

Engaging Gospel Doctrine: 166

Lesson 40: "I Can Do All Things Through Christ"

[Link to Online Lesson: "I Can Do All Things through Christ"](#)

Class Member Reading: Philippians; Colossians; Philemon

I appreciate that we have entire books assigned.

Philippians 1- 4 NRSV

1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 I thank my God every time I remember you, 4 **constantly praying with joy** in every one of my prayers for all of you, 5 because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. 6 I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. 7 It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for **all of you share in God's grace with me**, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. 8 For God is my witness, how **I long for all of you** with the compassion of Christ Jesus. 9 And this is my prayer, **that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight 10 to help you to determine what is best**, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, 11 having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God. [Helpfully specific wording. Love is important, but informed love is transformative.](#)

12 I want you to know, beloved, that what has happened to me has actually helped to spread the gospel, 13 so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to everyone else that my imprisonment is for Christ; 14 and most of the brothers and sisters, having been made confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, dare to speak the word with greater boldness and without fear. [Finding benefits in difficult circumstances. Paul was imprisoned, probably at Ephesus \(central Turkey\).](#)

15 Some proclaim Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from **goodwill** (eudokia, good will; dokia is your opinion) [Provocative statement. We can do good things with bad intentions..](#) 16 These proclaim Christ out of love, knowing that I have been put here for the defense of the gospel; 17 the others proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but intending to increase my suffering in my imprisonment. 18 What does it matter? Just this, that Christ is proclaimed in every way, whether out of false motives or true; and in that I rejoice.

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, 19 for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ **this will turn out for my deliverance**. 20 It is my **eager expectation and hope** that I will not be put to shame in any way, but that by my speaking with all boldness, Christ will be exalted now as always in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 For to me, **living is Christ and dying is gain**. 22 If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which I prefer. 23 I am hard pressed between the two: my **desire is to depart and be with Christ**, for that is far better [\(Was Paul discouraged or depressed? Considering martyrdom? Even](#)

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suicide? *Addresses the weary joy we can experience through service*); 24 but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. 25 Since **I am convinced** of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, 26 so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again.

27 Only, **live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ**, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are **standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind** for the faith of the gospel, 28 and are in no way intimidated by your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God’s doing. 29 For he has **graciously granted** you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of **suffering for him** as well— 30 since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have. *Being graciously allowed to suffer?! “The ‘opponents’ at whose hands suffering is expected probably refers to political and social pressure to take part in the imperial cult.” (Oxford Bible Commentary)*

Chapter 2

1 If then there is any **encouragement in Christ**, any **consolation from love**, any sharing in the Spirit, any **compassion and sympathy**, 2 **make my joy complete**: be of the **same mind**, having the **same love**, being in **full accord** and of **one mind**. 3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. *Sublime and noble traits worth meditating upon. Note how much Paul emphasizes unity.* 5 Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, *What is coming up is a real treasure—Paul quotes a hymn known to him from Christian, tradition, which means it is older than Paul’s own letters, going back very early in Christianity.*

6 who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,

7 but **emptied himself**, *so evocative*
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form,

8 he **humbled himself**
and became **obedient to the point of death—**
even death on a cross.

9 Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,

10 so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,

in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

11 and every tongue should confess

that Jesus Christ is Lord,

to the glory of God the Father.

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12 Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling** (The Greek words mean exactly this—being so terrified you shake. But what does this mean exactly? The phrase comes from Ps. 55:5. “Work”, “katergazdomai” means “to achieve something through work, accomplish, even in the face of obstacles”); 13 for it is **God who is at work in you**, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure. (I appreciate this idea of divine teamwork or collaboration—we must do all we can, but it is God strengthening and empowering us).

14 **Do all things without murmuring and arguing**, Quite the goal to strive for. But it has to do with being decided, whole, having integrity. 15 so that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, in which you **shine like stars in the world**. 16 It is by your **holding fast to the word of life** (the word of life... I like that) that I can boast on the day of Christ that **I did not run in vain or labor in vain**. 17 But even if **I am being poured out as a libation over the sacrifice and the offering of your faith**, I am glad and rejoice with all of you— 18 and in the same way you also must be glad and rejoice with me. Such vivid language. We must nourish and care for ourselves, but there are also times to pour ourselves out in service as well.

