

## Whatever *Philippians 4:8-13*

Good morning.

*betterup.com* asked the question, “Can anyone develop a positive mindset, or are you born with it?”

*The truth is, everyone can adopt a more positive mental attitude.*

*Developing a more positive orientation can improve your mood, relationships, job and life satisfaction.*

*Research has found that a positive outlook has a real impact on your physical health, too.*

*According to the positive mental attitude philosophy, a positive mindset is synonymous with hope, optimism, courage, and kindness.*

*It also means not giving in to negativity and hopelessness even in difficult situations.*

*A positive mindset is a choice. It promises that when you choose to look on the bright side of life and make the best out of any situation, you’ll create a better reality for yourself.” BUT*

*What does the Lord say about having a positive mental attitude?*

Please open your Bibles to ***Philippians 4***, as we continue in our verse-by-verse study of Paul’s Epistle to the Church at Philippi.

Last week, Paul encouraged his readers to remain in the faith as he instructed Christians how to have God's peace.

To *stand fast* is a verb that means to *remain in the same position or to refuse to abandon one's opinion or belief*.

We learned about two women who were causing some dis-unity in the church so, instead of Paul choosing sides, he told them to be like-minded.

During a disagreement, if both sides become like-minded, die to themselves, serve the Lord, and seek the Lord's wisdom, then love can cover a **multitude** of sins and offenses.

Then Paul again mentioned the main theme of the letter to the Philippian church, *to rejoice always*.

Despite the circumstances Paul faced while writing this letter, *joy* was the main theme of the letter to the Philippians.

Having an unhealthy, ungodly, or unproductive mindset can adversely affect every part of our lives, including the way we view the Lord and our walk with Him.

Finally, Paul said to *be anxious for nothing*, as a command, not a suggestion. *Philippians 4:6* means to, "*Stop worrying about anything and pray about everything*".

We receive perfect peace and abundant life as we change our perspective and see things the way the Lord sees them.

Authentic Prayer gives us eternal vision and changes our hearts.

Today's passage instructs us to change our focus and promises that the Lord will give us what we need to accomplish His will.

## I. A godly focus brings peace.

Read *Philippians 4:8-9*

Many psychologists have learned what Paul had communicated to these first-century Christians back then, that to meditate on godly things brings peace.

The human mind is so complex that no doctor or scientist can fully comprehend the mind's activities or abilities.

But the Lord, the Creator of all things, including the human mind, has revealed the secret to finding peace through Paul.

*Romans 1:20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, NKJV*

*Philippians 4:8* has an obvious meaning, but let's define some of the words Paul used in this verse.

- Whatever things are **true** = when we are depressed or negative, we can be focused on things that are **not true**.

Warren Wiersbe said, "*This does not mean we hide our heads in the sand and avoid what is unpleasant and displeasing,*

*"But it does mean we do not focus our attention on dishonorable things and permit them to control our thoughts."* (Wiersbe)

We live in a world where truth is subjective (“My truth might not be your truth”), but the Lord clearly said His *Word is truth*.

- Whatever things are *noble*.

This reads as *dignified* in other passages. It means personal moral excellence, or worthy of honor, *i.e.*, a noble life.

By the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit living in us, we become *dignified, noble*, and honorable.

- Whatever is *just*. We have a baseline for what is “*just*” or “right”, and it is the unchanging **character** of God.

When we have God’s unchanging character as our firm foundation then we can meditate on what’s “just” or “right” with our thoughts and actions.

- *Whatever things are pure*. Wiersbe said, “*Pure probably refers to moral purity, since the people then, as now, were constantly attacked by temptations to sexual impurity.*”

*Whatever things are pure* means moral purity thought.

- *Whatever things are lovely*. This is speaking of *lovely* thoughts, but it also speaks about *lovely* things to behold.

Ray Stevens sang, “*Everything is beautiful in its own way*”.  
*Like a starry summer night, on a snow-covered winter's day.*

*And everybody's beautiful in their own way, under God's heaven, the world's gonna find the way.”*

Gordon Fee said, “*From a sunset to a symphony to caring for the poor and powerless, all things are beautiful.*” (Fee)

- ***Whatever things are of good report.*** This means “worth talking about, or appealing.”

*Why is it that bad news or gossip always travels so fast?*

Christians need to be careful with the words we speak. The old saying, if you don’t have anything nice to say, say nothing at all.

***Colossians 4:6 Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one. NKJV***

- ***If there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy***

***Virtue*** is moral excellence, and everything morally excellent or worthy of praise should be meditated upon by believers.

