

The letters that Paul wrote to the Christians at Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi and Colossae

**Galatians, Ephesians,
Philippians and Colossians
from the Holy Bible**

Plain English Version

The letters that Paul wrote to the Christians at Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi and Colossae (Plain English Version)

Translated for speakers of Australian Indigenous languages

Illustrations on pages 45 and 51 by Gordon Thompson

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The letter that Paul wrote to the Christians at Galatia

(The book in the Holy Bible called Galatians)

About this letter

Paul wrote this letter about 2,000 years ago, about 20 years after Jesus went back to heaven, and it is now in the Holy Bible.

Paul wrote this letter to the Christians that were living in Galatia country. At that time Galatia was a part of the country that is now called Turkey.

God sent Paul to lots of countries to tell people about Jesus, and one of them was Galatia (see Acts 16:6). A lot of the Galatia people believed in Jesus and became Christians. Most of those new Christians were not Jews. (You see, Jesus belonged to the Jewish nation, so he was a Jew, and so were Peter, and Paul, and a lot of the other Christians at that time.)

After Paul left Galatia, some Jewish people went there and told the new Christians, "You can't be a friend of God unless you become like us Jews. You men have to let somebody do a young man operation on you, and you all have to follow the Jewish law."

The new Christians listened to those Jews and started to go wrong. Paul heard about it and it upset him, so he wrote this letter to get them to go the right way.

This letter has some very important messages for us today. It shows us that we need to trust Jesus and let the Holy Spirit control us, and not listen to anyone that says we have to go a different way.

Chapter 1

¹I am Paul, and this letter is from me. I'm sending this letter to you Christians in the churches in Galatia country.

I am Jesus's special worker, but it wasn't a man that gave me the power to be Jesus's special worker. It wasn't any mob of people. It was Jesus Christ, and God our father. They sent me out to tell everybody about Jesus. You see, God is really powerful. People killed Jesus, but God made him alive again.

²Your Christian friends that are with me here, they all say *hello* to you.

³I'm asking God our father, and Jesus Christ our leader, to be good to you, and to make you feel happy and quiet inside yourselves. ⁴You know, we all did bad things, but Jesus took the payback for all of us. He died instead of us, so now he can save us from this bad world that we live in. That is what God, our father, wanted him to do. ⁵So everyone has to say that God is very good and very great. We have to keep on saying it all the time, for ever. Yes, that's right.

Don't listen to the wrong story

⁶⁻⁷But now listen, you mob. You are giving me a big shock. A little while ago I told you the true story about

God, but now you are already listening to other people, and they are turning you away from God. You are forgetting the good news we told you, and now you are listening to a different story that other people are telling you. They say it is good news, but it is not. We told you the proper good news about Jesus Christ. He loves you, and he is very good to you, and God used him to bring you into his family. But that other mob are trying to change this story into another story, and they call it *good news*. But really, there is only one good news story. They are just messing you up. ⁸Listen, don't let anybody teach you a different story that is not the proper good news that we taught you. I pray that God will punish anyone that teaches a different message, no matter who it is, even if it is us, or an angel messenger from the sky. ⁹I will say it again. If anyone teaches a story that is different from the story that we told you, the story that you believed, I want God to properly punish that person.

¹⁰I'm not trying to make people happy with me, I'm trying to make God happy with me. I work for Jesus Christ now, so it doesn't matter to me if some people aren't happy when I talk straight like this.

Paul's message came from Jesus Christ, not from people

¹¹⁻¹²You see, my Christian friends, I want you to understand this. Jesus Christ himself told me that good news. No man or woman made up that message. It came from Jesus himself, and after Jesus told me that message, I told it to you.

¹³It was like this. You have heard what I was like before. At that time, I didn't believe in Jesus. I was a Jew, and I believed everything that the Jews believe. And you know about the things that I did at that time. I made a lot of trouble for the Christian people. I tried hard to stop them from following Jesus.*

¹⁴You see, our Jewish grand-fathers told us the way we Jewish people had to live, and I tried hard to live that way. I was becoming a better Jew than most of my mates, the other Jews that were the same age as me.* ¹⁵But God was good to me, and he picked me to be his worker even before I was born. ¹⁶God wanted me to go and tell the message about Jesus to the people that are not Jews. So he showed Jesus to me, and he told me all about him. Then I believed in Jesus. God told me that message, so I didn't ask anybody else about it.* ¹⁷I didn't go to Jerusalem to talk to the men that were Jesus's special workers before I was. Instead of that, I went straight away to the country called Arabia. Then later I went back to the city called Damascus.

¹⁸Then, 3 years later, I went south to Jerusalem to meet Peter. I stayed there with him for only 15 days.* ¹⁹I didn't see any of Jesus Christ's other special workers, except James, the brother of Jesus. ²⁰What I'm writing to you now is true. And God knows that it is true.

²¹Later I went north to the countries called Syria and Cilicia. ²²But back in Judea country the Christians there

* 1:13 Acts 8:3; 22:4-5; 26:9-11 * 1:14 Acts 22:3 * 1:16 Acts 9:3-6; 22:6-10; 26:13-18

* 1:18 Acts 9:26-30

didn't know me. ²³They only heard people say, "The man that tried to stop us believing in Jesus Christ, the man that gave us bad trouble and hurt us, that man has changed, and now he is telling everyone to believe in Jesus Christ." ²⁴Those Christians heard that I changed, and they were happy, and they thanked God and said that he is really great.

Chapter 2

The church leaders in Jerusalem agreed with Paul

¹⁻²Then, 14 years later, God told me to go to Jerusalem again. This time I went with Barnabas, and I took Titus with me too. We had a little meeting there, with just the important church people, and I told them all about the message that I teach to the people that are not Jews. I wanted to see if they agreed with what I was doing. I didn't want anyone to mess up my work.*

³⁻⁴You see, Titus was there with me, and he is a Greek man, not a Jew. But there were some Jewish men that came secretly into the church in Jerusalem. They reckoned they believed in Jesus, but they didn't really trust him properly. They only came into the church to see what we were doing. And they reckoned that Titus had to follow the Jewish law and have a young man operation. But, you see, if we belong to Jesus Christ, we are free from that law. But those men wanted to force us

* 2:1-2 Acts 11:30; 15:2

to keep that law. ⁵But we didn't listen to them, not even a little bit. We knew they were wrong. So we didn't tell Titus to have that young man operation. You see, we only want to teach the true message about Jesus, and we want you mob to keep on believing that true message.

⁶The Christians in Jerusalem reckon their leaders are important, but it doesn't matter to me if they are important, or not. God treats everybody the same way.* Anyway, those leaders agreed that I was already teaching the true message about Jesus, and that I wasn't leaving anything out. ⁷No, they understood that God gave me a special job, just like he gave Peter a special job. God told me to tell the good news about Jesus to the people that are not Jews. And he told Peter to tell that same good news to the Jewish people. ⁸God gave Peter the power to be his messenger to the Jews. And God gave me the power to be his messenger to the people that are not Jews.

⁹The 3 very important leaders in Jerusalem were James, Peter and John. They heard how much God helped Barnabas and me in our work, and they understood that God gave me this special job. Then they were happy with us, and they shook hands with us to show that they are our friends. They agreed that we had to go to people that are not Jews, and they themselves had to go to the Jewish people. ¹⁰The only other thing that they asked us to do was to help the poor Christians. And that was what I myself really wanted to do.

* 2:6 Deuteronomy 10:17

Paul told Peter, "You are wrong"

¹¹You know, Peter came to the city called Antioch to visit us Christians there. At that time, I had to straighten him out. I stood up in front of everybody, and I said, "Peter, you are wrong."

¹²⁻¹³You see, it was like this. Peter is a Jewish man, and at first he was friends with the Christians at Antioch that were not Jews. He even broke the Jewish rules and ate food with them. But then James sent some other Jewish men to Antioch, and after they got there, Peter changed. Those new men reckoned that every Christian has to become a Jew, and Peter was frightened of them. He went back to following the Jewish rules and stopped eating food with those people that were not Jews. All the other Jewish Christians at Antioch were frightened too, and they did the same as Peter, even though they knew it was wrong. And Barnabas did that too. He stopped eating food with people that are not Jews.

¹⁴I knew that they were not properly following God's true message, so I talked straight to Peter in front of everyone. I said, "Listen, Peter, you are wrong. You are a Jew, but you have been living here like you are not a Jew. So you can't turn around now and agree with this new mob. You can't try to force these people that are not Jews to follow the same rules as us Jews."

God will only say you are all right if you trust Jesus

¹⁵You see, Peter and me, we are Jews, and our Jewish people taught us God's law. We Jews are not like you

people that are not Jews. Nobody taught you mob God's law. ¹⁶And we know that if people just try to follow that law, they can't do it properly, so God will not say they are all right. He will only do that for people that trust Jesus Christ. And we trusted Jesus Christ, so now God will say we are all right. You see, if we believe in Jesus, God will say we are all right, and he will not punish us. If we only think about following the law, we will never do it properly, so he will never say we are all right. Nobody can get God to say they are all right by just following the law.*

¹⁷Yes, we trusted Jesus Christ, and now God says we are all right. But some people might reckon, "You left God's law, so now God will say you are guilty. Jesus got you to do something bad." But they are not right. ¹⁸You see, it is like this. I used to try to follow that law to get God to say that I'm all right, but then I found out that I just have to believe in Jesus. So now I can't go back and think that law will make me all right. If I do that, then I really will be guilty.

Jesus lives in his people

¹⁹⁻²⁰You see, I used to try to follow that law, so that law controlled me. I tried to do everything in that law, but I couldn't do it, so the law said that I had to die. But then I stopped thinking about that law, and I turned around to follow Jesus, and now he controls me, and God makes

* **2:16** Psalm 143:2; Romans 3:20, 22

me properly alive. And you know that Jesus died on a cross. Well, I believe in Jesus, so it is like I died there too. But Jesus is alive now, so I'm alive now too. You see, Jesus lives inside me, right here in my body. And he gets me to do the things that God wants me to do. He is God's son. He loved me, and he gave up his life and died for me. ²¹Yes, God is really good to us, and he really did a lot for us. I will never change my mind about that. You see, we can't become good people by following the law. If we could do that, it would mean that Jesus died for nothing. But, of course, he didn't.

Chapter 3

God gives us his spirit when we believe in Jesus

¹Listen, you mob in Galatia, I told you clearly why Jesus Christ died. It is like I painted a picture of him on the cross for you all to see. But now you are forgetting him. You are so silly, it's like somebody tricked you. ²Think about God's spirit. When did he come into you? Was it when you were trying to follow the law? No, it was when you believed the good news about Jesus. ³You started your Christian life with the power of God's spirit, and now you are trying to keep it going with just your own power. That is really stupid. ⁴You believed the good news about Jesus, so then you went through a lot of trouble. Was that all for nothing? I hope it was not for nothing. ⁵Look, God gives you his spirit and he does great things among you with his power. You see, he doesn't think,

“They are following the law, so I will do powerful things for them.” But he thinks, “They believe the message about Jesus, so I will do powerful things for them.”

We have to believe God, like Abraham did

⁶Do you know the story about Abraham? It was the same for him. God’s book says,

“Abram believed what God said, so God was really happy with him, and told him, ‘You believe me, so now I’m saying you are properly good, like you never did anything wrong.’”*

⁷And from that you can understand that Abraham’s real family are the people that believe God, like Abraham did.* ⁸And, you know, God’s book says what will happen. It says that if anyone believes God, God will say they are all right. God will even say that to people that are not Jews. God told Abraham, “I will use your family to do good things for all the nations.”* ⁹So God will be good to everyone that believes him, just like he was good to Abraham when Abraham believed God.

¹⁰You see, God will make trouble for those people that reckon they are all right by just following the law. They think that, in the end, God will agree that they are all right. But they are wrong. God says this in his book,

“You have to keep on doing everything in the law book, or God will punish you.”*

* 3:6 Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:3 * 3:7 Romans 4:16 * 3:8 Genesis 12:3; 18:18

* 3:10 Deuteronomy 27:26

¹¹And we all know that nobody can follow that law properly, so nobody is good enough for God to say they are all right. But God says this in his book,

“If you trust God, he will say you are all right, and you will live.”*

¹²But if somebody reckons they will live just by following the law, they are not trusting God. God also says this in his book,

“A person that does everything in the law will live.”*

¹³But if we try to follow that law, we will not be able to do it properly, and in the end God will punish us. But we don't have to follow that law. You see, God already punished Jesus Christ instead of us. When Jesus died, he paid for us, and he made us free from that trouble that comes from the law. God also says this in his book,

“If people hang somebody from wood to kill them, that person gets trouble from God.”

