

“Money in the Bank!” (Philippians 4:10–23)

A postal worker was sorting through the regular mail when she discovered a letter addressed as follows: GOD, c/o Heaven. The enclosed letter told about a little old lady who had never asked for anything in her life. She was desperately in need of \$100 and was wondering if God could send her the money. The young lady was deeply touched and passed the hat among her fellow postal workers. She managed to collect \$75, and she sent it off to the elderly lady. A few weeks later another letter arrived addressed in the same way to God, so the young lady opened it. The letter read, “Thank you for the money, God I deeply appreciate it. However, I received only \$75. One of those jerks at the post office must have stolen the rest!”¹

This humorous story is a convicting example of how discontent and selfish most of us are. No matter how much we receive, it seems we are rarely satisfied. When asked, “How much money is enough?”, the late John D. Rockefeller reportedly answered, “Just a little bit more.” Sadly, that response has been echoed by many Christians. We struggle to be satisfied with what God has entrusted to us. The irony is: We are some of the wealthiest people in the world. What? You don’t believe me? Do you have sufficient food, decent clothes, a home that shields you from the weather, and some kind of reliable transportation? If so, you’re in the top 15 percent of the world’s wealthy. If you have some savings, two cars (in any condition), a variety of clothes, and your own house, you have reached the top 5 percent! Today, you may not feel wealthy, but that’s only because you’re comparing yourself to the mega-wealthy. Consider someone who works from age twenty-five to sixty-five and makes only \$25,000 a year. Forget the huge value of benefits, interest pay raises, and other income sources, including inheritance or Social Security. Even without these extras, in his lifetime this person of modest income will be paid \$1 million. He will manage a fortune.² Stop right now and reflect on the money that has come in and out of your home. You and I have been given so much.

Now, what’s sobering about our wealth is the fact that we will all eventually give an account of our lives to God.³ One day everyone must answer these questions: Where did it all go? What did I spend it on? What, if anything, did I support with it? What has been accomplished for eternity through my use of all this wealth? Make no mistake, we *will* be held accountable for what we do in this life with our money. If we are generous with our possessions, God will reward us beyond our imagination. If we live only for ourselves, hoarding our money, and focusing on our earthly comfort, we will lose the eternal rewards God has planned for us. As Christians, we are saved by God’s grace—but what we do in this life will matter for eternity.⁴ In Philippians 4:10–23, Paul assures us that *God pays in many ways*. In this final installment, Paul provides two insider trading tips on how to build our eternal portfolio.

1. Want what you already have (4:10–13). It’s been rightly said that contentment is “the hidden jewel of Christianity.” In this section, Paul explains how you and I can be content in Christ. In 4:10 he writes, **“But⁵ I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned *before*, but you lacked opportunity.”** Paul sounds like Aunt Mabel who chides you for not writing her a thank you note for last year’s Christmas gift. But that is not his intent. Instead, he indicates that he rejoiced in the Lord *greatly* because the church at Philippi has been able to resume their financial support. This is the only appearance in the New Testament of the verb translated “revived” (*anathallo*), and it is a horticultural image of a plant that blooms again after a period of dormancy. It was not the Philippians’ concern that was dormant, but their opportunity to express it. It is important to recognize that the Philippians’ support of Paul is in addition to their regular giving to their local church. Here, Paul acknowledges the principle that there are times when generous Christians aren’t able to provide the “above and beyond” support that they might like. All God’s people go through challenging financial seasons. Yet, God knows our hearts; and He merely asks us to give in proportion to our income. Yet, if you have a burden to give more, ask God for the opportunity to do so. He may just provide.

Paul now assures the church that he is not after their money. (And all God's people said, "Whew!") Rather, he is content in Christ. In 4:11–12 he shares his experience: **"Not that I speak from want,⁶ for I have learned to be content⁷ in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need."** These verses make it clear that Paul wasn't born content, nor did contentment happen easily or naturally. The apostle emphasizes two words in these verses: "learned"⁸ and "know." He repeats both of these terms twice in these two verses. His point is that through his personal experience he has cultivated contentment. In 4:12, Paul gives three pairs of circumstances, each pair presenting the opposite extremes of a spectrum. The suggestion is that Paul has learned to be content at the extremes and everywhere in between. He knows how it feels not to be able to pay the bills, and also to have money left at the end of the month. He can sympathize with the worker who is greeted one morning with a layoff notice and identify with the one who gets a promotion. He knows how to live in feast or famine. What about you? When the Lord gives, it's easy to be content, but what if He takes away?⁹ Do you still trust Him and consider Him sovereign? Are you presently satisfied with the amount of money God has given you? Are you satisfied with your job? Are you satisfied with the amount of house God has given you?

