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## ALL THINGS

Why do we consider the Apostle Paul such a powerful role model for faith? Today's passage reveals some remarkable aspects about him. In Philippians 4:10-13 he writes, **"I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."**

As we saw last time, "whatever" refers to the dangers and deprivations and desperate situations he endured, including times of plenty and seasons of want. You may not think of abundance as temptation to sin, but Paul learned to understand well the realities of both ends of the spectrum of God's provision.

He presents "contentment" as the opposite of covetousness. No matter what Paul experiences, he does not yield to the temptation of "wanting more" than he has. Is this a puzzler to modern minds?

His secret is not a philosophy, not mind over matter. It is a person. Paul is a servant of the living Christ. He puts it this way in verse 13, **"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."**

Jesus Christ endured unspeakable suffering as He paid the penalty for sins. Then He rose to resurrection life. It's the power of His life that empowers all who put their trust in Him. Philippians presents Christ as the risen Lord whom Paul serves, and who will come again in conquering glory, the exalted Savior who paid the penalty for sin, and who has transformed his thinking and his living. Jesus is worthy of living your life for Him alone - by His power within you.

In immediate context, Paul is not saying *"you can do 'anything' you put your mind to"* - though it is often applied that way today. The specific context of "all things" is being content **IN CHRIST** in any situation, free from wanting "more" regardless of what you have, learning contentment in both plenty and want.

Yet, **"all things"** does mean ALL things. It surely includes what Paul said in verses 4-9, about not being anxious about anything, but bringing everything to God in prayer, practicing the things He commands, and rejoicing in all the worthiness of Christ your Lord and Savior, who always cares for you, who has a plan and purpose for your life, and who will see you through.

Plus, that rich word translated "through" carries the idea of "in, for, with." Through the Holy Spirit, believers are "in Christ" by virtue of the new birth and putting your trust in Him for salvation. You live your life "for Christ" because He gives you the responsibility to represent Him as you share the good news about Jesus. You are "with Christ" because you are in Him and He is in you.

As Paul proclaims earlier in Philippians, it is Christ who began His good work in you. And He promises to bring it to completion, as you work out what He is working in and through and for you. His presence and power and peace and protection and provision are always available, moment by moment, in every situation and life circumstance.

That's what Paul learned. What have you learned? Can you do "all things" **THROUGH CHRIST** who strengthens you?

Contentment IS Christ. Paul learned this not only through hardship, but through the **"mind of Christ."** In doing all things through Him, you can experience contentment that does not depend on anything the world has to offer. Being "in Christ" is all the security you need. You no longer need to insulate yourself with independence. Rather, you can make yourself completely dependent on Christ alone.

And if you're not sure you like the sound of that, maybe you still have much to learn - about contentment, and about Christ. In Philippians 4, Paul reminds it is Christ alone who gives you peace and contentment, and makes you strong in "all things" for "whatever" comes your way.

Trust in Jesus in every way, today and every day!