

Let's Stop Misquoting Philippians 4:13

The most misquoted passage in the Bible is Philippians 4:13.

"I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength."

I think every well-meaning Christian athlete has posted that in a gym locker, hung it on the wall, or worn it on a sweat-drenched T-shirt. But Philippians 4:13 has nothing to do with lifting weights or dunking the ball.

Philippians 4:13 is all about contentment.



and I know what it is to have plenty" (vv. 12-13).

Paul learned contentment regardless of the size of his bank account. And he shared his "secret" in verse 13. Christ gave him strength to be content in any and all circumstances. I like the NIV translation of verse 13 because it points back to the context of verses 11-12.

"I can do all this through him who gives me strength."

I can be content because Christ empowers me to be content. I find my joy in Him and not in the things that may or may not fill my life and bank account.

Let's stop using this verse in terms of running a marathon and think instead of running our lives. Let's live with a contentment fully grounded in Christ.

So instead of posting Philippians 4:13 in the gym, maybe we should post it in our bank accounts ... tape it to our credit cards before we make another purchase ... and review the verse as we write a check for Sunday's offering. Join me in being a person who says, "I will give no matter what. God gives me the strength to give—and God gives me the strength to live even if I end up giving it all away."

Ever heard someone say something like this? (Ever said it yourself?)

"If I won the lottery—if I had loads of money—I'd be ridiculously generous."

Whenever I hear that, I want to ask, "So what's keeping you from being generous now?" Giving is not a matter of funds; it's a matter of the heart.

- "I'd be generous if I had lots of money" shows a trust in my bank account.
- "I will be generous even if I don't have money" shows a trust in Christ, the one who ultimately gives us all things.

That's the point of Philippians 4:13. Paul had been talking about his circumstances.

"I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need,



When we've got Jesus, isn't that enough?