The story is told of a king who was sick with unhappiness and was looking for contentment. One of his astrologers told him that if his assistants could find a contented man, they should bring the man's shirt back to the king and he would be cured of his sickness. So the king sent his men out, and they searched the kingdom for a contented man whose shirt they could bring back to the king. They searched far and wide, only to discover that the only contented man in the kingdom didn't own a shirt.¹⁰

Stephen and Collony Henry, two of our members, are a contemporary example of contentment. The Henry's have six young children, yet they live in a 1,000 square foot apartment. Never once have I ever heard either Stephen or Collony complain about this. On the contrary, they point out how much they appreciate the low rent, the quality of the apartment, and its proximity to work and shopping. They have decided to live on one income and live within their means. How inspiring! *God pays in many ways...* and often His pay is contentment and joy, which certainly tops a five bedroom house.

We now come to one of the most well known, yet misquoted verses in the entire Bible—Phil 4:13: **"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."** This verse is embossed on boxing trunks, MMA (Mixed Martial Arts) warm-up robes, and athletic jerseys. It is cited for any and every purpose by self-help gurus. Yet, Phil 4:13 doesn't mean that a particular fighter will knock out or submit his opponent. It doesn't mean that an athlete or team can and will win the game. It doesn't mean that you can achieve everything you desire in your hobby or career. In most cases, this verse is used illegitimately. The phrase "all things" limits the meaning of this verse and establishes its boundaries. "All things" can be defined by the previous two verses (4:11–12). Paul has learned to be content in every economic setting in which he finds himself.¹¹ What he is saying is simply this: "I have the power through Christ to enjoy life no matter what comes my way."¹²

So how can we cultivate contentment in Christ? How can you "want what you already have?" The following principles are suggestions on how to cultivate contentment in Christ.

- **Beware of the effect of greed.** TV commercials are the capstone of greed. But of course commercials do not cause discontentment; they merely capitalize on what is inherent in each of us. Commercial are designed to create a need that you are lacking unless you purchase the product. Mike and Gloria Keeling, two of our members, have not used their TV for programming since 1991, and they haven't missed it one bit. Their four children have turned out magnificently, and they have accomplished more in ministry than is humanly imaginable. Perhaps you need to watch TV online with no commercials, or radically limit your viewing.

- ***Give away your possessions.*** Lori and I were given a 27” TV for a wedding gift. A few years ago, my next door neighbor won a 56” TV and wanted to give me his 36” TV. I was so excited about this. I went home and told Lori about this offer, certain that she would let me take it. But she said, “We have a very small family room and I don’t want a TV to be the focus of that room. Furthermore, you know our entertainment center only fits a 27” TV.” I said, “Baby, baby, you’re hurting me right now. Doug is willing to give us this TV for free! I’ve got to take it. We can make it work.” In the end, I declined the offer. (If mama’s not happy, nobody’s happy.) Doug then told me that if I wanted to take the TV, I could give it away. I said, “Oh, that’s perfect.” I was then able to give away the TV to a young family in our church had a 13” TV and was moving to begin school at Multnomah. I was reminded again that it is better to give than to receive. What is God calling you to give away today?
- ***Simplify your lifestyle.*** I read recently about a successful Southern California businessman who swapped his luxury car for a clunker in order to help spread the gospel. This man now saves \$600 a month on his car payment and puts this money toward missions and sponsoring four kids through Compassion International. When people tell him that they’d like to give more to charity or the Lord’s work, he asks, “How much are you spending on car payments?”¹³ What can you give up in order to help the cause of Christ? Do you really need that brand new car? How many CD’s, DVD’s and video games do you really need? How many sets of clothing are essential? How many times do you need to go golfing or out to coffee?
- ***Appreciate growing old.*** Instead of fighting age, welcome the approaching golden years. Recent research suggests that the happiest Americans are the oldest. Although many of them face health problems, they are generally more content with what they have than younger Americans. The research found that the odds of being happy increased by five percent for every ten years of age. Although aging is often looked at negatively in our society, age brings many benefits, including a greater likelihood of contentment. Christians should also look at aging as being one step closer to heaven and an eternity with Christ. Rather than worrying about aging, we should be celebrating each day that brings us closer to our treasures in heaven.¹⁴ *God pays in many ways.*

The key in all of this is to recognize that contentment is a byproduct of faithfulness to Christ. So instead of frantically seeking contentment, you and I need to pursue our love relationship with Christ.¹⁵ When we pursue Christ, contentment takes care of itself.

