

The Apostle Paul learned to be content,
but can Stephen?

PHILIPPIANS 4:10-14

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CHRISTIES BEACH BAPTIST CHURCH



Paul was **in prison** when he wrote to the Christians of Philippi...

Not that I am referring to being in need; for **I have learned to be content** with whatever I have. I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances **I have learned the secret** of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need. **I can do all things through him who strengthens me.**

In any case, it was kind of you to share **my distress**.

contentment: more than a feeling

Gk: αὐτάρκης

The word translated “content” (*autarkēs*) is widely used by Greek philosophers to denote a self-sufficiency, an inner freedom not dependent on the ups and downs of life.



I have learned to be content... I have learned the secret...

*contentment is a **chosen** state of being*

Paul's lived experience

I know what it is to have **little**,
and I know what it is to have **plenty**...



It was not easy being Paul – just ask him!

2 Corinthians 11:23-29

Paul was a real person with real, distressing experiences

Paul's lived theology

Paul's theology arose from his lived experiences with Jesus



nothing could separate him from the love of God in Christ Jesus... (Romans 8:35-39)

circumstances cannot be trusted to tell us if we are blessed

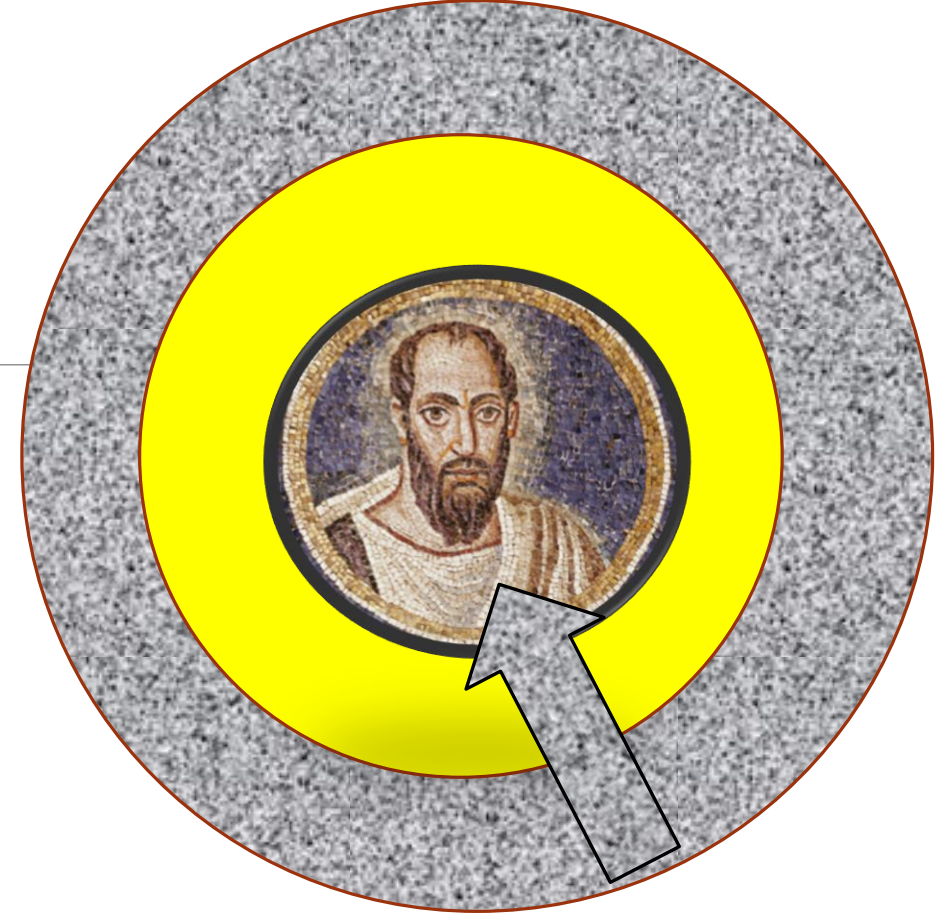
Christian contentment

Our outward circumstances are not the evidence of whether we are loved by God (or not).

The love of God is evidenced by God's faithful presence in our lives.

The purpose of life is a life lived in relationship with Jesus.

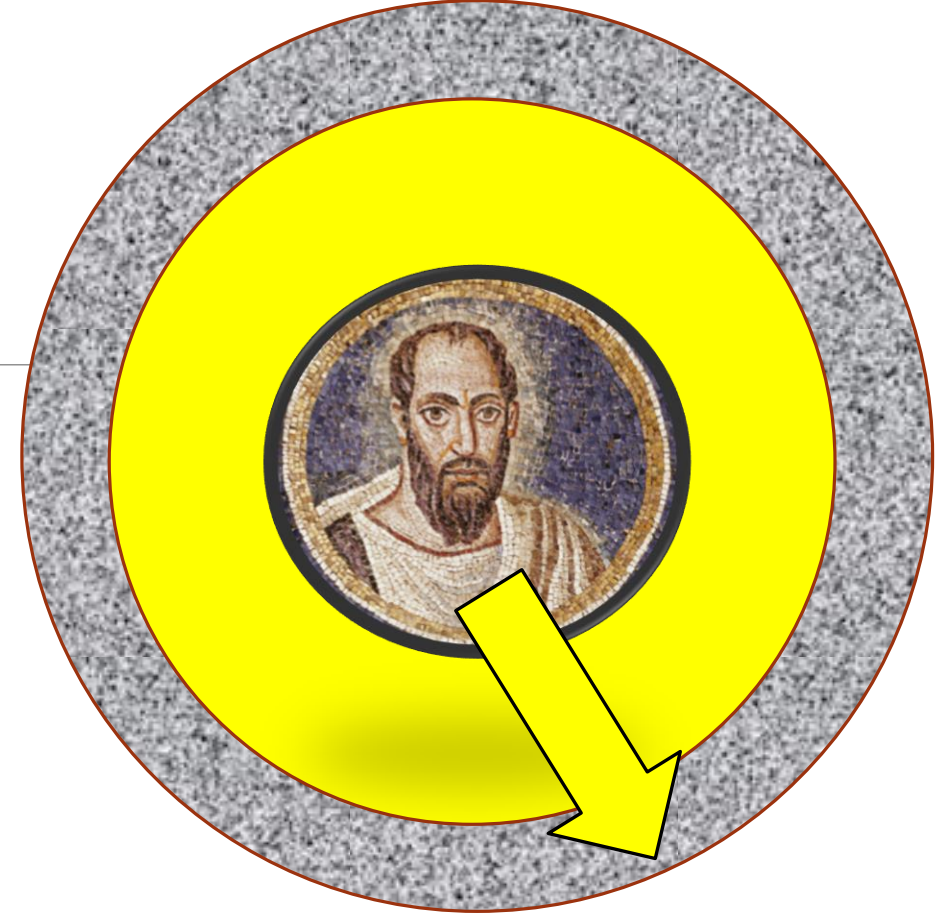
Jesus Christ has made me his own (Phil 3:12)



Christian contentment

In any and all circumstances **I have learned the secret** of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need.

I can do all things through him who strengthens me.



I choose contentment, therefore, I will...

- **look for God** in my **HERE** and my **NOW**
- **live for God** in my **HERE** and my **NOW**
- **NOT** allow desires for something “better” or fears of something “worse” to push away my present experience with God
- **NOT** seek a faithless path to achieve change, or a faithless path to resist change

Christ-sufficient not self-sufficient

Like Paul,

I am learning contentment in all things.

Feeling blessed.

Living content.



blessed = God smiles on me