Scheduled for study Oct. 14-20, 2019. When Paul says, "I can do all things through Christ ..." he isn't talking about superhuman feats of strength. Becoming a follower of Christ means our life has to change dramatically, and Paul says that through Christ all those changes are possible.

Day 1

Philippians 2:12-13 - Do we "work out [our] own salvation"?

Record your impressions in your journal or notebook. When was the last time you read the spiritual impressions you have recorded during your study of the New Testament? It might be helpful to review the promptings you've been receiving.

Too often in Christianity as a whole, people treat principles of salvation as standalone objects. What they ignore is that nothing in the process of salvation stands by itself. Every part of our salvation either affects or is affected by the other parts of salvation. This concept of works vs. grace is no different than any other part of our path to salvation or exaltation.

It is true that we are saved by grace. Without grace there can be no salvation, for we are not capable of saving ourselves, no matter how much effort we put into changing ourselves to make ourselves acceptable to God. It is just as true that no amount of grace can save us if we sit around and do nothing to change ourselves for the better. The point here is that our salvation is based, in the end, on what we become, not what we do.

To become the kind of people who are worthy to enter the Celestial kingdom and be comfortable with Celestial people, requires that we do everything in our power to improve ourselves and gain the abilities and virtues that Celestial people have. But this cannot be done without God's grace. Grace is only able to save us when we put forth the effort to become better people. It is the grace that strengthens us and enables the necessary changes to be made. Without grace our works are worthless; just as without works God's grace is useless. Both are required to save us.

Faith is required for our salvation, and faith is a principle of action. Faith is like a muscle, it must be exercised or used. That means we have to go out and practice the principles of kindness the commandments teach us. By learning to live by these principles God's grace enables us to make the permanent changes we need to become more Christlike. Faith is our works in action. Faith is how we demonstrate our hope that the grace of God can save us.

Day 2

Philippians 3:5-14 - The gospel of Jesus Christ is worth every sacrifice.

Record your impressions in your journal or notebook. When was the last time you read the spiritual impressions you have recorded during your study of the New Testament? It might be helpful to review the promptings you've been receiving.

In this life there are few who will be able to claim both the treasures of the earth AND the treasures of heaven. The vast majority of us will have to choose one or the other. Claiming the treasures of the earth is usually all consuming, and unfortunately, only temporary. The treasures of the earth can be stripped away at any time, and cannot possibly last beyond the grave. Yet despite these drawbacks, so many pursue them anyway, for their vision only goes to death's door, and no farther.

The treasures of heaven are free of cost, and only require our humility, devotion, and faith. And once granted, the testimonies we receive, the grace we are granted, and the conversion which is ours, is ours for eternity. The difference between the seeing our way to earn the treasures of the earth and the treasures of heaven is that when we set our sights on the treasures of heaven we gain the ability to see things with an eternal perspective. We start to see and comprehend that we truly are in mortality for but a moment. We begin to realize that true happiness comes from God, not Mammon or the

world. True happiness is everlasting, while earthly happiness depends on circumstances.

Take a marker to a whiteboard (or pencil to paper) and make two lists. In the first list, under the title of Earthly Glory write all the rewards you can think of that are a result of earthly riches. Now list all the sacrifices you have to make to get those rewards. Finally, list the duration and enduring qualities of those rewards. Once you have done that, make a second list. Title this one Eternal Riches. Now record all the rewards you can think of that come with eternal riches as taught in the gospel of Christ. List the sacrifices you have to make in order to gain those rewards, and finally state how long you get to keep those rewards.

What did you learn from that activity? Is one significantly better than the other? I dare say the answer will depend on whether you believe there is such a thing as eternal rewards. If you don't believe there really is such a thing, then there really is only earthly rewards. If that is the case then it really doesn't matter what sacrifices you have to make to earn them, because they are your only choice. It is either go for them or live without them, but either way you need to make peace with your choice.

If you do believe there are eternal rewards available to you, and your list shows they are clearly superior to anything the world can offer you then what sacrifice in this life is too great? What should you be willing to lay on the altar of sacrifice in order to obtain such marvelous blessings? Is there anything that should be too much to ask of you in order to obtain such blessings?

Day 3

Philippians 4:1-13 - I can find joy in Christ, regardless of my circumstances.