[Why is it important that we want what we already have? Contentment is vital because throughout our lives we often go through ups and downs, yet we still are commanded to exude joy and gratitude. Paul now provides a second insider trading tip...]

2. Give what you already own (4:14–23). Once you and I are content, we can easily convert material blessings into spiritual blessings. In 4:14–16, Paul writes, “**Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction. You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone; for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs.**”¹⁶ Paul commends the Philippians for their generosity to him. In 4:14, he says that they shared with him in his suffering through their giving. This carries the notion of partnership found back in 1:5, 7.¹⁷ He also states that they alone met his needs. I want you to think back to your last birthday. Who remembered your birthday with a card or gift? Who didn’t? Have you ever had a birthday where only one person bought you a gift? How did you feel about that individual? If you are a content person, your focus was not on those people who forgot or ignored your birthday; instead, you were overwhelmed with gratitude for the one person who remembered your special day. Paul is not being passive aggressive in these verses, rather he is especially grateful to the Philippians for their generous giving toward him.

In 4:17, Paul includes a tack-on phrase that is the key to this entire passage and one of the top reasons to speak on giving. Paul writes, **“Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit [lit. “fruit”] which increases to your account.”**¹⁸ Twice in this short verse, Paul says, “I seek” (*epizeteo*). This is a very strong Greek term that means “to be seriously interested in or have a strong desire for.”¹⁹ Paul wants the Philippians to know once again that he’s not after their money. (And all God’s people said, “Whew.”) Instead, he is actively and intentionally seeking their eternal good. Think about it: Who benefits most from a gift to God’s work? You might say, “Well, that’s obvious. The recipient does.” Really? Here, Paul says that the primary beneficiary of your faithful giving is YOU! And I don’t just mean the warm feeling you get inside when you help someone. Paul is talking about something that goes far beyond that. Whenever you invest your time, treasures, and talents in God’s kingdom, God deposits fruit (*karpos*)²⁰ into your ERA (Eternal Retirement Account). So God, others, and you benefit when you give. *God pays in many ways*, including eternal rewards that you are commanded to store up for yourself in heaven.²¹

When I was in seminary, I interned at a large church and taught an adult Bible class. The first couple that came to my class felt led to give to Lori and me because of their understanding of Gal 6:6: “The one who is taught the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches *him*.” Even though they didn’t have much money, they felt led to support Lori and me with \$50 a month. This gift sustained us and encouraged us. Everything that God has done in and through me over the years is accruing into their eternal account. One of the reasons that I’ve been able to do doctoral work in England is because a couple from our former church has generously supported me. These dear friends have chosen to believe in me, my educational goals, and my ministry potential and future. Every year, Lori and I are awed by this couple’s generosity. We never assume that their giving will continue. But we always tell them that whatever fruit God bears through me will accrue to their eternal account. Both of these couples have given generously and sacrificially without the benefit of a tax write-off. Truly, their reward is great in heaven. Lord willing, their ERA will continue to grow through the fruit that God bears in and through me.

It is important to understand that you become a partner with whomever you support. If you support our church, anything that the Lord allows our staff and ministries to accomplish, you share in. This means that when you stand before Christ, you will be rewarded for the fruit that comes from our ministry. Even though the Philippians were 800 miles away from Paul, they supported his ministry, and through Paul’s fruit, the eternal pay off for them will be great! Perhaps you need to spend more time investing in your ERA than in your IRA. We need to ask, “Where can our money have the most eternal impact?”

