***Contentment through God's Word - PH87-01  
Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 4:10-13***

We are continuing with the secret of contentment, as the apostle Paul instructs us at the last part of Philippians 4:10-13. We found that the Christians at Philippi were, as a whole, very positive to Bible doctrine. They were a group of believers who had grown spiritually into a mature local church organization, and they had a vision for reaching the world with the gospel. The Philippians highly esteemed the apostle Paul, and they were eager to share with him in the ministry of worldwide evangelism. Thus they were also ready to contribute their money to this cause.

We found that for a period of time during which Paul was in prison, the Philippians had not assisted him financially as they had in the past. So in verse 10, we read, "But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at the last," indicating that for a period of time they had not been active with him in financial support. The reason for this inactivity is not given, but it is due to circumstances beyond their control, because Paul points out that their care has blossomed out again, "But of which you were also mindful, but you lacked opportunity." So he recognizes that they were not unconcerned for the work of evangelism, and they were not unconcerned for the work that Paul was doing, but that they, for some reason, did not have opportunity to participate with him. Then suddenly, Epaphroditus arrives on the scene in Rome from Philippi on a surprise visit, and with him he brings a generous offering for Paul's ministry.

Paul was very happy for this blossoming out again of the Philippians' support, and of joining with him in evangelism. Paul's joy, however, I remind you again, was not over the sum of money that he received. But he was happy for the fact that now, in the providence of God, they once more had an opportunity to give, and they were willing to give. The result would be treasures stored in heaven for them. That is the treasure that Paul rejoiced in – the treasures which they would receive, not the treasures of their money which he had received. Paul had realized that their temporary lack of financial aid did not indicate lack of concern for the Lord's work; rather, just lack of opportunity.

Paul hastened, however, to make it clear where his expectation for funds lay. Paul wanted it understood very clearly that he waited upon the Lord alone. Paul would manage his ministry with or without the gifts of any church, even the Philippians. Sometimes his depending on the Lord for financing his ministry meant working with his hands. Sometimes it meant receiving gifts. Sometimes it meant having an ample supply. Sometimes it meant having very little.

So in verse 11, we're going to look at Paul's personal contentment. Though he has rejoiced in the gift which the Philippians have sent by Epaphroditus, and though he rejoices in their renewed participation with him after a period where they did not participate, he wants to make it clear that he is not getting high because they have brought him a sum of money. His joy is in something entirely beyond that.

So he begins with the words, "Not that I speak in respect of want." The word "not" in the Greek is this word "ou" which you will remember is the strongest negative in the Greek language, and it happens to stand first in the sentence. Therefore, it is even more negative. "That" is the Greek word "hoti." "Hoti" introduces a clause here ... and it's going to explain something to us. The word that follows is "I speak." This is the Greek word "lego." "Lego" refers to Paul's comments here in verse 10. So when he says in verse 11, "Not that I speak," he's looking back to verse 10. He is saying, "Now, let me explain what I've just said to you about my rejoicing over the fact that you're contributing to God's work again. This is in the present tense, so that it indicates that his remarks are continually coming from a divine viewpoint frame of reference. This is active, so it is his own statement. It's his own thinking which he is expressing on the basis of that divine viewpoint frame of reference. It's indicative which is indicating that we have here a statement of fact.

He says, "Now that I speak in respect of." "In respect of is the preposition "kata." The idea there means "in relationship to" or "concerning." Concerning what? Concerning "want." The word is "husteresis." This means "to suffer a lack." Here, the lack is particularly a financial need. Paul was not happy with the gift that the Philippians brought him because it met a dire need that he had. We might think that the reason he was happy was because he had a great need and they fulfilled it. No, he says, "I'm not happy because of that." The want here is financial. But he's saying, "When I say that I am rejoicing in what has happened, I'm not speaking concerning the fact that I had some great need, and I'm so happy that you met that need. Paul is not thinking in terms of the money he needed to do the Lord's work. He didn't get excited over the supply brought him. He was rejoicing in what the giving did for the spiritual progress of the Philippian Christians themselves.

