

Context Matters – Lesson 2

1. We must handle life's problems always in relation to God ([Philippians 4:4-7](#))
 - a. Vs. 4: Rejoice always.
 - i. Dr. Robert Lightner (Dallas Theological Seminary) *"Sometimes the trials and pressures of life make it almost impossible to be happy. But Paul did not tell his readers to be happy. He encouraged them to rejoice in the Lord... Christ is the One in whom the sphere of rejoicing was to take place. Surely there are many circumstances in which Christians cannot be happy. But they can always rejoice in the Lord and delight in Him."*
 - b. Vs. 5: Reminder that the Lord is at hand.
 - c. Vs. 6: Instead of anxiety, pray.
 - i. *"Do not be anxious about anything."* ([Matt 6:25-34](#))
 - d. Vs. 7: God desires us to be at peace (Isa 26:3, Col 3:17)
2. Peace comes through right thinking and action. ([Philippians 4:8, 9](#))
 - a. Vs. 8: Right thinking: *"Think on these things."*
 - b. Vs. 9: Right action: *"Practice these things."*
 - i. "Beholding is becoming"
 - ii. We become like Christ, and the Christians he desires us to be, though the reading, hearing, proclaiming, and living out of God's Word. ([Col 3:17](#))
 - c. Think on these things + practice these things = *"And the God of peace will be with you."* Paul does not separate right action from right thinking. The Bible does not ever divorce the two. ([Luke 6:43](#))
3. God is enough ([Philippians 4:10-13](#))
 - a. Vs. 11 *"I have learned."*
 - i. Μανθάνω. Baur, Danker, Arndt and Gingrich Lexicon: *"to come to a realization, with implication of taking place less through instruction than through experience or practice"*
 1. Chrysostom: *"this is an object of discipline, and exercise, and care, for it is not easy of attainment, but very difficult, and a new thing."*

Context Matters – Lesson 2 (Continued)

- b. *“I have learned...how to be brought low”* – a check on pride.
- c. *“I have learned...how to abound”* – a check on godlessness.
- d. To summarize: Gospel contentment is non-circumstantial.
 - i. Presbyterian pastor and scholar, Ligon Duncan: *“The secret of contentment is God's providence apprehended by your soul. It's not just the doctrine of God's providence, though you've got to understand the doctrine before you can experience contentment. It is the doctrine of providence; it is the God of providence embraced by your soul so that you believe it. Gospel contentment rests on a deep personal, doctrinal, experiential embrace of God's providence.”*
- e. *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”*
 - i. What it *doesn't* mean:
 - 1. *“God will help me do whatever I set my mind to.”*
- f. What it *does* mean:
 - i. God is the source of our strength, in the context of accomplishing His will. God strengthens us for the tasks He sets before us, when we wait upon Him ([Isa 40: 29](#))
 - ii. If our strengthening happens when we wait on the Lord, what does that mean?
 - 1. Looking to the Lord before any human effort is pursued (prayer).
 - 2. A complete dependence on Him for the process and provision.
 - 3. Allowing Him to decide the terms and the timing of the outcome.
(*secret of contentment*)