In 4:18, Paul expresses once again that he isn’t after more money (whew!). Three times he states that he has been given enough: **“But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent”** (4:18a). Paul is not after a salary increase. He isn’t striving for a promotion. He is content in Christ. The Philippians blessed Paul’s sandals off. Ironically, if any church had an excuse not to give, it was the Philippians since they were one of the most impoverished churches (2 Cor 8–9). But in spite of their circumstances, they gave, not just according to their ability, but beyond their ability. Paul now offers three expressions of gratitude for the Philippians’ generosity. He calls their gift **“a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God”** (4:18b). Paul draws upon the Old Testament where they would take an offering and lay it on the altar, and they would pour it out and it would create steam that the whole community could smell.²²

In most churches, people look forward to the song set and the preaching. (Notice I said *most* churches.) Nearly everyone enjoys observing the Lord’s Supper and baptisms. Everyone enjoys a good potluck or dessert social under the guise of “fellowship.” Yet, I think for most Christians, the offering is an awkward and necessary evil. When I first came to EBF, we purchased offering boxes and placed them at the exits of the auditorium. I thought that this was the way to go. I wanted to trust the Lord and didn’t want people to be distracted by a pastor exhorting them to give. Yet, I could not get over the emphasis in Scripture of the public act of giving as worship. So I didn’t make the change and have never regretted it.²³

Now we come to one of the most misunderstood verses in the Bible: **“And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”** This is not an unconditional promise, it is a conditional promise. God’s promise to supply your needs (cf. 4:16) is embedded in the context of faithful, generous, even sacrificial giving.²⁴ God meets our needs to express His approval of our giving.²⁵ God does not promise to take care of the needs of believers who are stingy, lazy, or irresponsible. On the other hand, if you are giving as the Lord expects, He will meet your needs. Note carefully, he promises to meet needs, not wants. I remember when I was in the delivery room for the birth of our first child, Joshua. I experienced two overwhelming emotions concurrently. First, when I first saw my firstborn son, I felt incredible joy. My eyes turned into a free-flowing waterfall. Yet, not a sound came out of my mouth. I was simply overwhelmed with joy and gratitude to God for giving me a child. At the same time, I was burdened by the fact that I had just assumed responsibility to meet the needs of an infant. I was having a hard enough time providing for Lori, but now I had Joshua as well! Since Joshua’s birth, Lori and I have tried to meet the needs of our three children. However, we expect them to be responsible with their money, their clothes, and their possessions. If they ruin their clothes, we don’t run out and buy them more. They have to make do with what they have. If they spend all their money on candy and frivolous toys, we don’t give them more money. This would be enabling our children to live irresponsibly. That’s not how things are run in the Krell family. That’s also not how things are run in God’s family. If you are a faithful giver, you can expect God to meet your financial needs. If you’re not a faithful giver, you shouldn’t expect God to meet your financial needs, because you’re not obeying His Scriptures.

Paul closes out the letter of Philippians with the following benediction: **“Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen. Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar’s household. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.”** When believers invest their lives and resources in God’s kingdom, He gets the glory (4:20). The mention of saints reminds us that every believer plays a vital role in God’s work in the world (4:21). The saints in Caesar’s household refer to convert that came about because of false imprisonment. It is fitting that Paul concludes with: **The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.”** Paul was focused on Christ and the eternal return on the Philippians’ financial investment.

Two friends were walking near Times Square in Manhattan. It was during the noon lunch hour and the streets were filled with people. Cars were honking their horns, taxis were squealing around corners, sirens were wailing and the sounds of the city were almost deafening. Suddenly, one of them said, “What an interesting place to hear a cricket.” His friend said, “You must be crazy. You couldn’t possibly hear a cricket in all of this noise!” “No, I’m sure of it,” his friend said, “I hear a cricket.” That’s crazy,” said his friend. The man, who had heard the cricket, listened carefully for a moment and then walked across the street to a big, cement planter where some shrubs were growing. He looked into the bushes, beneath the branches, and sure enough, he located a small cricket. His friend was utterly amazed. “That’s incredible,” said his friend. “You must have superhuman ears!” “No,” said the man who heard the cricket. “My ears are no different from yours. It all depends on what you’re listening for.” “But that can’t be!” said the friend. “I could never hear a cricket in this noise.” “Yes, it’s true,” came the reply. “It depends on what is really important to you. Here, let me show you.” He reached into his pocket, pulled out a few coins, and discreetly dropped them on the sidewalk. And then, with the noise of the crowded street still blaring in their ears, they noticed every head within twenty feet turn and look to see if the money that tinkled on the pavement was theirs. “See what I mean?” asked the man who had heard the cricket. “It all depends on what’s important to you.”²⁶ What is important to you?