There are many things that we can do which advance our personal spiritual maturity, and our personal walk with the Lord. We call them the techniques of the Christian life. But here is one thing that will depress spiritual growth as few things will, and that is failure to use our money that God has given us, not only for our needs, but for His work – to deny that money to the Lord's work. That has a depressive effect upon a person's spiritual life. People who do not give to the Lord's work as per the Spirit's direction and leading in relationship to what God has given them create a spiritual poverty in their hearts. This is inevitable.

When the apostle Paul sees people who are faithful in giving, it is because of what it means to those individuals. It is because this indicates that they have a level of spiritual maturity that has already developed. It indicates that they're going to have eternal rewards someday in the future when they stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ. So the apostle Paul is looking beyond the gift itself, and the fact that it met a particular need for him. He's looking for what they themselves (the givers) will receive.

"Not that I speak in respect of some want for." "For" is the word "gar," signaling an explanation. "What do you mean, Paul, that you're not speaking out of the pressure of being under some need?" "I'm not speaking out of the pressure of being under some want to do the Lord's work.

"I have learned." The word "I have learned" is the Greek word "manthano." In the Greek language, the word "I" is listed separately. It's the Greek word "ego." Usually the personal pronoun is part of the verb itself. It's part of the endings. Here, in this case, it stands separately because Paul is stressing the fact that there is something true about himself, whatever may be true about other people. "Here's one thing," he says, "I want you to understand about me. I for my part" (We may say, "Whatever others may feel.") have learned.

This word "learned" means "to acquire a habit," or it means "to become accustomed to." Paul is referring to an area of spiritual maturity in his soul. The spiritual maturity structure that he has built has enabled him to acquire a certain habit or a certain way of acting – something he has become accustomed to. It's in the aorist tense, meaning that he reached a certain level of spiritual maturity which is the super grace level of the spiritual life with him. It's not something he was born with. It's a point. That's why it's aorist. It's a point in his life that he reached. It is active. It's his own attitude and his own personal practice. It's indicative. It's a statement of fact.

"I have learned in whatever state I am." This refers to whatever circumstances. Here, by context, it refers specifically to material circumstances – whatever particular material circumstances he finds himself in.

"I am in this to be content." "I am" is the Greek word "eimi." This is simply the verb of being. It is present tense. It is Paul's continual circumstance at any time. He doesn't go up and down in this. This is something that he has become accustomed to. He has learned, and he has learned it well. It's part of his life. It is active – it's his own status. It's indicative – it's a statement of fact. "In this" is not in the Greek. That's why it's in italics in the English Bible. Again, we have that little clipped way of speaking in the Greek in order to make the emphasis: be content.

**Content**

This is a very important word. The word is "autarkes." "Autarkes" was used in the writings which have come down to us from New Testament times called the papyri. These are the various records that we have of how the Koine Greek language was used in New Testament times. We have this word "autarkes" many times. It means "sufficient in oneself." We would translate it as self-sufficient, adequate, or needing no assistance.

We have this same word used, for example, in 2 Corinthians 9:8 which will give us a little idea of how the Bible uses it. It uses it just the way they did in New Testament Koine ordinary everyday speech: "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, always having all sufficiency." There is the word. "In all things may abound every good work."

We have it again used by Paul 1 Timothy 6:6: "But godliness with contentment (and there is the word) is great gain." This is something that Paul elsewhere says, "Godliness (that is, a spiritual maturity built into your soul) – that's great. Along with it comes something else that's even greater, and that is contentment – a certain adequate self-sufficiency."

This word "autarkes" happened to be one of the great words that the pagan philosophers of ancient times liked to use. This word "autarkes" described what a certain group of philosophers called the Stoics held as the highest ideal in life. This was a school of philosophical thought which was founded by a man named Zeno in the fourth century B.C. The Stoics used this word "autarkes" to describe a mental attitude in which a person was completely independent of all things and people. He needed nothing, and he needed no one. The highest ideal of the Stoics was to come to a condition of "autarkes." You didn't need anybody, and you didn't need anything. The Stoic concept was very prominent in New Testament times, and people were well aware that this word represented this particular stoical idea.

So the Stoic philosophy sought to gain happiness by eliminating all desire. Contentment for the Stoics did not consist in possessing much, but in wanting little. The idea was not to add to a person's possessions to make him happy, but to take away his desire for possessions. That would make him happy. Socrates, one of the great philosophers, was once asked, "Who was the wealthiest person?" And Socrates' response was in the tradition of the concept of "autarkes," because he said, "He who is content with least, for 'autarkeia' (that is, self-sufficiency) is nature's wealth."

