

EMMAUS EQUIPPING COLLEGE

Grasping God's Word - Assignment 12

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Assignment 13:1

To get the heart of Philippians 4:13 - *"I can do all things through him who strengthens me"*, it helps to look at where Paul was coming from. He wrote it while locked up in a Roman prison, facing a trial that could easily have ended in his execution. He was thanking the church in Philippi for their financial support, but he also wanted to make it clear that his peace of mind didn't depend on his circumstances, whether he had plenty or nothing or whether he was free or behind bars. At its core, the passage is about endurance, staying true to your calling, mission-driven contentment and divine sufficiency in changing circumstances. Here is a "real-world scenario" that captures those same themes.

Maria is a doctor who walked away from a high-paying private practice to run an underfunded clinic in a remote, struggling area. Because of heavy red tape and local political shifts, she's suddenly hit with travel restrictions and administrative probation. She can't leave town, her funding is stuck, and local officials who oppose her work are threatening to pull her medical registration. She's exhausted, stuck in one place, and facing a really uncertain future.

A group of her old med-school classmates finds out what's going on and pools their own money to send her financial help and medical supplies, keeping the clinic's doors open for another month. Maria writes back to thank them deeply.

In her letter, Maria expresses how grateful she is, but she also shares a bigger realisation. She explains that while the supplies are a massive help, she had already learned how to keep going when the clinic had nothing, just as she knew how to manage things when she had a massive budget back home.

She writes: *"I'm not sharing this because I'm desperate. I've learned how to stay steady no matter what kind of bureaucratic hurdles or budget cuts come my way. I know what it's like to have plenty of medical supplies, and I know what it's like to make a single bottle of amoxycillin stretch as far as possible. In every situation, I've found how to keep going. I can fulfil my calling to look after these patients and weather these restrictions, not because my environment is easy, but because the strength keeping me going has nothing to do with my circumstances but rather my trusting the Lord and the peace and assurance He gives me through all things."*

Assignment 13:2

A member from the group spoke out and asked the speaker;

"To whom should I afford mercy to?"

The speaker replied as follows;

"The noon sun hung over the scorched valley outside Kabul like a brass shield, baking the clay until it cracked. Along the lower trade route, winding through the narrow Tang-e Gharu gorge connecting Jalalabad to Kabul, a traveller was making his way toward the capital city."

(Kabul–Jalalabad Highway - National Highway 08 - is historically and continuously regarded as the most dangerous road leading from Kabul to a neighbouring town. While famously dubbed "The Valley of Death" due to its terrifying geographical drops and catastrophic traffic accidents, it is also highly notorious for armed robbers, outlaws, and illegal checkpoints.)

"He was a Pashtun, a member of the elite ruling class, wearing fine robes and carrying a heavy leather purse of silver coins meant for his estate. He knew the warnings of the elders: "The high road is for the safe; the low road is for the desperate." But arrogance had made him careless, and he had chosen the quickest path and to travel it alone.

Without warning, a gang of men lunged from the shadows with clubs raised.

The Pashtun fought back, but he was overwhelmed in seconds. They beat him to the dirt, stripped him of his embroidered tunic, tore away his coin purse, and left him sprawled in the dust, bleeding, half-conscious and hardly breathing.

An hour later, the rhythmic jingle of harness bells broke the silence. Riding down the path was a senior religious scholar of high standing in the city, returning from a council of clerics. Draped in immaculate white vestments, the scholar sat high upon a well-groomed mule.

He spotted the broken form lying awkwardly by the side of the road. The scholar reined in his mount, his eyes widening in alarm.

The man was clearly battered and bloodied. The scholar's mind raced, the region was lawless. The outlaws might still be watching from the ridges, waiting in ambush. Furthermore, touching a bloodied body outside of ritual purification would render him unclean, barring him from leading afternoon prayers.

"If he is already dead, touching him defiles me," the scholar whispered to himself, his hand tightening on the reins. *"And if he lives, let the local magistrates deal with such crime."*

He nudged his mule sharply, veering wide around the bleeding Pashtun. He kept his eyes fixed forward, reciting a silent prayer of protection under his breath, and trotted away without looking back.

Shortly after, a second traveller approached. This was a wealthy government official wearing a suit tailored from imported Italian wool. A man of vast political influence who moved through the world in a tinted, armoured SUV. Seeing a body at the side of the road, the official stepped out to inspect it.

