

Limestone Bible Camp

Bible Class Lessons

Series 7

Phillipians 4:13

“I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me.”

LESSON 1: WHAT DOES IT REALLY MEAN?

Introduction: To make the statement, “I can do all things,” is to make a very bold assertion. Certainly there is nothing which is outside of the power of Christ to grant. But did Paul really mean all things? This lesson emphasizes that man has a dual nature, fleshly and spiritual. Paul (as well as God, Christ and the Holy Spirit) are concerned with the spiritual side of man. What we hope the students will see is that Paul means, “Anything that is spiritually good, necessary, or uplifting can be accomplished through faith in Christ.” We will use Rom. 8:28 as another example in which a verse with spiritual implications is misunderstood in a physical way.

- I. Getting students to think about what Phil. 4:13 means.
 - A. Ask students, “What do you suppose Paul means when he says, ‘I can do all things’?”
 1. (Give time for response. Don’t jump in too soon.)
 2. If no student responses are given, suggest some of your own, maybe these: Did he mean -
 - a.) He could be a great athlete, or he could start a successful business, or he could become rich, or get a new car (sorry, donkey)
 - b.) *Prod students to respond, although not necessarily to agree with you. Pick specific students and ask point blank. Ask why. Ask others if they agree or disagree and why. Let students discuss as long as discussion is worthwhile, then move on.*
 - B. “We have several ideas. Let’s look at Rom. 8:28, another verse with similar ideas. (All turn, have one to read.) Ask, “What do you suppose Paul means by, “All things work together for **good**”?”
 1. *This time have each student write at least 3 different ideas on a card. After a couple of minutes, collect the cards and read some of the better responses (Be careful not to embarrass anyone.) If their ideas are not good, offer your own.*
 2. “Do you think he means that if we love God we’ll find a way to make a lot of money, or guys does he mean that beautiful girl will fall in love with you. Those things would be good, right?” (I’ve seen televangelist shows where at least the first was indicated.)
- II. Clarifying the difference between fleshly and spiritual.

This is an outline for a discussion that you should direct in your own words. If you find yourself lecturing, be sure it is keeping the students interested. If they appear to be drifting, stop lecturing and get them involved. Ask question, use humor, etc.

 - A. Consider these questions.
 1. What is good? (That which is in the best interest of the person.)
 2. What is best for everyone in the world? (Going to Heaven.)

3. Is this what most people want the most? (It doesn't seem to be.)
 4. What's the problem? (Obsessed with physical, forget spiritual.)
- B. Man has a dual nature.
1. Man is physical (mass, volume, see, hear, touch, smell, etc.)
These are all qualities that will not last eternally.
 2. Man is spiritual (mind, will, love, things that are eternal)
 3. Which of these is really man? *This should generate some discussion. See what students have to say. It might be interesting. (It's similar to a family and a house. The house is just a temporary dwelling. The family can move into or out of it, but the family is not the house. What if a family gave all their attention to the physical appearance of the house and neglected the health of the family?)*
 - a.) The physical side of man.
 - is surrounded by a physical world
 - likes strong bodies and beautiful faces
 - likes money, fame, fortune, pleasure, etc.
 - experiences sickness, pain and DEATH.
 - b.) The spiritual side of man
 - can't be detected by the senses
 - is concerned only with good or evil/God or satan
 - is the part of man in God's image
 - will exist eternally in Heaven or Hell.