And that is what they did, they nailed Jesus Christ to that wooden cross, and he got that trouble from God. Jesus Christ died like that to pay for all of us. He bought us for God.* ¹⁴So now the people that are not Jews can get the good things from God that he said he will give to Abraham's family. And if we believe in Jesus Christ, God will give us his spirit, just like he promised.

Nothing can change what God promised

¹⁵My Christian friends, you already know what 2 people do when they agree about something, so I will use that

* 3:11 Habakkuk 2:4 * 3:12 Leviticus 18:5 * 3:13 Deuteronomy 21:23

as a picture. They write it on paper, and both of them sign it, that makes those words very strong. Nobody can say, “Forget it.” Nobody can change it at all. ¹⁶Well, in the same way, nobody can change what God promised to Abraham, and to Abraham’s son, and to all the people in his family. You know, we can read this story in God’s book. God doesn’t say that he promised things to Abraham’s *sons*, like it is talking about a lot of people. No, he is talking about only one man. He says Abraham’s *son*. You see, God promised those things to just one man, and that man is Jesus Christ. * ¹⁷It’s like this. At first God and Abraham agreed together, and God promised something to Abraham. Then the law came 430 years later. But that law can’t stop what God promised in his agreement with Abraham. * ¹⁸You see, God promised to do something good for Abraham before that law came. God gives people good things because he promised those things, not because those people follow that law. And it is like that for us too. God is doing something good for us now, because he promised to be good to us. *

The Jewish people had God’s law until Jesus Christ came

¹⁹But maybe somebody is asking, “Why did God give his law to his people?” This is the answer. His people kept on doing bad things, so God gave them his law. And he wanted them to follow that law until Abraham’s special grand-son came. This was the grand-son that God was

* 3:16 Genesis 12:7 * 3:17 Exodus 12:40 * 3:18 Romans 4:14

talking about a long time ago when he promised good to Abraham. You see, God gave his law like this. He used his angel messengers to tell it to Moses. He was a man that stood in the middle, between God and the people, to help those people listen to God. ²⁰And you know that a man that stands in the middle has to listen to both sides and help sort things out. But when God talked to Abraham, he didn't need anyone to stand in the middle. God himself promised good things to Abraham.

²¹But somebody might say, "God did something wrong. He gave a law that goes against what he promised." That's not right. No way. You see, if a law can give us real life, God would give us that law, and we would follow it and become good people. But no law can do that. ²²God says in his book that everyone does bad things. They can't stop doing those bad things. But if we listen to what God promises us, and if we believe in Jesus Christ, he will save us.

²³⁻²⁵But before Jesus Christ came, the law was like a boss, and like a school teacher for us Jewish people. It controlled us, and it looked after us. God wanted it to be like that, until Jesus came. We waited for God to send him, so that we can trust him. And then Jesus came, and now we trust him, and God says we are all right. So now we don't need that law to be a boss or a school teacher for us any more.

People that trust Jesus are God's kids

²⁶It's like this now. You all believe in Jesus Christ, so you are joined to him, and you are all God's kids. ²⁷You know,

when the church leaders baptised you, they took you through that special washing ceremony to show that you are joined to Jesus Christ, and now it is like you are wearing new clothes. It is like you are wearing Jesus Christ himself. ²⁸You are all joined to Jesus Christ, so you are all joined to each other. You are not different from each other any more. It doesn't matter if you are a Jew or not. It doesn't matter if you are a man or a woman. It doesn't matter if somebody keeps you like a prisoner, or if you are free. None of that matters. You are all joined to Jesus Christ, so you are all the same as each other. ²⁹You belong to Jesus Christ, so you are in Abraham's family, and you will get everything that God promised to Abraham. *

Chapter 4

¹I will tell you a picture story. There was an old man with a young son, and that old man was sick and going to die. He knew that after he dies that little kid will get everything he owns, but the kid will not know how to look after it. So the old man got some people to be the bosses, and they agreed to look after his things until the boy grows up. He told them how old the boy has to be before he can take over and control those things. After they agreed to that, the old man died. Then that kid owned everything that his father left, but that kid couldn't do anything with it. He was no different from

* 3:29 Romans 4:13

his father's workers. ²He had to do what his teachers and the other bosses told him to do, until he grew up. He had to wait for the right time to come, the time that his father told them before he died. ³Now I'll tell you what that picture story is all about. We were like that little kid. We had bosses too. The bad spirits that are the bosses over this world, they were our bosses. ⁴And just like that little kid, we had to wait for the right time to come. Then, when the right time came, God sent his own son from heaven to the earth. He was born from a normal woman into the Jewish nation, and he did what the Jewish law said. ⁵And then he took the payback for all of us, the payback for the bad things we did, and he set us free. So God took us into his family to be his proper kids, and we don't have to follow that law any more. ⁶And when we became God's kids, he sent his son's spirit to live right inside us. His spirit in us gets us to call out to God, "My Dad, you are my father."* ⁷So those bad spirits are not your bosses any more, but you are one of God's kids, and you will get everything that God gives to his kids.

Don't let the bad spirits be your bosses

⁸At first you didn't know God. Those other bad spirits were your bosses. Those spirits are not gods at all, but you couldn't get free from them. ⁹But then you heard about Jesus, and now you do know God, or really, God knows you. So don't turn back now to those weak and

* 4:6 Romans 8:15-17

useless spirits that are the bosses over this world. Don't let them be your bosses again. ¹⁰You think you make God happy if you follow the Jewish ceremonies for special days, or months, or times, or years. But you are wrong. ¹¹I'm worried about you. I worked really hard to help you, and now I think, "Maybe I wasted my time." ¹²Look, my Christian friends, I ask you to free yourselves from that law, just like I did. You see, I used to think I had to follow that law, but now I'm free, just like you.

People in Galatia believed the wrong story, and that hurt Paul

Remember the first time I came to you mob in Galatia. You didn't do anything wrong to me at that time, ¹³even though I was sick. And I told you the good news about Jesus. ¹⁴Yes, I had a problem in my body, and it made me look bad to you. But you didn't turn your back to me or say bad things to me. No, instead of that you were good to me, and you said, "Thank you for coming here." You were really happy with me, like I was one of God's angel messengers, or like I was Jesus Christ himself.

¹⁵But now you are not happy with me any more. What went wrong? Back then you loved me so much that you did everything for me, no matter how hard it was for you. ¹⁶But now something is wrong. I'm telling you what is true, and you don't like it. It looks like you turned around, and now you are calling me your enemy.

¹⁷Some people want you to follow the Jewish law, and they are trying hard to get you to join them. But that will not be good for you. They just want to pull you away

from me. They want you to listen only to them, nobody else. ¹⁸They don't teach you good things, so don't listen to them. But there are other people that teach you good things, and it is good to listen to them. Yes, it is good to listen to those good teachers all the time, not just when I'm there with you. ¹⁹Listen, I got you to believe in Jesus, so you are like my own kids to me. But now you are hurting me a lot. You know, when a woman has a baby, that baby gives her a lot of pain. Well, just like that, you are giving me a lot of pain. And I will keep on feeling this pain until you properly change to be like Jesus Christ. ²⁰You see, I really worry about you. I wish I could go there and be with you now, to talk with you the right way, and help you.

An old story means something new

²¹Listen, you mob that want to follow the Jewish law, you don't really know what that law says. ²²You see, God says in his book that Abraham had 2 sons. The mother of one son was Hagar. She was a worker. She was like a prisoner, and she had to work all the time for Sarah, Abraham's wife, and she got no pay. But Sarah was the mother of the other son. She was always a free woman. *

²³The 1st son was born after Abraham and Sarah talked about it, and then Abraham and the worker got together, and after that she had a son. But it was not God's idea. That 1st son came from the woman that was

* 4:22 Genesis 16:15; 21:2

like a prisoner. But the 2nd son came after God promised to give Sarah a son. That 2nd son came from the free woman.

²⁴That old story teaches us something else too. Those 2 women are like pictures of the 2 agreements that God made with his people. Hagar is like the agreement that God made on the big hill called Sinai, where he gave the Jews their law. That agreement makes people like prisoners. They are not free. They have to work all the time to follow that law. ²⁵Hagar is a picture of the big hill called Sinai in Arabia country, and she is like the city here on earth called Jerusalem, where people have to follow that Jewish law. That city and its people are like prisoners that have to work all the time. They are not free.

²⁶But there is another city called Jerusalem up in heaven. That city's people are free. And we belong to that city, so we are free. ²⁷There will be a lot of people with us in that city. You see, this is what God says in his book,

“Be happy, you woman that hasn't got any kids.

You didn't have to feel all that pain from having a kid.

You can be really happy, and you can shout out loud.

You used to be sad and lonely, but now you will have a

lot more kids than the woman that has a husband.”*

²⁸You see, my Christian friends, you are like Sarah's son. His name was Isaac. God promised to give that son to Abraham and Sarah. Well, just like that, God promises to make you his kids too. ²⁹And think a bit more about

* 4:27 Isaiah 54:1

that story. Remember Ishmael, the 1st son. He was born because of things people did by themselves. But Isaac, the 2nd son, he was born by the power of the Holy Spirit. And you know, at that time, long ago, Ishmael gave Isaac a lot of trouble. And it is like that now too. The people that reckon we have to follow the law, they give the free people a lot of trouble. * ³⁰But God's book says this about Hagar and Ishmael,

“Chuck out the working woman and her son. That working woman's son will never get what God promised to the free woman's son.”*

³¹So I'm telling you, my friends, we are like the free woman's kids. We are not like kids of the woman that had to work all the time like a prisoner.

Chapter 5

Keep trusting Jesus Christ and stay free

¹Listen, Jesus Christ has set us free, and we are properly free. So be strong and stay free. Don't let anyone make you follow that law again. If you do, it's like they make you a prisoner again, because they say you have to do everything that law says.

²Listen. This is me, Paul, writing this, and I'm telling you straight. If you try to be friends with God by having a young man operation, then you are not trusting Jesus Christ, so he will not help you at all. ³I'm telling you

* 4:29 Genesis 21:9 * 4:30 Genesis 21:10

again. If you let somebody do that operation on you, to make you like a Jewish man, then you have to do everything else that is in the Jewish law. ⁴And if you are following the Jewish law to get God to say that you are all right, that shows that you turned away from Jesus Christ, and that you forgot that he is the one that gets God to be good to you. ⁵But listen, we trust Jesus to make us properly good, and the Holy Spirit tells us for sure that Jesus will do that. So we are waiting for him to do it, and we know he will. ⁶You see, if people belong to Jesus Christ, it doesn't matter if they have a young man operation or not. The only thing that matters is that they trust Jesus, and if they do that, they will love God, and they will love other people.

⁷You mob were following Jesus really good, like you were running in a race and were nearly winning it. But then somebody got in your way, so now you are not winning. Somebody stopped you from believing the true story, and you stopped living the right way. ⁸That wrong message did not come from God. No, God is the one that picked you to be his people.

⁹I'll use a picture story about cooking damper. If you put a little bit of baking powder into a big lot of flour, it will make it all swell up. Well just like that, somebody told a few of you the wrong message, and now a lot of you are going wrong.* ¹⁰But I'm trusting God to help you. I reckon you will stop following that wrong way and you

* 5:9 1 Corinthians 5:6

will follow my words. And, as for that man that is getting you all mixed up, I don't know who he is, but I know that God will punish him.

¹¹Listen, my Christian friends, some people reckon that I still tell people to have a young man operation, but that's not right. I teach people that Jesus Christ died on the cross to save them. And those Jews that don't like Jesus, they are always giving me a lot of trouble. That shows you that I don't tell anyone to have a young man operation. If I did tell them to do that, then that Jewish mob wouldn't get angry and give me trouble.

¹²Do you know what I think about those people that are getting you all mixed up? I wish they will cut their own bodies, not yours.

You are free, so love each other

¹³You see, my Christian friends, God picked you to be people that are free from the Jewish law. But you have to be free in the right way. You can't just do anything you like, anything that makes you feel good. Instead of that, you have to love each other and do things to help each other. ¹⁴Just think about that Jewish law. You will follow all of it if you do this, "Love other people just like you love yourself."* ¹⁵Don't be like wild animals. They fight each other and eat each other all the time. If you don't love each other, you are just like them. So be careful. If you fight each other, you might properly finish each other.

* 5:14 Leviticus 19:18

Let God's spirit show you the right way to live

¹⁶So this is what I'm telling you, let God's spirit control your lives, and you will not do any of those bad things that make you feel good. ¹⁷You see, it is like this. We all have a bad part in us that makes us want to do bad things, to make us feel good. And we also have God's spirit in us, and he makes us want to do good things. Those 2 are both in you, and they both want to control you, so they are fighting each other inside you all the time. Whenever you listen to God's spirit and try to do good things, that bad part in you tries to stop you, so you don't do what you really want to do. * ¹⁸But if you let God's spirit control you, you will do good things, and you will not need to have the Jewish law as your boss.

