

Articles and Sermons :: Four Secrets of Apostle Paul by Zac Poonen**Four Secrets of Apostle Paul by Zac Poonen - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2008/12/15 13:10****Four Secrets of Apostle Paul***by Zac Poonen***1. Contentment:**

In Philippians 4:11, Paul says, "In whatever state I am, I am content." And such contentment brings with it fullness of joy and peace. Hence Paul speaks of joy and peace in verses 4 and 7 of the same chapter. We can praise God only when we are perfectly content with all His dealings with us. If we believe in a God who is sovereign and Who can therefore make everything that befalls us work together for our good, (Rom.8:28) then we can be truly content in all circumstances. Then we can praise the Lord, like Habakkuk, even when the trees in our garden don't bear fruit, when our flock dies and when we have suffered heavy financial loss - or in any situation (Habak.3:17,18). Ephesians 5:18-20 indicates that the result of the infilling of the Holy Spirit is an outflow of praise to God. The Apostle Paul could rejoice even when he was locked up in prison, with his feet in stocks (Acts 16:25). Even there, he was content and found nothing to complain about.

2. Cross:

Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ" (Gal. 2:20). The cross is a symbol of weakness, shame and death. The Apostle Paul had fears, perplexities, sorrows and tears in his life (See 2 Cor. 1:8; 4:8; 6:10; 7:5). He was considered a fool and a fanatic. He was often treated like dirt and garbage by others (1 Cor. 4:13). He glories in nothing but the cross (Gal. 6:14). He does not glory in his gifts or abilities or even his deeper life experiences. He glories only in dying to himself perpetually. He says in 2 Cor. 4:10, "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body ." One aspect of the cross that he accepted was the disciplining of his bodily appetites. He says, "Like an athlete I punish my body, treating it roughly, training it to do what it should, not what it wants to" (1 Cor. 9:27-LB). He disciplined his eyes in what they read and looked at, his ears in what they listened to, and his tongue in what it spoke. He disciplined his life in every area.

3. Humility:

Twenty-five years after his conversion, Paul says, "I am the least of the apostles" (1 Cor. 15:9). Five years subsequently, he says, "I am less than the least of all the saints" (Eph. 3:8). Still a year later he says, "I am (notice, it is not "I was" but "I am") the chief of sinners" (1 Tim. 1:15). The closer Paul walked with God, the more he was conscious of the corruption and wickedness of his flesh. He recognized that no good thing could be found in his flesh (Rom. 7:18).

4. Pressing forward:

"I am pressing on," says Paul, nearly thirty years after his conversion, and as he was drawing to the end of his life (Phil. 3:14). He still has not attained. He is seeking a still greater degree of the fullness of the Spirit of God in his life, and is therefore straining every spiritual muscle toward this goal.

Re: Four Secrets of Apostle Paul by Zac Poonen - posted by GodsFire, on: 2008/12/15 13:22

Praise God,

For I am still a wretch, I needed that Post, and I still need the post, I am in need....

Thank you brother Moderator

Re: - posted by live4jc, on: 2008/12/15 17:50

Thanks for sharing that, Greg. This message blessed and challenged me ! There is so much that speaks to us from the life of Paul. God broke him, and purged him of his worldly self confidence, and transformed a man who was a Christ hater , into a passionate lover of Christ.

I remember one morning, my oldest son had been reading an illustrated children's Bible, and when I saw him, he had a look of joy and great excitement on his face. The section he'd been reading was in the book of Acts, and it centered on the activities of Paul and the other apostles. Reporting on what he had just been reading, my son exclaimed, "Paul was a great man. I want to be like Paul !!" He repeated these statements a number of times, with much exuberance.

I hope and pray that he does become like Paul- like the Christ who lived in Paul.

In Jesus,
John