

*I press on
toward the goal to
win the prize for
which God has
called me
heavenward
in Christ
Jesus.*

Philippians 3:14

Following the upward call through Philippians ...

God's Ability to Supply

When Jesus sent the twelve apostles two-by-two out on their first teaching foray, He told them not to take any extra materials with them. "He instructed them that they should take nothing for their journey, except a mere staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belt" (Mark 6:8). His idea on this first training mission was that they should learn to trust Him to provide for their needs, even though there was no visible plan for their sustenance. They learned, and so did Paul. "I have learned," said he, "to be content in whatever circumstances I am." "I have learned," he again asserted, "the secret of being filled and going hungry." All saints, likewise, should learn the same lesson, to know that God can and will provide in amazing ways for His children who are carrying out His mission.

▼ **Paul's needs met** — The apostle Paul could have been in a very desperate situation in his imprisonment in Rome. But the Almighty worked through the brethren in Philippi and others to ensure that His bond-servant had his basic needs supplied while incarcerated. "But I have received everything in full," he writes in appreciation, "and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God" (Philippians 4:18). What was sent by the Philippians was not only a blessing to Paul, but it was — most importantly — a spiritual sacrifice that pleased God! How much more valuable are these types of offerings as contrasted to the smoke of burnt goat flesh ascending to Him who dwells on high.

▼ **What God can do** — It is interesting to sort out man's role in the production of the things necessary for life as contrasted to God's role. The Father, of course, supplies all the big and foundational things which man requires to live: air to breathe, water, photosynthesis, functioning of the cell, seed for planting... But, since the time of Adam, man has to work for his daily bread. If he doesn't plant when he needs to plant, and if he is too lazy to harvest when he needs to harvest, he will starve. On a larger scale, socialist economic systems tend to collapse and result in massive starvation, whereas the free enterprise, private ownership of property economic systems result in plenty. The promise of God, for the saints, is that in the midst of mankind's muddling, He can provide what is necessary. "And my God," states Paul confidently, "shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). The resources of God's riches in glory are infinite. The faithful Philippians were going to be provided for regardless of the economic conditions around them.

**DOES THE
CHRISTIAN HAVE
FAITH THAT GOD
CAN SUPPLY ALL
HIS NEEDS?**

Life on earth is a testing ground for the disciple of Christ. Can God supply what the Christian needs? Does the Christian have faith that God can supply all his needs? The answer to the first question is an obvious "Yes." But the answer to the second question is one that will be worked out in the earthly sojourn of the one making the claim to godliness. Will he compromise when faced with economic uncertainty, or will he continue to stand firm for the principles of the faith of Christ? Will he trust God, or will he sink to trusting himself?

But God is not only interested in providing for those who have true Biblical faith in Him. He is also very interested in finding those who, like the Philippians, have faith to give out of their limited resources for the support of men like the apostle Paul. They believe that God cannot only provide for them, but that He can use them as a conduit for the unlimited resources of the riches of glory. May the brethren of today develop such a faith, that the gospel of glory might go forward to the ends of the earth!

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