III. Realizing God's outlook over man's outlook.

- A. Most men are concerned with physical side and give physical answers to questions about Romans 8 and Phillipians 4. Which side do you suppose God is concerned about? (Spiritual, and he would give spiritual answers to the questions we are considering.) Man reads Rom 8:28 and expects people to be nice, money to roll in, and a life of ease to begin. God writes Rom. 8:28 to tell us that even those things that seem unpleasant at the time will help us reach our goal of Heaven if we love Him. *Have the class offer examples for Rom. 8:28. (A desired promotion went to someone else, but it would have put you in the wrong social circles. Your let go from your job, but you find a better job in a different town where you can be active in church work. etc.)*
- B. The subject in Romans is improving spiritual qualities. That is **good**. The subject of Phillipians is also regarding spiritual qualities. What things can we do?
 1. Wrong: Wall Street deals, impress girls (or guys), hit home runs become Tiddly Wink Champion
Right: Spiritual Things.
 2. *Divide class into groups and have them name some spiritual things as opposed to physical things. Discuss the difference in the two and how we can do the spiritual list for the rest of the class. The following lists will give an idea if students can't get started.*

- Spiritual:
1. trust in God
 2. study God's word
 3. teach others about Christ
 4. do things for the glory of God
 5. suffer abuse unjustly for our belief
 6. cry over a lost soul/pray for a missionary

- Physical:
1. desire great riches
 2. get Ph.D. degree
 3. train for marathon
 4. seek praise and credit for everything that is done
 5. carry a grudge and get even
 6. watch TV while youth visitation meets and works

Note: The physical is not always necessarily wrong,
but the spiritual is always right.

LESSON 2: WHAT DID PAUL DO?

Introduction: The purpose of this introduction is to show that Paul has earned the right to make such a bold statement as Phil. 4:13. The three examples are given to help students understand that it is better to be given directions by someone who knows the situation.

Example 1: “Suppose it is your job to clean out sludge pits. Would you rather have a boss that had done it before, or one who had not?” (This is intentionally disgusting. Students should realize that a boss who had experience would be more sympathetic, would understand the situation, might help, etc. *Encourage discussion.*)

Example 2: “What if it was your job to deliver news of the death of loved ones?” (This is mentally/emotional disturbing rather than physically. It is still better to have a boss who has experienced it. Help students discuss to this conclusion. Why is it better?)

Example 3: “What if you were the main person involved in the manufacture of brakes for Greyhound buses?” (This is a very responsible position and you don’t want a novice telling you how to do it. Students discuss - why is an experienced boss better.)

Summary: *Ask class to draw their own conclusions.* A boss should earn the right to be boss. The same is true for anyone who gives directions. If they haven’t earned the right by experience, then what do they really know and what do they have to offer you? What is the perfect NT example of this? John 13:13-17, Jesus.

I. Students make a list of what Paul did.

A. *Divide the class into discussion groups of 4 or less if possible. Appoint group leaders if they cannot do so quickly.*

1. “Some day some of you may have some of those jobs, but probably not. That doesn’t matter. What does matter is going to Heaven, and I hope we all do. Then we all have the same job and that is to be a Christian. (This makes Christ our “boss”, but we are considering Paul as the one who has written Phil. 4:13.) Paul made quite a statement in Phil. 4:13. Did he ever earn the right to say such a thing? i.e. to give us such expectations?”
2. *Have the students, in their groups, make a list of all the ways they can think of that the apostle Paul proved himself a fit candidate to indicate that we can do ALL things through Christ. Students should be able to develop a good list. Complement them or help them as needed. Paul gives a list in II Cor. 11:23-33. Add also Phil 3:7. Don’t tell students about these until they are through. We see that Paul gave up a bright future as a Jew and then suffered all kinds of abuse for Christ.*

- II. Teacher tells the story.
- A. Use the next few minutes to vividly portray the story of Paul and the kinds of things he went through to the students. Talk about his rejection after his baptism the beatings, imprisonment, stoning, shipwreck, etc. Make it come alive to the students. Use ideas from their lists when possible.
 - B. Follow up by asking, “Now, did Paul have the right to say to us, “I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me”?”
No boss could go further in doing the job he asks us to do. No boss could know more about what the instructions he gives us might mean for us. Our hats must be taken off to Paul. He definitely knew what he was talking about. If he could go through the things he went through, don’t you know we can do what we must do for Christ.
- III. Everyone focuses on the point.
- A. When Paul says something to us for any purpose, he knows what he is talking about.
 - B. Earlier we mentioned an experienced boss being able to comfort, or sympathize, or give proper direction. What about Paul?
 - 1. Paul know the proper comfort for Christians.
II Cor. 4:6-9, Through Christ our problems cannot overwhelm us.
 - 2. Paul knows the proper exhortation for Christians.
Phil. 3:12-15, Keep the finish line in mind and go for it.
 - 3. Paul knows the proper direction for Christians.
Phil. 4:13, The only way we’ll be successful.

