

# *Know the God of Scripture*

Volume 1

(revised 10/10/2024)

## **Week 48: The Christian Life - Answer Guide**

*Below is the answer guide for this week's lesson. By no means are the answers complete or the only possible responses to each question. They are a guide to fully understanding the intent of the questions posed.*

**1.** Paul lived his life for Christ in both word and deed. He desired that everyone he influenced would see how he lived, how he prayed, how he showed compassion, how he taught, how he had zeal for evangelism, how he worked, how he served, etc. He had a heart whose desire was to please the heart of God (2 Corinthians 5:9).

**2.** Paul was encouraging the Philippians to live like Christ as an example of righteousness. He emphasized the words of Jesus (Matthew 20:16) that the first will be last and the last first. Jesus humbled himself by leaving heaven and being incarnated before men. He always thought of others first, being obedient to the point of death, even on a cross, demonstrating His love for mankind (reference Romans 15:3).

**3.** Know (*gnonai*) connotes to know by “experience.” Power (*dynamis*) means ability to overcome resistance (particularly of self). As Christ died for our sins, we, too, must die to our sins. As He suffered, we, too, must suffer for following Him. The power of the resurrection is our source of encouragement to sustain the Christian life.

**4.** Paul did not beg for support; he made his need be known and trusted God to provide in every circumstance. He had been both rich and poor, and in either case, trusted Christ to provide. In every situation Paul encountered he trusted in Christ to strengthen him. This verse is often misquoted by many as a reference to the ability of self to attain a goal (Reference 1 Timothy 1:12).

**5.** Some of the concerns Paul addresses in Colossae are:

- Philosophy of attaining higher “knowledge” to worship Christ (Colossians 1:24-2:3) - Gnosticism promoted the idea that higher learning (knowledge) was key to properly knowing Christ and therefore being saved. They believed that only a few had the knowledge of the true Christ. The “mystery” promoted by Paul is the unlimited grace God demonstrated by sending His Son as redemption to mankind. It is now manifested in all who believe.
- Jews stressing the need to observe Law and ceremonies (Colossians 2:16-23) - As mentioned already in the book of Galatians, adherence to the Law is unattainable by sinful man. When one gives themselves to Christ they are filled with God’s Spirit which leads them to a desire to abide in the Law. Not the other way around.
- Worship of angels (Colossians 2:18) - The worship of angelic, spiritual, beings was prohibited by Paul in the church. In no circumstance should we worship angelic beings.
- Christology without acknowledging the human nature and deity of Christ (1:15-16; 2:9) - Docetism, the notion that Christ wasn’t really man nor fully God, was making waves in the church. Paul states that not only was He God, He was used in the creation of the universe by God, from the beginning. Adam was “made” into His image, whereas Christ was the perfect image of God.

**6.** Seven characteristics of Christ are found in Colossians 1:15-20. He is:

- the image of God
- firstborn over creation
- creator of the universe
- head of the church
- firstborn from the dead
- the fullness of God
- reconciler of all things

Jesus is supreme Sovereign of the universe which was made by Him, for Him and through Him. All of this points back to the Creation account in Genesis 1. Reference Week 1 study where Elohim is the plurality of God and the “us” phrases found in Genesis 1-3.

**7.** To better understand Platonic thinking, research Plato’s Cave at:

<https://interestingliterature.com/2023/03/plato-allegory-of-the-cave-summary-analysis/>

Plato taught in “forms” and “shadows,” those things that were real in reality and those that appeared real. Paul was versed in Platonic thinking and demonstrates that in some of his writings. To Paul, Christ was the reality, the very substance of ideology. What the Old Testament foreshadowed, Christ fulfilled. The shadow was simply an image, whereas Christ was the substance, the true “form.”

**8.** The Spirit sets our mind on things above, whereas the flesh is temporal and focused on things that are temporal. Believers should consider their flesh dead to fleshly desires, no longer in need of satisfaction. Believers now live for the future, not the present. Life in this world will be better if it is lived by a power beyond this world.

**9.** Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote these roles and responsibilities to the church at Colossae. Therefore, the roles of fathers, mothers, children and employees (slaves) that Paul lays out here are applicable to believers today. As a husband and father, I am to love my wife as Christ loved (agape) the church and to give my life to her as a living sacrifice. I am to raise my children according to Scriptures, disciplining them and guiding them to the cross. I am to reflect Jesus in my work ethic and work as if working for the Lord.

**10.** Onesimus was a runaway slave who belonged to Philemon. He had been converted by Paul and was now useful (his name meant “useless,” a play on words here) to the ministry of Paul. He accompanied Tychicus in delivering this (and other) letter. It appears Mark had reconciled with Paul (they were both in Rome together) The letter to Laodicea mentioned here is most likely Ephesians, which was also delivered by Tychicus.

### **Additional Questions:**

**1.** Christians must recognize that God is the initiator of our faith. He extends to us the free gift of grace to wretched sinners to come to Him for salvation. Grace is imputed to man and man responds with faith in Christ as God’s Son, given to him by God, as the only means of forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation. These two couplets are foundational to the Christian’s life.

**2.** In light of the context from which it is written, the words in Philippians 4:13 can be included in our prayers when we ask God to provide us the strength, the stamina or the encouragement to maintain our walk with Him during tough times. Paul is exclaiming that he is able to fulfill the will of the Father in all circumstances because it is the Son that empowers him to do so.

**3.** Our salvation lies in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus had to be both man and God in order to offer us salvation. It was man that initiated sin so it had to be man that initiated the reconciliation process. However, God being pure light, could not be in the presence of the darkness of sin in man's life. So, Christ had to be man to reach out to man, but God to reach out to God to bring the two together in reconciliation.

