



**“Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content,”** Philippians 4:11.

## **The Believer's Spiritual Adjustment**

**Lesson Aim:** To encourage the believer to rely on the ample provisions of God through Christ for the supplying of every need.

**L520. Date:** June 1964. **Text:** Philippians 4:6-19.

**Topic:** Contentment; God: Provision of.

INTRODUCTION — “All that I have seen teaches me to trust God for all I have not seen.” To rely upon God's provision through Christ is the Christian's duty as well as his privilege. The spiritual warfare which believers wage against Satan comes to successful conclusion only when they use spiritual weapons. God is trustworthy. He feels toward us like a sympathetic father feels toward his children and is always anxious to aid us, Psalm 103:13. Therefore, we may feel free to come to Him with any problem we have—financial, physical, mental, or spiritual. He is waiting for our call.

It is well to send a missionary to foreign fields with the counsel, “Trust God to provide your needs.” Indeed, God will provide for him. It is imperative, however, that the matter of God's provision be brought much closer home. We need to know that God will supply our own needs right here where we now live and serve him. Therefore, the aim of today's study is “to encourage the believer to rely on the ample provisions of God through Christ for the supplying of every need.”

**“For we walk by faith, not by sight,”** II Corinthians 5:7. Therefore we should not expect God to show us every step of the way before we begin our journey with Him. It is enough to know that the obligation to be a good soldier, following the example of Christ, will be made possible of realization through God who provides all our needs in Christ Jesus, Philippians 4:19. The believer's life must be planned, therefore, in full dependence upon God's

provision. God will provide.

## EXPOSITION

### I. WHY GOD PROVIDES, 4:6-9.

1. God provides an answer to the prayer of His people, verse 6. Anxiety, fretting, and worry are alien to the spirit of dependent trust in God. The child who has loving parents does not fret about where he will get food, clothing, and shelter. He is assured that his parents will provide for him in love. In like manner, God would not have us fretting about our needs, but trusting in His care. This is why He has given such wonderful promises to hear prayer and provide whatever is needful. The prayer which gets things from God is the prayer which involves all the heart, Jeremiah 29:13. It is a prayer which asks, seeks, and knocks with specific requests and definite petitions, Matthew 7:7. It is a prayer which, asking in faith, reaches out to receive the things asked for, believing that God is already offering the answer to the petition, Mark 11:24. It is a prayer which is not afraid to pray about any matter which arises, John 15:7. How pleased God must be to see His children approaching Him in an attitude of absolute trust and unhesitating confidence to lay their petitions before Him. How He delights to answer such prayers with His choicest provisions.

2. God provides in order to confer his peace upon His children, verse 7. It is not God's will that any of His dear children would be distressed. He promises to answer prayer in providing their needs that each one might enjoy the peace which He gives. Those who learn to turn from anxious care to trusting prayer will enjoy "the peace of God which passeth understanding." Indeed, the peace of God will fill both heart and mind. One commentator suggests that in response to prayer, "The peace of God like a pure, strong beautiful angel will descend to act as sentry to the heart and mind—to the heart, keeping out unholy affection, and to the mind, checking the entrance of rebellious, restless, and distracting thoughts."

Jesus encourages prayer in these words, "**Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full,**" John 16:24. When God is looked upon as a loving Father, the heart

can rest in the perfect assurance that He will provide. Oh, how the heart can relax when God is wholly depended upon to care for His own. Christian brother, turn all your affairs into the Lord's care, becoming His faithful steward of all. Then you will enjoy the peace and security which stocks, bonds, and bank accounts can never provide.

3. God provides in order to keep His children's thoughts on a higher plane, verse 8. In Matthew 6:25-34 there is described two types of men: one who frets and worries about life's necessities and the other who calmly trusts God. What a difference between them! Which one do you suppose has his thoughts centered on God? He who frets as if God did not care for him has not obeyed Paul's imperative: **“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ,”** II Corinthians 10:5. God carefully inspires Paul to describe the kind of thoughts which His children should entertain. Six characteristics are set out.

(1) The Christian's thoughts should be **true**. Keep out of the mind the false and admit only the true. Truthfulness of word and sincerity of character are absolutely indispensable to holiness. Whatever of any life, government, business, books or systems is not true, will perish away.

(2) The Christian's thoughts should be **honest**. The man whose thoughts are “honorable, venerable, grave, worthy of reverence” is a man of Christian stature. This quality is demanded of the Christian life in general (I Timothy 2:2), of the minister (I Timothy 3:4), of the deacon (I Timothy 3:8), of deacons' wives (I Timothy 3:11), of aged women (Titus 2:2), and of pastors (Titus 2:7). It is that appreciation of good which gives all life a noble sanctity.

(3) The Christian's thoughts should be **just**. In the Greek language the words “just” and “righteous” come from the same root word. “Just thoughts” are those thoughts which have a pure appreciation of all things honorable and shuns things improper. It is to follow the leadings of an enlightened conscience in all dealings with other men.

(4) The Christian's thoughts should be **pure**. Pure thoughts are free from that which is gross and sensual, selfish and mean, as well as being chaste in feeling, word and conduct. Impure thoughts breed impure desires. It is possible for one to sin by impure thoughts alone, Matthew 5:27,28. Arrest the impure and admit to the mind only what is honorable.

(5) The Christian's thoughts should be **lovely**. These thoughts are “pleasing, amiable, winsome, calculated to win love.” The person who thinks thoughts of love toward others will meet this qualification. He who thinks such thoughts will find himself performing a manner of life consistent

with I Corinthians 13. Such thinking from a heart of love will overcome many a hard way and win many a precious friend.

