

# TRITE, *not* TRUE

JARRETT STEPHENS

rightnow MEDIA

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## SESSION 6: “I Can Do ALL Things... *Philippians 4:13*”

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### ► SERIES RECAP

*You and I are swimming in a culture full of opinions masquerading as wisdom. What’s worse, much of what passes as wisdom today has the ring of biblical truth. How do you tell the difference? How do you see through half-truths and self-help trends to access the deep wisdom of God’s Word and the full life found in Him alone?*

*Those are the questions Jarrett Stephens tackles in his series Trite, Not True – where he explores six of the most common pop philosophies that influence people’s lives today, including Christians.*

*As you dive in, you’ll discover how to decipher superficial insights from the real truth of God’s Word, as well as how to apply biblical wisdom to your everyday life. Because ultimately, the life of meaning and impact you long for doesn’t come from a philosophy, platitude, maxim, or mantra... but from one person, Jesus Christ.*

### ► OPEN

(Simple intro to frame the objective of the group study, break the ice, and get people thinking)

**Ask the group:** If you could have any superpower, which one would it be and why?

Superheroes are hugely popular in today’s culture. With so much out of our control in life, we love the idea of having the power to stand strong and make a difference. With a superpower, you could do more, be more, and make a bigger impact on the world than you could with your own normal abilities.

In the Bible, one verse has unofficially grown into the “superpower for Christians” verse, and it’s our phrase for today: *Philippians 4:13*.

*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*

If you’re wondering how an actual Scripture verse made its way into this series, it’s because the pop psychology applied to *Philippians 4:13* is not in what it says but in how it’s interpreted. Let’s dig in.

### ► WATCH THE VIDEO

**Jarrett Says:** Pastor Jarrett tells the story of playing football and writing *Philippians 4:13* on his towel. Though it was partly to be a witness for Christ, it also communicated exactly what he wanted to hear when playing football:

I can make a play through Jesus...

I can score a touchdown through Jesus...

I can get back up after being knocked down through Jesus...

I can chase that person down that’s faster than me through Jesus who strengthens me...

### ► DISCUSS (ASK YOUR GROUP):

Have you ever heard people use *Philippians 4:13* in this way or in a similar way? Share some examples.

How do you think most people interpret this verse?

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**DIG DEEPER:** Interpreting Scripture is something we’re tempted to do through the lens of self. When approaching a passage, we often ask questions like, “*What does this say about me? How does it apply to me?*” and “*What am I supposed to do now?*” Instead, the first question we should always ask is, “*What does this verse say about God?*” How would asking this question first change your perception of Scripture when you read it?

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## ► WHAT THE WORLD SAYS

Pastor Jarrett mentioned three common misconceptions when it comes to Philippians 4:13. Let's explore them.

### **Misconception #1: I can do ANYTHING through Him who strengthens me.**

If you're 5'4" and 150 lbs., you're not going to make it as an NFL linebacker. If you're tone deaf, you're not going to get a standing ovation on the opera stage. God gave each one of us strengths and abilities – and weaknesses. He will work through everything He gave us for His glory... but maybe not the way we think He should or want Him to.

Philippians 4:13 is not a promise that *anything* you set your mind to will magically happen.

### **Misconception #2: I can do all things... EVEN IF I'm not walking with Him.**

Philippians 4:13 is a promise in Scripture, but it's a *conditional* promise. It's for those who don't simply say they follow Jesus, but who actually walk with Him daily.

Pastor Jarrett used the example of football lights in the video. Electric lights only come on when they're connected to a power source. Even if a light had the highest possible wattage, you wouldn't know it if it never got plugged in. You'd just be standing there in the dark.

God's power in us is the same.

If we want to have strength for today, we've got to walk with Jesus today. We must stay connected to Him because the moment we disconnect is the moment we start losing power.

