

March 29/30, 2003

**Study Questions**  
*Experiencing Joy: A Study in Philippians*  
**The Secret to Contentment**  
**Philippians 4:10-23**  
Pastor Bryan Clark

### Opening Discussion

1. What is contentment? What characterizes a contented person?
2. What causes people to be discontent? What are the marks of discontentment?
3. What is the relationship between contentment and trust in God? What are the signs in our everyday lives that we do not trust God?

### Bible Study

1. As an application from Philippians 4:8, what did you choose to allow your mind to dwell on this past week? What was the result?
2. Read Philippians 4:10-23.
3. Paul says he has learned to be content in whatever circumstances he is in. What are his circumstances?

What are some reasons why it would be hard to be content in his circumstances?

4. The word “content” was a word the Stoics used for “self-sufficiency.” While Paul is clearly promoting our sufficiency in Christ (4:13), he is trying to capture some of the idea of the Stoics. They believed wisdom was in controlling what you can control and not worrying about that which you cannot control. What are the things in your daily life you can control and what are the things you cannot control?

Paul said he “learned” to be content. Where are you in that learning process?

5. According to 4:12 Paul had to learn how to respond to prosperity as well as humble means. Does prosperity guarantee contentment? Why or why not?

How do you respond to the statement that God may want to prosper us more, but we could not handle it?

6. How does the promise of 4:13 affect our contentment?

What does anxiety reveal about our belief in this promise?

7. In 4:14 Paul commends them for “sharing” with him in his affliction. The word for sharing is *koinonia*, which typically is translated “fellowship” or “community.” How does God sometimes strengthen us according to verse 14?

What can your LifeGroup do to share one another’s afflictions?

8. In 4:15-18 why is Paul excited about the gift from the Philippian church?

Compare with Jesus' words in Matthew 6:19-21. Does God need our money or does He want our heart? Why?

What does it say to God about our heart if we don't offer our sacrifice of worship in giving of our money?

9. Is it possible to be anxious about financial concerns and still truly believe in the promise of 4:19? Why?

What is the difference between anxiety and rightful concern?

How does 4:19 help us with contentment?

### **Application**

1. Would you say, as a general rule, you tend to be content or discontent?

If discontent, what does this passage teach you to help you learn to be content in whatever the circumstances? Name 3 specific things.

2. Name the things you tend to dwell on that you cannot control or change.

What must you do with these things if you want to be content?

3. What must you do specifically to demonstrate your belief in the promise of 4:19?

**Next week: We will review the book of Philippians as we conclude our study. Try to read over the book at least once before next week. It takes approximately 12 minutes to read in one sitting. The review lesson next week will be the last lesson until we resume with Genesis in September.**