This concept still exists in the eastern religions. The concept of coming to nirvana is approached via the idea of destroying all desires – that a person's happiness lies not in the fact that he has what he needs or that he has what he wants, but that he has no desires whatsoever.

Another writer of ancient Greek times, Epictetus, had a program that he set up for eliminating all emotions so that a person was unsubdued either by joy or by grief – to develop complete indifference to pleasure and pain, and to steel oneself into accepting everything that happens as the will of God. So Epictetus set out a course of study which is summarized in a paragraph from his writings as to how to arrive at the ideal mental attitude in life. The advice of Epictetus was:

"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. If you are hurt or injured in any way, say, 'I don't care.' If you go on long enough, and if you try hard enough, you will come to a stage where you can watch your nearest and dearest suffer and die, and say, 'I don't care.'"

That, to the pagan Greek philosopher, was the epitome of living. And that was described by this word "autarkes" – completely devoid of any kind of feeling; completely devoid of any desires; and, completely devoid of any sense of need of anybody or of anything.

Now, Paul takes his very words and he says, "Hey, I've got an 'autarkes.' That's why I don't have any trouble. I want you people, when I commend you for your offering, to understand that I'm not getting excited because I have some needs, and your offering is going to help me to meet them. These are not only personal needs, but I mean even needs for the Lord's work. Even that, though your offerings will meet it, is not what I'm getting excited and happy about." The reason, he says, is because, "I don't have that kind of a reaction. I've got an 'autarkes' condition in my soul." What was he talking about?

Well, the Stoics operated from grim determination of the will. Their "autarkes" glorified themselves, and it stemmed from their pride. But Paul had an "autarkes" that stemmed (that was based upon) the spiritual maturity structure in his soul which glorified the Lord Jesus Christ, and flowed from an attitude of humility. Paul had developed a spiritual maturity where he was at a super grace level. Therefore, part of that spiritual maturity, as you know, included the facet of the mastery of the details of life. Paul was not an economic animal. Consequently, he was not swayed hither and yon by economic factors. Anytime a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ feeds his soul on doctrine through the instruction of the pastor-teacher in the Word of God, he will move through the various steps to spiritual maturity, where one of the things he will have in his life is a mastery of the details of life.

The apostle Paul, because he had a mastery of the details of life, did not fit into this kind of a picture. Paul was happy either in prosperity or in poverty because the point of his living was not to stockpile money. Paul's eyes were on the Lord, so he was happy in exercising his gifts to bring Bible doctrine to people. He was stockpiling eternal rewards. That's what he had his eyes on. He did not have his eyes on stockpiling a bank account, but he had his eyes on stockpiling eternal rewards – either his, or those he ministered to. So what he got excited over was not the actual gift itself, but it was what this gift represented in terms of eternity for those who gave it. That was the thing over which Paul was rejoicing.

The pagan stoic virtue of contentment is self-made. However, Paul has a Christian contentment (a Christian "autarkes") which is the product of Bible doctrine – building in the soul a spiritual maturity structure that gives us a mastery of the details of life. No Christian, who has not built this structure in his soul, can ever hope to have this kind of contentment. You'll be told to be content in the Lord. You'll be told to be content with such things as you have, and so on. Christians will try to grimly live up to that kind of an ideal. But it will not be natural. It will be alien. It will be forced. They'll be forcing themselves to do it. Paul is saying, "Listen. What I'm doing is just as natural to me as breathing. I wasn't born with this kind of Christian 'autarkes,' but it was something that was developed in me through the Word of God and through the Spirit of God."

The same principle or concept is stated for us in Hebrews 13:6: "Let your manner of life be without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have. For he has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you,' so that we may boldly say, 'The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do to me.'" Let me show you what this verse is saying. Verse 5 begins with, "Manner of life." It doesn't begin with "Let your." That's not in the Greek, but that fills out the idea: "Let your manner of life." "Manner of life" is this Greek word "tropos." It means fashion, or it means lifestyle. Paul says, "Your lifestyle." Then again, the verb "be" is not in there. It's in italics. So in the Greek you've got this staccato type of speaking again: "Manner of life without covetousness." The word "without covetousness" is this long Greek word "aphilargiros." The first part of this word is "a." This is the Greek way of putting a negative on a word. Then it has the word "phil" from the word "philos" which is the word for love. Then the last part is "argiros" which means "silver." So literally, this Greek word says, "Without a love of silver," or we would say, "Without a love of money."