¹⁹You see, everybody knows about the bad things that people do to make themselves feel good. They sleep with people that are not their own wives or husbands, and they do what married people do together. They think about dirty things, and then they do those bad things. They don't try to control their bad thoughts. ²⁰They respect the spirits that are not God. They try to get bad spirits to hurt other people. They hate other people, and they fight other people. They want to be like some other person, and if they can't be, they hate that other person. They get very angry. They want to be more important than everybody else. They will not agree with other people, so they split off into separate groups. ²¹They

* 5:17 Romans 7:15-23

want things that belong to other people. They get drunk. They have wild parties and do all sorts of bad things. Listen, I'm telling you again what I told you before. People that keep on doing those bad things will never be in God's family. They will never get the good things that God will give to the people in his family.

²²But if God's spirit controls people, he gets them to do good things. You know that a good fruit tree always gets good fruit on it. Well, like that, a person with God's spirit does good things. If you let God's spirit lead you, he will get you to love God and to love other people. And you will be happy. And you will feel good and quiet inside yourself so that you will not fight with other people. God's spirit inside you will help you be good to people and not get angry, even if they give you trouble. And he will get you to be friendly to other people, and he will get you to do good things. He will make you the sort of person that other people can trust. ²³He will stop you from thinking you are too important, and he will help you to control yourself. And there is no law to stop anybody doing any of those good things.

²⁴You see, sometimes doing bad things makes people feel good. But people that belong to Jesus Christ stop doing those bad things. That bad part inside them might make them feel like doing those bad things, but they don't take any notice of it any more. It is like they nailed it to a cross and killed it.

²⁵So you and me, we have to live like that too. We live with God's spirit in us now, so we have to do what

God's spirit tells us to do. We have to let him control us. ²⁶We can't reckon we are better than anyone else. We can't do things that make other people angry, so that we start fighting each other. And we can't wish we are like somebody else, and then hate that other person.

Chapter 6

Be good to each other

¹My Christian friends, if you catch one of your own mob doing something bad, the rest of you that listen properly to God's spirit, you have to get that person to stop. Make sure you talk to that person in a good and easy way. Remember, Satan tries to get you to do bad things too, so be careful.

²You have to do this to help each other be strong. You have to help other Christians that have problems. If you do that, you will be doing what Jesus Christ told you to do. ³Don't think that you are too important to help other Christians. If you are not very important, but you reckon you are really important, then you are just tricking yourself. ⁴Each one of you has to think about the things that you do, and see if those things are good, or not good. And if they are good, then you can be happy and feel good about yourself. Don't look at other people and think, "Am I better than them?" ⁵Each of you have to live your own life the right way. If you go wrong, you can't blame anyone else.

⁶By the way, remember this too. If somebody teaches you God's word, you have to share your money, and food, and other good things with that teacher.

⁷Listen, you've got to understand this properly. Nobody can ever trick God, so don't ever think you can do that. I'll tell you a picture story about seeds. A gardener plants different sorts of seeds in his garden, then later he gets the food from the plants that grow from those seeds. Whatever sort of seed he plants, that's the sort of food he gets. ⁸Well, it is like that with us people. Some people do good things, like a gardener that plants the seeds of good plants. And some people do bad things, like a gardener that plants rubbish seeds. Some people only think about what will make them feel good, so they do bad things. Later God will pay them with something bad. They will die. But other people listen to God's spirit and do good things. Later God will do something good for them. God's spirit will let them live with him for ever.

⁹So we have to keep going the right way. Don't get tired of doing good things, and later, God will give you lots of good things. ¹⁰You see, every time we can do something good for somebody, we have to do it. If that person believes in Jesus, they belong to the same family as us, so we really have to do good things for them.

Jesus is the great one

¹¹*Look. I am writing these words with my own hand. See how big my writing is. This message is very important.* ¹²Some Jewish Christians are trying to force you to have that young man operation. They want the other Jews to think that you follow the Jewish law. You see, those other Jews will make trouble for anyone that believes that Jesus died on the cross to save them, and the Jewish Christians don't

want to get that trouble. ¹³But, you know, even the Jews don't follow the Jewish law properly themselves. Those Jewish Christians only want you to get that operation, and be like Jews, so they can tell everybody that they got you to be Jewish. They want to use your bodies like that, to get the other Jews to say they are good.

¹⁴But I never want to say anything to get other people to say I am good. The only good one for me is Jesus Christ. He died for me on the cross. And when I think about him, the things of this world mean nothing to me, and I am nothing to this world.

God changed each of you into a new person

¹⁵You see, it doesn't matter if somebody did a young man operation on you, or not. The most important thing is this. God changed you into a new person. ¹⁶So I'm asking God to be good to all the people that say that the young man operation doesn't matter. I'm asking God to make them happy and quiet inside themselves. I'm asking this for all the people that God picked to be his own, like he picked the Israel people a long time ago.

¹⁷I hope nobody gives me any more trouble after this. I've got scars on my body from stones and whips, and these scars show everyone that I belong to Jesus.

¹⁸My Christian friends, I pray that our leader, Jesus Christ, will be very good to you, and that he will be with you and help you spiritually.

From Paul

The letter that Paul wrote to the Christians at Ephesus

(The book in the Holy Bible called Ephesians)

About this letter

Paul wrote this letter about 2,000 years ago, about 30 years after Jesus went back to heaven, and it is now part of the Holy Bible.

God sent Paul to lots of countries and lots of towns to tell people about Jesus. One of those towns was Ephesus (see Acts 18:19—20:1). It was a big town in the country that is now called Turkey. About 200 years later the enemies of Ephesus broke it down, and today there are just stones and rubbish at that place in Turkey.

At the time when Paul wrote this letter, the people called the Romans were the bosses over lots of nations. The Roman bosses didn't like Paul telling people about Jesus, so they grabbed him and put him in jail. Paul wrote this letter while he was in that jail, in Rome.

In this letter, Paul wrote about how God planned great things for us Christians. He wrote about how Jesus joins all of us together into his family, no matter what nation we belong to, so that we can be strong for God and live the way he wants us to live.

Paul wrote this letter a long time ago, but it still has good messages for us today. So we have to take notice today of those messages that Paul wrote to the Christians at Ephesus.

Chapter 1

¹I am Paul, and this letter is from me. God got me to be one of Jesus Christ's special workers. I'm sending this letter to all God's people there at Ephesus, all you people that follow Jesus Christ properly. * ²I'm asking God our father, and Jesus Christ our leader, to be good to you, and to make you feel happy and quiet inside yourselves.

God gives us a lot

³God is the father of our leader Jesus Christ. God joined us to Jesus, and he gave us every good thing that our spirits need. So we have to thank him a lot.

⁴A long time ago, before God made the world, he picked us to be his people, and he joined us to Jesus Christ, so that now God can say we are good, like we never did anything wrong. He loved us, ⁵so he got Jesus to bring us into his family, and now we can be God's own kids. God did that because it is what he really wanted to do.

⁶So we thank him a lot for that. God loves his son, Jesus, very much, and after we are joined to his son, God is really good to us too. ⁷You know, we were prisoners of the devil, the boss over the bad spirits. But Jesus died for

* 1:1 Acts 18:19-21; 19:1

us, and his blood came out for us. Jesus paid for us with his own blood, and he set us free from the devil. So now God will not punish us for all the bad things we did. Yes, God is very good to us.* ⁸He does all that for us, and he also makes us wise and helps us to think properly. ⁹God planned it all a long time ago, and nobody knew about it. But now he let us know about it. He told us that he is using Jesus to do the things he planned, things that make him happy. ¹⁰And at the right time he will finish doing the things he planned. He will bring everything together, the things in heaven, and the things on the earth. God will bring them all together, and Jesus Christ will be the leader and boss over everything.

¹¹God always does everything that he plans. And a long time ago, he picked us, and planned to join us to Jesus Christ and make us his people. ¹²At first he picked the Jewish people. They were the first to trust Jesus Christ, and to wait for him to save them. God wanted the Jews to be the first people to praise him, and to say that he is really great. ¹³Now it is your turn. You people that are not Jews, you heard that good news that God saves you, and you believed in Jesus Christ. And God gave you his Holy Spirit, just like he promised. His spirit in you is like his sign on you, to show everyone that you belong to him. ¹⁴And now God promises us that one day we will be properly free from doing wrong things. He gives us the Holy Spirit now. It is the first good thing that he gives

* 1:7 Colossians 1:14

us, and it shows us that he will give us other good things, for sure. So we really thank God, and we say that he is really great.

Jesus is the leader of the church

¹⁵Some people told me about you, that you keep on trusting our leader Jesus, and they also told me that you love God's people. They told me those things, ¹⁶so now I never stop thanking God for you, and I always remember to pray for you. ¹⁷I pray to our very great father, the God of our leader Jesus Christ. I pray that his spirit will help you to think properly and show you more about God, so that you will know him better. ¹⁸God promised very great things to his people, and now he has them ready for you. I pray that he will show them to you clearly, like he will switch on a light in your minds, so you can know and be sure about these good things. ¹⁹I pray that you will know that God is stronger and more powerful than anyone, and that he will use his power to do good things for all of us that trust him.

God is very powerful. ²⁰You see, people killed Jesus Christ, but God used his power to make him alive again, and to take him up into heaven. That shows that God is really powerful. Then God put Jesus in the most important place in heaven. He is sitting right next to God, on his right-hand side.* ²¹Jesus is now the biggest boss. He is bigger than all the other bosses everywhere, and

* 1:20 Psalm 110:1

he is bigger than all the spirits everywhere. He is the big boss over everyone in this world now, and he's the big boss over everyone in the world that will come later. Not one of them is stronger than Jesus. Only Jesus has God's power. ²²God made Jesus the boss over everyone. It's like everything is under Jesus's feet. And God made Jesus the leader of his people. Those people are his church.* ²³Jesus lives in God's people, like we are his body, and Jesus is our head. He comes into his people and fills them up. He is the boss over everything, everywhere.*

Chapter 2

God is really good to us

¹You know, in the past you mob did lots of bad things. You couldn't be friends with God. It was like your spirits were dead.* ²You didn't do what God wants, but instead, you always did bad things, just like the other people in this world do. You used to do the things the devil wants. He is the boss over those strong bad spirits that are in the air. That devil is working now inside everyone that will not do what God wants. ³And it wasn't only you mob that were bad. We were all bad. We were like those other people in this world. We did whatever we wanted to do. We did whatever made us feel good. We did whatever our own bodies and minds told us to do. And that made God angry with us, just like he is angry with everyone else.

⁴⁻⁵But God didn't punish us. He felt very sorry for us. He loved us, even though we were doing bad things. It is like our spirits were dead. But he was very good to us, and he saved us. He loved us so much that he made our spirits alive, just like he made Jesus Christ alive. ⁶And God joined us to Jesus, and God lifted us up to sit with Jesus Christ in heaven. ⁷God did those things to show everyone that he is very good to us. He showed those things to people in the past, and he shows them to us now, and he will keep on showing them to everyone for ever. He is showing everyone that he is better than anyone else. He is really good to everyone that belongs to Jesus Christ. ⁸God is really good to you. You believed in Jesus, and God saved you. You didn't do anything good, and you didn't pay God anything, but he saved you anyway. ⁹You can't do things to save yourself. Even if you do a lot of good things, you can't save yourself. No way. It is God that saves you. Nobody can say, "I'm really good, that is the reason why God saved me." Nobody can talk like that. No way. ¹⁰God is the one that made us what we are, and he wants us to do good things. He already has those good things ready for us to do. He turned us into new people, and he joined us to Jesus Christ, so now we can do those good things.

Jesus Christ brings us all together, Jews and other people

¹¹⁻¹²Think about what you were at first. You were not Jews, so you didn't belong to the special mob called Israel. And at that time you were not friends with Jesus

Christ. You didn't know that God promised to send him to save us. And before, when God promised to look after the Israel mob if they agreed to keep his law, he didn't promise that to you. You didn't know anything about those things. You were living without God, and there was nothing good for you in this world. You didn't know anything about the young man operation that God told the Jewish people to do on all their boys. That's the reason why the Jewish people rubbish you. But don't worry about that. They are only talking about the operation that people do to their bodies. They are not talking about the job that God does inside us. ¹³But now it is different for you. At first you were far away from God, but then you believed in Jesus. You believed that he died, and that his blood came out for you. Then God joined you to Jesus Christ, and he brought you really close to himself.