19 I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I may be cheered by news of you. 20 I have no one like him who will be **genuinely concerned for your welfare**. A small phrase, but so vital. Are we genuinely concerned with the welfare of those close to us? Friends, co-workers, and ward members? 21 All of them are seeking their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. 22 But Timothy’s worth you know, how like a son with a father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. 23 I hope therefore to send him as soon as I see how things go with me; 24 and I trust in the Lord that I will also come soon.

25 Still, I think it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus—my brother and co-worker and fellow soldier, your messenger and minister to my need; 26 for he has been longing for all of you, and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill. 27 He was indeed so ill that he nearly died. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, so that I would not have one sorrow after another. 28 I am the more eager to send him, therefore, in order that you may rejoice at seeing him again, and that I may be less anxious. 29 Welcome him then in the Lord with all joy, and honor such people, 30 because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for those services that you could not give me.

Chapter 3

1 Finally, my brothers and sisters, **rejoice in the Lord**.

To write the same things to you is not troublesome to me, and for you it is a safeguard.

2 Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of those who mutilate the flesh! 3 For it is we who are the circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh— 4 even though I, too, have reason for confidence in the flesh.

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If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

7 Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. 8 More than that, I **regard everything as loss** (hyperbolic, but refers to putting things in proper perspective) because of the **surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord** (Worth discussion: What is of greatest value in life?). For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. 10 I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the **sharing of his sufferings** (Compassion and sympathy both mean "to suffer with") by becoming like him in his death, 11 if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

12 Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; **but I press on to make it my own**, because **Christ Jesus has made me his own** ("make it our own" is another vital concept, whether it refers to our choices, or testimony, or goals in life, etc. We should figure out what we want, and claim it through righteous means). 13 Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: **forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead**, 14 **I press on toward the goal** for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus. 15 **Let those of us then who are mature be of the same mind**; and if you think differently about anything, this too God will reveal to you. 16 Only **let us hold fast to what we have attained**. Sound advice on so many levels. Focus on the present, look forward to the future. Hold to the good we have gained. Be unified with others.

17 Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us. 18 For many live as enemies of the cross of Christ; I have often told you of them, and now I tell you even with tears. 19 Their end is destruction; their god is the belly; and their glory is in their shame; their minds are set on earthly things. 20 But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. 21 He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself.

Chapter 4

1 Therefore, my brothers and sisters, **whom I love and long for**, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved. I appreciate how effusive Paul is, especially when it comes to expressing his caring and love for his friends.

2 I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. 3 Yes, and I ask you also, my **loyal companion** (very intriguing... who is this? Unfortunately we can't know. The Greek is "suzugos", "yoke fellow" so "fellow worker". The word is masculine), help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

4 **Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice** (What helps you feel joy day to day?). 5 Let your **gentleness** be known to everyone. The Lord is near. 6 Do not worry about anything, but in

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everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the **peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds** in Christ Jesus. *We truly can have peace in the midst of difficult circumstances.*

8 Finally, beloved, whatever is **true**, whatever is **honorable**, whatever is **just**, whatever is **pure**, whatever is **pleasing** (agreeable, worthy of loving), whatever is **commendable** (praiseworthy, worthy of being spoken well of), if there is any **excellence** and if there is anything **worthy of praise, think about these things** (Gr: think about, let one's mind dwell on). 9 Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you. "Admonition of Paul" as quoted in the 13th Article of Faith. Worth discussing.

10 I rejoice in the Lord greatly that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned for me, but had no opportunity to show it. 11 Not that I am referring to being in need; for **I have learned to be content with whatever I have**. *Very important life lesson, which has limits of course. We have basic needs, physical, emotional, relational, spiritual.* 12 I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need. 13 **I can do all things through him who strengthens me**. *Our verse from which the title is taken.* 14 In any case, it was kind of you to **share my distress**.

15 You Philippians indeed know that in the early days of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you alone. 16 For even when I was in Thessalonica, **you sent me help for my needs more than once**. *Pure religion...* 17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the profit that accumulates to your account. 18 I have been paid in full and have more than enough; **I am fully satisfied**, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. 19 And my **God will fully satisfy every need of yours** according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. 20 To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

21 Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The friends who are with me greet you. 22 All the saints greet you, especially those of the emperor's household.

