

Contentment (vv. 11-14)

VERSE 11 Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am (οὐχ ὅτι καθ' ὑστέρησιν λέγω, ἐγὼ γὰρ ἔμαθον ἐν οἷς εἰμι αὐτάρκης εἶναι [*neg ouk + conj hoti + prep kata according to + noun acc.f.s. husteresis need, want + pres.act.ind.Is. lego "speak" + pro.nom.m.s. ego I + conj gar for + aor.act.ind.Is. manthano learn + prepp en in + pro.loc.nt.p. hos whatever + pres.act.ind.Is. eimi "I am" + adj.nom.m.s. autarkes content, satisfied + pres.act.infin. eimi "to be"]).*

VERSE 12 I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity (οἶδα καὶ ταπεινοῦσθαι, οἶδα καὶ περισσεύειν [*perf.act.ind.Is. oida know + conj kai also + pres.act.infin. tapeinoo humble; "to get along with humble means" or "how to be abased" + perf.act.ind.Is. oida know + conj. kai also + pres.act.infin. perisseuo increase, abound; "how to live in prosperity"]); **in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry** [ἐν παντὶ καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν μεμύημαι, καὶ χορτάζεσθαι καὶ πεινᾶν, [*prep en + adj.loc.nt.s. pas "in any" + conj kai and + prep en + adj.loc.nt.p. pas "every circumstance" + perf.pass.ind.Is. mueomai learn the secret of + conj kai both + pres.pass.infin. chorizo be filled/satisfied + conj kai and + pres.act.infin. peinao be hungry*], **both of having abundance and suffering need** [καὶ περισσεύειν καὶ ὑστερεῖσθαι [*conj kai + pres.act.infin. peinao be hungry + conj kai + pres.pass.infin. hustereo fall short, have need*]).*

VERSE 13 I can do all things through Him who strengthens me (πάντα ἰσχύω ἐν τῷ ἐνδυναμοῦντί με [*adj.acc.nt.p. pas all + pres.act.ind.Is. ischuo be able; "I can do" + prep en + d.a. w/pres.act.part.instr.m.s. endunamoo strengthen + pro.acc.m.s. ego*]).

VERSE 14 Nevertheless, you have done well to share *with me* in my affliction

(πλὴν καλῶς ἐποιήσατε συγκοινωνήσαντές μου τῇ θλίψει [*conj plen nevertheless + adv. kalos well + aor.act.ind.2p. poieo do + aor.act.part.nom.m.p. sugkoinoneo take part in something + pro.gen.m.s. ego + d.a.w/noun loc.f.s. thdlipsis distress, affliction*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSES 11-14

1. Paul, while appreciative of the monetary gift, he felt it essential that the Philippians were apprised of his mind-set regarding his varied circumstances.
2. They needed to hear how he regarded the extremes of having and not having material assets.
3. The phrase “not that I speak from want” reveals a mental attitude that recognizes that in all circumstances Paul “had learned” to be content knowing that God was with him at all times.
4. “I have learned” refers to the many situations he experienced which enabled him to avoid anxiety when he had little resources or on the other hand to not trust in the Lord when he had an abundance.
5. Real life situations that included the extremes served to teach him an essential life lesson—how to be content no matter what he was facing.
6. The noun “content” (*husteresis*; only here) refers to his wherewithal to relax under the extremes.
7. While aware of a given situation Paul’s contentment did not arise out of personal resources but rather from God’s promises and from his life experiences of being enabled to conduct his ministry no matter what.
8. In v. 12 Paul repeats and expands upon what he said in v. 11.
9. In this verse he uses a different term for learning via shifting circumstances.
10. “I have learned the secret” (pf.pass.ind. *mneuomai*; only here) is a Greek term used in a ritual of initiation into the mystery religions.
11. Here it is used in a non-technical sense as a stylistic touch.
12. He may be drawing attention to the Christian alternative to Stoicism that was apart of the Greco-Roman world and using it is a touch of irony.
13. “I know how to get along with humble means” (pres.pass.infin. *tapeinoo* ‘to be abased’) refers to a general lack of external things that make one’s existence easy.
14. “I know how to live in prosperity” (pres.act.infin. *perisseuo* have more than enough) refers to times when Paul had an abundance.
15. “In any (singular adj. *pas*) and in every circumstance “(pl.adj. *pas*) covers the gamut of human experience from not having to having more than enough.
16. Paul provides an example of this as he alludes to food which is an essential living grace need.
17. “Being filled and going hungry” are two extremes.
18. “Having abundance and suffering need” speaks to the extremes Paul as an apostle underwent.
19. In 2 Cor. 6:4-5 and 2 Cor. 11:23-12:10 Paul lists the physical sufferings he underwent to serve positive volition.
20. Here in v. 13 Paul explains how it was that he was able to be content and accomplish the will of God no matter the circumstances he was facing.

21. He received inner strength so he could “do all things through Him (Christ) who strengthens [him].”
22. Note Col. 1:9-11; 2 Tim. 4:17; Eph. 1:19; 3:16.
23. Paul faced situations that looked as though imminent death was at hand (1Cor. 1:8-10).
24. This was a learning experience for him.
25. In the face of adversity there is the admonition of Eph. 6:10 “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.”
26. God supplies this supernatural strength to overcome the trials of life if we avail ourselves of it (1Pet. 4:11).
27. Lest the Philippians draw a wrong inference from Paul’s words about contentment and self-sufficiency he concludes these verse with a commendation for their application to meet his needs in v. 14.
28. His “affliction” was the circumstances of this 1st Roman imprisonment.
29. By sending him this assistance the Philippians “shared in [his] affliction” (aor.part. *sugkoinoneo* take part in something; cf. Eph. 5:11; Rev. 18:4).