¹⁴You see, you mob that are not Jews, you were enemies with us Jewish mob at first. There was something that made us enemies with each other. It was like a wall standing between us. But Jesus broke down that wall, and he brought us together, and he made us become one new group. He has made us friends with each other now. ¹⁵⁻¹⁶You know, Jesus let people kill his body, and he died for all of us. When he did that, he made all those Jewish laws useless, along with all their rules. Jesus Christ died on the cross for everybody. He died for the Jewish people, and he died for the people that are not Jews. When he died, he stopped the Jews

from being enemies with other people, and he brought both mobs to God, to be God's friends. He brought them together into one new group.*

¹⁷Jesus came and told people God's message. He said that everyone can be friends with God, and they can be friends with each other. He said that you mob that are not Jews, can be friends with God. You mob were far away from God at that time. And he also said that us Jewish mob can be friends with God. We were more close to God at that time.* ¹⁸So now the Holy Spirit helps us all to come close to God our father, because Jesus Christ died for all of us. It is the same Holy Spirit that helps us both. He helps Jews, and he helps people that are not Jews.

¹⁹So now, you mob that are not Jews, you are not strangers any more. You don't belong to a different nation any more, but you belong to God's family, and you are in God's mob now. ²⁰⁻²²I will use a house as a picture story. It is like God used Jesus and all his people to build a special house for himself. He used Jesus Christ to start building that house. He is the most important one. Then God used Jesus's special workers, and the other people that told God's messages. They are like the cement slab that the house sits on. Now God is using you mob, with us Jewish mob, to make the rest of the house. It is like God's people are the bricks and the wood. You mob are not Jews, but you are still part of that house.

* 2:15-16 Colossians 1:20 * 2:17 Isaiah 57:19

God's spirit carefully joins us together, to make that house bigger all the time, and God lives in his special house. That picture of a house shows us that God is living in us all the time.

Chapter 3

God picked Paul to help the people that are not Jews

¹You mob know about me, Paul, that I am in jail now. You see, I told you mob the message about Jesus. But the bosses didn't like me talking about Jesus to people that are not Jews. So they put me in jail. ²And you know that God was very good to me, and he picked me to tell you his message. ³You see, a long time ago, God planned to save people that are not Jews, as well as Jewish people. At that time he didn't tell everybody about it, but later he told it to me. Remember, I already wrote to you about this. ⁴When you read those words, you will understand that I know what God planned about Christ. ⁵God didn't tell that message to the people that lived before me. But now, God picked Jesus's special workers and other people that tell his messages, and God's spirit told them his plan. * ⁶And this is what God planned. He will be good to everyone that believes the good news about Jesus. It doesn't matter if they are Jews, or not Jews. If they believe in Jesus, God will save them. Both will get what God

* 3:5 Colossians 1:26-27

promised. They both belong to the same mob now. They both belong to God, just like arms and legs belong to the same body.

⁷God was really good to me. He used his power to help me to be strong. Then he gave me this special job. I have to tell people this good news about Jesus. ⁸I'm not important. All of God's people are more important than me. But God was good to me, and he gave me this special job. He sent me to tell the people that are not Jews about the really great things that Jesus Christ can give them. These things are so great that nobody can understand them properly. ⁹And God sent me to help everyone to understand the message about his plan. A long time ago, when God made everything, he didn't tell anyone that message. He kept it secret at that time. ¹⁰But now God wants everyone to hear that message. He wants to use his church people to show all the spirit bosses, everywhere, that God is really wise, and that he understands all about everything. ¹¹God always planned to save people, and he sent our leader, Jesus Christ, to do it.

¹²We trust in Jesus, and we are joined to him, so we can come to God, and we can be sure that he will listen to us. We don't have to be frightened of him. ¹³So when some people make trouble for me, don't let that worry you. I tell you God's word, and they don't like it, so they make trouble for me. But don't worry. I want you to be strong. You can always feel happy whenever they make trouble for me.

Paul asked God to help the Christians be strong

¹⁴When I think about all these things that our father does, I get down on my knees and pray to him. ¹⁵He made everything in the world, and everything in heaven, and he put every family here too. ¹⁶He is very great, and he can work powerfully in you, so I pray that he will do that. I pray that his spirit will make your spirits strong, inside yourselves. ¹⁷I pray that you will trust Jesus Christ properly, so that he will live inside you. I pray that you will always love God properly, and that you will always love other people too, so that you will always keep standing strong for him, like the roots of a tree always keep it standing up strong. ¹⁸⁻¹⁹I pray for you, and for all God's people. I pray that you will know, in a powerful way, that Jesus Christ loves us very much. He loves us so much that nobody can properly know all about it. But I want you to understand that he loves everybody very much, so that you will become like him in every way, and you will live the good way he wants you to live.

²⁰⁻²¹We have to thank God now. His power works in us, and he does really great things. He can do a lot more than we can ask him for. He can even do more than we can think about. And we are God's people. We are his church. So we always have to praise God and show everyone that he is very great and good. We have to show them what Jesus Christ does, and that he is really great. And we have to keep on doing it for ever and ever. Yes, that's right.

Chapter 4

God's people have to be friends with each other

¹So now, even though I'm in jail because I follow Jesus, I'm asking you strongly to live the right way. You see, God picked you to be his own people, so you have to live his way. ²Don't think that you are more important than other people. You have to be good to other people, you have to listen to them and try to understand them. Don't get angry with each other, but you have to love each other all the time. * ³Try hard to let God's spirit keep you together as friends, without any trouble between you.

⁴All of God's people are like parts of one body, with the one Holy Spirit living in all of us. God picked us to be his own people, so we are all sure of this one thing, that he will do everything that he promised to us. ⁵We all have only one leader, Jesus. There is only one true message that we all believe, the good news about Jesus. We all went through that one ceremony called baptism, to show that we follow Jesus. ⁶And there is only one God. He is the father of all of us. He is the biggest boss over everything, and he lives inside all of us to get all of us to do what he wants.

⁷You see, Jesus Christ has been good to us. He has given each one of us the spiritual power to do something properly. They are spiritual gifts that he gives us, and he himself picks the person to get each gift. ⁸A long time ago, God got one of his men to write this in his book,

* 4:2 Colossians 3:12-13

“He went up to the highest place,
and he made lots of prisoners follow him.

And he gave gifts to people.”*

⁹That man wrote, “He went up.” But think about it. He couldn’t go up unless he first came down. You see, at first Jesus Christ came down to the low parts of the earth, and after that he went back up. ¹⁰It was the same man, Jesus, that came down here, and then went up high, right up above all the sky. So now he can be everywhere.

¹¹⁻¹²And Jesus Christ gives these special gifts to his people, so that they can help other people in the church. These gifts are the powers he gives to Christians. He gave some of his people the power to be his special workers, and he sent them out to other people to tell them his good news. And he gave other Christians the power to tell God’s messages to people. And he gave some of them the power to help other people to believe in Jesus. And he gave some Christians the power to be pastors, to look after Christians and teach them God’s way. God gave all these powers to his people to get them ready, so that they can work together for him. God works like that, so that his people get stronger, and so that more people join his family. We are like the body of Jesus Christ here on earth, and he wants that body to get bigger and stronger. ¹³God will keep on using the people with this spiritual power until we all join in together, and we all work together properly. We all believe in

* 4:8 Psalm 68:18

God's son, so we all have to work together, and we all have to get to know Jesus better. Then we, God's people, will become like Jesus Christ himself. We will become what God wants us to be.

¹⁴So then liars will not trick us, like they trick little kids. Lots of tricky people will try to teach us new messages that sound good, but are wrong. But we will not be like little kids. We will not believe their lies. Instead, we will be strong, and we will not stop believing the true message. ¹⁵We will love people, and at the same time we will tell them the true message. Then we will get stronger for Jesus Christ and become more like him. It's like we are his body, and he is the head. ¹⁶He holds the whole body together. He's like the strings in a body that join every part together. Each of us is a different part of his body, and if every one of us does our job properly, and if we love each other, the whole body will grow, and it will get stronger.*

You have to turn around and live the right way

¹⁷I'm telling you this message that our leader, Jesus, wants me to tell you, so you have to take notice of it. Don't live any more like the people that don't know God. They can't think straight. ¹⁸They can't understand anything properly. It is like their minds are in darkness. They don't want to know God, and they are a long way away from him. He doesn't give them new life. They do

* 4:16 Colossians 2:19

bad things, but they never feel sorry about it. ¹⁹They don't know what is right, or what is wrong, any more. They only want to do all sorts of bad things, and dirty things, and they really want to keep on doing those wrong things.

²⁰But when you learned about Jesus Christ, you didn't learn to live in a bad way like that. ²¹I'm sure that you heard the good story about Jesus, and you learned the true things that Jesus taught to people. ²²You learned that we all have a bad part inside us that gets us to only think about what we want for ourselves, and it gets us to go wrong, and it gets us to do bad things. And you learned that now we have to turn around and stop doing those things. So don't take any notice of that old bad part inside you. Don't think about those bad things any more, * ²³but let the Holy Spirit show you how to think in a new way. ²⁴You have to live a new way now. You have to live for God. He makes you into a new person, to be like himself, so you have to properly do what is right, and do what is good, like he does. *

²⁵You know, we all belong to Jesus, like each one of us is a part of his body. So don't lie to each other. Only say the things that are true. * ²⁶And if you get angry, don't do anything wrong. Don't stay angry all day, but quickly stop being angry. * ²⁷Don't make it easy for the devil, the boss over the bad spirits, to get you to go wrong.

* 4:22 Colossians 3:9 * 4:24 Genesis 1:26; Colossians 3:10 * 4:25 Zechariah 8:16

* 4:26 Psalm 4:4

²⁸Anyone that steals things from other people has to stop doing that. Instead, they have to do honest work to get things for themselves, and they have to give things to other people that need them. ²⁹And don't swear, or say any bad talk. Only say good things that will help people, and say things that they need to hear. When you do that, your words will be good for the people that hear you.

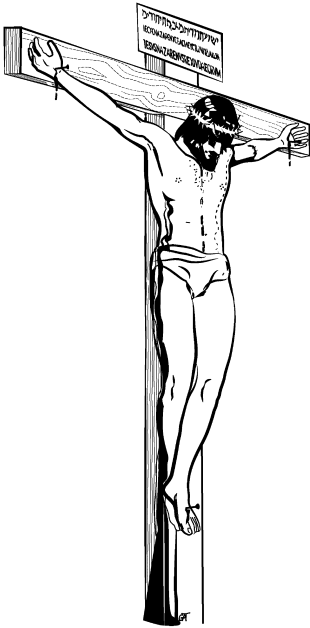
³⁰Don't make the Holy Spirit sad. Remember, he is in you. God gave him to you so that you can be really sure that you belong to God, and that one day God will set you free from everything bad. ³¹So don't get upset with people, and don't think about them in a bad way. Don't get angry with anyone. Don't argue or fight with people. Don't yell at anyone, or say bad things about them. Don't do anything bad to anyone. ³²Instead, be good to each other, and try to understand how other people feel. If somebody does wrong to you, don't do payback to them, but let it go. Be good to each other, just like God is good to you. He doesn't do payback to you. You belong to Jesus Christ now, so God doesn't punish you for those bad things you did.*

Chapter 5

You are God's kids, so you have to live the right way

¹You are God's kids, and he loves you, so try to be like God. He is good all the time. ²Always love other people,

* 4:32 Colossians 3:13



Jesus died and gave himself to God because he loved you

just like Jesus Christ loves us. He loved us so much that he took our payback, and he died instead of us. You know how people used to kill animals and burn them, to give them to God, for the good smell to make him happy. * Well, just like those animals, Jesus died. When Jesus died, he gave himself to God. Jesus did that because he loved you. So you have to love other people too.

³So don't sleep with somebody that is not your own wife or husband, as if you are married to them. And don't be greedy, wanting lots of money and things.

You are God's own people, so don't even think about doing bad things like that. That's not the way for God's people to live. ⁴And don't talk in a dirty way or tell dirty jokes, and don't say stupid things. It's not right for God's people to talk like that. Instead, when you talk, you have to thank God a lot. ⁵Listen, this is true. If you do those bad and dirty things, you will never get the good things that God gives to his people. It's like this, if you think in a dirty way, you can't be in God's family, you can't be with Jesus Christ. And if you

* 5:2 Exodus 29:18

sleep with somebody that is not your wife or husband, as if you are married to them, you can't be in God's family. And if you are greedy, wanting lots of money and things, you can't be in God's family. You see, greedy people really respect money and things more than they respect God.

⁶Don't believe anyone that says you can do those bad things. Don't let them trick you. Don't believe their lies. God will get really angry with people that do those bad things, and he will punish those people that will not listen to him or do what he says. ⁷So don't join in with people that tell you to do bad things. Don't do what those people do.