Jesus is worthy of all of our **praise**, so we should meditate on the things He has done.

***Revelation 5:12 "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!" NKJV***

David Guzik said, “***meditate on these things***”, “*Much of the Christian life comes down to the mind.*”

***Romans 12:2 speaks of the essential place of being transformed by the renewing of your mind and 2 Corinthians 10:5 says to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.***

“*What we choose to meditate on matters.*” (Guzik)

Re-read *Philippians 4:9*

When we live the way Paul has instructed his readers to live in this letter to the Philippians and follow Paul’s example, we again are promised God’s peace.

*James 3:17 the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. NKJV*

Having the peace of God is one of the litmus tests to discover whether a believer is in the will of God or not.

## **II. Generosity and contentment.**

Read *Philippians 4:10-11*

More than any other church, the Philippian Church supported Paul and his ministry. Later in this chapter, Paul said in...

*Philippians 4:15, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only.*

Unlike America, Rome’s prison system did not supply food, clothing, or medical care for the prisoners. A prisoner was responsible for providing his food, clothing, and health care.

But financial support was not the only reason Paul had affection for them, they proved their love by caring for him, and Paul loved them. This Church helped Paul in three different ways.

This Church **prayed** for Paul as he told them about his situation.

*Philippians 1:19 For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, NKJV*

This Church **encouraged** Paul in many ways including sending messages to him while he was in Rome.

Finally, this Church gave a **financial gift** to Paul while he was in Rome, but this was not the first time the Philippians had financially supported Paul's missionary work.

Paul reminded these Christians of his thankfulness to them as well as to the Lord. It was good that they supplied as Paul was in need, but it also honored the Lord by them being **godly** givers.

*Acts 20:35 Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" NKJV*

Re-read *Philippians 4:11*

Paul wanted these believers to know that he was not complaining. Again, his happiness was not dependent upon his circumstances, his joy came from his relationship with Jesus.

*Not that I speak in regard to need.* Paul did have needs, but that was not his focus as he spoke to these Christians about their gift.

*2 Corinthians 9:7 So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. NKJV*

The Lord does not want us to give grudging, *i.e.*, reluctantly, regretfully, or with complaining.

Nor does the Lord want us to give because someone has demanded us or manipulated us, to give.

*A cheerful giver* means **hilarious**, and this word is used only here in the New Testament. Giving that honors the Lord comes from a happy heart.

Paul said that whatever state he was in, he had learned how to be **content**. Contentment is not a natural thing for anyone, it is a spiritual thing we learn with Christian **maturity**.

Paul told his protégé Timothy in... ***1 Timothy 6:6 Now godliness with contentment is great gain.***

***1 Timothy 6:7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. NKJV***

The dictionary defines contentment as “*the state of being mentally or emotionally satisfied with things as they are.*”

For the Christian, the confidence that things are okay comes from faith in the Lord to provide for all of our needs, from His riches in glory.

Matthew Henry said, “(Paul) *depended upon the providence of God to provide for him from day to day, and that satisfied him: so that he did not speak in respect of want anyway.*”



[gotquestions.org](http://gotquestions.org), “The key to overcoming our discontentment and lack of faith is to find out who God is and how He has been faithful to supply the needs of His people in the past.”

***1 Peter 5:6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,***

***1 Peter 5:7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. NKJV***

One commentator said, “Godliness is not about acquiring better and more material things;

*Instead, it is an active life of faith, living out a covenant of faithfulness in relation to God, that finds sufficiency and contentment in Christ alone whatever circumstances might be.”*

There is nothing wrong with trying to better ourselves, however, if we will not be **content** with what the Lord has provided, then we will not be **content** with more.

Godly contentment is finding joy in what God has given to you and the opposite of contentment is **greed** that will destroy your ability to enjoy what God has already given you.

If we are discontented, we still have a lot to learn about the meaning of godliness.

### **III. All things in Christ, in all situations.**

Read ***Philippians 4:12-13***

Paul was not saying that poverty brings about godliness.

There are plenty of godly men and women who are wealthy.

Paul was saying that contentment is not only theoretical, but it is a **lifestyle** for the Christian disciple.

Paul said he knew how to be ***abased***.

***Abased*** means to reduce or lower something or someone in status, office, dignity, or estimation.

Paul knew how to be financially ***abased***, and of course, because he was a Roman prisoner, we know he was lowered in status, office, dignity, or estimation.

