

**Philippians 4:10-14 — “The Secret of Being Content in Any Circumstance!”**

- In his superb book *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment*, the Puritan **Jeremiah Burroughs** explained what we ought to say to ourselves whenever we are tempted to be discontent: “*I find a sufficiency of satisfaction in my own heart, through the grace of Christ that is in me. Though I have not outward comforts and worldly conveniences to supply my necessities, yet I have a sufficient portion between Christ and my soul abundantly to satisfy me in every condition.*”
  - Quite Simply: The Secret to Contentment? *Being So Satisfied with Christ that External Situations Don't Shake You Up.*
  - ❖ \*Think of CONTENTMENT by this phrase: “Satisfied In Christ!”
  - A good definition: **Contentment** is the inward, quiet, gracious frame of spirit, freely submitting to and taking pleasure in God’s disposal in every condition. [Jeremiah Burroughs]

In a very real sense, the key to contentment is **worship!**

**THESIS — From this paragraph, our loving God gives us the \*Secret to be Content in Any Circumstance\*.**

*Where does contentment come from? What’s the secret?*

## **I. GOD SATISFIES! (10-12)**

“The word **content** means *satisfaction* — and implies that Paul had in his own heart the secret of satisfaction, and was not dependent for it on any outside circumstances.” (JR Miller)

**Remember!** The secret of contentment isn’t normally learned in abundance or in great lack. But in exposure to both! Contentment is NOT contingent on circumstances! True biblical contentment is not dependent at all on our circumstances. Rather it’s focused on GOD!

\*Jeremiah 31.14 - my people will be satisfied with my goodness!\*

Burroughs again writes: “Spiritual contentment comes from the frame of the soul. The contentment of a man or woman who is rightly content does not come so much from outward circumstances or help, as from the disposition of their own hearts.”

\*Thus, it’s a heart issue, a worship issue, a satisfied-in-God issue!

**Philippians 4:10-14 — “The Secret of Being Content in Any Circumstance!”**

Contentment is not only a duty, but it's also a *discipline*.

Consider what Thomas Watson says about contentment: Contentment is a (1) **DIVINE** thing, (2) Contentment is an **INTERNAL** thing & (3) Contentment is a **HABITUAL** thing.

## **II. GOD STRENGTHENS! (13)**

\*Remember to interpret this verse in its context!

1. Contentment is **possible**.

2. Contentment is **pervasive**.

3. Contentment is **infused**.

“through Him who strengthens me!” — the verb “strengthens” means that our Christ infuses or pours in the power we need for the need of the moment. To be strengthened/infused with this strength means that we are so permeated with Him! We do this because we're in a vital, inseparable, intimate, eternal union with Christ!

## **III. GOD SUPPLIES! (14)**

Here, Paul knows that God has supplied what is needed. Paul praises the beloved Philippians because they have shared with him in his afflictions (advancement of the gospel, financial supplies, Christian encouragement!).

You really can be content in *any circumstances* that you're in because, really, ultimately you have a friend -- a **loving** friend, a **caring** friend, a **wise** friend, a **faithful** friend, a **compassionate** friend, and a **close**/near friend.

- Satisfied in God's clear revelation.
- Satisfied in God's glorious attributes.
- Satisfied in God's full redemption.
- Satisfied in Christ's perfect righteousness.
- Satisfied in God's progressively sanctifying us.

**Philippians 4:10-14 — “The Secret of Being Content in Any Circumstance!”****Jesus, Lover of My Soul**

Jesus, lover of my soul, let me to Thy bosom fly,  
While the nearer waters roll, while the tempest still  
is high.  
Hide me, O my Savior, hide, till the storm of life is  
past;  
Safe into the haven guide; O receive my soul at last.

Other refuge have I none, hangs my helpless soul on  
Thee;  
Leave, ah! leave me not alone, still support and  
comfort me.  
All my trust on Thee is stayed, all my help from Thee  
I bring;  
Cover my defenseless head with the shadow of Thy  
wing.

Thou, O Christ, art all I want, more than all in Thee I  
find;  
Raise the fallen, cheer the faint, heal the sick, and lead  
the blind.  
Just and holy is Thy Name, I am all unrighteousness;  
False and full of sin I am; Thou art full of truth and  
grace.

Plenteous grace with Thee is found, grace to cover all  
my sin;  
Let the healing streams abound; make and keep me  
pure within.  
Thou of life the fountain art, freely let me take of  
Thee;  
Spring Thou up within my heart; rise to all eternity.

**O the Deep Deep Love of Jesus**

O the deep, deep love of Jesus, vast, unmeasured,  
boundless, free!  
Rolling as a mighty ocean in its fullness over me!  
Underneath me, all around me, is the current of Thy  
love  
Leading onward, leading homeward to Thy glorious  
rest above!

O the deep, deep love of Jesus, spread His praise from  
shore to shore!  
How He loveth, ever loveth, changeth never,  
nevermore!

How He watches o'er His loved ones, died to call  
them all His own;  
How for them He intercedeth, watcheth o'er them  
from the throne!

O the deep, deep love of Jesus, love of every love the  
best!  
'Tis an ocean full of blessing, 'tis a haven giving rest!  
O the deep, deep love of Jesus, 'tis a heaven of heavens  
to me;  
And it lifts me up to glory, for it lifts me up to Thee!

**My Soul Finds Rest in God Alone**

My soul finds rest in God alone,  
My Rock and my salvation;  
A fortress strong against my foes,  
And I will not be shaken.  
Though lips may bless and hearts may curse,  
And lies like arrows pierce me,  
I'll fix my heart on righteousness,  
I'll look to Him who hears me.

