

Philippians

Lesson #16, Chapter 4:8-14

Ask the Lord for His continued grace and help as you come to His Word. Seek to worship the Lord with a humble and teachable heart.

1. Review the commands given to believers from Philippians 4:1-7.
2. How does Paul begin Philippians 4:8? What does that tell you about what is to come in the verse?
3. What command is given in Philippians 4:8? How would you describe or categorize the list that accompanies his command in verse 8?
4. Define *dwell* [Strong's #3049 (ESV, NIV *think*; NKJV *meditate*)].
5. Dwell, as it is used in our text, is in the present middle imperative, which means *we initiate and participate in the action*. It means we are to be doing something to ourselves. Here we are to begin dwelling and then continue in the action of dwelling on and thinking carefully about certain things. What does this teach you about what God wants us to do when it comes to how and what we are thinking on?
6. How does the context of the preceding verses, specifically verses 6-7, show us when and why we should apply the command of Philippians 4:8?

7. How would dwelling on the things that are *true* fix most of our sinful struggles? Make a list of 5 or more things that you know are *true* from the Word of God that have helped you when you needed to think on true things.

8. The word *honorable* [Strong's #4586 (NKJV, NIV *noble*)] is rich with meaning. Look up the word to see what you can discover, and why it would be so good to think on honorable things.

9. Why would it be good to think on *right* (ESV, NKJV *just*) things? Also see Acts 4:19; Ephesians 6:1; 2 Peter 1:13 where the same Greek word is used to help you form your answer.

10. As Paul's list continues in verse 8 there's a sense in which it almost begins to pick up speed like a snowball gaining momentum as it rolls down a hill. Choose one or two more of the descriptions in the verse to discover their meaning.

11. And if the command to dwell on such praiseworthy things wasn't enough, what command is given in verse 9?

12. What is the result of such obedience according to the end of verse 9? Notice the connection with Philippians 4:7. If we put these commands from verses 4-9 into practice in our lives, what will be the result?

“The key to godly living is godly thinking, as Solomon wisely observed: “Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life” (Prov. 4:23).”¹ ~John MacArthur

13. What new subject does Paul introduce in Philippians 4:10? In what way did the Philippians show their concern for Paul? See Philippians 4:15-16.

14. In verse 10, Paul says he *rejoiced* in the Philippians’ gift. Why is that? See Philippians 4:17.

15. Though Paul was happy about their gift of love and faith toward him, what does he hasten to assure them in Philippians 4:11?

16. We want to take note of Paul’s statement in Philippians 4:11, as learning to be content in any circumstances implies many biblical and life lessons taken to heart and then applied. Before we study *how* Paul learned this important lesson, take some time to come up with at least 5 observations about Philippians 4:11 as you consider what you learn about Paul and what he knew about his God.

17. Why is contentment *essential* for every believer? What does a contented spirit communicate about us and how we view our lives? See 1 Samuel 3:18; Job 2:10; Psalm 73:25-28; 2 Corinthians 9:8; 1 Timothy 6:6-9; Hebrews 13:5-6.

18. Paul details some of the aspects of his soul’s training in Philippians 4:12. What do you learn? Explain how the wide range of Paul’s experiences trained him in contentment.

¹John F. MacArthur Jr., [*Philippians*](#), MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 2001), 290.

19. According to Philippians 4:13, from where does true contentment come?

Verse 13 can literally be translated, "I can do all things through Him who infuses strength into me." One commentator, Lenski, says, "Being connected with the Lord who keeps empowering him, Paul always has the strength for everything in his life and his work."

20. God strengthens you for whatever He brings in your life. Consider some of your life situations, temptations, and struggles as you look up the following Scriptures that show how God strengthens you. What do you learn from the verses that follow? See Isaiah 40:29-31; 41:10; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10; Ephesians 3:16-19; Philippians 4:13; Colossians 1:11.

21. How does Paul close his explanation to the Philippians in verse 14? Why does he add this comment after his statements on contentment?

22. We have covered a lot of ground in this lesson! What is one part of your study that stood out to you that you want to remember and apply?

"A contented Christian does not choose his cross, but is willing to take that which God chooses, and is content with the kind and the duration of the cross. He will wait for God's providence to remove it, but never force the door to escape from it."² ~Thomas Watson

"A contented Christian is like Noah in the ark: although tossed upon the waters, he reposed confidently in his God. The soul that is safe in the ark of contentment, sits quiet and sails above all the waves of trouble, and can even sing amid the deluge. The wheels of a chariot are an emblem of contentment: the wheels move, the axle stirs not. When change and motion are around us, a contented spirit remains firm in its centre."³ ~Thomas Watson

²Thomas Watson, *Puritan Gems; Or, Wise and Holy Sayings of the Rev. Thomas Watson, A.M.*, ed. John Adey, Second Thousand. (London: J. Snow, and Ward and Co.; Nisbet and Co.; E. F. Gooch, 1850), 25–30.

³ Ibid.