

The ConTENTment Commandments Pastor Steven Furtick

Philippians 4-Key Passage

Philippians 4 contains Paul's words on contentment. It is not born in you. It's a decision you make. This is the man who preached to the Gentiles when everyone else was evangelizing the Jews. He was the guy that didn't circumcise converts. He reprimanded Peter for refusing to shut down prejudice.

Philippians 4:13 is the most famous verse in the Bible. Contentment is a skill to be learned.

Philippians was a letter to a church that Paul founded. We need to discover where Paul was emotionally and spiritually when he wrote the book.

Philippians 4:10-19

I HAVE LEARNED the hard way to trust him. To be content WHATEVER the circumstances. It is not my situation that regulates my satisfaction. I have learned the secret of being content.

I was good before you got here-I'm good. Even before you sent your gift.

I am amply supplied.

Here are Paul's "Contentment Commandments"

God is a God of freedom. When God delivered the children of Israel out of Egypt, He began the process of getting Egypt out of them. We would rather stay with familiar addictions, familiar mindsets because it feels normal. We choose normal rather than new. God wants you free from the need to be approved by others.

Before the 10 Commandments, God wanted the Jews to be free.

Did Paul get justice? Paul was unjustly accused. Treated as a common criminal rather than a Roman citizen. Paul in chains was more free than a lot of us.

Paul has expressed freedoms:

Chapter one: Freedom from fear. I don't care whether I die or live. Kill me. I'll see Christ. If you leave me here, I'll keep working.

Chapter two: Free from my flesh. I don't have anything to prove. I am doing the will of God. He imitates Christ's servanthood.

Chapter four: It's almost a P.S. I can do all things through Christ. It's a weight lifting verse. "God will supply all your needs."

A 'P.S.' is a perspective shift..

1. THOU SHALT REMEMBER TO REJOICE.

The worst thing you can do-is forget how He loves, you redeems you. Worship songs remind you to surrender. Contentment means nobody has to remind you to rejoice.

"Again I say rejoice!" How easy it is to forget. Selective memory-remember those good things to rejoice. Make a movie in your mind. Delete evil-enhance the good.

In the final cut in Hollywood, the terms means you have the final say over what goes on the big screen. But for Christians, you can have the final cut. Remember the blessings. Rejoice in the victories.

Bless the Lord at all times. Bless the Lord in the midst of battles.

Paul wrote terrible thank you notes. Mom raised him right. He sat at the feet of Gamaliel, Pharisee of Pharisees. But Paul was not a good thank-you note writer!

"I rejoice in the Lord that AT LAST you send me a little something. Indeed you were concerned but had not opportunity. There was a period of silence. He could have thought, "Nobody cares about me."

How do you interpret silence?

2. REFUSE TO RESENT.

He refused to live in the prison of resentment. No windows, only bars. I choose to assume that you wanted to help me. Refuse to resent others in every situation. How do you view your past? You can live in resentment or contentment. God wants his children free. You have to be like Joseph. It does matter that you had rough times in the past. Joseph said, "God sent me here to save your lives!"

The only one free was Joseph who was in prison. I will not another day I refuse to live in resentment when Christ died to set me free.

3. APPRECIATE ALL SEASONS.

When you renewed your concerned for me. The Greek word means you caused your concern to bloom. Church is seasonal sometimes, like the summer. Some people get busy in certain seasons of the year. God is not as important as other things.

You have to live through bad seasons. "A re-building year." It means you are losing. Right now the nights are long and the days are short. Paul says it was a long winter, but there is spring. To everything there is a season. I know how to have plenty, and I know how to be pruned.

4. THOU SHALT KEEP A SECRET STASH.

Paul wrote, "I choose to believe the best. I got your gift. It took awhile. I didn't really need it." If you are going to house and you don't know if the food is good, pre-eat. Be spiritually full before you come to church. "It's nice but I don't need it." I get high on my own supply. I have some songs I can sing all by myself.

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

5. THOU SHALT NOT CONFUSE THE SUPPLY WITH THE SOURCE.

What happened to the Israelites waiting for Moses when they danced around the Golden Calf? They got the created things, instead of their Creator. Paul starts by saying "I rejoice in the LORD for sending the gift." Not, "I rejoice in the gift. "

However God blesses you in every season, He was the one who provided it. You might be living in dual seasons.

Great job, wayward kids. Everybody needs to know your life, no matter how good or bad, is from God's hand. You reject the blessing because of the burden.

"I am not the drink, I'm the straw." Takes the pressure off me, the preacher.

Got a new car? Every good and perfect gift from God.

God is my source. If you believe that, you will have no problem following Him.

"When I first started out, not one church was giving me anything." He was making tents. Staying up late working to pay for his ministry.

6. THOU SHALT NOT DOWNPLAY DISAPPOINTMENT.

Paul could be disappointed. He refused to define himself. He knew disappointment will send you to destiny if you stay with it. "I will choose to see the Lord in the Land of the Living,"

7. THOU SHALT RECOGNIZE

8. THOU SHALT RELEASE

9. THOU SHALT RECEIVE

10. THOU SHALT REMAIN

“And my God will *supply*.” I have found where my needs are really met and I will not be moved. I know the One who knows my needs.

RECOGNIZE-that we have Epaphroditus. It reminds me of Andrew standing by Jesus and complaining about a lack of bread when he was standing next to the bread of life.

This is where you release the frustration, the anger and the worry.

Sometime we do not recognize the good things God has given us. God has sent Epaphroditus and we send him back and say, “I’m good.” Sometimes our marriages fail when we don’t express our needs and we say, “I’m good.” We filter our lives, filter out our frustrations. We wonder why we are weak. We don’t have a lack of supply. We don’t allow God to supply our needs.

Sometimes we are too proud to obey. Naaman would have kept his leprosy-he had to receive the instruction from a servant girl, and could have stayed in his pride and self-reliance. But Naaman humbled himself. And he was healed.

I don’t know what’s going to happen to me next. “I don’t know if I’ll get out of prison. I will not leave this place of confidence in the provision of God-even in prison,” says Paul.

God is going to use you where you are. Paul says, “It’s not about me. It’s not about Caesar. It’s all about Jesus!” “I’m free indeed.”

“Be Free!!!”