Record your impressions in your journal or notebook. When was the last time you read the spiritual impressions you have recorded during your study of the New Testament? It might be helpful to review the promptings you've been receiving.

My comments are based on Elder Kyle S. McKay's talk in Conference entitled, "The Immediate Goodness of God." I highly recommend you listen to it again.

The main question in my mind is why we turn to Christ in the first place. What is it we expect God to do for us when we turn to Him in prayer? For most of us I think it is safe

to say we are seeking relief from something. By relief I mean a stopping of whatever it is that is causing us discomfort or pain. We want our financial burdens to be taken away, or our relationships to be healed, or our addictions to vanish. The list is long and complicated. But that is not what God does for us. We are not here on earth to see if we can manufacture a smooth sail through mortality.

In Abraham 3:24-26 God tells Abraham our reason for coming to earth.

> 24 And there stood one among them that was like unto God, and he said unto those who were with him: We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell;
>
> 25 And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them;
>
> 26 And they who keep their first estate shall be added upon; and they who keep not their first estate shall not have glory in the same kingdom with those who keep their first estate; and they who keep their second estate shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever.

We are here in mortality to be proven to see if we are still willing to be obedient to God's commandments, even during the most trying times mortality can throw at us. We must contend with not just the vagaries of our fellow man, and all the harm and hurt we cause each other, but our own natural desires we refer to as the desires of the flesh, the carnal man. This means we are besieged on all sides at times from both within and without.

When we go to God to pray for relief, we often have it in the back (or front) of our mind that it would be nice to have the trial removed altogether. Somehow this is supposed to solve the problem. But the problem is not the trial, but how we are handling it. This proving process we call mortality is supposed to help us grow into strong and mighty servants, courageous and valiant in pursuing good through any adversity.

God knows that removing adversity and trials would only cause us harm, so when we turn to Him for comfort or relief, His immediate goodness is in providing us with support, not a reprieve. He sends us peace, assurance, calm, and gives us hope in a better tomorrow. He directs us as to how we can proceed when we feel lost, or He might even send us help in the form of kindly disposed people who are willing to weep and mourn with us and extend to us the comfort we need to carry on until the sun comes out and we can see more clearly on our own.

This is what is meant by the immediate goodness of God. Think of Christ in the garden of Gethsemane. Jesus suffered more than any of us can comprehend, and when he turned to God for "relief" praying that the cup might be taken from him so he didn't have to hurt so much, what was God's answer? Did he make the hurting stop? No, He sent an angel to Jesus to comfort him and help strengthen him so he could complete the mission he came to perform for all of God's children.

Our Father in Heaven knows that nothing in mortality will scar us beyond what He and Christ can heal. When we are faced with trauma, heartache, pain, or loss, God is sympathetic, empathetic, and fully understanding of what we are going through. He has been here and done it all before us. But now he has moved on and understands perfectly that what we experience in mortality will build us into celestial people who are capable of creating eternal families and ruling over an ever expanding universe. So when we seek Him out in our darkest hours, we need to realize that we are usually required to pass through the full scope of our suffering, but we need not do it alone. His immediate goodness will comfort us, and give us a broader vision of what lies ahead, or in ways we can turn our eyes from ourselves and find peace and happiness by serving others instead of only looking at our own wants. It is all part of helping us keep our second estate, our time in mortality.

Day 4

Colossians 1:12-23 - My faith is founded on Jesus Christ.

Record your impressions in your journal or notebook. When was the last time you read the spiritual impressions you have recorded during your study of the New Testament? It might be helpful to review the promptings you've been receiving.

I hope I stand alone in my next thought, but I fear not. Too often, when we think of Jesus, we see a simple carpenter who wandered the dusty roads of Israel teaching the people how to live peaceably with each other. To view Jesus through this lens is like picking up a small clod of dirt at the top of Mt. Everest, and thinking we comprehend the full scope and grandeur of the largest mountain in the world.

There is so much more to who and what Jesus of Nazareth is than the short passages we read about in the New Testament. As you study the Pearl of Great Price, the Old Testament, the Book of Mormon, and the Doctrine and Covenants, collecting all the

references to Jesus as the Christ, only then will you begin to grasp the magnitude of his scope and mission in the eternities. And even with all our current scriptures, we see but a small window on his greatness.

