



www.mitchkruse.com

Grounders:

What is the secret to contentment? Two thousand years ago, stoic philosophers referred to contentment as “self-sufficiency, or to be independent of external circumstances.” Fast-forward to today, and inside each of us is a desire for contentment. Paul closes his letter to the church at Philippi describing the secret to attaining this inner peace: *trust in the Giver, not the gifts* (Phil. 4:10-23).

First, Paul says that the secret to freedom from circumstances controlling our emotions is to *trust in the Giver, Christ* (4:10-13). Paul thanks the church for their gift to his ministry to advance the kingdom of Christ. He says that he has learned whether in plenty or in want that the secret to contentment is that he can do all things through Christ who gives him strength (4:13). Emphasis is on the word, “through.” Every circumstance, whether we win, lose, or draw, is an opportunity to grow in our intimacy with Christ as we live *through* Him who gives us strength. Inner peace will come only from Christ. Paul describes contentment as Christ-sufficiency.

Second, Paul warns the church to *not trust in the gifts* (Phil. 4:14-23). Charlatan philosophers of Paul’s day would stand on street corners of cities like Philippi gathering followers with their good looks, expensive clothes, and articulate speech in hopes of laying siege to the money of the unsuspecting citizens. Paul says that the church’s gift to him was radically different from money given to the selfish philosophers because he did not benefit financially. Instead, the money was used to advance the kingdom of Christ. Essentially, Paul says, “Don’t trust in the gifts; *give*.” Paul’s message is that we are to be content enough to give.

Our gifts include our time, talent, and treasures. This week, when you find yourself behaving as if you are trusting in the gifts and not the Giver, ask God to transform your heart, and trust in the Giver, Christ, not the gifts. Be content enough to give your time, talent, and treasures to someone else to advance the kingdom of Christ. Paul describes this giving as a fragrant offering pleasing to God (4:18). He goes on to say, “My God will meet all our needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus” (4:19).

In Him,
Mitch