23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Colossians NRSV

Chapter 1

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, *(Most likely not)*

2 To the saints and faithful brothers and sisters in Christ in Colossae *(Western Turkey)*:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

3 In our prayers for you we always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 4 for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, 5 because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. You have heard of this hope before in the word of the truth, the

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gospel 6 that has come to you. Just as it is bearing fruit and growing in the whole world, so it has been bearing fruit among yourselves from the day you heard it and **truly comprehended the grace of God** (Do we comprehend the grace of God?). 7 This you learned from Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, 8 and he has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

9 For this reason, since the day we heard it, we have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be **filled with the knowledge of God’s will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding**, 10 so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you **grow in the knowledge of God**. Key principles of spiritual growth—**increase in knowledge and abound in good works**. 11 May you be **made strong** with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be **prepared to endure everything with patience**, while **joyfully 12 giving thanks** to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. 13 He has **rescued us** from the power of darkness and **transferred us** into the kingdom of his beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

15 He is the image of the invisible (Gr: “not seen”, so either unseen or unseeable) God, the firstborn of all creation; 16 for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. 19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross. (staggeringly high Christology if you read it carefully. The idea that “everything is for Jesus” would come full circle, since through the Atonement Jesus became all of us).

21 And **you who were once estranged and hostile in mind**, doing evil deeds, 22 he has now **reconciled** in his fleshly body through death, so as to **present you holy and blameless** and irreproachable (Gr: **unable to be accused, beyond reproach**) before him— 23 provided that you continue **securely established and steadfast in the faith** (Important goal—to be steadfast, trustworthy, consistent, to master our shortcomings and become more reliable), without shifting from the hope promised by the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven. I, Paul, became a servant of this gospel.

24 I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church. 25 I became its servant according to God’s commission that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, 26 the mystery that has been hidden throughout the ages and generations but has now been revealed to his saints. 27 To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. 28 It is he whom we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone in all wisdom, so that we may **present everyone mature in Christ**. 29 For this I toil and struggle with all the **energy that he powerfully inspires within me**. I am grateful for that feeling when I have it—that vitalizing radiance where we feel our best selves, motivated to do good.

Chapter 2

1 For I want you to know how much I am struggling for you, and for those in Laodicea, and for all who have not seen me face to face. 2 I want their **hearts to be encouraged and united in love**, so that they may have all the **riches of assured understanding** and have the knowledge of God’s mystery, that is, Christ himself, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. 4 I am saying this so that no one may deceive you with plausible arguments (*Plausible arguments seem like a good thing to be persuaded by... The Greek term simply means “a persuasive statement”, but the impression here is “persuasive but false”. Worth pushing back on though*). 5 For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, and I rejoice to see your morale and the firmness of your faith in Christ.

6 As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, 7 **rooted and built up in him** and **established** in the faith, just as you were taught, **abounding in thanksgiving**. *Gratitude is a powerful, transformative force. Note the emphasis on groundedness, solid foundations.*

8 See to it that no one takes you **captive through philosophy and empty deceit**, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ. (*Very worth discussing. When is persuasion and philosophy helpful and constructive, and when is it not?*) 9 For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, 10 and **you have come to fullness in him**, who is the head of every ruler and authority. 11 In him also you were circumcised with a **spiritual circumcision**, by putting off the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ; 12 when you were **buried with him in baptism**, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. 13 And when you were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, **God made you alive together with him**, when he forgave us all our trespasses, 14 erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, **nauling it to the cross**. 15 He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it. *Powerfully evocative language. Also quite mystical.*

16 Therefore do not let anyone condemn you in matters of food and drink or of observing festivals, new moons, or Sabbaths (*these are all Jewish features*). 17 These are only a shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. 18 Do not let anyone disqualify you, insisting on self-abasement and worship of angels, dwelling on visions, puffed up without cause by a **human way of thinking**, 19 and not holding fast to the head, from whom the whole body, nourished and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows with a growth that is from God.

