

CHRIST'S STRENGTH IN THE BELIEVER

PLEASE do not read these comments until you have prayed and read the Bible for this lesson to learn what the Holy Spirit wants you to teach your students. Then let Him guide you in using these notes. Follow this procedure to meet the needs of your students.

Lesson Aim: Show how Christ's strength can help us live a life that pleases God.

Suggestion: Have the students read the Scriptures and answer the questions in the student lesson. Insert questions that fit your lesson aim for class discussion. Use the ones below where appropriate.

Introduction: The demands of God to live a life that pleases Him are too difficult for us to do it alone. We need His strength to do it. That is what Christ promises to give to us when we ask Him to help us. Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13)

What are some ways that Christ's strength can be used in our Christian lives?**1. We can settle personal differences with other Christian. 4:1-3**

Two women in the church at Philippi needed to settle their personal differences, unite together, and stand fast with the Lord in His work (4:1; 1 Cor 15:58). Satan was using them to divide the church and hurt the work of the Lord in that city. They needed the strength of the Lord to humble themselves so they could work together and keep the church strong. We may disagree on some issues, but we must love one another and work together to win lost souls to Christ and build them up in the most holy faith. We need the strength of the Lord to do this.

2. We can keep God's commands and receive His blessings. 4:4-7

Believers are given four commands to keep, which will provide them with four blessings. These commands are difficult to keep, but not impossible, if we depend upon the Lord to strengthen us. We are commanded to rejoice in the Lord always, to show gentleness to all people, to be anxious about nothing, to make our requests known to God about everything. Although the blessings are not named, they are not difficult to figure out. If we rejoice "always," we will have a bright outlook on life and will be able to accept God's will for our lives. If we are gentle to "all" people, we will have the good pleasure of God in our lives and the good will of decent people. If we are anxious about "nothing," it will remove all our worries so we enjoy God's provisions. If we pray to God about "everything," we will have indescribable peace from God guarding our hearts and minds (vv. 6-7).

3. We can overcome bad thoughts with good thoughts. 4:8-9

There two more commands for believers to obey. First, they are commanded to think about wholesome things. Second, they are told to live by these thoughts. We will need the strength of Christ to keep both commands. The order of these commands is logical: whatever we think is how we live (Prov. 4:23; 23:7). Therefore, we need to transform our minds from worldly thoughts and think on godly thoughts found in God's Word (Rom. 12:2). There are eight kinds of thoughts that are allowable for a believer's mind (v. 8). When these thoughts fill our minds, the God of peace will be with us to give us His peace (v. 9).

4. We can be content in whatever circumstance God puts us. 4:10-20

Paul rejoiced in the gift that the church had sent to him because it would add to their reward and God would supply all their need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus, As for him, he had learned to be content with little or much, with food or no food, with supplies or no supplies. His circumstances could not destroy his contentment because it rested in the strength of Christ (vv. 11-13). We need to learn more and more of Paul's contentment. We need to be satisfied in whatever situation God puts us. We can do this by the strength of Christ.