Adam Clarke said, “*See here the state to which God permitted his chief apostle to be reduced! And see how powerfully the grace of Christ supported him under the whole!*”

*How few of those who are called Christian ministers or Christian men have learned this important lesson!*

*When want or affliction comes, their complaints are loud and frequent; and they are soon at the end of their patience.”*

Paul also said he knew how to ***abound***.

According to the dictionary, ***abound*** means to be plentiful, be abundant, or to overflow.

Remember Paul was previously a Pharisee and a tent maker, so he was financially well-off in his previous lifestyle not only financially, but Paul also had a lot of worldly power.

C. H. Spurgeon said, “*There are a great many men that know a little how to be abased, that do not know at all how to abound.*

*When they are put down into the pit with Joseph, they look up and see the starry promise, and they hope for an escape.*

*But when they are put on the top of a pinnacle, their heads grow dizzy, and they are ready to fall.”*

Paul trusted the Lord and learned to be **content** in any situation that he found himself in.

Re-read ***Philippians 4:13***

***Philippians 4:13*** is one of the most misquoted scriptures.

Taken out of context you may hear sports teams quote this verse and say, “*We can win the football game because we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.*”

*But what happens if both opposing teams confess this verse?*  
Both teams cannot win the football game.

We know Jesus is all-powerful and we are **complete** in Him.

***Colossians 2:9 For in Him (Jesus) dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;***

***Colossians 2:10 and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power. NKJV***

But the context of ***Philippians 4:13*** is that the Lord will grant us the power to endure any circumstance, according to His will.

*Philippians 4:12* brings the context into view by Paul saying ***“I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.”***

Paul lived through times of abundance, but he also faced many trials for proclaiming the Gospel as well.

J. B. Philipps translates *Philippians 4:13* ***“I am ready for anything through the strength of the One who lives within me,”*** (Philipps translation)

Paul was not saying he could do everything **that Christ could do.**

Paul was saying that he could be satisfied in every situation and could know how to act in times of adversity and prosperity, in both poverty and abundance.

John Gill said, *“He was willing and happy to endure the most cruel and torturous death for the sake of Christ.*

*He did not do it in his own strength, as he was very aware of his own weakness and the fragility of human nature.*

*Therefore, he always directed others to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.*

*He depended on the grace that is in Christ, and by that grace, he was able to accomplish what he did.”*

Paul depended upon the power of Christ to live!

***John 15:5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. NKJV***

#### **IV. Practical Application.**

*“Can anyone develop a positive mindset, or are you born with it?”*

*The truth is, everyone can adopt a more positive mental attitude.*

*Developing a more positive orientation can improve your mood, relationships, and job and life satisfaction.*

*Research has found that a positive outlook has a real impact on your physical health, too.*

*According to the positive mental attitude philosophy, a positive mindset is synonymous with hope, optimism, courage, and kindness.*

*It also means not giving in to negativity and hopelessness even in difficult situations.*

*A positive mindset is a choice. It promises that when you choose to look on the bright side of life and make the best out of any situation, you'll create a better reality for yourself.”* **BUT**

*What does the Lord say about having a positive mental attitude?*

**Read *Philippians 4:6-8***

*“Much of the Christian life comes down to the mind.” (Guzik)*

*Romans 12:2 speaks of the essential place of being transformed by the renewing of your mind.*

*Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*

*Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

*NKJV*

*2 Corinthians 10:5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, NKJV*

*What we choose to meditate on, matters.”*

When we live the way Paul has instructed his readers to live in this letter to the *Philippians* and follow Paul’s example, we will receive God’s **peace**.

And then with God’s peace, finding contentment in difficult circumstances becomes easier.

When times are tough, and things are not going as planned, it is easy to become frustrated or discouraged.

Matthew Henry said, “*We need Christ’s strength to teach us to be content in every condition.*”

Paul understood this truth and this is why he said to the Church at Corinth when faced with a thorn in the flesh...

***2 Corinthians 12:8 Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me.***

***2 Corinthians 12:9 And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.***

***2 Corinthians 12:10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong. NKJV***

*"The key to overcoming our discontentment and lack of faith is to find out who God is and how He has been faithful to supply the needs of His people in the past." (gotquestions.org)*

We should be content with what and how the Lord supplies because we know this life is simply a dress rehearsal for heaven.

As believers, we need to stop buying into the lies that tell us we need to keep up with the Jones', because the Jones' probably aren't happy, and they are probably in debt up to their eyeballs.

Paul told his protégé Timothy in... ***1 Timothy 6:6 Now godliness with contentment is great gain.***

***1 Timothy 6:7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. NKJV***