

I Can Do All Things Through Christ Jesus

Jessica Scott

1305

NT321

12-5-22

I Can Do All Things Through Christ Jesus

There are astonishing things that we can do through Christ who makes us stronger. In Philippians 4:13, the Apostle Paul stated that “I can do all things through Christ that strengthens me.” This Bible verse is all over the place, from pastors to athletes everyone loves quoting this verse. Possibilities are that most of us have seen, read, and heard this Bible verse written multiple times. However, in spite of the popularity of this verse, only a few individuals actually comprehend the meaning of the verse and the manner in which it applies to their lives. “I can do all things through Christ” is generally understood to mean that one can fulfill any desire one sets their mind to. This popular verse is frequently distilled to basically a personal motivation to overcome something difficult. However, Apostle Paul never had that in mind when he wrote this verse. This interpretation misses the intensity of what this verse is truly conveying. This essay focuses on revealing the real meaning of Apostle Paul’s words “I can do all things through Christ,” their context, and how they essentially apply to our lives.

After Paul tells his audience that he has gone through both affluence and poverty, he writes these famous words, “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.” We have to read a Bible passage or verse in context if we really want to know what it means. One cannot abandon all the surrounding verses, take them away from their original purpose, and yet expect to comprehend them. Just before Apostle Paul says these words, he narrates some of the various situations he has found himself in. He has been well off and in need, he has been well-fed and hungry, and despite the nature of his circumstances, Paul has learned to be content. He is not comparing these situations to imply that one situation is better than the other, he is utilizing these extremes for the purpose of highlighting that he comprehends the extent of human experience, and he comprehends the hardships associated with each position. Paul is not an affluent

individual telling a poor individuals to be happy with what they have or the other way around, and he is not encouraging hungry individuals to get over it. He is saying that one can learn to be content in spite of what their circumstances are. He knows this because he has tested and proved it.

Bolinger (2022) contends that Paul transformed from a luxurious life as an individual in fame in Jewish circles to one of the most despised men among Israelite leaders and in Rome.¹ He was abandoned by his friends while in prison, he got stoned and received unlawful punishments. Although he survived, the thorn in his flesh may likely have been the result of the damage of being hit by heavy rocks. In these situations, Paul exhorts the Philippians to join him in believing in his Savior and asserts that he can do all things through Christ. Jesus Christ can provide us with the strength to put up with what we otherwise could not be able to endure through our own means. He gives us the power to keep going during difficult seasons of life and trials, above all when oppressed for His sake. Jesus Christ also gives us power through joy and contentment, in spite of our situations. Christ reminds his followers of their eternal hope. Despite what happens to the followers of Jesus here on earth, they have something more greater awaiting them when they reach the end of their race (Hebrews 12).

As Christians, we should redirect our thinking. It is not what we cannot do, but our miscomprehension of the context of Apostle Paul's words. Even though it is all extremely good and well to incorporate this verse in our daily lives, we need to recognize the situations in which Paul writes. Paul originates from a place of hunger, homelessness, and hardship, from which he states that he can persevere because of Jesus Christ.

¹ Bolinger, "3 Ways Christians May Be Misusing 'I Can Do All Things through Christ Who Strengthens Me,'" 2021.

One of the interpretations of this verse in our lives today is that it is for the losers. Paul did not write these words from a place of success but penned them while he was in prison. From a worldly standpoint, Paul had nothing. Paul's basic needs were not even being met and were a loser. Paul's words are neither a war cry to go and triumph over nor an inspiration to achieve success athletically, academically, or professionally. Philippians 4:13 is not composed to challenge strong individuals to transform into even greater people. It is rather composed to inspire those that find themselves in difficult situations and the weak. The meaning of this verse is for those who are struggling. It is an encouragement and a reminder that despite the fact that life may be challenging, God is always with us. One can overcome anything that life throws their way since God is with them.

An additional application of these Apostle Paul's words in our lives today is that it challenges us to be content. Paul was content in a damp and dark prison cell without enough food to eat since he had what mattered most, Christ. Paul's words challenge followers of Christ to put everything in the right perspective. Even though we often think we might require all these other things in order to be content and joyful, Paul challenges us to see the joy from a different perspective. All Christians actually require is Jesus. It should be one of the main applications of this verse in our lives today. We should be content in Christ alone.

Apostle Paul's words are also a reminder to Christians to keep their eyes on what is most important. It is a reminder for them to keep their eyes on Christ. Poor (2022) argues that "it would be understandable if Paul were to complain about his current conditions. After all, he's in jail for preaching the Word of God.² No one would blame him if he complained a little bit." Rather than looking at his present situation, he kept his eyes on Christ, which kept him going. He

² Poor, "The Real Meaning of Philippians 4:13 (I can do all things through Christ)," 2021.

comprehended that he could accomplish all things through Christ, including being content in a prison cell. This challenges Christians to keep their eyes on the proper place. We tend to forget that Jesus is in control and lose sight of Him when distracted and begin concentrating on all the difficulties around us. However, we can overcome whatever it is that is in front of us when we keep our eyes on Christ. As followers of Christ, we should not forget that we are in total need of Christ, and it is only through Him that we gain our strength. Individuals fail whenever they lose sight of that and attempt to power through on their own.