*O praise Him, hallelujah,  
My Delight and my reward;  
Everlasting, never failing,  
My Redeemer, my God.*

Find rest, my soul, in God alone  
Amid the world's temptations;

When evil seeks to take a hold  
I'll cling to my salvation.  
Though riches come and riches go,  
Don't set your heart upon them;  
The fields of hope in which I sow  
Are harvested in heaven.

I'll set my gaze on God alone  
And trust in Him completely;  
With every day pour out my soul  
And He will prove His mercy.  
Though life is but a fleeting breath,  
A sigh too brief to measure,  
My King has crushed the curse of death  
And I am His forever.

**THE REDWOODS & THE RARE JEWEL OF CHRISTIAN CONTENTMENT** (by John Piper)

J.I. Packer says that the Puritans are the theological and devotional Redwoods of the western world ([A Quest for Godliness](#), 11f). My own experience is that no one comes close to the skill they have in taking the razor-like scalpel of Scripture, and lancing the boils of my corruption, cutting out the cancers of my God-belittling habits of mind, and amputating the limbs of my disobedience. They are simply in a class by themselves.

For example, see if you have ever had thoughts like these. And if not, know that a world of biblical wisdom awaits you.

In his book, [The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment](#), Puritan Jeremiah Burroughs (d. 1646) poses the question, “How can a Christian enjoy deep contentment while having little in this life?” That is, little by way of material possessions and other advantages of the world. Why is the proverb true: “Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues with injustice” ([Proverbs 16:8](#))?

He gives five answers. And the best parts of the answers are the illustrations and explanations (which I have reworded only slightly).

**From the Love of God**

First, Christians enjoy contentment in the little they have because *in what they have they have the love of God to him*.

In other words, this “little” is an expression of God’s love, and so it is much more than the littleness of the condition itself.

- “If a king were to send a piece of meat from his own table, it would be a great deal more pleasant to a poor subject of his kingdom, than if he had twenty dishes some other way. If the king sends even a little thing and says, ‘Go and carry it to my dear subject as a token of my love,’ Oh, how delightful would that be to him!”
- “When your husbands are at sea and send you a token of their love, it is worth more than forty times what you already have in your houses.”
- “Every good thing the people of God enjoy, they enjoy it in God’s love.” It is “a token of God’s love . . . and this must be very sweet to them.”

**Sanctified by God**

Second, Christians enjoy contentment in the little they have because *the little they have is sanctified to them for their good*.

Others have what they have simply from God’s general providence. “But the saints have it in a special way.” The saint says, “I have it, and I have a sanctified use of it too; God goes along with what I have to draw my heart nearer to him, and sanctify my heart to him.”

Christians receive everything from God’s hand as a gift, but it never comes by itself. It always comes with God’s accompanying purpose to sanctify us by it — and the amount of it is perfectly suited to his good purposes for us.

So the Christian says, “If I find my heart drawn nearer to God by what I enjoy, that is much more than if I had great wealth but no sanctifying influence with it.”

**Free of Cost to Me**

Third, Christians enjoy contentment in the little they have because *this little is free of cost; he does not have to pay for it.*

- “The difference between what a godly man has and a wicked man, is this: A godly man is as a child in an inn. The inn-keeper has his child in the house, and provides his diet, and lodging, and what is needful for him. But a stranger comes, and he has dinner and supper provided, and lodging, but the stranger must pay for everything.”
- “It may be that the child’s meal is simple, and the stranger has a great feast, but there must come a reckoning for it.”

Behind this insight is [Romans 2:4-5](#),

- “Do you not know that God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed.”

If a person is not led to repentance and conversion through God’s gifts, “there must come a reckoning.” All will pay.

- “Just so it is: many of God’s people have only a simple meal, but God as a Father provides it, and it is free of cost, they need not pay for what they have; it is already paid for. Is it not better to have a little, free of cost, than to have to pay for everything?”

Therefore the little that the Christian has, being totally free from his Father’s hand, is very sweet.

## Bought by Christ

Fourth, Christians enjoy contentment in the little they have because *what they have, they have by the purchase and the rights of Jesus Christ.*

- The unrepentant person is like the criminal on death row. “A criminal is condemned to die, and yet by favor he has his supper provided overnight. Now though the criminal has forfeited all his right to all things, to every bit of bread, yet if he is given his supper he does not steal it.”
- “But if a man is given a supper overnight before his execution, is that the kind of supper he hopes to have in his own house with his wife and children about him? Would it matter if it were even a great feast? Oh, a dish of green herbs would be a great deal better than any dainties in such a supper as that.”

But it is altogether different for the Christian. He has his meal not merely by donation. No. He has it by right — the right of Christ. It has been bought for him. It comes to him through the purchase of Christ. “Every bit of bread you eat, if you are a godly man or woman, Jesus Christ has bought it for you.” This makes the little that you have far sweeter to you than the wealth of the unbeliever.

## The Best Is Yet to Come

Fifth, finally, Christians enjoy contentment in the little they have because *the little that they have is a down-payment for all the glory that is reserved for them.*

- “Now if a man has but twelve pence given to him as a down-payment for some great possession that he must have, is that not better than if he had forty pounds given to him otherwise? So every comfort that the saints have in this world is an down-payment to them of those eternal mercies that the Lord has provided for them.”
- “Just as every affliction that the wicked have here is but the forerunner of those eternal sorrows that they are likely to have hereafter in Hell, so every comfort you have is a forerunner of those eternal mercies you shall have with God in Heaven.”