**Ask Yourself:** In John 15:4, Jesus says, "Abide (or "remain") in Me, and I'll abide in you." Our ability to do all things IN Christ depends on our willingness to do all things WITH Christ – *abiding* in Him. Noted 19th Century pastor J. C. Ryle described abiding in Christ this way: "To abide in Christ means to keep up a habit of constant close communion with Him – to be always leaning on Him, resting on Him, pouring out our hearts to Him, and using Him as our Fountain of life and strength, as our chief Companion and best Friend."

How are you abiding in Christ today?

### **Misconception #3: I can do all things... because it's about ME.**

No one would admit they look at this verse this way, but if we're not careful, we can put the emphasis on "I" instead of "Him".

It's a subtle distinction, but an important one, because this verse is not about us – what *we* can accomplish or how *we* can stand out. It's about God working THROUGH us. *He* is the hero here.

We need to make sure we're not using this verse to set out to accomplish something for ourselves and simply use God as the instrument or tool to do it.

Do any of these misconceptions hit home for you? Which ones? Share some examples?

## ► WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

One of the keys to accurately interpreting a verse of Scripture is to understand the context within which it was written. In this case, we know the Apostle Paul was in prison because he says in Philippians 1:13, "*It has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ.*"

The whole book, in fact, is a letter from Paul to his friends in Philippi, thanking them for sending a generous care package while he was in jail. He also uses the letter as an opportunity to encourage them in their faith. Though they were enduring hard times and persecution – just as he was, in prison – Paul pointed them back to God, again and again, showing that contentment in Christ is what would strengthen them, *no matter what else was going on.*

Now that we know the background, let's read Philippians 4:13 in context.

*Ask a participant to read the verses*

- *Philippians 4:11–13*

What new insights about the verse popped out to you this time?

Think back through each of the misconceptions we discussed earlier. How does this deeper understanding of the passage shed even more light on why they're misleading?

*(Leader's note: As a review, the misconceptions are: I can do anything at all through Christ, I can have God's strength even when I'm not walking with Him, and doing all things through Christ is all about me.)*

▶ **APPLY THE BIBLICAL TRUTH IN YOUR LIFE**

How would you rephrase Philippians 4:13 in your own words?

Pastor Jarrett rephrased the verse like this:

***We have a supernatural ability combined with a supernatural capacity that results in supernatural strength to handle in a supernatural way whatever God allows in our life.***

What does it mean to have a **supernatural ability**?

When we get saved, God puts his Holy Spirit in us... therefore the supernatural (God Himself) is living *in* us.

What does it mean to have a **supernatural capacity**?

When we go through hard times, God expands our capacity to endure. Paul learned that going through the ups and downs of life, which included beatings, shipwrecks, and imprisonment.

When he walked – stayed, remained, abided – with Jesus, he received a supernatural capacity to handle whatever came his way. The same is true for us.

What does it mean to have **supernatural strength**?

Some versions translate Philippians 4:13 as, *“I can do all things through Him who infuses strength into me”*.

As we walk with Jesus, He infuses us with power and strength *at the exact moment of our need*. Oftentimes we are brought to our limit – stretched to a supernatural capacity. Why? So that the supernatural power and strength of God can be put on display.

▶ **CLOSE**

Life isn’t easy. Struggles come, whether we walk with Jesus or not. But when we do walk with Him, staying close and abiding in Him, then He infuses us with His strength to endure troubles, hardships, and difficulties. It’s a different kind of superpower – one that makes us look less like the superheroes we see in the movies but more like Jesus.

Philippians 4:13 is a promise we can claim, but it’s not about us. It’s for us. We can do all things through Christ who gives us strength.

***Prayer:*** Heavenly Father, thank You for sharing Your strength with us when we need it. Your promises are good, and Your love never fails. Help us to stay connected to You so those around us experience You through us. Remind us that our greatest abilities ultimately come from You. It’s a privilege to use them for Your glory. Thank You for being our strength. We love You. In His name, Amen.

▶ **NOTES**

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