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Scripture References

Philippians 4:10–23

1 Timothy 6:6–9

Hebrews 13:5–6

James 4:2–4

Matthew 6:19–21; 10:42; 19:21

Mark 10:29–30; 12:41–44

2 Corinthians 8:1–5; 9:6–8

Study Questions

1. Am I truly content (4:11–13)? What evidence can I point to that I am satisfied with what God has entrusted to me? At what point in my life have I enjoyed the greatest degree of contentment? Why was this particular time so satisfying? How can I “learn” to be content in all my circumstances (4:11)? How has relying upon God’s power made a difference in my contentment (4:13)?
2. How has my financial giving helped me grow spiritually (4:17)? Am I investing heavily in my IHA (Individual Heavenly Account)? If the answer is no, what excuses have I made to justify my lack of giving? Will I ask my spouse, a friend, or fellow church member to hold me accountable to giving sacrificially and cheerfully?
3. Do I really believe that giving is an act of worship (4:18)? If so, what does this look like? Do I look forward to the offering plates being passed so that I can express my worship to God? How have I explained to my children the importance of worshiping God through giving?
4. Do I really believe that God will meet every Christian’s material needs (4:19)? How has God supplied all of my financial needs? How do I explain Christians who have unmet needs for food, clothing, or shelter? Is this a conditional promise? Why or why not?
5. A.W. Tozer said, “Any temporal possession can be turned into everlasting wealth. Whatever is given to Christ is immediately touched with immortality.” In what ways have I lived out this principle? What has God called me to sacrifice in order to honor Him and advance His kingdom? How did God meet my needs as a result?

Notes

¹ PreachingNow Vol. 8 No. 13, 3/31/09.

² Randy Alcorn, *The Law of Rewards* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 2003), 5–7.

³ See Rom 14:10–12; 1 Cor 3:10–15; and 2 Cor 5:10.

⁴ Alcorn, *The Law of Rewards*, 7.

⁵ The word “but” (*de*) that opens this section (NASB, NKJV/KJV) is a bit misleading. It does not imply a contrast with what precedes but simply introduces a new idea. Most English versions (e.g., NET, ESV, HCSB, NRSV, NIV) wisely omit the term and start the sentence with “I rejoiced...”

⁶ The word “want” (*husteresis*) is only used one other place in the NT (Mark 12:44, the widow with two mites).

⁷ Paul’s secret of contentment, or joy, is his focus on Christ in “any and every circumstance.” The word “content” (*autarkes*) means “self-sufficient” (BDAG s.v. *autarkes*: “content, self-sufficient”). For the Greeks, contentment came from personal sufficiency, but for Paul true sufficiency is found in Christ’s strength (cf. 4:13). Contentment doesn’t depend on circumstances; it transcends them. Contentment and joy are synonyms. This word is only used here in the New Testament. Interestingly, it is only used once in the Greek OT, in Prov 30:8: “Keep deception and lies far from me, give me neither poverty nor riches; Feed me with the food that is my portion [*autarkes*].” The theological concept of Christian contentment is also found in 2 Cor 9:8; 1 Tim 6:6, 8; and Heb 13:5.

⁸ In Phil 4:11, Paul uses the verb *manthano* (cf. 4:9), which means to learn not by study but by experience (BDAG s.v. *manthano* 3: “to come to a realization, with implication of taking place less through instruction than through experience or practice, *learn, appropriate to oneself*,” cf. 1 Tim 5:4, 13; Titus 3:14; Heb 5:8). Interestingly, the noun form of *manthano* is *mathetes*, the Greek word for “disciple.” The implication seems to be that a disciple learns through experience how to be content in all circumstances. In 4:12, Paul uses a different word translated “learned” (*mueo*). This verb originally referred to induction into a mystery cult. Though the word “secret” was no longer limited to that usage, the sense of initiation still lingered. So Paul’s point is that Christian contentment remains a mystery to those on the outside and can only be learned from the inside by those who are in Christ (see also R. Kent Hughes, *Philippians: The Fellowship of the Gospel*. Preaching the Word (Wheaton: Crossway, 2007, 185).

⁹ Study the life of Job to appreciate this scenario.

¹⁰ Evans, *Returning to Your First Love*, 206.