So the writer to the Hebrews, who may be the apostle Paul (many believe) is saying here again the same thing that Paul was saying in Philippians about himself. Your lifestyle literally is to be without a love of money. Instead, it says, "And be," and again, there is no verb. "And be" is not in the Greek. He just says, "Content." The word "content" is the verb from which the previous word "autarkes" came from – this word "arkeo." That's the word for content. It means to be satisfied. It simply means to be contented with. It is in the present tense – constantly. Middle voice means it's to your personal benefit. It is participle. A principle is stated here: "To be content." "Autarkes" in Philippians 4:11 comes from this verb "arkeo" used in Hebrews 13:5. So the two are connected. This passage in Hebrews gives a little further explanation about Christians being content.

So you should not be a person who is involved with the love of money. But it says to be content. With what? With such things as you have." "Such things as you have" is the verb "pareimi." "Pareimi" means the things which are at hand; that is, the things which you possess. Luke 3:14 says to be content with your wages. 1 Timothy 6:8 says to be content with the kind of food you have, and the clothing you have. Hebrews 13:5 tells us to be content with our possessions.

I must add at this point that the Bible makes it clear that we are to seek to improve our economic lot by godly means. It does not mean that while you are content with the wages you have, you should not seek to improve your lot in life with better wages. That is properly legitimate. As a matter of fact, that's exactly what the Bible tells you to do. This does not mean that if you have a certain quality of food, and you have a certain quality of clothing, that you should not seek to improve both. The same is true of any other possession you have.

If you will check Ephesians 4:28, 1 Thessalonians 4:11, and 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12, all of those passages of Scripture will emphasize repeatedly that Christians are to work and they are to apply themselves for what purpose? In order to improve their condition, and in order that they may have the things that they need and the things that they want. As a matter of fact, in the book to the Thessalonians, the apostle Paul says that the person who does not work is not going to eat either. That's the principle of the Word of God. If you don't work, you don't eat.

The Bible keeps coming up with these concepts that are just devastating to our welfare programs today. Just think what would happen if this principle was applied? If you don't work, you don't eat. Do you know what would happen? You wouldn't quit eating, but you'd start working. That's what would happen for most people by far. So "such things as you have" and "to be content with what you have" means to say, "OK, God. Here's where I am. This is where I am at this stage of my life, and I'm happy with it. I'm not sitting here grumbling. I'm not complaining because my neighbor has something more, or someone else has something more. I'm not even complaining about the fact that I don't have what my parents have.

A lot of young people who get married start off with the very bad idea that they should start at the economic level that their parents have. They are just very unhappy if they can't do that. The Bible says, "Improve your status, but while you're improving it, act in a condition of being satisfied with what you have as of that point.

The next word is "For" which is the Greek word "gar." He explains. Why can't I have this kind of an attitude of contentment wherever I am at a certain point in my life? Next comes, "He has said." "He" is emphatic in the Greek, referring to God. "Said" is the Greek word "eipon." It is perfect tense, which means that he has said it in the past, and the statement continues to the present. It is active. It is God Himself who has said it. It is indicative – a statement of fact.

**God Will Never Leave You**

Then, he quotes Deuteronomy 31:6. Here's what he says: "God (in the past, and it continues to the present) has said (and it is now recorded), 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.'" The word "never" is the strongest Greek way of expressing a negative. You're all acquainted with the negative "ou" which is the strongest negative, and the weaker negative "me." But when you put them together, you've got something that's even stronger than "ou." And here in the Greek Bible at this point, the word never is a translation of these words "ou me." In order to get this idea in English, we would have to say "by no means" or "positively not." "I will positively not what?" "Leave." The word is "aniemi." That means "to let go." It connotes to leave a person without any support. Here, almighty God says, "First of all, I'm going to ask you to be content in whatever status you find yourself, as a result of my providence and my grace, while you seek to improve your state in life. The reason for that is that I will never leave you without support. I'm never going to let you go." That's what this word means.