⁸You see, you used to be like that before. You didn't know what was right, like you were living in the dark. But then you came to our leader, Jesus, and now you are in the light. So live like people that belong to the light. ⁹You know, if people have God's light in them, they live in a way that is good, right, and true. ¹⁰So find out what makes God happy, and do that. ¹¹People that belong to the darkness do wrong things. Don't ever join in with them. Don't do those things that are wrong and useless, but instead, tell everybody that those things are wrong. ¹²Those people do bad things when nobody can see them. Those things are so bad that if we talk about them, we feel shame. ¹³But whenever light shines on something, everyone can see it. ¹⁴The light shows us what something really is. So some people say this,
"Stop doing bad things.

It's like you are asleep, so wake up now.

It's like you are dead, so come alive again now.

Then Jesus will show you the right way to live, it's like he will shine light on you."

¹⁵So you have to be very careful to live the right way. You have to understand what is right and good. Don't live like stupid people. ¹⁶Do good things every time you can, because lots of people do lots of bad things these days. * ¹⁷Don't be fools. But instead, understand what God wants. ¹⁸Don't get drunk. If you drink too much grog, you will go wild, and you will do stupid things. Don't do that, but instead, keep on letting the Holy Spirit come into you and fill you up. ¹⁹Use God's songs to talk to each other. You know, you can sing hymns and songs that the Holy Spirit gives you. Sing and make music to God from inside yourselves. * ²⁰Remember our leader, Jesus Christ, and always thank God, our father, for everything.

Respect each other properly

²¹Each of you has to think about what other Christians want, and agree with them, because you really respect Jesus Christ.

Wives

²²You women that are wives, you have to think about what your husbands want, and agree with them, just like God's people always have to agree with what our leader, Jesus, wants. * ²³You see it is like this. Each body has a head that controls it. Well, we are God's people,

* 5:16 Colossians 4:5 * 5:19 Colossians 3:16-17 * 5:22 Colossians 3:18; 1 Peter 3:1

his church, and we are like a body, and Jesus is like our head. He is the one that saved us. In the same way, husbands are like the head of their wives. ²⁴Yes, wives always have to think about what their husbands want and agree with them, just like God's people always have to agree with what Jesus Christ wants.

Husbands

²⁵Yes, and you men that are husbands, you have to do your part too. You have to always love your wives properly, just like Jesus Christ loves the people in his church properly. Jesus let people kill him so that he could save us. * ²⁶He washed us properly clean, not just with water in the baptism ceremony, but with his word too. ²⁷So now we can be properly good, and he can bring us to himself, with nothing wrong with us at all.

²⁸Well, husbands have to love their wives properly, just like Jesus loves us. You know that everyone loves his own body and looks after it properly. Well, in the same way, husbands have to love their wives and look after them, just as much as they love their own bodies. A man that loves his wife, loves himself. ²⁹No man ever hates his own body. No, instead he gives it food and takes care of it. Jesus Christ does that too. He takes care of his people, the church. ³⁰We all belong to Jesus, like we are parts of his own body.

³¹God says this in his book,

* 5:25 Colossians 3:19; 1 Peter 3:7

“A man will leave his mother and father and marry a woman. The man and his wife will join with each other, and their bodies will be like one body.”*

³²Those words tell us important things, and they are a picture of something else too. They show us how Jesus Christ and his church are joined together, like one.

³³So I say this to you married people. Every one of you husbands has to love your own wife as much as you love yourself. And every wife has to respect her husband.

Chapter 6

Kids

¹Now I’m talking to you kids. You belong to our leader, Jesus, so you have to do what your father and mother tell you to do. That is the right way to live. ²⁻³You see, God made this law, “Always respect your father and your mother. If you do that, you will be happy, and you will live for a long time on the earth.” That was the first time God made a law and promised something with it. *

Fathers

⁴Now I’m talking to you fathers. Don’t make your kids angry. But instead, as they are growing up, you have to teach them the way God wants them to live, and show them how to live the right way.

* 5:31 Genesis 2:24 * 6:2-3 Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16

Workers

⁵Now I'm talking to you workers, you people that have to work for other people all the time. Your bosses are only people, but that doesn't matter, you have to respect them properly, and do whatever they tell you. Work hard for them, like you are working for Jesus Christ. ⁶Do what they say, and try to make them happy. Don't only do it when they can see you, but also when they can't see you. Work happily in your job, like you are working for Jesus Christ, and then you will be doing what God wants. ⁷Your bosses are only people, but try to work properly for them, like you are working for Jesus, not working for people. ⁸Remember this, if you do good things, Jesus, our leader, will pay you with something good later. He will do that, no matter if you work for nothing, like a prisoner, or if you are free.

Bosses

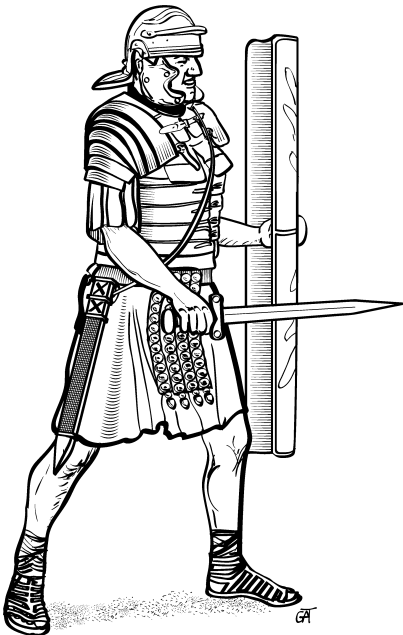
⁹Now I'm talking to bosses. You have to do the same, you have to be good to your workers. Don't say anything to frighten them, like saying you are going to punish them. Remember that God in heaven is your boss, and he is the boss over your workers too. And he treats everyone the same, no matter if you are a boss or a worker.*

Be like strong soldiers for God

¹⁰The last thing that I want to say to you is this. You are joined to our leader, Jesus, and he is very strong, so you

* 6:9 Deuteronomy 10:17

have to use his strong power to fight against the devil, the boss over the bad spirits. ¹¹You know that a soldier puts on special gear to stop the enemy from hurting him. Well, you have to do that with the special gear that God gives us. Then you will keep strong against the devil, and you will not let him trick you. He tries all sorts of clever ways to fight against us. ¹²You see, we are not fighting against people, but we are fighting against a big mob of bad spirits. We are fighting against the bad spirit bosses that we can't see in this bad world. And we are fighting against the powerful bad spirits that live above the earth too. ¹³So you have to use all the special gear



In those days a soldier put on this sort of special gear

that God gives you, so that you can stand up to those bad spirits whenever they come at you, and they will not win. And at the end of the fight, you will still be standing strong.

¹⁴So put on that special gear from God, so you can stand up against the devil. This is what that gear is.

– You know that a soldier wears a belt, to hold his clothes on tight, so he can move quickly in a fight. Well, just like that, you take notice of what is true, so you can fight better against the devil.

- And a soldier wears an iron plate, to stop the enemy from hitting his chest. Well, you have to always do what is right, and that will be like an iron plate for you, to stop the devil from hitting you.*
- ¹⁵And a soldier wears special shoes, so that he can always be ready to fight. Well, you have to remember the good news about Jesus, that he makes us God's friends. Then you will be ready to fight the devil.*
- ¹⁶You know that a soldier always has a shield, to stop the spears that the enemy throws at him. In the same way, you have to always trust God. Whenever you do that, it is like you are holding up a shield that stops the things that the devil throws at you. They are like burning spears, but if you trust God, he will stop them and put them out.
- ¹⁷And a soldier wears an iron hat, that stops the enemy from hurting his head. Well, you remember that God has saved you. That will be like an iron hat for you, to keep you safe.
- And you know the long knife a soldier has, called a sword? He uses it to fight back against his enemy. Well, in the same way, you can use God's word to fight back against the devil, and the Holy Spirit will help you.*

¹⁸And always pray in the way that God's spirit leads you. Pray about every problem, and pray in all sorts of ways, and ask God for whatever you need. So always keep on

praying for all God's people. ¹⁹And pray for me too. Ask God to give me the right words to say every time I start to tell people the good news about Jesus. Pray that I will not be too frightened to tell them that message properly. God kept it secret for a long time, ²⁰but now he has sent me to tell this good story to everybody. The bosses here didn't like me telling that story, so they put me in jail. I want you to ask God to make me brave, so that I keep on telling his good story.

The end of Paul's letter

²¹⁻²²Now I'm sending Tikicus to you to tell you about me and about what I'm doing these days. He is my Christian friend that I love, and he is a good worker for God. He will tell you all the news about me, and the news about the other people that are here with me. And I also want him to help you feel strong and brave.*

²³You mob are my Christian friends. You believe in God, our father, and you believe in our leader Jesus Christ. So I'm asking them to be really good to you, and to help you to be happy and quiet inside yourselves. And I'm asking God to help you to love him, and to love other people, and to help you to keep on trusting Jesus.

²⁴I want God to be very good to everyone that never stops loving our leader, Jesus Christ.

From Paul

* 6:21-22 Acts 20:4; 2 Timothy 4:12; Colossians 4:7-8

The letter that Paul wrote to the Christians at Philippi

(The book in the Holy Bible called Philippians)

About this letter

Paul wrote this letter about 2,000 years ago, about 30 years after Jesus went back to heaven, and it is now in the Holy Bible.

God sent Paul to lots of towns to tell people about Jesus, and one of them was Philippi (see Acts 16:11-40). It was in the country that we now call Greece, but at that time they called it Macedonia. About 1,400 years ago an earthquake broke Philippi down, and today there are just stones and rubbish at that place in Greece.

At the time when Paul wrote this letter, the people called the Romans were the bosses over lots of nations. The Roman bosses didn't like Paul telling people about Jesus, so they grabbed him and put him in jail. Paul wrote this letter while he was in that jail, in Rome. His friend Timothy helped him write it.

In this letter, Paul said some very important things to help those Christians get really close to God. And we can learn a lot today from what Paul wrote to the Christians at Philippi, a long time ago.

Chapter 1

¹I am Paul, and this letter is from me, and it is from Timothy too, because he is helping me write it. We work all the time for Jesus Christ. We are sending this letter to all God's special people at Philippi, you people that belong to Jesus Christ. We are writing to you Christian leaders, and to you church helpers, and to all you Christians. *

²We are asking God our father, and Jesus Christ our leader, to be good to you, and to make you feel happy and quiet inside yourselves.

The Christians at Philippi helped Paul tell people about Jesus

³Every time I think about you mob, I thank God for you.

⁴And every time I pray for you, I'm really happy. ⁵You believed the message about Jesus right from the first day that you heard it, and you helped me tell it to other people. Yes, you helped me with my work. And you are still doing it. ⁶I know that God is working inside you. He has already started doing a good thing in you, and he will keep on working in you until he has properly finished it. That will be when Jesus Christ comes back again. I'm really sure that God will finish doing this good thing inside you. ⁷You see, I love you mob very much, so it is all right for me to think about you like that. You are my friends and God is good to you, just like he is good to me. So you help me every time God lets me tell

* 1:1 Acts 16:12

people the good news about Jesus. Right now I'm tied up in jail, and sometimes they take me to court, and I tell them the message about Jesus, and I show them that it is true. And you help me do that. ⁸Yes, I love you, just like Jesus Christ loves you, and I want to be with you again. God himself knows that is true.

Paul asked God to help the Christians at Philippi

⁹So I pray like this for you. I ask God to help you to love each other more and more, and to know God better. I ask God to help you to understand spiritual things better. ¹⁰⁻¹¹Then you will know the right way to live, and you will do a lot of good things. And I ask Jesus Christ to help you so that you will always do good things, and never do bad things. Jesus is going to come back again, and I want you to be living in that good way. You will show people that God is good, and they will say that he is really great.

Paul was in jail, but he told more people about Jesus

¹²My Christian friends, I want to tell you about myself. You know that bad things happened to me, and now I'm in jail. But don't worry, it is good that I am in jail. Now I can tell more people about Jesus. ¹³So now everybody here knows that I belong to Jesus Christ, and that is the reason why I'm in jail. All the guards, and soldiers, and everyone else that works in the big boss's house here, they all know that is the reason why I'm in jail. * ¹⁴And the Christians

* 1:13 Acts 28:30

here heard that I'm in jail. Then most of them trusted in our leader Jesus more strongly and got brave, and they are not frightened to tell other people God's message.

¹⁵⁻¹⁷There are Christians here that think in a good way and they want to help me, so they tell people about Jesus. They love me, and they know that God let people put me in jail so that I can tell a lot more people the message about Jesus and show them that this message is true.

But there are other Christians that are a bit jealous of me, and they think they can give me trouble while I'm in jail. They want other Christians to think that they are more important than me. So they tell people about Jesus Christ, and they hope they will get a lot of people to say they are great. They are thinking the wrong way. They only think about themselves.

