

14. We can be reluctant to give because we think we won't have enough ourselves. How then do giving and contentment go together? What encouragement are we given verse 19?

The End

15. Our first question in study 1 was about saints, referred to again in verse 21 and 22. From this letter think of three or four things that best summarise how saints are to continue in faith.

Pray

Pray for those individuals and organisations that we support as a church that their needs would be provided and they would find contentment.

Pray that as a church we would use the money given wisely and well. Pray particularly for the PCC who make financial decisions, for Bill Waller as Treasurer and for someone to take over as Bill steps down next year.

Pray for our forthcoming Christmas services that they would be an encouragement as we celebrate Christ's coming. Pray that people would visit and that through the power of the gospel people would come to trust in the Word made flesh.

*David Phillips,
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Philippians

Study 10 God's Provision

Philippians 4.10-23



Read Philippians 4.10-23

Contentment

1. Looking at verse 12 what is the spiritual danger posed by plenty and abundance?
2. **Read Ecclesiastes 5.10-12.** Alongside many other Bible passages what warning and encouragement do we find in these verses.
3. What is the spiritual danger posed by hunger and need?
4. Paul is particularly writing about money but refers to "whatever situation" and was himself in prison. In what other situations can it be a struggle to find contentment? (Relationships, work?)
5. Does contentment mean giving up on goals and ambitions? If not how do we make sure the two things go hand in hand rather than being in conflict?

6. Look at the following situations Paul refers to in Philippians. How might he have responded badly to them and how did his actual response help him “be content”?

- 1.12 - “what has happened to me” - under arrest or in prison for 3+ years.
- 1.15-18 those acting out of envy, rivalry and wanting to afflict him
- 1.20 - knowing that his awaited trial might result in his death
- 2.21 - most of his fellow workers being concerned with their own interests
- 3.8 - his lost position, potential and prestige when he turned to Christ, as well as later persecution since

Partnership in the Gospel

The Philippians had helped Paul financially in the past (4.15), though not recently (v10). Having become aware of his need in prison in Rome, Epaphroditus had been sent with a gift, amongst other things.

7. Some say that in verses 11 and 17 Paul was begrudging in his thanks for their gift. What particular problem and danger might there be for those who depend on the giving of other believers in both being contented, and to be seen as contented, in need or plenty?

8. Some Christian organizations operate as faith missions, i.e. they do not ask for money but just pray for the Lord to provide. Others, the Church of England included, follow the idea that the labourer is worthy of his reward (1 Tim 5.18). What do you think of each approach?

9. At the start of the letter (1.5) Paul wrote about their partnership in the gospel and returns to the theme here 4.15. How does financial giving express this partnership?

10. What are the benefits and blessings for us in giving financially to support others in gospel work?

11. Why and how is giving money a fruit of faith? (cf. verse 17)

12. **Read Acts 16.15.** Lydia was the first Christian convert in Philippi. How was her faith shown in giving? (Another example is Zacchaeus in Luke 19.8.)

13. From Phil 4.17-19 what are the benefits to the giver in giving? (Though remembering Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 6.1-4.)