

“Sharing Joy and Hope in Jesus!” #7

Chapter 4: 8 - 9

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. ⁹ Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

- “Finally” signals we are approaching the end of this letter. These are some of the last thoughts Paul wants to leave with those whom he loves in Christ.
- Paul is speaking in general, not specific terms. He points to his own life as an example to follow.

What would be on your list of things that are excellent and praiseworthy? On the other hand, what things could you spend less time thinking about?

Could you say to someone, “Put into practice what you have seen in me and heard from me? Explain.

Chapter 4: 10 - 13

¹⁰ I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were 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 all this through him who gives me strength.

- In verse 10, Paul acknowledges a gift of support he had received from the believers in Philippi. The gift brought him great joy, not so much because he was in physical need, but because of what the gift said about the believers at Philippi. (More about that later.)
- Paul did not “need” the gift, because he had learned the secret of being content in any and all circumstances. Paul certainly had a wide range of experiences in his life. Yet, he always found the strength he needed through the Lord.

What does Paul mean when he says, “you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it”? Have you ever faced a similar circumstance?

Agree or disagree: The main reason we give our offerings is because the church needs them. Explain your answer.

Agree or disagree: Discontentment is a sin. Explain.

Put “the secret of being content” in your own words.

Agree or disagree: Nothing is impossible for the Christian. Explain.

Chapter 4: 14 - 20

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 more than once when I was in need. ¹⁷ Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account. ¹⁸ I have received full payment and have more than enough. 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 the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus. ²⁰ To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

- These believers in Philippi had a track record of generous support of gospel ministry. Again, Paul emphasizes that the gift speaks volume about their dedication to the Lord. He calls the gifts “a fragrant offering ... pleasing to God.”
- He assures them that the Lord will continue to meet their needs, even as they show generosity. All glory belongs to the Lord!

Agree or disagree: Giving congregations are thriving congregations. Explain your answer.

God will always give us enough to be generous. (See 2 Corinthians 9: 6 – 11). Do you believe that truth? Explain.

Agree or disagree: Every offering we give is pleasing to God. Explain.

Chapter 4: 21 - 23

Greet all God's people in Christ Jesus. The brothers and sisters who are with me send greetings. ²² All God's people here send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household. ²³ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

- Paul closes the letter with some personal greetings. We again see the blessing of Christian fellowship! Note that there are believers even in Caesar's household.

Does this time of social distancing have you thinking more about the blessing of Christian fellowship? How can you express that fellowship in your present circumstances?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, help me to be content with the circumstances of my life. Use me to support gospel ministry and my fellow Christians with the gifts and opportunities I have. Keep me safe and secure in your grace! Amen.

