

PHILIPPIANS

Content In Christ (4:10-23)

Notes: Week Eight

Philippians 4:10-23 (NIV)

Thanks for Their Gifts

¹⁰ I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. ¹¹ I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. ¹² 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. ¹³ I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

¹⁴ Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. ¹⁵ Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; ¹⁶ for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need. ¹⁷ Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account. ¹⁸ I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. ¹⁹ And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

²⁰ To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Final Greetings

²¹ Greet all God's people in Christ Jesus. The brothers and sisters who are with me send greetings. ²² All God's people here send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household.

²³ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. ^[a]

Footnotes:

- a. [Philippians 4:23](#) Some manuscripts do not have *Amen*.

Philippians 4:10-23 (HCSB)

Appreciation of Support

¹⁰ I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that once again you renewed your care for me. You were, in fact, concerned about me but lacked the opportunity to show it. ¹¹ I don't say this out of need, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. ¹² I know both how to have a little, and I know how to have a lot. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being content—whether well fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need. ¹³ I am able to do all things through Him^[a] who strengthens me. ¹⁴ Still, you did well by sharing with me in my hardship.

¹⁵ And you Philippians know that in the early days of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving except you alone. ¹⁶ For even in Thessalonica you sent gifts for my need several times. ¹⁷ Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the profit^[b] that is increasing to your account. ¹⁸ But I have received everything in full, and I have an abundance. I am fully supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you provided—a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. ¹⁹ And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. ²⁰ Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Final Greetings

²¹ Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. Those brothers who are with me greet you. ²² All the saints greet you, but especially those from Caesar's household. ²³ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.^[c]

Footnotes:

- a. [Philippians 4:13](#) Other mss read *Christ*
- b. [Philippians 4:17](#) Lit *fruit*
- c. [Philippians 4:23](#) Other mss add *Amen*.

Holman Christian Standard Bible - *Study Bible*¹

Philippians 4:10-23

4:10 **Once again** indicates that some time had elapsed between the Philippian believers' previous gifts to Paul (cp. [2Co 8](#)) and their sending Epaphroditus to him in Rome ([2:25-30](#)). Since Paul had no need, they **lacked the opportunity** to give.

4:11 **Learned** (Greek perfect tense) implies a lesson resulting in better knowledge. **Content** (lit "self-reliant") is self-sufficiency that grows out of trust in Christ.

4:12 **I know** results from evaluating various circumstances. The difficult circumstances are **have a little... hungry**, and **need**. The contrasting good are **a lot... well fed... abundance**. Together these taught Paul how to be **content**.

4:13 **All things** refers to the economic fluctuations of life ([v. 12](#)). **Through Him who strengthens me** teaches that Christ empowers believers to live in God's will. Paradoxically, Paul was strong when he was weak; independent only when dependent. Such is the life of a disciple.

4:14 **Sharing** is the word for "fellowship" ([1:5](#)). **Hardship** is "tribulations." Real partners share difficulties.

4:15 The **early days of the gospel** refers to Paul's leaving Philippi to continue witnessing in Europe. **Shared** is, again, "fellowship" ([v. 14](#); [1:5](#)). Others had a one-way relationship, receiving but not giving. **You alone** reveals one reason why Paul loved the Philippian church. They did what others did not.

4:16 Paul entered **Thessalonica** after leaving Philippi, and the Philippian believers' gifts to him began immediately and continued consistently (**several times**).

4:17 With contentment ([v. 11](#)) and adaptability ([v. 12](#)), Paul did not **seek the gift**. That would abuse his converts and compromise servanthood. With a higher, spiritual motivation, Paul sought **the profit that is increasing to your account**. Using financial terms, Paul declared this "profit" accrued from an action. "Increasing" is the interest it would bear to the account of the Philippian believers. Giving, a physical and material act, is a spiritual transaction.

4:18 Continuing financial language, Paul had **received everything in full**. Any responsibility to him was paid. What Epaphroditus embodied was **an abundance**. Their material support was **a fragrant offering** and an **acceptable sacrifice** because it met Paul's needs and was **pleasing to God** (cp. [Rm 12:1-2](#)). Giving always benefits those who give more than those who receive.

4:21-22 **Caesar's household** indicates there were Christians in Rome related to the Roman emperor. "Household" probably indicates they were not immediate family; they were perhaps members of the civil service.

1. Jeremy Royal Howard, ed., *HCSB Study Bible*, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2010), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "Philippians 4".

English Standard Version - Study Bible²

Philippians 4:10-23

4:10-20 Thanksgiving for the Philippians' Gift; Paul's Contentment in God. Paul thanks the Philippians for their gift to him and assures them that God will in turn supply all of their needs.

