

Philippians 4; 10-23

July 5, 2009

The Secret; verses 10-13

- What is Paul trying to say in verse 10 especially what is with the “at last “(NIV) statement?
- Contentment, how does it work? (verses 10-13)

In these verses Paul uses a Greek word that has great meaning in pagan ethics it is autarkes which means entirely self-sufficient. This “self-sufficiency” was the highest aim of the Stoic philosophers. Stoics thought that man could reach a state of mind where he was absolutely independent of all things and all people. They thought that this “state” could be reached by a certain pathway of the mind. Their goal was to eliminate all desire.

Paul uses this word but his definition of where the self-sufficiency comes from is completely different. The Stoic says “I will learn to be content by a deliberate act of my own will”. Paul has a different source for his contentment in all circumstances and it is not an act of his will.

Questions:

1. How does 20th century America view self-sufficiency is it good, or a bad trait? Why do you think Americans view self-sufficiency (Independence if you will) in this manner?
2. How do we remain “content” in “all circumstances”, and do how many times are we truly content versus just enduring? How do we discern the difference?
3. What do you make of verses 17-19, is this a “prosperity” promise? How do you interpret this passage?
4. Do you think that current day Christians “appreciate” the meaning and value of a blessing such as the one Paul ends the letter with. What about the blessing at the end of our worship service?