

Find A Way To Be Content

By Brent Moody

Paul said in his letter to the church at Philippi, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Phil. 4:13). This scripture is often used to assert the idea that God miraculously aided someone in an athletic, social, or economic accomplishment. God’s providence is beyond my comprehension, and I believe that He has given us all of our talents and abilities. But we must be careful to use scriptures, like this one, in their proper context. In this text Paul is not talking about such things as Michael Phelps winning eight medals in the 2004 Olympics, or Craig Biggio recording 2,600 major league baseball hits. Paul is talking about the ability to find contentment, no matter the situation.

The preceding two verses, Phil. 4:11-12, say this, “Not that I speak in regard to need for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.” Contentment is what Paul is making reference to when he says, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

We must recognize that contentment is a learned attitude. Paul said, “I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content” and again, “I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.” Paul was willing to accept whatever lifestyle the Lord blessed him with. Whether he was traveling around the world to various cities proclaiming God’s word, or confined to a few hundred square feet, under house arrest, Paul always found a way to be content. Paul was so successful at finding contentment that he turned a “thorn in the flesh” into a gift of God used to maintain his humility. Later in the same context, found in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, Paul said, “Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

Brethren, we must, no matter what the circumstances, find a way to be content. Finding contentment has as much or more to do with our attitude than the situation we are in. Daniel purposed in his heart to not defile himself with the king’s delicacies—and he did not do so. We must purpose in our hearts to learn, in whatever state we are in, to be content. If we do not decide to be content, we will easily become discontent. Although there is nothing wrong with being wealthy in this life, if we truly “seek first the kingdom of heaven” even the bare necessities of life will be enough to bring us contentment. For that to be the case, we must purpose in our hearts that we will always find a way to be content.

To many of us purpose in our hearts to seek after worldly possessions. If Solomon with all of his wealth and power could never find satisfaction in materialistic desires, what makes us think we will even come close? Solomon wrote an entire book, Ecclesiastes, relaying his experiences with the pleasures of the world, and the discontentment he

found in worldly possessions. Do you remember the conclusion to his book? Solomon said, "Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all" (Eccl. 12:13). If worldly possessions were "man's all," Solomon would have found plenty of contentment without God. But Solomon recognized that without God everything was vain, and there was no contentment to be gained.

Paul's bold statement, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13), has little to do with worldly accomplishments, but much to do with finding contentment as a child of God. Purpose in your heart that you will always, with God's help, find a way to be content. Then, like Paul, you can say, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."