4:10-11 Paul is grateful for the Philippians' support, but he wants them to know that even in difficult circumstances he has **learned... to be content**.

4:12-13 The **secret** of living amid life's difficulties is simple: trusting God in such a way that one can say, **I can do all things through him who strengthens me**. This does not mean God will bless whatever a person does; it must be read within the context of the letter, with its emphasis on obedience to God and service to God and others.

4:14-16 The Philippians **share** in Paul's ministry, not just at the spiritual level but at the practical level of financial support (cf. note on [1:3-5](#)). They contributed to his work after he had **left Macedonia** ([4:15](#)) as well as when he was just down the road in **Thessalonica**, which was also in Macedonia ([v. 16](#); cf. [Acts 17:1](#)).

4:17 Lest they imagine he has moved away from the service-centered perspective of the earlier chapters, Paul reminds the Philippians that even his reception of their gifts is ultimately for *their* benefit. Likely using a business metaphor, he is seeking **the fruit that increases to your credit** (cf. ESV footnote: "the profit that accrues to your account"). God sees their sacrifice and is pleased.

4:18 Paul is **well supplied** by the Philippians' gift, and because it has been offered to him for the service of the gospel, he can return to images drawn from Israel's worship. The gift is a **fragrant offering** (the Gk. *osmēn euōdias* occurs often in the Septuagint in connection with the "pleasing aroma" of sacrifices to God; see [Gen. 8:21](#); [Ex. 29:18](#); [Lev. 4:31](#)) and a **sacrifice acceptable** to God. While the literal offerings of the OT system have been done away with in Christ, the principle behind them of costly devotion to God remains.

4:19 Those who are generous toward God will find that he is generous toward them and **will supply their every need... in Christ Jesus**.

4:20 Just as the "hymn of Christ" ([2:5-11](#)) ended with "to the glory of God the Father," so Paul concludes the body of his letter with a doxology: **To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.**

4:21-22 Greetings. The exhortation to **greet every saint** reinforces the personal nature of Paul's communication and shows that the truths of the letter were to be lived out by real people in the real world. **Caesar's household** could refer not only to the "royal family" but to anyone connected with the emperor's service, including soldiers, slaves, or freedmen. It is likely that some of the latter group had responded positively to Paul's message; there is no evidence that the emperor's actual family were believers at this point. The fact that some within Caesar's circles had believed would have had particular resonance in Roman Philippi.

4:23 Benediction. Paul ends his letter with a reminder that true progress in life is a gift of God through **the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ**.

2. Lane T. Dennis, ed., *ESV Study Bible, The: English Standard Version*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Bibles, 2008), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "Philippians 4".

NLT Life Application Study Bible³

Philippians 4:10-23

4:10 In [1 Corinthians 9:11-18](#), Paul wrote that he didn't accept gifts from the Corinthian church because he didn't want to be accused of preaching only to get money. But Paul maintained that it was a church's responsibility to support God's ministers ([1 Corinthians 9:14](#)). He accepted the Philippians' gift because they gave it willingly and because he was in need.

4:10-14 Are you able to get along happily (be content) in any circumstances you face? Paul knew how to be satisfied whether he had plenty or whether he was in need. The secret was drawing on Christ's power for strength. Do you have great needs, or are you dissatisfied because you don't have what you want? Learn to rely on God's promises and Christ's power to help you be content. If you always want more, ask God to remove that desire and teach you how to be satisfied in every circumstance. He will supply all your needs, but in a way that he knows is best for you. (See the note on [4:19](#) for more on God supplying our needs.)

Training for the Christian Life

As a great amount of training is needed for athletic activities, so we must train diligently for the Christian life. Such training takes time, dedication, energy, continued practice, and vision. We must all commit ourselves to the Christian life, but we must first know the rules as prescribed in God's Word ([2 Timothy 2:5](#)).

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Metaphors</i>	<i>Training</i>	<i>Our Goal as Believers</i>
1 Corinthians 9:24-27	Race	Go into strict training in order to get the prize.	We train ourselves to run the race of life. So we keep our eyes on Christ—the goal—and don't get sidetracked or slowed down. When we do this, we will win a reward in Christ's Kingdom.
Philippians 3:13, 14	Race	Focus all your energies toward winning the race.	Living the Christian life demands all of our energies. We can forget the past and strain to reach the goal because we know Christ promises eternity with him at the race's end.
1 Timothy 4:7-10	Training	Training for godliness will help you grow in faith and character.	Just as we exercise to keep physically fit, we must also train ourselves to be spiritually fit. As our faith develops, we become better Christians, living in accordance with God's will. Such a life will attract others to Christ and pay dividends in both this life and the next.
2 Timothy 4:7,8	Fight, Race	Fighting the good fight and persevering to the end.	The Christian life is a fight against evil forces from without and temptation from within. If we stay true to God through it all, he promises an end, a rest, and a crown.

