfaction with things as they are; accepting of our lot in life.

- i. He had learned to be content in whatever situation he found himself in doing the will of God.
- ii. He now knew how to be humbled and how to abound— by learning to trust God for anything that God allowed to be added or taken away from his life.
- iii. He had learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need.

C. His secret was being firmly convinced that God would complete his work in his life by supplying his every need along the way.

- (Philippians 4:19 ESV) And my God **will supply every need of yours** according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

The Philippians were in partnership with Paul in the gospel from the very beginning. The good work that God had promised to bring to completion seems to be primarily their work as partners in the gospel.

Yes, God will bring his sanctifying work in us as individuals to completion, but it seems best to view his work in our lives as individuals as being interwoven with our partnership in the gospel.

- (Philippians 1:4–6 ESV) Always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, 5 **because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.** 6 And 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.

D. And how does God strengthen us to do these things?

- i. First, we need to know where the battle for contentment is taking place to understand how God will strengthen us.

Note the phrases in 4:11-12 ... I have learned ... I know how ... I know how ... I have learned ...

- ii. Our pursuit of contentment is relevant to our physical needs but our primary concern should not be our physical needs.
- iii. The battle for contentment is primarily a battle fought in our hearts and minds—Will we believe God and trust and hope in his promises?
- iv. Godly contentment is not dependent on whether we are hungry or full, have little or have much.
- v. The discontented person is unhappy regardless of circumstances and feels dissatisfied and restless and thinks he should have a better lot in life than his current situation.
- vi. The contented person accepts and is perfectly satisfied with his lot in life and rests in God's will and shepherding care for everything.

E. The secret to contentment is knowing that God will work out everything in our lives for our good.

- (Romans 8:28 ESV) **And we know** that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

F. We learn contentment by trusting God in and through the varying circumstances of our lives.

G. Our faith will grow and grace will abound as we see God strengthen us to overcome every obstacle and trial before us on our path as ministers of his gospel.

- (Philippians 4:13 ESV) I can do all things through him who strengthens me.
- (2 Corinthians 9:8 ESV) And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.
- (Philippians 4:19 ESV) And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

2. The necessary relationship between obedience and hope—trusting in God by obeying God produces hope in God.

A. Hope is a joyful and confident expectation resulting from our obedience to and our faith in God.

B. God wants us to abound in hope.

- (Romans 15:13 ESV) May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

C. To abound in hope we must not drift away from our primary source of hope—the gospel.

- (Colossians 1:23 ESV) If indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.
- (Hebrews 10:23 ESV) Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.

D. Our faith is evidence that we believe God in things seen and unseen.

- (Hebrews 11:1 NKJV) Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

E. Consistently setting our hope on the grace of God we recalibrate our coordinates and are able to successfully navigate life.

- (1 Peter 1:13 ESV) Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

3. God strengthens us by filling us with abounding hope that never disappoints.

- (Romans 5:1–5 ESV) Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3 Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5 and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

A. The “I” in 4:13 speaks of the person who has been justified by faith and has peace with God through Jesus Christ.

- (Philippians 4:13 ESV) I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

B. The process begins with peace with God and a position of standing in the grace of God.

C. From our position of grace we are to rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

D. Now pay careful attention as to how God builds hope into our lives that will never disappoint us ...

- i. We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.
- ii. We also then rejoice in our sufferings.
- iii. Our suffering produces endurance.
- iv. Endurance produces character.
- v. Character produces hope that will never let us down, or bring us to shame or disappoint us.
- vi. This powerful, abounding hope is the result of God's love being poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

4. The Philippians had been Paul's partners in the gospel from the very beginning, 4:14-17.

- (Philippians 4:14–17 ESV) Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. 15 And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. 16 Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. 17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit.

Paul connects the discussion of contentment to the beginning and continued partnership/fellowship they had with him in the gospel.

- A. Paul pointed out that at one point in his ministry the church at Philippi was the only gospel church partner in supporting his work.
- B. The secret of the secret of contentment is an unrelenting passion for the glory of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- C. This unrelenting passion for the glory of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ is the fire that burns off the dross of self.
- D. This frees us from ourselves so that we may give ourselves completely to serving our Lord knowing that God will supply our every need.

5. Generosity begets generosity and we become conduits of supernatural generosity that flows from our trust in God's total sufficiency in supplying our needs in Christ Jesus, 4:18-19.

- (Philippians 4:18–19 ESV) **I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied,** having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. 19 **And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.**
- A. Generosity begets generosity: God's overflowing generosity in the gospel makes us to be generous people.
- B. Passion for living to the glory of God yields trust in his provision for our every need according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

6. The secret of the secret of contentment is an enduring desire to bring glory to God in everything we do, 4:20.

- (Philippians 4:20 ESV) **To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.**
- A. The more our lives are consumed with bringing glory to God ... the greater our faith in God's promise to complete his work in us in bringing him glory.
- B. Trusting him as he calls us to trust brings honor and glory to our God and reveals his power and magnificence to us in previously unknown ways.
- C. Generosity begets generosity begets service and worship begets praise and glory to God.

CONCLUSION: GRACE WINS, SO WE WIN

- I. The contented person is blessed with the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ being with his spirit, 4:21-23.
 - (Philippians 4:21–23 ESV) Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me greet you. 22 All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household. 23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.
- II. When the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is with our spirit, grace reigns and we win at life and bring glory to God.
 - (Romans 5:21 NLT) So just as sin ruled over all people and brought them to death, now God's wonderful grace rules instead, giving us right standing with God and resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.