¹¹ Gordon D. Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*. New International Commentary on the New Testament series (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 436.

¹² This is especially true when you are experiencing trying and difficult situations because of your faithfulness to the gospel. You can expect that God will strengthen you in order for you to endure that difficulty. See the discussion on Phil 4:13 in J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays, *Grasping God’s Word* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 205–8.

¹³ SermonNews: “Drive a Clunker; Support a Ministry”: www.sermonnews.com. Cited in OneNewsNow, January 26, 2009.

¹⁴ SermonNews: “Oldest Americans the Happiest”: www.sermonnews.com. Cited in Yahoo News, April 18, 2008.

¹⁵ Tony Evans, *Returning to Your First Love* (Chicago: Moody, 1995), 204.

¹⁶ This has been understood to be a contradiction to 2 Cor 11:8–9, which implies that the other churches of Macedonia also helped Paul. However, the time element is significant. Paul is saying that at this particular time no other church besides this church at Philippi had helped him. Paul was very hesitant to accept financial contributions (cf. 1 Cor 9:4–18; 2 Cor 11:7–10; 12:13–18; 1 Thess 2:5–9; and 2 Thess 3:7–9).

¹⁷ The use of *koinonia* forms an inclusio between Phil 4:10–20 and 1:3–7. For many other parallels, see the excellent article by my friend John F. Hart, “Does Philippians 1:6 Guarantee Progressive Sanctification? Part 1.” *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* 9:16 (Spring 1996): <http://www.faithalone.org/journal/1996i/Hart.html>.

¹⁸ O’Brien writes, “The picture painted by the accounting metaphor is of compound interest that accumulates all the time until the last day. The apostle has employed this commercial language to show that he has set his heart on an ongoing, permanent gain for the Philippians in the spiritual realm. The advantage (*karpos*) that accrues to them as a result of their generous giving is God’s blessing in their lives by which they continually grow in the graces of Christ until the parousia.” Peter T. O’Brien, *Commentary on Philippians*. New International Greek Testament Commentary series (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 539.

¹⁹ BDAG s.v. *epizeteo* 2.

²⁰ See Paul’s use of *karpos* in Phil 1:11, 22.

²¹ Jesus says, “Do not store up [lit. “treasure up”] for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up [lit. “treasure up”] for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matt 6:19–21).

²² The language grows out of the OT and while it was used generally to describe sacrifices to God (i.e., in the case of Noah after the flood, Gen 8:21), it is especially connected in its approximately 50 uses to the Levitical sacrificial system and the various burnt offerings (cf. Exod 29:18, 25, 41; Lev 1:9, 13, 2:2, 9, 12; Num 15:3, 5, 7, 10, 13–14). The expression acceptable sacrifice (*qusian dekthn*) in the OT referred to grain offerings as well as burnt offerings and could refer spiritually to the sacrifice of a broken spirit (Ps 51:17–19) or of praise (50:8). It indicated that the sacrifice as a whole was acceptable to God because the sacrifice itself as well as the heart of the one doing the sacrificing was pleasing to God. (In the case of the Philippians, whose hearts were committed to Christ and to their apostle, and whose gift was generous by all measure, their sacrificial offer was very pleasing [*euareston*] to God). It was given to Paul, but it was as if it had been offered directly to God. This same type of metaphor is used by Paul in 2 Cor 2:15 and Eph 5:2.

²³ I can make a biblical case for not collecting an offering. A few of my pastoral friends whom I have tremendous respect for have this conviction. I respect them for this decision, but don't feel led to currently follow suit.

²⁴ This is not a blank check from God! "Needs" must be defined. This must be seen in light of the principles of spiritual giving found in 2 Cor 8 and 9, particularly 9:6–15. This is not a promise that can be taken out of context and applied to every human desire. In this context it relates to Paul's provision for ministry. God will always supply those who are generous givers with more to give. This does not mean that they will have more for personal use, but more to give to gospel causes!

²⁵ O'Brien, *Commentary on Philippians*, 545; cf. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, 452; Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*. Word Biblical Commentary, ed. Ralph P. Martin, vol. 43 (Waco: Word, 1983), 207.

²⁶ Keenan Kelsey, *Making Choices*, via eSermons.com newsletter. Cited in PreachingNow Vol. 8 No. 19, 5/26/09.