

# GRATITUDE DURING THE HARD TIMES

## Philippians 4:10-23

**Collector's Dilemma:** whether we collect coins, stamps, or antiques, or just *try* to collect *money!*

We always want to add *more* to our collection.

***We're never satisfied!***

Rockefeller: "*How much does it take to be content?*"

***Just a little more!***

If we focus on what we *possess*, we'll *never* be **content**

Phil. 4 => **Remedies for Discouragement**

Phil. struggling with discouragement, due to suffering.

When facing discouragement, how do we respond?

When pressure builds...

When we face affliction...

We turn attention inward

We think about *ourselves*

We try to defend ourselves.

Phil 4 intro. **God's prescription** to cure what ails us!

**7 REMEDIES** for dealing with discouragement:

Each Rx treats symptom of discouragement:

[Suffering from:] **Symptom** [Try: ] **Prescription**

**Fear** 4:1

**Stand firm in the Lord**

**Anger/Division** 4:2-3

**Be of one mind**

**Complaining** 4:4

**Rejoice in the Lord**

**Panic** 4:5

**Think calmly/rationally**

**Worry 4:6-7**

**Take concerns to God**

**Neg Thinking 4:8**

**Focus on what leads to godliness**

**Disobedience 4:9**

**Practice what you've learned**

One more prescription:

Found in his expression of...

**THANKSGIVING FOR THEIR GIFT 4:10-20**

**PAUL'S GRATITUDE FOR THEIR CONCERN 4:10**

*"I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you have been concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it."*

**He's grateful for expres-sion of concern shown through their offering.**

**He understands previous lack of opportunity.**

Through their example, & *his* response to it, we learn...

When we're feeling discour-aged, one of best cures:

**Take eyes off ourselves & our problems.**

**Fix attention on others**

*NOT* substitute for focusing on *GOD*, but it *IS* part of solution

***Stop focusing on US!***

**Look for ways to help others**

**PAUL'S CONTENTMENT 4:11-13**

Paul models appropriate attitude toward money & *stuff*.

**He's learned to be content in diverse circumstances**

**4:11-12** *"I'm not saying this because I'm in need, for I've learned to be **content** whatever the circumstances. <sup>12</sup>I know what it is to be in need, & I know what it is to have plenty. I've learned the secret of being content in any & every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want."*

Problem people face:

### **WE'RE NEVER SATISFIED!**

We always want more – *better* than we have:

Food Money House

Car Job

*We haven't learned secret!*

We aren't **content!**

**1 Tim. 6:6** *"Godliness **with contentment** is great gain"*

Contentment isn't based on how much we have!

Some people have very little; yet they're content.

Others have *everything*, but still aren't content!

Paul has learned to get along:

in every circumstance: In humble means

or In prosperity Filled or Hungry

In abundance or Suffering need

He knows how to "barely get by" or live in wealth

He's **content** either way.

He's learned the secret!

**Paul can handle *any***

**circumstance in Jesus' strength. 4:13 "I can do *everything* through him who gives me strength."**

***Christ is enough!***

Realize what God has provided in Him

Be content with that

Enjoy it– take advantage of it.

### **Paul's gratitude for their generosity 4:14-20**

He doesn't want to communicate ungrateful attitude.

They've *abundantly* expressed concern,  
by providing for his needs.

**He's grateful they're sharing with him in his affliction**

**4:14** *"Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles."*

**He's grateful for their participation in his ministry.**

**4:15-16** *"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 & receiving, except you only; <sup>16</sup>for even when I was in Thess., you sent me aid again & again when I was in need."*

He's grateful for past & *ongoing* financial support.

**His desire for them**

**4:17** *"Not that I'm looking for a gift; but I'm looking for what may be credited to your acct."*

**He appreciates their gift because of what it does for them, more than for what it does for him.**

**He wants them to receive blessing that comes from giving.**

**His contentment with their gift 4:18a** *"I've received full payment & even more. I'm amply supplied, now that I've received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent."*

**God's contentment with their gift 4:18b**

“They’re a *fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.*”

**=> God’s promise to supply their needs. 4:19**

“My God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.”

Notice what he does NOT say:

- Doesn't say God will do this for ALL believers

Related to what they’ve *already* done.

By faith, they’ve taken a risk, given generously

–even when they didn’t have anything to spare!

**God’s supply is related to sacrifice they made by faith**

- Doesn't say God will supply all we WANT

Isn’t “copout”–doesn’t lessen value of promise.

**NOT a plan to manipulate God!–to get rich quick**

**God's supply IS consistent with His riches in glory**

Conforms to God’s kind of wealth!

Usually surprises us how generous God is,

- Doesn't say God will supply on our schedule

Or, according to *our* plan.

God knows what we’ve done

=> He’ll supply all we need

True for us when WE give in response to His prodding!

**God does promise to supply all we need.**

When we trust Him & put what we have in His hands

They haven't been rich and given much.

They have little, but share what they have

=> God will care for *them* acc. to *His* riches & His plan.

=> **Ultimate result of our generosity: God's glory**

**4:20** *"To our God & Father be glory forever & ever. Amen."*

*Looks like prayer => "To God BE glory."*

May be **statement of fact**:

*"To our God & Father IS glory forever!"*

4:19– *"according to His glorious riches"*

This prayer/statement reflects result Paul expects from our giving:

–God receives glory through our generosity

–God deserves & possesses glory

When, facing depression, we **live for God's glory**

=> *we can't lose!*

**Concluding Benediction 4:23 => GRACE!!!**

*"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ [be] with your spirit."*

Same question: Prayer?

Or, statement of fact?

*"BE"* isn't there.

Could be typical prayer of closing:

*"May His grace be with you"*

*Could* be statement of fact –*"God's grace IS with you!"*.

Maybe all these closing statements focus on that reality!

Major message in Paul's letters: extent of God's grace.

*"May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit [and it is!]"*

Or, *"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ IS with your Spirit"*

[there's reason to celebrate! ]

When facing discouragement, **COUNT ON GOD'S GRACE!**

**2 Cor. 9:8** "God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need you will abound in every good work."

**Count on His grace!**

It's all there. *All the time!*

**Lessons for us to learn:**

**3 key words to focus on:**

**1. GRATITUDE**

**2. GENEROSITY**

**3. CONTENTMENT**

**When we model these 3 traits, God's grace is evident in us;**

**=> He receives glory.**

**Only GOD can produce these qualities—work of H.S.**

We can't produce them

—they don't come naturally from us

but it *is* appropriate to ask God to produce them in us—for His glory!