LESSON 3: WHAT CAN WE DO?

Introduction: In the first lesson several spiritual activities were compared to some physical activities. This lesson continues the idea of listing several spiritual things so that the student will have a concrete idea of what is meant by “all things” that we should be able to do in Phil. 4:13. It is important for the teacher to help the student gain an understanding of practical ways to apply what Paul is talking about or the verse will be meaningless to them. If little or no time was left for the activity at the close of lesson 1, it would fit well in this lesson.

I. Summarizing

“We have been studying things from God’s word. What good does it do to study God’s word?” (*Student responses*) “When we learn what God’s will is what should we do?” (*Student responses*) “So to have learned what God’s will is and not to do it is not a very good, or even sensible idea, is it? Can you think of a verse that tells us this?” (*Give hints. If students think of the right parable, but not the verse, have them find it.*) The verse is Matt. 7:24-27. “How would you put into your own words that part of God’s will that we have studied this week?” (This is a good time to clarify. A possible answer: **God wants us to understand that if we put our faith in Him, we can overcome the obstacles, difficulties, temptations, problems and etc. that may hinder us and we can be successful Christians. We can do what it takes to be faithful.** Students may have some interesting answers. Encourage them to offer theirs, but make sure that the idea is understood before going on.)

II. Listing

At this point divide the class into discussion groups of 4 or less with group leaders and/or secretaries. Have each group list spiritual activities that we should be doing. Each group should be able to name at least 5. Go from group to group helping if necessary. If any groups are just not cooperating, example 1 below is one you might want to give early. After a sufficient amount of time have the groups report on their lists. Write down any good ideas they have. Keep them in their groups. Pick one of the ideas to start with and ask the groups to list problems or hindrances that would keep us from doing whatever the activity is. Discuss the problems some if it is helpful to the understanding of the situation. But mostly, now that some problems are definitely known, concentrate on how to overcome those problems. This section should be about 90% class discussion. It should be their problems and their solutions for it to be most meaningful to them. However you should feel free to offer your own ideas and you must guide the discussion to make it worthwhile and to ensure that the goals you have are attained. Following are some ideas to help you with discussion. The students may list some of these ideas, but these will give you some for discussion in case the students are not helpful.)

- A. Participate in Bible class (II Tim. 2:15) (Spiritual Activity)
Not prepared (Problems)
Not paying attention, easily distracted
Timid, shy
Schedule weekly study time (Solutions)
Make priority list and follow it
Force yourself to comment and/or answer questions
Realize: Pleasing God is more important than anything
- B. Become Christian (Acts 22:16)
Don't feel the need
Friends aren't interested, are discouraging
Family doesn't appear to care
Study about eternity and Jesus' love
Try to be an influence to friends (Why let them be lost?)
Seek new friends, talk to family
Make plan for life that goes past the grave
- C. Attend church services (Heb. 10:25)
Family doesn't go
Don't feel the need
Some people make fun
Christians would be happy to give ride
Work on family attitude
Do you desire to please people or God?
Study to understand God and his love
- D. Be a good influence
Others are a negative influence on us instead
Don't like to make waves
Christians must take a stand, others must know it
Who will show the way if Christians don't?
Learn to be tactful in what we say or do
- E. Teach others about salvation
Bashful
Don't know enough, or how
Don't have time
Will you let others be lost because you are shy?
Study (remember the priority list?)
Go with others who have experience
Make time for those things that are more important
We have time for the things we want time for
- F. Face temptation
It looks good
We're gullible
If sin didn't look good, no one would sin
What is the result?
Study, think of God and his love, eternity
- G. Persevere

LESSON 4: HOW DO WE DO IT?

