



**February 23, 2026**

## **Content but Not Complacent**

In his letter to the Church at Philippi, penned while under house arrest in Rome, Paul makes this astonishing statement.

*"I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or want."*

Contentment — isn't that what all of us yearn for? To be at ease with our physical appearance and station in life. To be comfortable with our age, despite its limitations, and our neighbors, despite their foibles. To be at peace with our family and our friends. To be satisfied. To feel complete.

So what is Paul's secret for personally achieving this glorious place in his life? We know with certainty that he hasn't always lived in this blissful state. In fact, the Book of Acts tells us that as a young man known by the name Saul, he was the polar opposite of content. Saul was an enraged, driven individual bent on eradicating this scourge of Christianity that was sweeping his country. Well-educated in the Jewish law, and furious that Christian converts were worshipping Jesus as their Messiah, Saul served as an official witness at the stoning death of Stephen, the first Christian martyr.

Following this horrific event, Saul was caught up in the fervor of anti-Christian persecution which was sweeping the land. In Acts 8:3 we read,

*“Saul was going everywhere to devastate the church. He went from house to house, dragging out both men and women to throw them into jail.”*

As Chapter 9 begins, the horrors continue.

*“Meanwhile, Saul was uttering threats with every breath. He was eager to destroy the Lord’s followers, so he went to the high priest. He requested letters addressed to the synagogues in Damascus, asking their cooperation in the arrest of any followers he found there. He wanted to bring them — both men and women — back to Jerusalem in chains.”*

So how in the world did the man we read about here become the man who speaks with such love to his Christian followers in Philippi — a man totally at peace with himself and his circumstances?

On the road to Damascus where he plans to carry out the threats he has been issuing, Saul experiences a personal encounter with this resurrected Jesus whom he has been railing against. And this single act changes everything — his understanding, his belief systems, and even his name —Saul becomes Paul. His face-to-face encounter with the living Lord causes him to do a complete about-face. This former enemy of Christ suddenly becomes Christ’s strongest advocate. He is suddenly passionate in his zeal to convert everyone he knows to Christianity.

As a Christian, Paul is a man set free and through this new found freedom, he discovers the secret we all yearn for — how to live a life of contentment. It is not through his own power, but rather through his union with Christ that the seemingly impossible becomes not only possible but personal. He verbalizes his secret in this way.

*“For I can do everything with the help of Christ who gives me the strength I need.”*

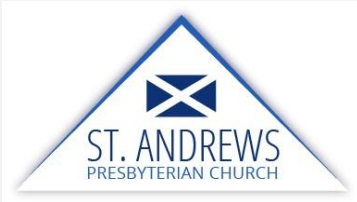
Paul is content, but he is not complacent. There is far too much to be done to allow complacency to set in. Preaching and teaching and letter writing fill his days. He offers words of caution, and comfort, and encouragement to fellow believers — first face-to-face and later through letters — letters that have made their way to us two millennia later. May you and I seek the same contentment that

the Apostle Paul experienced in our own lives — with the help of Christ who gives us strength.

~Written by Bonnie Garbrecht

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