He looked down at the Pashtun noble with a mixture of cold detachment and mild annoyance.

“How tragic” the official murmured, speaking more to his own reflection in the car window than to the dying man. *“The breakdown of social order in these outer districts is appalling. The Ministry really ought to deploy more checkpoints.”*

He took out his smartphone to capture a quick photo of the scene, intending to post a scathing commentary on his socials about the urgent need for state security and harsher policing. But as he looked closer, he recognised the clan crest on the battered man’s ring. He belonged to a rival political faction currently locked in a bitter power struggle with the official's own patronage network.

The official frowned. Associating with a political rival in distress could draw unwanted scrutiny from powerful allies, or worse, entangle him in an embarrassing factional scandal.

“Can't get involved in political messes” he said aloud, slipping his phone back into his pocket. He climbed into his vehicle, locked the doors and sped off, the vehicle’s tyres grinding uncomfortably close to the noble's outstretched hand.

As the afternoon light began to lengthen, casting long, bruised shadows across the valley, a third traveller appeared on the road.

He was a Hazara driving a rickety utility truck laden with scrap metal.

When he saw the figure in the dust, he slammed on the brakes bringing his old truck to a clanking halt and he leaped out.

Kneeling directly in the dust, ignoring the way the dirt ruined his only decent pair of work trousers, he realised that the person before him was a Pashtun—a member of the dominant ruling class that had historically marginalised his own people and subjected them to systemic discrimination in the cities.

He had spent his life dodging checkpoints, enduring slurs, and swallowing quiet humiliations from men of the exact same social standing as the one now bleeding out in front of him.

Unlike the religious scholar or the government official, the Hazara driver did not calculate political risk, legal liabilities, or ethnic grievances. He saw a human being whose chest was barely moving.

He knew he would immediately fall under suspicion of foul play simply because he was a Hazara, but he couldn’t just leave him there; he had to do something.

He gently cradled the wounded Pashtun's head. *"Hey. Look at me. You're going to be alright"* his voice thick with empathy. He had seen what hatred and violence could do. It was a language his own people knew too well.

Working quickly, the driver unclipped a large canvas water jug from his truck bed. Speaking words of comfort, he washed the blood and grit from the Pashtun's face,. He took a clean rag from his pocket and bound a deep gash on the man's arm.

With agonising care, the driver lifted the limp body into the passenger seat of his truck, propping him up against a cushion. He drove him straight to a small, independent health clinic run by volunteers on the outskirts of the valley. A place that treated the injured without asking for tribal lineage or political papers.

Because the clinic's resources were strained, the driver stayed through the evening. He paid the intake nurse out of a tin can he kept under his truck seat, savings he had set aside for his daughter's modest school fees.

The next morning, before the sun crested the ridge, the driver had to leave for a distant work site. He pulled the head nurse aside and handed her some money, it was all the spare cash he had left.

"Keep him here until he can walk on his own" the driver quietly instructed her. *"He has no one. If he needs more medicine or food before he can leave, put it on my account at the salvage yard in town. I'll settle it when I come back through next week."*

The murmurs settled in the room. The speaker looked up at the circle of listeners, men and women who had spent their lives building walls of dogma, wealth, and ethnic pride.

The speaker asked a single question, quiet but heavy with inescapable truth:

"Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbour to the man who fell victim to the robbers?"

One of the listeners, hesitant to bring himself to mention the name of the minority group he despised, could only offer a fractured response:

"The... the one who showed mercy."

The speaker's voice answered back into the stillness:

"Go and do likewise."

Assignment 13:3

First Timothy 6:10a reads “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.”

Take this verse through the interpretive Journey, including the application process:

1. **Grasp the text in their town. Summarise the original situation and the meaning of the text for the biblical audience.**

The church in Ephesus was dealing with a major mess because some shady leaders were treating the faith like a get-rich-quick scheme, basically teaching that being religious was a great way to line your pockets (1 Timothy 6:5). Paul wrote to Timothy to shut those guys down and look out for a pretty young, impressionable group of believers.

In Ephesus back then, being rich meant everything—it bought you social standing, power, and influence. These false teachers saw ministry as a sweet career move and were completely obsessed with cash. So when Paul dropped the line about the "love of money" being the root of all kinds of evil, he was calling them out face-to-face. He wasn't saying money itself is evil, but rather that making it your ultimate obsession—and selling out your morals to get it—is the breeding ground for every bad thing you can think of, from dishonesty and greed to walking away from God entirely. For those early Christians, the message was simple: building your whole life around chasing wealth is a trap that wrecks your faith.

