

Christians Regardless

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By the time Paul wrote to the Philippians he had learned the lesson of being content to serve Christ faithfully regardless of the hostile circumstances or forces he faced (Phi. 4:11-13). If there is one basic key to being a faithful child of God, it is this principle. What are some of the hostile forces we may or do face?

- **Poverty and Humiliation.** Paul had experienced being abased and hungry and in want (Phi. 4:12). Think of Job who one day was a very wealthy man and the next day was stripped of his health, his wealth, and most of his family. Some of us may have known what real hunger and want for the necessities of life mean, and our faith has survived. We need to ponder whether our faith is such that we could remain faithful to God if we were suddenly plunged into poverty. We also need to ask whether our faith could survive being publicly humiliated because we are God's people.
- **Abundance and Exaltation.** Paul had also experienced times of having all his needs and more supplied. He had known times when he was commended and praised. In some ways, this may be a more dangerous and insidious enemy than the former. When we are rich, we are tempted to forget God in an imagined self-sufficiency. When others exalt us, we are tempted to become filled with pride and conceit. Many have been those who were once faithful to God but who became obsessed with their riches or with the pursuit of them, and in the process, lost their faith.
- **Trials.** When Paul wrote that he had learned to be content whatever his circumstances, he was in prison for the Lord's sake in Rome (Phi. 1:13). Rather than drowning in self-pity and denying Christ, he said his bonds had served to further the Gospel (Phi. 1:12). We are not likely to have the same trials Paul had, but if we faithfully live for Jesus the devil will send some our way. We will have some trials just because we are human, and we live in a material world. When we are called upon to deal dishonestly or lose our job, a trusted friend becomes an enemy, the dearest one we have is taken from us by death, and such like, do we have the spiritual backbone to be faithful to God, regardless?
- **Freedom.** As a Roman citizen, Paul was free to roam the Empire and preach the Gospel much of his life. He could have chosen many other things to do, but he chose to faithfully serve Christ. The freedoms we have are a major stumbling block to many saints, a responsibility they can't handle. Some use their freedom of time to pursue wholly secular, if not ungodly aims. Let us determine to be **Christians regardless.**

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