(6) The Christian's thoughts should be of **good report**. These thoughts will sound proper when spoken. They will be winning and attractive. Sometimes men speak differently in the presence of ladies than when they are alone. Yet, they are always in the presence of God and must account to Him for every word, Matthew 13:26.

Then let these six characteristics become as six guardian angels which stand at the doorway of your soul, and challenge every thought as it offers itself there, admitting only those which approve themselves as “true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report.” This will be possible only to the person who has learned to trust God in everything.

4. God provides that Christians might be encouraged to further obedience, verse 9. The fruit of thought and prayer will surely be seen in the lives of God's children. Thoughts such as described above will produce a holy stability, energy, and beauty which will attract others to God. They will make it the life's aim to follow the Lord fully. Confidence that God will provide whatever needs arise, keeping the mind centered on God rather than on carnal things, will produce a holy assurance in the believer that will inspire him unceasing service. This, in turn, creates assurance of answered prayer and prompts to further obedience. “And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight,” I John 3:22.

## **II. HOW GOD PROVIDES, 4:10-19.**

1. God often provides through His children, verse 10. Relief is no less from God because it comes by the hands of a human messenger. God sends the Gospel to a foreign nation even if an association of churches does pay the expenses of the missionary. The benevolent gifts of the early church were looked upon as God's provision, Acts 4:34-35. Paul taught Christians they ought to support those in physical as well as spiritual need, Acts 20:35; II Corinthians 8-9. It appears the finances for the ministry of Jesus were largely provided by a group of devoted women. Such occasions of provision of the needs of people is as much God's provision as when He fed His prophet by the ministry of ravens or when he increased the meal and oil in the home of the widow of Zarepath, I Kings 17. Yes, the church should carry on a benevolent ministry in the name of Jesus. God has often used this method to provide the needs of His dear children.

2. God provides according to needs not according to wants, verses 11-

12. Blessed is the man who has so grown in Christian grace, so conquered the lust to possess earthly security, and so learned to rely upon God that he can honestly say, **“I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.”** Such contentment is preeminently a Christian grace. It is acquired by practicing it. The Cross of Jesus must be constantly applied to ambitions, murmurings, and the tendency to complain. There must be an attention to the bright side of things, to what one has rather than to what one lacks. There must be certain assurance that God will take care of every need, even if every carnal want is not supplied. Therefore, refusing the sinister suggestions flung into the soul by the Tempter, the Christian is to rely in full assurance that that which God permits is what is best. This is sure to create the grace of contentment in the soul.

3. God provides through His churches, verses 14-18. Praise God for those faithful congregations who regularly, proportionately, consistently give to supply the needs of His pastors, evangelists, and missionaries. No church had done for Paul what the Philippian brethren had done. They had sent regularly to support him while he was on the missionary tours. Now that he was a prisoner in Rome, they found a faithful messenger and sent him with provisions for the missionary once again. He designated such an offering a “sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.” Indeed, such offerings are not given to men alone, but to men as God's workmen, and therefore are actually presented to God. Untold times God has used the offerings of His churches to support His people in need. This includes benevolent gifts, payment of salaries, special offerings of all sorts. Since He so often uses this method, how it behooves each church to include benevolent and missionary designations in each Lord's Day offering. Missionaries cannot be cared for upon occasional, spasmodic offerings. Churches who love the Lord and follow His leading should prayerfully designate a proportionate amount to be given regularly to this worthy ministry. After all, somewhere there is someone in need who is waiting for the Lord to provide. Is it possible He would use your congregation to supply that need?

4. God provides all through Jesus Christ, verses 13, 19. Whatever the need, we must learn to turn to Jesus Christ for in Him alone is the fullness of God manifest. It is more than the strength of Christ that is needed. We need Christ himself! When we have Him, we can do all things—live or die, be abased or abound, be full or empty—because He strengthens us. The Christian must learn to avail himself of all the treasures that are prepared for our use in the Risen Lord. Too often we act as if our supplies must come from our own limited resources. What would you think if a clerk, who was

sent to a distant land to open a branch of some great business firm, were to seek to meet the expenses out of his own limited salary, when the head of the firm had told him to draw upon his credit to any extent which he deemed necessary? But we make the same mistake when we meet the calls of life apart from the boundless wealth which is placed to our credit in Jesus.” — F. E. Meyer.

**CONCLUSION** — This lesson encourages the “Grace of Contentment.” How can each reader rejoice in this grace? (1) Live in the will of God. (2) Turn to Christ as the complement of our need. (3) Do all things through Christ's strength. Treasures are prepared for our use in our Risen Lord. Anything necessary to make effective the believer's testimony in an ungodly world will be provided by our Heavenly Father, as next week's study will reveal. “The Believer's Spiritual Adjustment” is the act of turning from sight to faith, from carnal provisions of man to the limitless provisions of God, and acting as if all of life's needs were as certain from Him as if they were already received. This is God-honoring faith and it will certainly be rewarded.

### **QUESTIONS**

1. How does Psalm 103:13 relate to this study?
2. How does II Corinthians 5:7 relate to this study?
3. What evidence have you seen that God really does answer prayer?
4. How do God's provisions create peace in His children?
5. What are “true” and “honest” thoughts?
6. What are “just” and “pure” thoughts?
7. What thoughts are “lovely” and of “good report”?
8. How does God provide for His children?