¹⁸But it doesn't matter. Both mobs are telling people about Jesus Christ. That is the most important thing. Maybe some of them are thinking the wrong way. But the others are thinking the right way. And all of them are telling people about Jesus Christ, so I'm very happy about it.

Which is better, to be with Jesus or to stay alive in this world?

Yes, and I will stay very happy. ¹⁹You mob are praying for me and the spirit of Jesus Christ is helping me, so I'm sure that God will get me out of this jail. ²⁰I want to be brave and stay strong for Jesus Christ, just like I always am. Then I will not feel shame. Maybe they will kill me, or maybe they will let me stay alive. It doesn't matter. I

want to stay strong for Jesus Christ and show everyone how great he is, no matter what.

²¹You see, while I'm alive, I want to let people know that Jesus Christ is really great. That is what I live for. But if they kill me, that is even better for me. ²²Maybe they will not kill me, and I will keep on living in this body. Then I will keep on working for Jesus, and I will help more people know him properly. I don't really know what will be best, for me to live, or for me to die. ²³I want to do both. I want to leave this body and go to be with Jesus Christ. That will be a lot better for me. ²⁴But at the same time, you mob need me, so I want to keep on living in this body so I can help you. ²⁵When I think about it, I'm sure that God will let me stay alive here, so I can keep on helping all of you. Then you will trust God more, and you will be more happy. ²⁶Yes, I reckon I will come and visit you again and you will be happy to see me. You will tell everyone, "This is awesome. Jesus Christ is really good and really powerful. He got Paul out of jail and brought him here to help us." You will talk like that to everyone.

Stay strong for Jesus

²⁷Listen, you heard the good news about Jesus Christ, and you trusted him, so keep on living the way he wants you to live, no matter what happens. Maybe I will come and visit you again, but maybe not. Maybe I will only hear what people tell me about you. Anyway, I want to find out that you are staying strong for Jesus, and that

God's spirit is joining you all together, so that you are all agreeing with each other and working together to tell people about Jesus. ²⁸Some people will try to stop you living for Jesus. Don't be frightened of those people. Stay strong for Jesus. Then you will show those people that, in the end, God will finish them, but he will save you. Yes, God will make that happen. ²⁹You see, God lets you believe in Jesus Christ. But not only that, sometimes people make trouble for you because you believe in Jesus. God lets that happen too. ³⁰Those bad people are making trouble for you, just like they made trouble for me when I was there in your town. And bad people are still making trouble for me.*

Chapter 2

Work together with each other

¹Listen. You know that you belong to Jesus Christ, and he helps you to be strong and brave. You know that he loves you, so you are happy. You know that God's spirit is in you, and you share your lives with him. You know how to feel sorry for each other, and how to help each other. You know all that, right? ²So now make me properly happy. I want you all to love each other properly, and I want you all to agree with each other, and work together, and think the same way about what is right. ³⁻⁴Each of you has to think about what is good

* 1:30 Acts 16:19-40

for the others. Don't only think about what is good for yourself. Don't think that you are better than other people, but think that they are better than you. And don't do things only to get people to say you are good. And don't try to be a boss over other people.

Be like Jesus, and think like he did

⁵You have to think the same way that Jesus Christ thought.

⁶He was the same as God.

He was just as important as God.

But he didn't reckon that he had to keep on being important, like God is.

⁷Instead, he left all that, and he made himself like a nobody.

He was born into this world and looked like other human beings.

He was a man living here.

And he worked hard to help people.

⁸And then he made himself even less important.

He did everything that God wanted him to do, he even died.

He let people nail him to a cross and kill him.

⁹So then God made him alive again and lifted him up to the most important place in heaven.

And God made him more powerful than everyone else.

¹⁰One day, everyone will hear the name of Jesus, and they will get down on their knees and show him respect.

All the people and spirits will show respect to Jesus.

Everything in heaven, and everything on the earth, and everything under the earth, they will all show respect to Jesus.

¹¹ And every one of them will say out loud, “Jesus Christ is the boss.”

That will happen to show that God our father is very great and good. *

God gives you the power to do good things

¹² So, my good friends, you always have to do what God wants. I know that you did that when I was with you, and I reckon you still do it now that I’m not with you any more. So you have to work hard and keep on trying to do what God wants. You see, God saved you, so give him proper respect and try to live his way. You have to be too frightened to do any bad thing that will make him angry.

¹³ God is the one that is working inside you. He helps you think the right way, so that you want to do the good things that make him happy, and he gives you the power to do those good things.

¹⁴ And while you do those things, don’t get angry or argue about them. ¹⁵ Then you will be properly good, so that nobody can blame you for anything. You are God’s kids living among really bad people that always go wrong. So you have to live in a way that is properly good. Then everyone will see that you are properly good. You

* 2:10-11 Isaiah 45:23

will be like bright stars in a dark sky.* ¹⁶And you have to keep on believing the message about Jesus that gives us real life. Then when Jesus Christ comes back, I will be very happy, and I will know that I didn't waste my time when I worked among you.

¹⁷Yes, I'm happy about you. And even if they kill me, I will still be happy. I know that you believe in Jesus and you work for him, and when you do that, you are giving yourselves to God. And if they are going to kill me, I will be giving my body to God too. So we can all be happy about it together. ¹⁸Yes, you can be happy too. Even if they are going to kill me, you can be happy with me.

Paul wanted Timothy to find out about the mob at Philippi

¹⁹Now I will tell you what I want to do. Timothy is here with me, and I want to send him to you soon. So if that is what our leader Jesus wants, I will send him to you. After that, he will come back and tell me all about you, and that will make me happy. ²⁰Timothy is different from the other people here. He really cares about you and about how you are going. ²¹The others think about the things they want, not the things that Jesus Christ wants. ²²But you know Timothy. Everyone can see that he is a good man. He works with me just like a son works with his father. Together we tell people the good news about Jesus. ²³So I will send him to you. But first I will wait and see what they are going to do to me, then I will send

* 2:15 Deuteronomy 32:5

him to you, ²⁴even though I'm sure that God will let me visit you soon too.

Epafroditus wanted to go back to Philippi

²⁵Right now I'm sending Epafroditus back to you. You sent him to me a while ago when I needed help. He came here and looked after me. He has been a good Christian friend to me here. We work together. We are both like soldiers fighting for God. But now I reckon I have to send him back to you. ²⁶He really wants to see you all again. And you know, after he came here, he got sick, and then somebody told you about it. So now he worries about you. He doesn't want you to be sad and feel sorry for him. So he really wants to go back and see you all again. ²⁷Yes, he was very sick a while ago, and he nearly died. But God felt sorry for him, and for me too. God was good to him and made him better. And when God did that, he was good to me too. You know, I am already sad about some things, and if Epafroditus died, that would make me really sad. But he didn't die. ²⁸So now I really want to send him to you, and when you see him again you will be happy, and I will not worry about you any more. ²⁹⁻³⁰Epafroditus belongs to our leader, Jesus, just like you do. You couldn't come and help me a while ago, so he came instead of you. And then he nearly died. But he didn't worry. He knew he was working for Jesus Christ while he was helping me, and he was ready to die for Jesus. You have to really respect people like Epafroditus. So when he comes back

to you, be happy and say, “Good to see you again. You are our good Christian friend.”

Chapter 3

Some people teach things that are not true

¹And now, my Christian friends, before I finish this letter, I want to tell you this. Be happy all the time. Remember that you belong to our leader Jesus. Yes, I told you all these things before, and I am telling you again. I don't get tired of telling you, and this message will stop you from going the wrong way.

²⁻³Look out. There are some men that want to teach you the wrong things and get you to go the wrong way. They are like dogs. They go the wrong way. They only want to cut men's bodies. They say that you don't belong to God unless you do what the Jewish law says and have a young man operation. They are wrong. We have God's spirit in us, and he helps us respect God the right way. We know what Jesus Christ did for us, and we trust him. We know that ceremonies that people do will not save us, so we don't trust them. So really, we are the ones that belong to God. Those people that only follow that Jewish law don't belong to him.

Know Jesus properly, this is most important

⁴Look at me. I'm more Jewish than they are, and I trusted that Jewish law more than them, but it didn't save me. ⁵I was born into the Israel nation, and I

belong to the Benjamin tribe. They did that young man operation on me when I was 8 days old, just like the Jewish law says. When I grew up, I joined the Pharisee mob, that are really strong for the Jewish law. I'm properly Jewish.* ⁶I really wanted to make God happy, but I followed the Jewish way, and I made a lot of trouble for Christians. And I was strong for the Jewish laws. Nobody could say that I broke any of them.* ⁷I used to think that if I lived like that, God will like me. But then I found out the true message about Jesus, and I knew that I was wrong. Those things didn't help at all. Now that I know Jesus Christ properly, I reckon all those things are useless. ⁸Yes, they are useless. But I know Jesus Christ. That is the only important thing. He is my leader, and he is really special to me now. I have left every other way, and I only follow him now. I reckon all those other things are rubbish, and I have chucked them away, so that I can join up with Jesus Christ, ⁹and belong to him properly. I have stopped trying to follow that Jewish law to get God to say that I'm all right. Instead of that, I trust in Jesus Christ, and that is the reason why God will say that I'm all right. God makes us right because we believe in Jesus. ¹⁰And I really want to know Jesus Christ properly. And I want God's power to be in my life, the same power he used to make Jesus alive again. And I even want to share the pain that Jesus got. I will even let his enemies kill me, like they killed him.

* 3:5 Acts 23:6; 26:5; Romans 11:1 * 3:6 Acts 8:3; 22:4; 26:9-11

¹¹Then later, God will make me alive again, one way or another.

Try hard to be like Jesus

¹²I'm not saying that I have already done all that. I'm not saying that I'm properly good now. But, you see, Jesus Christ picked me to be one of his people, so I'm trying hard to be the sort of person that he wants me to be. ¹³Friends, I don't reckon I'm all that good yet, but I keep on looking ahead. I'm like a man running in a race. I forget what I did in the past, and I think about what God wants me to do later. ¹⁴I keep trying to be like Jesus, so that God will take me up to properly join up with Jesus. That will be my prize.

¹⁵And all of us have to think like that. That will show that we are spiritually strong now and live properly for Jesus. But if you think differently about anything, God will help you, and he will show you the right way. ¹⁶We started to learn about the way God wants us to live, so we have to keep on living his way and keep on doing the things he taught us to do. That is the most important thing for all of us to do.

Live the right way, like Paul did

¹⁷My Christian friends, you know how I live, so you all have to try to live the same way. And look around at each other, and see the way you all live. Look at those people that live the same way as I live, and you do the same.*

* 3:17 1 Corinthians 4:16; 11:1

¹⁸You see, there are a lot of people that don't live the right way. I have often told you this before, and now I'm telling you the same thing again. When I think about it, I get so sad that I cry. There are people that reckon they are Christians, but they are really enemies of Jesus Christ. They live in a way that shows they are against the good things that Jesus died for on the cross. ¹⁹They don't listen to God. They listen to their own bodies, and they do bad things so that their bodies feel good. They do those bad things, but they don't feel shame. Instead, they think they are smart. They only think about the things that belong to this world. And in the end God will finish them up for ever.

²⁰But we belong to heaven. That is our real home. And we are waiting for our leader, Jesus Christ, to come back from heaven. He is the one that saves us, and we really want him to come back. ²¹He will change these weak bodies that we have now, and he will make them into new bodies. They will be like the wonderful body that he has now. Jesus can do that because he is really powerful. He is so powerful that he can be the boss over everything.

Chapter 4

¹So think about all that, my Christian friends, and keep on following our leader Jesus. And keep on trusting him properly. I love you very much, and I really want to see you again. You make me very happy, and it is like you are the prize that I get for winning a race.

Don't argue with each other

²Now I just want to talk to Yuwodia and Sintiki. I ask you 2 women very strongly to stop arguing with each other, and to try to think the same way as each other. Remember, you both belong to our leader Jesus. ³And now I'm talking to my other good friend there. Listen, my friend, you worked hard with me, and you always tried to follow Jesus properly. Now I want you to help those 2 women to be friends with each other. They both worked hard to tell people the good news about Jesus. They worked with me and Clement and some other Christians. God wrote the names of all those Christians in his special book called *the book of life*, where he writes the name of every person that will live with him for ever.

Jesus can make you happy and quiet inside

⁴Now I'm talking to all of you Christians. You belong to our leader, Jesus, so always be happy. This is important, so I'm saying it again, "Be happy." ⁵Always be easy with people, and be nice to them, so that everyone will see how good you are. Remember that our leader, Jesus, will come back soon. ⁶Don't worry about anything, but pray to God and ask him for everything you need. And always thank God for what he has already done. ⁷Then God will get you to feel happy and quiet inside yourselves. You belong to Jesus Christ, and he will do that to look after your minds, so that you will think properly. Nobody knows how God does it, but he can do it.