Introduction: (When Paul said he could do all things it is an indication that all Christians can do all things the same way that Paul could. How was Paul able to do all things? He tells us, “through Christ.” Christ must be the source of our strength. Is so, we can do all things spiritually necessary to be faithful and have a home in Heaven.)

“This week we have been studying Paul’s statement in Phil. 4:13: “I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me.” What does Paul mean by ‘all’ things? (*Student response*) Now, how is it that Paul can do all things? (*Lead students to answer, “through Christ strengthening him.”*) Then if we want to do all things as Paul was able to do, what must be true for us? (*Students – Christ must strengthen us.*) Today, we want to see what is involved in Christ strengthening us.”

- I. Christ only works on those who seek him. (Luke 13:34)
(Divide the class into groups of 4 or less,
or have each student make their own list.)
 - A. How can we seek Christ? – prayer, study, meditation
 - B. Each one of us must make Christ the center of our life.
(Was Christ important to Paul?)
 - C. “What is your decision?” (Help students decide to place Christ at the center of their lives by looking at alternatives.)
 1. Christ at center – Heaven
 2. Christ not at center – ultimate despair
 - D. (With students either in groups, or with whole class working together with teacher as group leader-) “Let’s outline a plan for seeking Christ, making him the center of life.”
(Possible plan- students should develop)
 1. morning: meditation and prayer to start the day
 2. daytime: prayer
 3. evening: Bible study, prayer
 4. night: prayer
 5. All of these should be kept short enough that they are not painstaking to accomplish, but long enough to be worthwhile. Success will come most readily when goals are realizable.
 6. Must have the determination to stick with the plan until it becomes habitual.
- II. How is Christ able to strengthen us?
 - A. How is food able to strengthen us? (We are speaking of good food.)
 1. (*Get students to discuss and come up with a process similar to: It goes into the body through digestion, carries out body processes through biological methods.*)
 2. How often should a person eat good food? (Every day)

- B. What is the difference in Christ and good food? (For the purpose of this illustration, only that the food goes into the (physical) body through biological processes and Christ should go into the (spiritual) mind through spiritual (intellectual) processes.
- C. Then we need a daily dose of Christ just as we need our daily (good) food. We must allow him to become intimately involved with our mind (through self-surrender and allow him to carry out our spiritual operations as He knows what is best for us. (We will have to feed on His word.)
- D. (The teacher might spend some time comparing what bad food does to the body, and compare that with evil influences on the soul. (Bad food is the same as good food except that it hampers proper body operations instead of helping to carry them out properly. What about bad spiritual food?)

Lessons For Evening Speakers.

Please note that the following outlines are provided to suggest a way of presenting the topic. If you have other ideas that are more meaningful to you, then by all means use them. We only ask that you attempt to stay within the general area of the outline so that the various ideas we are hoping to present for the students consideration will be covered and so that there will be a minimum of repetition. Thank you so much for helping us.

Sunday –

Monday – Spiritual vs. Fleshly

1. What is the difference?
2. Perils of the flesh, rewards of the spirit.
3. Christian challenge: Uplift spiritual, subdue fleshly.

Tuesday – God's Heroes Don't Quit

1. Joseph, thrown down repeatedly, kept coming back.
2. David, chased by Saul, Absalom
3. Others (?) Paul
4. What do YOU have to overcome?

Wednesday – What CAN young people do?

1. Put God first in their own lives.
2. Stedfastly influence friends and family.
3. Mature with a focus on God.

Thursday – What Will You Do When You Leave Here?

1. You Can Do ALL Things.
2. You Will Do What You Decide To Do
3. Will you lead, follow or get out of the way? Which type are you?