Brown (2022) argues that we can love across our differences through Christ. Paul believed that Euodia and Syntyche could love across their differences.³ Apostle Paul believed that these two sisters could do just like Jesus had taught, that is, love your enemies and pray for those who oppress you. Paul had the belief that they could forbear each other. And just like the way Christ had forgiven them, they could forgive one another if one had a complaint against the other. This teaches us that we can love across our differences in Jesus Christ. And we will have differences.

In conclusion, Paul's words, "I can do all things through Christ," are frequently utilized by Christians to give themselves positive thoughts so they can accomplish what they want. Only a few people understand what the verse actually means. This understanding sells these popular statements short. Apostle Paul's statements are referring to the capability of going through hardships and trials when we keep our eyes on Christ. It is good to always remind ourselves that whatever we are going through or encountering in life, God is with us.

Bibliography

³ Brown, "I Can Do All Things Through Christ," 2022.

Hope Bolinger. 2021. "3 Ways Christians May Be Misusing 'I Can Do All Things Through Christ Who Strengthens Me.'" <https://www.crosswalk.com/faith/bible-study/ways-christians-may-be-misusing-i-can-do-all-things-through-christ-who-strengthens-me.html>

Jeffery Curtis Poor. 2021. "The Real Meaning of Philippians 4:13 (I Can Do All Things Through Christ)." <https://www.rethinkknow.org/philippians-4-13-meaning/>

Tim Brown. 2022. "I Can Do All Things Through Christ."
<https://www.preachingtoday.com/sermons/sermons/2005/august/239.html>

Paper Outline

I. Introduction

- A.** In spite of the popularity of Apostle Paul's words in Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ that strengthens me," only a few people understand these words and how they apply to their daily lives.
- B.** People's interpretation of the verse misses the intensity of the message being actually conveyed by the verse.

Thesis: People need to understand the real meaning of Apostle Paul's words "I can do all things through Christ," their context, and how they essentially apply to our lives.

II. Body Paragraph 1

Topic Sentence: We have to read a Bible passage or verse in context if we really want to know what it means.

- A. Minor Point 1:** Paul experienced both good and bad circumstances in his life and learned how to be content in spite of the situation.
- B. Minor Point 2:** We can learn to be content despite the circumstances we are in, as demonstrated by Apostle Paul.

III. Body Paragraph 2

Topic Sentence: that Paul transformed from a luxurious life as an individual in fame in Jewish circles to one of the most despised men among Israelite leaders and in Rome.

- A. Minor Point 1:** Christ can provide us with the strength to put up with what we otherwise could not be able to endure through our own means.
- B. Minor Point 2:** Christ gives us the power to keep going during difficult seasons of life and trials, above all when oppressed for His sake

- C. Minor Point 3:** Despite what happens to the followers of Jesus here on earth, they have something more greater awaiting them when they reach the end of their race.

IV. Body Paragraph 3

Topic Sentence: As Christians, we should redirect our thinking. It is not what we cannot do, but our miscomprehension of the context of Apostle Paul's words.

- A. Minor Point 1:** Philippians 4:13 is composed to inspire those that find themselves in difficult situations and the weak.

- B. Minor Point 2:** Paul's words are an encouragement and a reminder that despite the fact that life may be challenging, God is always with us.

V. Body Paragraph 4

Topic Sentence: Paul's words can be applied in our lives today to challenge us to be content as he was content in a damp and dark prison cell without enough food to eat since he had what mattered most, Christ.

- A. Minor Point 1:** Paul's words challenge followers of Christ to put everything in the right perspective.

- B. Minor Point 2:** All Christians actually need is Jesus.

VI. Body Paragraph 5

Topic Sentence: Apostle Paul's words are also a reminder to Christians to keep their eyes on what is most important, that is, Jesus Christ.

- A. Minor Point 1:** We tend to forget that Jesus is in control and lose sight of Him when distracted.

B. Minor Point 2: We can overcome whatever it is that is in front of us when we keep our eyes on Christ.

VII. Body Paragraph 6

Topic Sentence: We can love across our differences through Christ.

A. Minor Point 1: Paul believed that Euodia and Syntyche could love across their differences as Christ had taught us to love our enemies and pray for those who oppress us.

VIII. Conclusion

A. Restatement of Thesis: In spite of the popularity of Apostle Paul's words in Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ that strengthens me," only a few people understand these words and how they apply to their daily lives.

B. Next Steps: It is good to always remind ourselves that whatever we are going through or encountering in life, God is with us.