Jesus became the first spirit child of God, and is greater than all of God's other children put together. His capacities are beyond our ability to comprehend them. His goodness, righteousness, love, and loyalty approaches that of God, Himself. Even as a spirit child of our Father in Heaven Jesus was able to achieve godhood. Under the direction of our Father he created everything we see in the universe around us, every star, planet, solar system, and galaxy. And there are billions and billions of them. The amount of time and effort required for such a project boggles the mind.

Christ's personal glory is in and through all things. They operate through his personal light and truth, for without his light they would cease to function and operate within their sphere of creation. God gave Jesus this responsibility because Jesus was to be the Savior and Redeemer for all of God's children. Jesus created not just our earth for our time in our mortal probation, but he has already created all the star systems and made them ready for habitation for when we are judged and sent to our glory.

If being the creator is not enough, he submitted himself to the will of our Father and came to earth to live a hard life of a transient, someone with no place to call home. For thousands of years he had guided and shepharded God's children as the great Jehovah of the Old Testament. Now it was his turn to come to earth as a mortal and work through the atoning sacrifice that was needed to make repentance possible for all the rest of us who couldn't save ourselves. In every thing and in every way he showed us the example of how we are to live our lives and the attitudes we need to learn to become like him.

Why do we need to become like him? Because he is like our Father, and that is our goal, to become like God one day. So we follow the example of our elder Brother and do as he has commanded us to do. We submit ourselves to him as he submitted himself to God. When this mortal time has come to an end we will be judged by Jesus and rewarded according to how we have behaved ourselves. If we have learned to become more like him we will be rewarded with honor and glory with him in the eternities. If we haven't then we will be given eternal glory, but it will be far short of that which will be given to those who put their faith in Christ and followed his example.

The point of this passage in Colossians is that Jesus is our one and only path back home. There is no other way, nor means by which exaltation with God is possible. So we live like the Christ, honoring the Father in all things, praying to Him, and expressing gratitude at all times to Him in the name of Jesus, our Redeemer.

Day 5

Colossians 3:1-17 - Disciples of Jesus Christ become "new" as they live His gospel.

Record your impressions in your journal or notebook. When was the last time you read the spiritual impressions you have recorded during your study of the New Testament? It might be helpful to review the promptings you've been receiving.

The symbolism of baptism is the burying of the old person of the world, along with all their worldly pursuits and pleasures, and the rising from the grave as a new person in Christ. This means that we should be learning to be less and less as we were before baptism, and more and more like Christ after our baptism.

Paul reminds the Saints in this passage of what some of the worldly desires are, then he lists those attributes that demonstrate that someone has cast off the natural man and become more of a Saint through their worship of God. The process starts by us having to give up those habits that are controlled by the flesh, anger, lust, desires, jealousy, envy, etc. The more of those we are able to become free from, the more we can focus on acquiring better desires, better attitudes, etc. One modern apostle referred to this process as being able to move from sins of commission, the things we do that are wrong, to a higher way of living, getting rid of sins of omission, the things we fail to do that we should.

An example of this process of going from commission to omission is someone who forsakes pornography or a love for worldly pleasures, and learns instead to find time for service of others and loving others. While the person was still "of the world" their own wants and needs took priority, but after they give them up they are able to focus more on others, turning their hearts outward to care for the needs of others before worrying about their own desires. This is how we begin to experience charity, the pure love of Christ, which is caring for others before caring for self.

Scripture Study and Home Evening

Philippians 2:14-15 - How can we "shine as lights in the world"?

In the scriptural context a light is an example. So in this context how are we shining as lights in the world? What example is Paul referring to?

I have added a verse to this passage. Philippians 2:14-16 says,

> 14 Do all things without murmurings and disputings:
>
> 15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;
>
> 16 Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

Jesus always taught peace, unity, cooperation, tolerance, forgiveness, in short, everything that is the opposite of discord and strife. Those who have made covenants with God should be practicing being peacemakers, being law-abiding citizens, supportive of their local civic leaders. They should be model citizens. Not only that, but they should be the best neighbors and volunteers in their community. This is how we act as a light to those around us. We actually live our religion, and our examples show others that our way of life brings happiness. This is what brings more people to the gospel of Christ than anything else. People will listen to your testimony more readily when they admire you and are your friend.

Here is a PDF of this week's study material.
Print it out for greater convenience in your studies.

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