20 If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the universe, why do you live as if you still belonged to the world? Why do you submit to regulations, 21 “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch”? 22 All these regulations refer to things that perish with use; they are simply **human commands and teachings**. 23 These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-imposed piety, humility, and severe treatment of the body, but they are of no value in checking self-indulgence. (*the author is again critiquing Judaism*)

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Chapter 3

1 So if you have been raised with Christ, **seek the things that are above**, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, 3 for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

5 **Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly:** fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry). 6 On account of these the wrath of God is coming on those who are disobedient. 7 These are the ways you also once followed, when you were living that life. 8 But now you must get rid of all such things—anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices 10 and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. 11 In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all! *Certainly evocative and this language has its place, but there is also an argument for integrating all the parts of us in love and disciplining rather than killing our passions.*

12 As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, **clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.** 13 **Bear with one another** and, if anyone has a complaint against another, **forgive each other**; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14 Above all, **clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.** 15 **And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts,** to which indeed you were called in the one body. **And be thankful.** 16 **Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom;** and with **gratitude** in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. 17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. *Beautiful advice worthy of reflection.*

18 Wives, be subject (*very clear in Greek, “subordinate yourself to, put under”*) to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. 19 Husbands, love your wives and never treat them harshly.

20 Children, obey your parents in everything, for this is your acceptable duty in the Lord. 21 Fathers, do not provoke your children, or they may lose heart. 22 Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything, not only while being watched and in order to please them, but wholeheartedly, fearing the Lord. 23 Whatever your task, put yourselves into it, as done for the Lord and not for your masters, 24 since you know that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward; you serve the Lord Christ. 25 For the wrongdoer will be paid back for whatever wrong has been done, and there is no partiality. (*Note the similarities to Ephesians, which seems to have been patterned after Colossians*).

Chapter 4

1 Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly, for you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

2 **Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving.** *I like this wording. Keeping alert through focus and gratitude.* 3 At the same time pray for us as well that God will open

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to us a door for the word, that we may declare the mystery of Christ, for which I am in prison, 4 so that I may reveal it clearly, as I should.

5 **Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, making the most of the time.** 6 Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer everyone.

7 Tychicus will tell you all the news about me; he is a beloved brother, a faithful minister, and a fellow servant in the Lord. 8 I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts; 9 he is coming with Onesimus, the faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you about everything here.

10 Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, as does Mark the cousin of Barnabas, concerning whom you have received instructions—if he comes to you, welcome him. 11 And Jesus who is called Justus greets you. These are the only ones of the circumcision among my co-workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me. 12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you. He is always **wrestling in his prayers on your behalf**, so that you may stand **mature** and **fully assured** in everything that God wills. 13 For I testify for him that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. 14 Luke, the beloved physician (This is where we get the idea that Luke was a doctor and the author of Luke-Acts), and Demas greet you. 15 Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters in Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house. 16 And when this letter has been read among you, have it read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you read also the letter from Laodicea. (This could be how Paul's letters were shared and eventually collected) 17 And say to Archippus, “See that you complete the task that you have received in the Lord.”

18 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you. (and yet Colossians is most likely a forgery. What do you make of this level of deception?)

Philemon NRSV

Chapter 1

1 Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,

To Philemon our dear friend and co-worker, 2 to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house: (Paul's only surviving letter to one individual) Watch for rhetorical devices in this letter—Paul wants to convince Philemon to forgive Onesimus from running away—and possible Paul wants to keep him as his own slave! He lays it on pretty thick.

3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

4 When I remember you in my prayers, I always thank my God 5 because I hear of your love for all the saints and your faith toward the Lord Jesus. 6 I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective when you perceive all the good that we may do for Christ. 7 I have indeed received much joy and encouragement from your love, because the hearts of the **saints have been refreshed through you**, my brother.

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8 For this reason, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do your duty, 9 yet I would rather appeal to you on the basis of love—and I, Paul, do this as an old man, and now also as a prisoner of Christ Jesus. 10 I am appealing to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I have become during my imprisonment. 11 Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful both to you and to me. 12 I am sending him, **that is, my own heart, back to you.** 13 I wanted to keep him with me, so that **he might be of service to me** in your place during my imprisonment for the gospel; 14 but I preferred to do nothing without your consent, in order that your good deed might be voluntary and not something forced. 15 Perhaps this is the reason he was separated from you for a while, so that you might have him back forever, 16 no longer as a slave but more than a slave, a beloved brother—especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

17 So if you consider me your partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. 18 If he has wronged you in any way, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. 19 I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand: I will repay it. I say nothing about your owing me even your own self. (*except that he did say it ;)*) 20 Yes, brother, let me have this benefit from you in the Lord! Refresh my heart in Christ. 21 Confident of your obedience, I am writing to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.

