

LEARNING CONTENTMENT

Wednesday, February 25

Reading: Philippians 4:10-20

Philippians 4:12 *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.*

There is a false teaching out there today that says a believer can pray for whatever they want and God will give it to them. All we have to do is “name it and claim it!” They will tell you that God is glorified when His people live “the good life” and encourage believers to pray for our daily luxury car and mansion. God wants His people healthy and wealthy. The result is that Christians are measured not by how much they give but by how much they own! Those who believe this have not read their Bible.

While it is true that God does bless some of His people with material things, it also tells us that with great blessings comes great responsibility.

2 Corinthians 9:8 And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work...11 You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

The focus of the Bible is not on getting but on being content with what God gives us. When Paul writes his letter to the Philippians, he is a prisoner awaiting trial in Rome. The church has sent him money to help pay his expenses and he writes to thank them. While thankful, Paul tells this church that he has learned to be “content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.” He can do this because his focus is on Christ who gives him strength in every situation. (see also 1 Timothy 6:6-10; Hebrews 13:5-6).

Contentment does not crave after more. It does not pray selfishly with “wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures” (James 4:3). And it doesn’t matter if you have much or little. In the book of Proverbs, we have the words of a man named Agur who prayed:

...give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread.
Otherwise, I may have too much and disown You and say, ‘Who is the LORD?’
Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God.
(Proverbs 30:8-9)

The desire for MORE is dangerous for both those who have and those who have not! It takes our attention off the Lord who provides and puts it on ourselves and what we think we need. That is why Jesus told us to pray for our daily bread. Later in His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus warned us not to worry about food and clothing for God already knows what we need. If He provides for the birds of the air and the flowers in the field, how much more will He provide for His children? Jesus’ answer is to “seek first [God’s] kingdom and [God’s] righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:25-34). What would contentment look like in your life? What daily bread do you need to put at the top of your prayer list? What might you need to remove?