It is aorist tense which means at no point in time will God abandon you without support. It is active. It is the Lord Himself who will see that this does not happen. It is subjunctive. It's potential. He could abandon you, but He says that He would not. Subjunctive means it's possible either way. "I will never leave you nor." "Nor" is another negative "oude." So far, God is trying to tell us something about how we can be comfortable in accepting the doctrine of contentment. He has used three negatives thus far in the Greek Bible to express the absolute confidence we can have in our God. He says, "I will never leave you nor."

Then the Greek does something that the English doesn't put in. The English would have to say, "I will never leave you *nor never* forsake." You can't say that in English. That's call a double negative, and a double negative comes out positive. So you can't do that in English. But in Greek, boy, when they want to be emphatic, they can just string any number of negatives together. So the Greek here has another "ou me" that is repeated.

So you've got five negatives strung together in order to try to get it into our brains in some emphatic way that God says, "Be content with such things as you have." When he says that godliness with contentment is great gain, he is talking about something that is realistic because the basis of that contentment is whether you trust God or not. This trust isn't because of some kind of challenging appeal, but it is because the Word of God has declared that this is what is pleasing to God. This is what He will do.

So he says, "I will never leave you;" that is, "I'll never leave you with our support, nor never forsake." The word forsake is "egkataleipo." "Egkataleipo" means "to abandon." It means to leave you in straits, or to leave a person helpless. God has used five negatives to declare that He will never leave you without economic support. He will never leave you in some economic helpless condition. It is aorist which means at no point in time. It is active. The Lord will not do this. It is subjunctive again. It's potential. He could leave you like this, but He won't.

Verse 6 gives a conclusion: "So that." This is this little particle "hoste." Next is "boldly:" "tharreo." The word "tharreo" means "confidentially." Because the Word of God has said it, and because God has declared it, I can declare confidently my acceptance of the principle of contentment. We say constantly and emphatically (boldly) with the result that we have confidence.

Then he quotes Psalm 118:6: "The Lord is my helper. I will not fear what man shall do unto me." The word "helper" is "boethos." That is just exactly what it means – someone who assists you in your helplessness. "And you will not fear ('phobeo')." This is future passive indicative. It means that at no time in the future will you be afraid. It is passive. You won't have to tell yourself not to be afraid. You just won't be afraid, as the result of having believed the promises of God. It is indicative – a statement of fact. It has the strong negative "no." "I just won't be afraid of what man." The word "man" is anthropos" meaning of what mankind (anybody in the human race) shall do at any time in the future unto me." So Hebrews 13:5-6 restates in a very forceful way, with a little more explanation, the principle of contentment.

**In Feast or Famine**

Now coming back to Philippians 4:12, the apostle Paul is giving further explanations of what he means by the fact that he knows how to be content. Paul's experience has included two things. It has included the experience of feast and famine. So he says: "I know." This is the Greek word "oida." "Oida" connotes being able to see something. Actually, this word "oida" does come from a Greek verb which means "to see." We use that in English. We say, "Oh, I *see* what you're talking about." That means, "I understand. I grasp it." So the Greek does the same thing. But this particular word "oida" connotes seeing something as a result of information that you receive. There's another word, "ginosko", for knowing, but that's knowing as a result of your experience in this particular situation.

It says, "I know how." It is followed here by a grammatical structure that makes it more than just "know:" "I know how." And I know it because of information. What kind of information? I know it because of the fact that I have taken the Word of God into my thinking. That's how I know it. I don't know it from something I concluded: from something people tell me; or, from any experiences. I know it on the basis of the fact that I have oriented my thinking to doctrine. I've learned the Word of God. It connotes an ability: "I know how." Perfect tense here is used as the present tense. That just happens to be a peculiarity of this word "oida." It's perfect, but it means the same thing as present. It's active. Paul is exercising this ability continually. And it's a statement of fact.

Then we come again where we have "kai." It's comparing two things. Well, here is another way that the Greek compares: this time, by using the word "kai" twice ("kai kai"), and it's translated "both and:" on the one hand, this; and, on the other hand, that." So the apostle Paul is going to make a comparison in the Greek Bible. He keeps throwing the word "kai" in there so that when you read it on the Greek page, it's just easy to see that he's balancing one against another in order to convey the basis for his contentment.