Think about good things

⁸And one more thing, my Christian friends. Keep thinking about the things that are true, and the things that people should respect. Keep thinking about the things that are right, and good, and lovely. Think about things that everyone reckons are really good. Think about the things that we can thank God for. ⁹And remember, when I was with you, I taught you the right things to do. You agreed with me about those things. And you know the things that I said, and the things that I did when I was with you. Well, keep on doing all those things. Then God will be with you, and he will get you to feel happy and quiet inside yourselves.

***The Christians at Philippi wanted to help Paul,
and that made him happy***

¹⁰Now I will tell you how things are going with me here. I'm really happy, thanks to our leader Jesus. I know that you were worried about me here in jail, and you wanted to send something to help me, but at first you couldn't do it. Then later, you found a way to send me something, and that made me happy. It shows that you are still thinking about me.

¹¹I'm not saying this because I need anything. I have learned to be happy, no matter what happens to me. ¹²I know what it is like to need things, and I know what it is like to have a lot of things. I have learned this secret, to be happy all the time no matter what happens. Sometimes I can eat plenty of food, and sometimes I go

hungry. But it doesn't matter, I can be happy anyway. Sometimes I have everything I need, and sometimes I haven't got anything. But it doesn't matter, I can be happy anyway. ¹³You see, Jesus Christ makes me strong, so I can do all these things. ¹⁴And you have been very good to me. I have been getting trouble, but you remembered me, and you helped me a lot.

The Christians at Philippi do good things, so God is happy with them

¹⁵Remember the time when I first came to tell you the good news about Jesus. Then I left your country, called Macedonia, and I went to tell other people this story. You know, you were the only Christian church that gave me something to help me do that. * ¹⁶And when I was in the town called Thessalonica, I needed money, you mob kept on sending me money and things, to help me.*

¹⁷I'm not telling you this to get you to send me more things. But I want you to keep on doing good things like that, so that God will be happy about you. He will add those good things to the list of all the good things you have done, and one day, he will pay you for it all.

Give to God, and he will give you everything you need

¹⁸But right now I have everything I need, and even more than I need. You are so good to me. You gave lots of money and things to Epafroditus to bring to me. But you

didn't only give them to me. You gave them to God. They are the right sort of gift, a really nice one, so he is very happy. * ¹⁹You know, God looks after me, and he will look after you too. You belong to Jesus Christ, and God will give you everything you need. He is really rich and powerful. So he can give you everything you need.

²⁰He is our God and our father. Everybody has to always say that he is very great, for ever and ever. That's right.

The end of Paul's letter

²¹Say *hello* to all God's people there that belong to Jesus Christ. The Christians that are with me here say *hello* to you. ²²All of God's people say *hello* to you. There are some Christians here that live in the house that belongs to the really big government boss, and they say a special *hello* to you.

²³I pray that our leader, Jesus Christ, will keep on being really good to all of you.

From Paul

* 4:18 Exodus 29:18

The letter that Paul wrote to the Christians at Colossae

(The book in the Holy Bible called Colossians)

About this letter

Paul wrote this letter about 2,000 years ago, about 30 years after Jesus went back to heaven, and it is now in the Holy Bible.

God sent Paul to lots of countries and lots of towns to tell people about Jesus. Epafra heard Paul's message, and he believed in Jesus. Then Epafra went to the town called Colossae, to tell the people there about Jesus. Colossae was in the country that is now called Turkey. About 1,100 years later some enemy soldiers broke Colossae down, and today there are just stones and rubbish at that place in Turkey.

At the time when Paul wrote this letter, the Roman people were the bosses over lots of nations. The Roman bosses didn't like Paul telling people about Jesus, so they grabbed him and put him in jail. Epafra visited him there in jail and told him about the Christians at Colossae. He also told Paul that some people were teaching them lies. So Paul wrote this letter to the Christians at Colossae, to tell them the true message so that they would not believe those lying teachers. He was still in jail when he wrote this letter.

This letter has good messages for us today. We have to take notice of those messages that Paul wrote to the Christians at Colossae.

Chapter 1

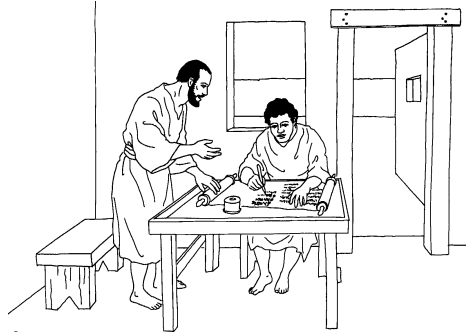
¹I'm Paul, and this letter is from me. And Timothy is helping me write it too. God made me Jesus Christ's special worker.

²We are writing this letter to God's people that live at Colossae. You joined up with Jesus Christ, and you keep on trusting him, so you are like brothers and sisters to us.

We are asking God our father to be good to you, and to make you feel happy and quiet inside yourselves.

People at Colossae believed the good news about Jesus

³⁻⁵People tell us good things about you, so now, every time we pray for you, we always say *thank you* to God for you. He is the father of our leader Jesus Christ. You heard the true message about Jesus, and you believed it. Now you are really sure that God will give you the good things that he promised. You know that he is keeping them safe for you in heaven. So you keep on believing



This letter is from Paul, he told Timothy what to write

in Jesus Christ, and you keep on loving all God's people. That is what people tell us about you.

⁶And other people everywhere are hearing that same true message that you heard about Jesus. And they are believing in Jesus and doing good things too.

⁷Epafras told you the message about Jesus. He works for Jesus Christ, just like we do, and we love him very much. You see, we couldn't go and tell you the message about Jesus, but he went instead of us. He is a good man. You can always believe what he tells you.*

⁸After that, Epafras came back here, and he told us about you. He said that the Holy Spirit now helps you to love everybody.

Paul prayed for the new Christians

⁹Yes, Epafras told us about you, and so now we pray for you all the time. We ask God to help you to know what he wants you to do. And we pray that he will help you to understand spiritual things properly, and think about them properly. ¹⁰Then you will live the way that our leader, Jesus, wants you to live, and you will do lots of good things that will make him happy. And you will know God better and better all the time.

¹¹And we ask God to use his great power to make you strong, so that you will stay strong for him and you will not give up. And if people give you trouble, we pray that you will not worry or get upset. And we ask him to make

* 1:7 Colossians 4:12; Philemon 1:23

you happy all the time. ¹²And we want you to always say *thank you* to God, our father. He brought you into his family so that you will get the good things that he promised to give to his people. Then you will live with him in his good place.

God's son died to set us free

¹³⁻¹⁴You know, the boss over the bad spirits always used to push us to do bad things. It's like we were in a bad place, where he is the boss. But God sent his son, Jesus, to get us out of that place. He took the payback for us, so that now God will not punish us. He set us free from that bad boss, and now we belong to the family of God's son. God loves his son Jesus very much. *

¹⁵⁻¹⁶Nobody can see God. But God's son, Jesus, is just like God, and he showed people what God is like. You see, Jesus was there with God a long time ago, and he worked with God to make everything. They made all the things in heaven, and all the things on the earth. They made the things we can see, and the things we can't see. They made all the spirits, even the spirit bosses that we can't see. God worked with his son to make everything, so that now everything has to respect God's son. Jesus is God's son, and he is the boss over everything. ¹⁷He was there at first, before anything else, and now he holds everything together, everything everywhere, and he keeps it all working properly.

* 1:13-14 Ephesians 1:7

¹⁸Jesus is the leader of all God's people, and God's people are the church. It's like God's people are a body, and Jesus is their head. He is the church's leader. He was the first one to ever die and then come back to life and keep on living. So he is really great. He is greater than anyone else, and greater than anything else, anywhere.*

¹⁹At the time when God's son became a man, God lived in him properly. God was happy to live in him. ²⁰God used him to get everything to come back to himself. God's son bled and died on the cross, so that now everything can stop being God's enemies, and become God's friends again. Some of those things are in heaven, and some of them are on the earth, but Jesus died on the cross, so that they can all come back to God.*

God is a friend of people that trust Jesus

²¹And I'm talking about you too. At first you were not God's friends. You were his enemies. You always thought in a bad way, and then you did bad things. ²²But God sent Jesus Christ to live as a man, in a human body, and then he let people kill Jesus's body. When Jesus died, he took the payback for the bad things you did, so you can be friends with God. It's like he washed you of those bad things, so you are properly good and clean inside. So at the time when God will judge everyone, he will see that you are clean and he will not blame you, he will say that you are not guilty.

²³If you stay strong, God will do that for you. You have to always remember the good news that you heard about Jesus, so that you keep on trusting him and know that he will save you. You see, God got his workers to tell people everywhere that Jesus died to save us. It is really good news. And I, Paul, am one of God's workers now. My job is to tell people that good news.

Paul helped God's people no matter what trouble he got

²⁴Yes, I tell people the message about Jesus. Some people don't like it, and they give me trouble. But that doesn't matter, that message helps people that believe it. You believe it, so it helps you. So I am happy, and I keep on telling it. You know that Jesus Christ got a lot of trouble. In the same way, I get a lot of trouble. But I want to keep on helping his people. They are the church. They are like the body of Jesus Christ. ²⁵And God gets me to work for his people, so I do this to help you. My job is to tell you God's word, and help you understand it properly.

²⁶At first, God didn't let anyone know what he planned to do. He kept that plan a secret for a really long time. But now he is showing it to his people. ²⁷God wants his people to know that plan. He planned to use Jesus to save people that are not Jews, as well as people that are Jews. And now he is doing that, so it is really great for people that are not Jews. Yes, Jesus Christ lives in you, and he lives in everybody that trusts him, so you can be sure that later on God will make you great.

²⁸So we tell everyone about Jesus Christ. We teach them to follow Jesus and do what he says. You see, God helped us to understand those things properly, and we want everyone to join up with Jesus Christ, and to become really good Christians. And God will see that they are really good. ²⁹So I work really hard to do that. It is hard work, but Jesus Christ gives me his power, and he makes me strong.

Chapter 2

Paul worked hard for Christian people

¹I want you to know that I work very hard for you Christians at Colossae, and also for the Christians at that other town near you called Laodicea. And I work hard for lots of other Christians that have never met me.

²I'm working like this to help you be strong, so that all of you will be joined together by loving each other. You see, I want you to know and properly understand God's plan to use Jesus Christ to save people. Then you will be really sure about it, and that will make you really happy.

³You see, Jesus knows everything, and he understands everything. He is the only one that can get us to think properly, so that we understand what is true. That is really good for us. ⁴I'm telling you these things so that you will not listen to people that teach lies. They might talk in a way that sounds good, but they are liars.

⁵You know, I'm not there with you right now, that is, my body is not there. But I think about you a lot. And

I'm happy about you. You all work together as a group, and you all keep on trusting Jesus Christ properly.

We have to keep on living Jesus's way

⁶You believe in Jesus Christ now, and you let him be your boss. That's good. Keep living his way. ⁷Keep on believing that message about Jesus Christ, and keep on getting to know him better all the time. Keep on strongly believing the things that we taught you. And always thank God very much for everything.

Don't believe any message about God that did not come from Jesus Christ

⁸Some people might try to make you believe some ideas about God that are wrong. Those ideas didn't come from Jesus Christ, but they came from bad spirits, and from the people of this world. People taught those ideas to their kids, and to their grand-kids. But those ideas are not true. They might sound good, but they are tricky lies. Be careful. Don't believe them.

⁹Listen. God himself lives in Jesus Christ. Jesus has a body and God lives in that body, so that Jesus is properly God. ¹⁰And you are joined to Jesus Christ, so God is in you too. He gives you everything that you need to live the right way. And Jesus is the winner over all the other spirit bosses.

¹¹You know that the Jewish people do a young man operation on their baby boys. Well, when you joined on to Jesus, God did something like that to you. He didn't

cut away a part of your body, but it was like he did an operation on your spirit. He cut away a bad part from your spirit. That was the bad part that made you want to do bad things. ¹²You know, after you became a Christian, the church leaders baptised you. You went into the water, then you came up out of it. In that ceremony, it's like you did what Jesus did. He died, and it's like that bad part of your spirit died. And God made him alive again, and he came up out of the grave. And now you believe that God has strong power, and your spirit is joined to Jesus, so God's power makes your spirit alive too, just like he made Jesus alive again.*



Church leaders baptised new Christians

God finished up the power of all the bad spirits

¹³⁻¹⁴You did bad things before. Your spirits still had that bad part that made you go wrong. It is like your spirits were dead. I will use picture talk to show you what I mean. Whenever you did bad things, it is like somebody wrote it down on paper so they could blame you later. But God let them blame Jesus instead of you, and then God chucked that paper away. It is like he nailed that

* 2:12 Romans 6:4

paper to the cross when he let people nail Jesus there. And then God made your spirits alive again, just like he made Jesus alive again. Now he doesn't blame you for the bad things you did.*

¹⁵God did that, and he finished up the power of all the bad spirit mob. He was even stronger than the most powerful spirit bosses. He finished up their power when Jesus died on the cross. He shamed them, and he showed everyone that he is the winner over all those bad spirits.

