Dear Open Door Family,

When it comes to being stuck in traffic I am never very happy. One time I was driving to Florida, I had been driving through the day and it was getting close to 10 PM when the highway came to a screeching halt. It became a parking lot with not an exit in site. I was NOT very excited about it. It was late; I was tired, and I still had another long day ahead of me. But there was absolutely nothing I could do. That is such a helpless feeling. Many times we react to those kinds of situations with frustration or anger. But certainly not by being content - what is there to be content about? That is why the phrase in verse 11 is such a startling statement. I have learned to be CONTENT whatever the circumstances - come on now Paul, really? Have you ever been stuck on the highway going zero miles an hour late at night? He must mean something else - he cannot mean to be content in ALL circumstances, can he?

Philippians 4:11-13 (NIV) ... I have learned to be content WHATEVER the circumstances. 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 EVERYTHING through him who gives me strength.

The first thing that we need to notice is that to be content is not a natural thing. Most of us are not easily satisfied. Even Paul said he had to *LEARN* to be content. When you hear Paul say he had *learned* to be content or satisfied in EVERY situation we are still skeptical. He cannot possibly mean EVERYTHING, can he? But Paul goes on to say that he has learned to be satisfied or content with being HUNGRY or being in WANT. So even when he had nothing to eat and when he was in some kind of desperate need Paul says he can be content. How? How does Paul do this? The answer in is vs. 13. Paul says he looks to the LORD for STRENGTH to do what he must. So, if Paul was in a situation where he had NO food - he is willing to look to Jesus for the strength to live without and to be content even when he was hungry. Perhaps it was that his focus was on what God had called him to BE and DO, not on what he thought he should HAVE. Too many times I have quoted vs. 13 as a promise from God to give me strength to do hard things for him. But perhaps the hard thing is to LEARN to be CONTENT without all the goodies we think we need.

John Calvin said this about wealth: *Prosperity inebriates men so that they take delight in their own merit.* I love this quote from the **Life Application Bible Notes:** Being content means that we regard ALL that we have as God's gift, but NEVER as a SUBSTITUTE for God.

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, help me to LEARN to be content with what you have given me.

- > the wonder of Forgiveness and a Relationship with You
- > an invitation to Come anytime I am in need of Your Grace
- > the right to be called a son of God

Please Lord, may these and ALL your blessings overshadow any petty desires I may have for things that will NEVER last or truly Satisfy.

Pastor Mark Kieft	
>>>>>>>>	>>>>>>>>