**In Poverty or Prosperity**

So he says, "I know on the one hand both to be abased." The word for abased is the Greek word "tapeinoo." "Tapeinoo" means "to bring low," or "to bring to a humble condition." What Paul means by this word is that he knows how to be strapped for funds. He knows how to be in poverty. It is present tense. He knows, at a certain point in his experience, he has known continual poverty. It is passive. That's interesting. Passive indicates that the apostle Paul did not bring this property on himself. It was not because he was too lazy to work, or because he was a spendthrift. This was something that was due to the sovereignty of God, and the conditions of his Christian service. That's why he lacked. It's infinitive. This is an infinitive's use in what we call an objective use, in that it is the object of "learned." In other words, these infinitives mark what it is that he says: "I know how." He says, "I know how," then he starts labeling for us (listing for us) what he knows how to do. He knows one thing: "I know how to be strapped for money."

Then he says, "And," and he uses the other "kai" to close things out. He says, "I know another thing," and he repeats the word "I know" for emphasis: "I know how to abound." "To abound is "perisseuo." "Perisseuo" means to be abundantly supplied. Paul says, "I know how to be flush with money too. I know how to be in poverty. Now I know how to be in prosperity. It is present tense – a continual status at certain times of his experience. It is active. That's interesting. When he was in poverty, it was passive, indicating that it was the result of something beyond his control – not due to him. It is active. His prosperity is due to what he has done. He's gone to work. He has performed the Lord's ministry, so God has raised up the money. The infinitive indicates, again, this is what he knows.

Paul has a spiritual maturity structure, which is that super grace level. It enables him to take poverty or prosperity in godly stride. There's no emotional instability either way. He took poverty without feeling depressed or defeated. He took prosperity without undue delight or self-indulgence. Now, what is enough? Enough for the old sin nature (you will discover, if you have not already found this to be true) is always a little more than you happen to have at that point. When will a person have enough? From time to time, I've had experience to be associated with people who have made vast sums of money. One of the things that's always puzzled me about those people is that they have never reached enough.

I can envision myself (I've sometimes thought), "Now how much money would I have to make, and then I wouldn't be bothered with making money anymore?" I have seen people who are literally millionaires, and they couldn't stop making money, and invest their lives in the Lord's work. You can stop working with a whole lot less than a million dollars. So how much is enough? For the old sin nature, it's always a little more than you have. I've noticed that it's prosperous people who are the ones who often share the least with others. They share only when it's to their benefit. There are certain prosperous Christians which will share with others, but only if it's to their benefit. Ananias and Sapphira tried to do that and they dropped dead. Fortunately, God doesn't do that anymore. Otherwise it would shoot our membership down in a hurry. They were very gracious when it was to their benefit.

Do you remember the old fable about the old woman and the beggar? The old woman was sitting there at the fireplace. She was making cakes. This old beggar knocked on the door. She opened the door. He said, "I'm very cold. Could I warm myself by the fire?" She allowed him to sit there by the fire. Then he said, "I'm terribly hungry. I wonder if I could have one of those loaves." So she baked a loaf, and the loaf came out bigger than the others she had baked. She thought to herself, "This is too big. I can't give that to him." So she cut the size of the next dough in half; put it in there; baked it; and, lo and behold, that was bigger than the one before. So she said, "That's too big. I can't give that to him."

So she kept cutting it down until she had a piece of dough the size of a peanut; put it in there; and, the loaf came out bigger than all the others. She said, "I can't give this to him." She said, "I'm sorry, I have no more dough left. I can't give you anything." So the poor beggar left. She was wearing a black cloth with a red scarf around her neck, and she turned into a woodpecker – a red-throated woodpecker. And that's where the dark red-throated woodpecker came from – this character, who didn't have enough dough to be able to help feed a beggar who needed a loaf of bread, because she never could get enough. So I suggest that you be careful what you wear when you can't get enough.

The apostle Paul said, "I know how to be in poverty. I know how to be strapped for money. I know how to be flush. I know how to abound. Then he says, "Everywhere." This is kind of interesting. "Everywhere" is the Greek word "en" which stands for "in," plus the word "pas:" "en" and "pas." We're going to have it repeated in just a moment. Here, the "pas" is the singular. So it means in every single thing; whatever the situation is; whatever the particular desire; and, whatever the particular need, I know how to act in it. Then is says, "And," and there's our comparison word, "In all things." He compares it to that. The preposition "en" again, plus "pas," but this time in the plural. So this time it's "in all things" – here, specifically in all circumstances. So what we are saying here is that Paul knows how to be content in any particular situation – in all circumstances under which this may happen to him, whether he is prosperous or poor.