22 One thing more—prepare a guest room for me, for I am hoping through your prayers to be restored to you.

23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you, 24 and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers.

25 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Additional Reading: “[Pauline Epistles: Epistle to the Philippians](#),” 745–46; “[Pauline Epistles: Epistle to the Colossians](#),” 746; and “[Pauline Epistles: Epistle to Philemon](#),” 746.

Epistle to the Philippians

The church at Philippi was the earliest founded by Paul in Europe ([Acts 16:11–40](#)). His first visit ended abruptly, but he was not forgotten, and his converts sent him supplies not only while he remained in the neighborhood, but also after he had moved on to Corinth ([Philip. 4:15–16](#)). He passed through Philippi six years later ([Acts 20:2](#)) on his way from Ephesus to Corinth, and again on his return ([Acts 20:6](#)) from Corinth to Jerusalem. When the news of his removal to Rome reached the Philippians, they sent one of their number, Epaphroditus ([Philip. 2:25](#)), to minister to him in their name. The strain of work in the capital proved too severe, and Epaphroditus had to be sent home ([2:26–30](#)), taking with him the epistle to the Philippians. Its main purpose is to express Paul’s gratitude and affection, and to cheer them under the disappointment of his protracted imprisonment.

Analysis of Philippians

Salutation, thanksgiving, and prayer on their behalf ([1:1–11](#)).

Personal: dealing with the progress of the missionary work ([1:12–26](#)).

Exhortation to unity, humility, and perseverance ([2:1–18](#)).

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Paul’s own plans, and those of Timothy and Epaphroditus ([2:19–30](#)).

Warning against false teachers ([3:1–4:9](#)).

Thanks for their assistance, and conclusion ([4:10–23](#)).

Epistle to the Colossians

This epistle was the result of a visit from Epaphras, the evangelist of the Church in Colosse ([1:7–8](#)), who reported that the Colossians were falling into serious error, the result of a deep consciousness of sin leading to a desire to attain moral perfection by mechanical means, the careful observance of external ordinances ([2:16](#)) and ascetic restrictions ([2:20](#)), coupled with special devotion to a host of angelic mediators. The attractiveness of such teaching was due not only to the satisfaction it offered to the craving after sanctification, but also to the show it made of superior wisdom and greater insight into the mysteries of the universe. Paul shows that Christ, in His own person, is the one principle of the unity of the universe, and that sanctification is to be found only through union with Him.

- 1 Analysis of Colossians
- 2 Salutation, thanksgiving, and prayer ([1:1–13](#)).
- 3 Doctrinal: (a) Christ, our Redeemer, the author and goal of all creation, the Lord of all divine perfection, in whom is the reconciliation of the universe ([1:14–2:5](#)). (b) Hence the importance of union with Him ([2:6–12](#)). (c) Danger of ceremonialism and of angel worship ([2:13–19](#)). (d) Importance of dying and rising again with Christ ([2:20–3:4](#)).
- 4 Exhortation: (a) Every evil inclination to be subdued ([3:5–11](#)). (b) We must clothe ourselves in all graces of the Spirit ([3:12–17](#)). (c) Social duties to be observed ([3:18–4:6](#)).
- 5 Personal: commendations and greetings ([4:7–18](#)).

Epistle to Philemon

This epistle is a private letter about Onesimus, a slave who had robbed his master, Philemon, and run away to Rome. Paul sent him back to his master at Colosse in company with Tychicus the bearer of the epistle to the Colossians. Paul asks that Onesimus be forgiven and received back as a fellow Christian.

Scripture Chain: [Philippians 4:8](#); [Articles of Faith 1:13](#)

Philippians 4:8 NRSV

8 Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things

Articles of Faith 1:13

13 We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul—We believe all things, we hope all things,

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Lesson 40: “I Can Do All Things Through Christ”

we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.