You don't have to follow laws that people make up

¹⁶You know, some people make up laws, and they reckon that if you want to make God happy, you have to follow those laws. But remember what I just said. God is already happy with you. So don't listen to anyone that says you are wrong if you don't follow their laws. Don't take any notice of them. They might have laws about things you can't eat or drink. Or they might have laws about some ceremonies on special days, or laws about the time of a new moon, or laws about a special day for rest.

¹⁷God gave the Jewish people laws about those things, but they are not for us now. It is like this, and I'm using picture talk again now. Sometimes you see a shadow moving along, and you know that somebody is coming. Well, God gave them those laws, but those laws are just like a shadow. They are not the real person. The real person is Jesus Christ. And now he has come to us, so we

* 2:13-14 Ephesians 2:1-5

don't need to look at that shadow any more. That is, we don't need to follow those laws any more.

¹⁸There are some people that tell lies and say, "God has shown us special things." Those people think up their own ideas, and that makes them feel smart. But they tell you that they are not smart, and then they tell you to show respect to God's angel messengers, as if those angels are God. But they are trying to trick you. Don't take any notice of those people, and don't believe those lies. ¹⁹They are trying to have a church without Jesus.

You see, God set the church up like this. Jesus is the head, and his people are his body. Jesus holds his people together just like a body has joints and ligament strings that hold it together. And God makes the church grow, just like he makes bodies grow.*

²⁰Remember that you are joined to Jesus Christ. It is like you died with him when he died. You don't belong to this world any more, so you don't have to follow the laws that the people of this world make up about God.

²¹They have laws like, "Don't use that thing," and, "Don't eat that," and, "Don't touch that thing." ²²Those laws just come from people, not from God, so you don't have to take any notice of them. Those laws are just about things that wear out when people use them.

²³Those laws might sound like they are good, but they are useless. They get people to do things that hurt their bodies, and then they think they are good, and they think it makes

* 2:19 Ephesians 4:16

God happy. But even when people try to follow those laws, they still can't stop themselves from going wrong. Their bodies still make them want to do bad things, and then they do those bad things. So those laws are useless.

Chapter 3

Think about heaven, and live God's way

¹⁻³You see, you have new life now from Jesus Christ. He is up in heaven now, sitting with God, at God's right-hand side. * He is a powerful boss there with God. Remember that Jesus died, then God made him alive again, and God lifted him up from the grave. Well, you believe in Jesus now, so you have to be better than you used to be. It is like you died with him, and then God made you alive again, and now you live for Jesus. He is in heaven now, so you always have to think about doing good things that belong to heaven. Don't think about doing bad things that belong to this earth. You are joined to Jesus Christ now, and he is joined to God. The people of this world can't see that yet, ⁴but when Jesus comes back, everyone will see him, and they will see that he is great. And they will see you too, and you will be great too.

Do what is right, don't do what is wrong

⁵So now you have to stop doing bad things. If that bad part inside you wants you to do something bad, don't do

* 3:1-3 Psalm 110:1

it. It's like you have to kill that old bad part inside you. Don't listen to it. Don't sleep with anyone that is not your wife or your husband, as if you are married to them. And don't think bad, dirty thoughts. Don't think about doing bad things. Don't be greedy, wanting lots of money and things. Greedy people respect money and things more than they respect God. ⁶You know, some people will not do what God says, and he will be angry with those people, and he will punish them.

⁷At one time, you lived the wrong way, and you did bad things like that. ⁸But now, don't do these bad things any more. Don't get angry easily. Don't go around angry and yelling at people. Don't hate people or think about giving them trouble. Don't talk in a bad way about people, or tell lies about them. Don't talk in a dirty way. ⁹Don't lie to each other. You see, you believed in Jesus, and you stopped living that old way. You stopped doing bad things. * ¹⁰You are now living a new way. God made you a new person, and he is helping you to know him properly. He is the one that made you, and now he is making you more like himself. * ¹¹You are a new person now. It doesn't matter if you are a Jew or not, or if they did a young man operation on you or not. It doesn't matter if you are from another country, or even if you are from a wild tribe. It doesn't matter if you are a prisoner, or a free person. This is what matters, Jesus Christ lives inside all of his people. He is really great.

* 3:9 Ephesians 4:22 * 3:10 Genesis 1:26; Ephesians 4:24

Live God's way

¹²You see, God loves you. He picked you to be his own special people. So you have to live a new way for him. You have to be good to other people. You have to feel sorry for people that have trouble and try to help them. Don't think that you are more important than other people. You have to be easy on other people, and don't get angry with them, even if they give you trouble. * ¹³Don't get upset with each other. If somebody does something bad to you, don't do payback to them. Remember that God doesn't do payback to you, for the bad things that you do. So don't do payback to other people. * ¹⁴And you really have to love each other properly. When you love each other, it is like you properly join yourselves to each other. ¹⁵Jesus Christ wants you to all live together in a quiet way, so let him make you feel happy and quiet inside yourselves, so that you think the right way. That's how you can let him control you.

And think about the good things that God does for you, and always say *thank you* to him for them.

¹⁶And always think about the message that came from Jesus Christ, so that you follow it all the time. Talk to each other about Jesus's message, and help each other to follow it properly. Think about it the right way. If anyone starts to get it wrong, straighten each other out. Remember that God is really good to you, and always be ready to thank him by singing to him with hymns and

* 3:12 Ephesians 4:2 * 3:13 Ephesians 4:32

songs that the Holy Spirit gives you. * ¹⁷Do everything the way our leader, Jesus, wants you to do it, and talk the way he wants you to talk. And always thank God, our father, for the good things that Jesus does for us.

Treat each other the right way

Husbands and wives

¹⁸You women that are wives, you have to think about what your husbands want, and agree with them. That is the right way to follow our leader Jesus. *

¹⁹Yes, and you men that are husbands, you have to do your part too. You have to love your wives properly, and don't ever be hard on them. *

Kids and parents

²⁰And now I am talking to you kids. You always have to do whatever your mothers and fathers want. Our leader, Jesus, is happy when you do that. *

²¹And now I am talking to you fathers. Don't be hard on your kids. Don't make them get angry with you, or they might stop trying to be good. *

Workers and bosses

²²And now I am talking to you people that have to work all the time for other people, like you are their prisoners.

* **3:16** Ephesians 5:19-20 * **3:18** Ephesians 5:22; 1 Peter 3:1 * **3:19** Ephesians 5:25; 1 Peter 3:7 * **3:20** Ephesians 6:1 * **3:21** Ephesians 6:4

Make sure you always do whatever your bosses want. And don't only work hard when they can see you, to make them think you are good. But also work hard when they can't see you. Remember our leader, Jesus, can see you all the time, so respect him, and respect your bosses as you do your job. ²³Work as if you are working for our leader, Jesus, not for a normal human being. So work hard, and be happy about it. ²⁴Yes, you are working for our leader, Jesus Christ, and remember that later on he will pay you properly, just like he promised us. * ²⁵But if you do what is wrong, God will do payback to you for the wrong things you do. God judges each person the same way, no matter who that person is. *

Chapter 4

¹And now I am talking to you bosses that own your workers, like they are your prisoners. You have to give your workers a fair go. You have to look after them properly and give them what is right for them. Remember, you have a boss too. He is God, in heaven. *

Pray to God all the time

²Now I'm talking to all of you. Keep on praying to God, and keep on asking him to help you. Keep your minds properly awake while you pray. Don't give up easily. And also thank God for the good things he does for

* 3:22-24 Ephesians 6:5-8 * 3:25 Deuteronomy 10:17; Ephesians 6:9

* 4:1 Ephesians 6:9

you. ³And pray for us too. Ask God to make a way for us to tell more people about Jesus Christ. We want to clearly tell them the message about God's plan to use Jesus to save them. You know, I told that message to some people, and they didn't like it, so they put me in jail. ⁴But I still have to tell more people about Jesus. So I want you to ask God to help me make this message clear to them.

Help other people to believe in Jesus

⁵And you too, whenever you are with people that don't believe in Jesus, if you can tell them about him, you have to do it. Be sensible in how you live with those people. * ⁶And talk to them in a good way, to get them interested in your message. And be ready to answer their questions.

The end of Paul's letter

⁷⁻⁸All right, I'm not going to write much more in this letter. I will give it to Tikicus to take to you. He is a Christian friend that we love. He works for our leader, Jesus, just like I do, and he always works really well. When he gets to you mob there, he will tell you all the news about us. And he will help you to feel brave, and to trust Jesus more. * ⁹And I'm sending Onesimus with him. You know Onesimus. He is one of your mob, and he is another strong Christian friend that we love. Those 2

* 4:5 Ephesians 5:16 * 4:7-8 Acts 20:4; Ephesians 6:21-22; 2 Timothy 4:12

men will tell you all about everything that is going on here.*

¹⁰Do you remember Aristarkus? He is here with me in jail. He says *hello* to you. And Mark too, he says *hello* to you. He is a cousin of Barnabas. And like I told you before, if he comes to visit you, tell him, “Good to see you, Mark.”* ¹¹And there is another man here that says *hello* to you. His name is Jesus, but we call him Justus. He says *hello* to you too. Those men are the only Jews that are working with me here. They are helping me get more people to come into God’s family, and they make this job much more easy for me.

¹²And Epafra is another one of your mob that is here with me. He says *hello* to you too. He works for Jesus too, and he is always praying strongly for you. He prays that you will keep on trusting God, and that you will properly know everything that God wants you to do.* ¹³I can tell you truly that he works very hard for you, and for the Christians that live in the towns called Laodicea and Hirapolis.

¹⁴Our good friend Luke, the doctor, says *hello* to you too, and so does Demas.*

¹⁵And I want you to say *hello* from me to all the Christians at Laodicea. And say *hello* from me to Nimfa, and to the Christians that meet in her house.

* 4:9 Philemon 1:10-12 * 4:10 Acts 12:12, 25; 13:13; 15:37-39; 19:29; 27:2;

Philemon 1:24 * 4:12 Colossians 1:7; Philemon 1:23 * 4:14 2 Timothy 4:10-11;

Philemon 1:24

¹⁶After you mob at Colossae read this letter, send it to the church people at Laodicea, so that they can read it too. And I sent another letter to that Laodicea mob a little while ago, so after they have read it, make sure you get it from them and read it too.

¹⁷Now here is a special message from me to Arkipus. Tell him, “Our leader, Jesus, gave you a job, so keep on doing it, until you finish it properly.”*

Paul signed this letter

¹⁸*This is me, Paul, writing these words now with my own hand. I got somebody else to write all the words up to here, but I want you to be sure that this letter is really from me, so from here on it is me writing it. I’m saying hello to you mob there at Colossae.*

*Remember that I am in jail here, and pray for me.
I’m asking God to be very good to you.*

From Paul

* 4:17 Philemon 1:2

Notes

About this translation

This booklet uses the **Plain English Version** (PEV) of the Scriptures, an English translation of the Bible designed for Indigenous Australians whose first language is an Indigenous language. Its purpose is to convey the meaning of the original Scripture in English that is easy to understand and natural for them. We have, as much as possible, limited its grammar, semantic and rhetorical features to those common in Aboriginal languages, and its vocabulary to the English that is most widely used.

We have applied the principles of meaning-based translation, wherein we have sought to convey the same meaning that the original authors conveyed to the original readers. That means not just considering individual words, but also the message of the whole passage.

The following are some of the more common modifications that have been made:

- Where the grammar of the original has used the passive voice, we have used the active voice, since the grammars of most indigenous Australian languages do not have passive voice.
- Where the original text has used an abstract noun to express a concept that is fundamentally an action or a quality, we have usually used a verb or adjective to translate that concept, since abstract nouns are comparatively rare in Australian languages.
- Where the grammar of the original has used long and complicated sentences, we have conformed to the grammars of Australian languages by using shorter sentences, making other adjustments as necessary to retain the meaning carried by the grammar of the original.
- Where the original text has implicit or background information that would not be obvious to our target audience, we have made that information explicit.
- Where the original text has used a word or phrase, the literal translation of which would not be understood by our target audience, we have used an explanatory rendering to convey the same meaning, whether or not it involved more words.
- Where the original text has used figurative language that would be taken as literal by our target audience, we have stated the meaning of the figure rather than its literal form.
- Where the original text is not in chronological or logical order, we have usually adjusted the order of information.

At any one place in our translation we may have used a combination of the above.

PEV Translation Team