4:12, 13 Paul could get along happily because he could see life from God's point of view. He focused on what he was supposed to *do*, not what he felt he should *have*. Paul had his priorities straight, and he was grateful for everything God had given him. Paul had detached himself from the nonessentials so that he could concentrate on the eternal. Often the desire for more or better possessions is really a longing to fill an empty place in a person's life. To what are you drawn when you feel empty inside? How can you find true contentment? The answer lies in your perspective, your priorities, and your source of power.

3. *Life Application Study Bible*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1988), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 2022-24.

4:13 Can we really do everything? The power we receive in union with Christ is sufficient to do his will and to face the challenges that arise from our commitment to doing it. He does not grant us superhuman ability to accomplish anything we can imagine without regard to his interests. As we contend for the faith, we will face troubles, pressures, and trials. As they come, ask Christ to strengthen you.

4:14 The Philippians shared in Paul's financial support while he was in prison.

4:15 What makes money so magnetic and giving it away so stressful? Money measures our energy; it represents our day-to-day security. Giving money away puts our work and our futures at risk. Not every charity deserves your attention, and you're wise to scrutinize missionary appeals as well. But once you've determined that a project honors the Lord, don't hold back—give generously and joyfully. Like the Philippians, you'll be establishing an eternal partnership.

4:17 When we give to those in need, it not only benefits the receiver but it benefits us as well. It was not the Philippians' gift but their spirit of love and devotion that Paul appreciated most.

4:18 Paul was not referring to a sin offering but to a peace offering, "a sweet-smelling sacrifice that is acceptable and pleasing to God" ([Leviticus 7:12-15](#) contains the instructions for such offerings of thanksgiving). Although the Greek and Roman Christians were not Jews and they had not offered sacrifices according to the Old Testament laws, they were well acquainted with the pagan rituals of offering sacrifices.

4:19 We can trust that God will always meet our needs. Whatever we need on earth he will always supply, even if it is the courage to face death as Paul did. Whatever we need in heaven he will supply. We must remember, however, the difference between our wants and our needs. Most people want to feel good and avoid discomfort or pain. We may not get all that we want. By trusting in Christ, our attitudes and appetites can change from wanting everything to accepting his provision and power to live for him.

4:22 There were many Christians in Rome; some were even in Caesar's household. Perhaps Paul, while awaiting trial, was making converts of the Roman civil service! Paul sent greetings from these Roman Christians to the believers at Philippi. The Good News had spread to all strata of society, linking people who had no other bond but Christ. The Roman Christians and the Philippian Christians were brothers and sisters because of their unity in Christ. Believers today are also linked to others across cultural, economic, and social barriers. Because all believers are brothers and sisters in Christ, let us live like God's true family.

4:23 In many ways the Philippian church was a model congregation. It was made up of many different kinds of people who were learning to work together. But Paul recognized that problems could arise, so in his thank-you letter he prepared the Philippians for difficulties that could crop up within a body of believers. Although a prisoner in Rome, Paul had learned the true secret of joy and peace—imitating Christ and serving others. By focusing our mind on Christ, we will learn unity, humility, joy, and peace. We will also be motivated to live for him. We can live confidently for him because we have "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ" with us.

Life Essentials Study Bible⁴

A Principle to Live By
Philippians #12: Eternal Rewards
from Philippians 4:10-17

Spiritual leaders whose material needs are being met by fellow Christians should serve Christ faithfully in order to add to their supporters' spiritual rewards in heaven.

One of Paul's main purposes in writing this letter was to express his deep gratitude to the Philippians for caring for his personal needs. This process began the very first day, when Lydia became a believer and invited him and his fellow missionaries to stay in her home. As the church grew in numbers and spiritually, these believers became a supporting church.

As Paul concluded this letter, he once again thanked them for their partnership in the gospel, but he wanted them to know that what was most important to him was to "seek the profit that [was] increasing to [their] account" ([4:17](#)). Here Paul used key words that were used in the Roman Empire to describe lending institutions and the accumulation of interest. In essence, Paul was saying metaphorically, "My foremost desire is to use your investment in my ministry so that I might build your bank account in heaven." The lesson for all spiritual leaders is that they should earnestly desire to accumulate eternal spiritual rewards for those who invest financially in their lives and ministries.

Reflection and Response

How do Paul's motives once again demonstrate his desire to practice what he is teaching? (See [2:4](#).)

4. Gene Getz, *Life Essentials Study Bible*, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2011), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 1646.