Whatever it is, he says, "I am instructed." The word "instructed" is "mueo." That is very interesting. This word "mueo" was a word which was used in the ancient world to describe initiation into the secrets of a mystery religion. Today you may join certain secret lodges. You are initiated into their secrets. This is the word ("mueo") which would describe your being initiated into their secrets. The apostle Paul is taking this word which, in the passive here, means "to learn a secret." He's saying, "I've learned the secret from the past. Because I built spiritual maturity to super grace level, I have learned the secret concerning the mastery of the details of life."

Then he explains that a little more with the expression "both." Here again, we have that "kai kai" comparison. This is another contrast: "Both to be full." The Greek word for "full" is "chortazo." "Chortazo" means to satisfy with food. This is the word that they used to use to describe fattening up an animal by feeding him. It is present tense – continual status. It was a feast at times. Paul knew what it was to have plenty of food. It is passive because it satisfied his appetite. He didn't do it. The food did it. It's infinitive. Again, this is an object of what he learned. This is telling us: "This is what I have learned. I have learned how to be full. That's the first thing. I know how to be satisfied with food." Incidentally, this word "chortazo" is the one which is used in Luke 16:21 to describe the meal that the beggar wanted to make of the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. These crumbs were big enough to be a satisfying meal in themselves.

Paul says, I know how to have plenty of food." He says, "I also know how to be hungry." That's "peinao." That simply means a famine condition. Paul was grateful for when he had plenty of food, and he was grateful for the famine. It is present. That was the continual condition at times. It is active. Paul did the hungering this time. Previously it was passive. When he was feasting, the food did the satiating of his hunger. Now Paul does his own hungering. It is infinitive again, indicating one of the things he is instructed in. That's the object there.

Then again, you have, "Both and." Again we have a comparison. This time, to abound ("perisseuo") which means to have more than enough. This refers to things in general. He's just been talking about having enough food, being in feast and famine. He's talking about being in prosperity. Again, this is present tense – continual at times. It is active – Paul's experience of affluence. It is infinitive – indicating again what he had learned. He says, "And the other times, I suffered need" ("hustereo"). "Hustereo" means "to lack select certain things," or "to be in want." It refers to things in general again that he needed. Sometimes present tense shows that was continually his state. Again, notice that it's passive here. It was done to Paul. He lacked this. It is infinitive – one of the things he learned. He knew how to need something and do without it, and still be happy.

What was the source of this stability? Let's sum it up with that great Philippians 4:13. The man who was so influential in spiritual things in my life, Dr. Donald Gordon Davis, used this verse as his life verse. This is what he set for himself always to guide him in his life and in his ministry. Paul says, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." "I can do" is the Greek word "ischuo," and it means "to be strong so as to prevail." Paul had a spiritual capacity within himself continually. He had this ability. "I can do all things." That means meeting any of the conditions of feast or famine; or poverty or prosperity. "Through" is the Greek word "en", and it means "by means of" (instrumental).

The word Christ is not in the Greek. Cross it out. It shouldn't be in the English translation. It's "The One who strengthens me." "The One" is the Greek word "endunamoo." "Endunamoo" means "to make strong." It means "to pour the power into." Paul says, "I can do all of these things through the One who has inwardly strengthened me – who has poured the power into me." What's he talking about? He's talking about, "The One who has given me a spiritual capacity so that I am able to be content." That's the basis of his contentment – continually, because of what has been built into him, through the Word of God: "By means of the One who strengthens me" (the apostle Paul).

So what was Paul's basis of contentment? He made it clear to these Philippians that their gift was not what excited him, but the benefits of that gift to them spiritually excited him. He made it clear to them that he himself was very stable when it came to material things. He knew how to be content in whatever condition he found himself in. He knew how to be content when he was in famine or when feasting. He knew how to be content when he was in poverty or when he was in prosperity. Why? It was because there was something spiritually built within first that made him content, namely spiritual maturity through the Word of God.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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