2. **Measure the width of the river. What are the differences between the biblical situation and our situation?**

Flesh is flesh—nothing has changed there. The only difference is that our current environment is far more complex and advanced, while greed driven deception has become a whole lot more sophisticated and stealthier.

Research shows that the overall baseline rate of everyday lying for self-gain has not drastically multiplied for most people, but a small, concentrated minority of prolific liars accounts for a disproportionate majority of all falsehoods told and misleading many. (Source <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6890208/>)

3. **Cross the principising bridge. List the theological principles communicated by the passage.**

Making money your main goal destroys your spiritual life. When you put financial security above everything else, you inevitably drift away from God, reverse self-sufficiency and ultimately compromise your morals. Greed is the starting point for all kinds of wrong-doing. An obsessive craving for wealth acts as the root system that feeds all sorts of destructive habits, deceptions, and bad choices. Using religion to get rich is a complete corruption of true faith. Turning ministry or church communities into a hustle to line your own pockets totally twists what genuine faith and Godly leadership is meant to be.

Real contentment comes from God, not wealth, status, power, etc. While money itself isn't evil, how you prioritise and handle it reveals whether you truly trust God to take care of you or if you're putting all your "faith" in your bank account. We could go on and on...

4. Consult the Biblical map. How does our theological principal fit with the rest of the Bible?

a. Grasp the text in its own town. How should individual Christians today live out the theological principles? Observe how the principles in the text address the original situation.

The principle that loving wealth destroys spiritual devotion and breeds corruption is a recurring, foundational theme across both the Old and New Testaments.

The Old Testament repeatedly warns against trusting in wealth (Deuteronomy 8:11–17) and condemns exploiting the vulnerable for financial gain (Amos 8:4–6). Proverbs 23:4 warns ***"Do not wear yourself out to get rich; give up your own cleverness,"*** mirroring the idea that the pursuit of money is a trap.

Jesus addresses this head-on, declaring that you cannot serve both God and money (Matthew 6:24) and warning that the deceitfulness of riches chokes out spiritual fruitfulness (Mark 4:19).

Paul's repeats this sentiment directly, noting that greed is a form of idolatry (Colossians 3:5) and warning believers against the destructive trap of wanting to get rich (1 Timothy 6:9).

Across the entire Bible, wealth is consistently viewed as a potential tool rather than a master. The moment money shifts from a resource to an object of worship/ultimate security, it derails a person's walk with God.

Individual Christians live out these theological principles by intentionally shifting their relationship with money from one of worship and security to one of stewardship and contentment.

Putting these principles into practice involves several key lifestyle commitments:

Practising radical contentment, consciously fighting against lifestyle creep and consumerism by learning to be satisfied with basic provisions. This means choosing not to measure personal success or worth by the size of a pay-slip, career, real estate portfolio, superannuation balance, house size, brand of car, etc.

Prioritising generosity over hoarding, regularly giving away time, energy, and finances to support the vulnerable, the church/Brethren and those in need. Radical generosity acts as an antidote to greed, breaking the psychological grip that money tries to hold over a person's sense of security.

Maintaining spiritual integrity especially under pressure or temptation. Refusing to compromise moral boundaries, honesty, or family life for career advancement, bonuses, or financial gain. **When faced with a choice between making a profit and doing what is right, believers choose spiritual integrity.**

Guarding against manipulative deceitful theology. Discerning and rejecting religious or secular messages that treat faith, ministry, or God as a transaction vehicle designed to generate personal wealth. True faith seeks God for who He is, not for what material benefits He can provide.

Regularly auditing financial motives, purposefully taking time to examine personal budgets, spending habits, and financial goals to ensure that God remains the ultimate master of the household, while money is kept strictly in its place as a temporary tool for Kingdom work.

Again, we could go on and on.

b. Discover a genuine parallel situation in your world.

A direct modern parallel exists in the "prosperity gospel" or financial manipulation found within certain sectors of modern media, television ministries, and high-profile church organisations. In these spaces, preachers exploit the faith, hopes, and financial struggles of everyday believers, heavily promoting the idea that financial giving directly triggers tangible and intangible wealth/benefits "blessing". Beyond institutional religion, a secular parallel is found in modern hustle culture, where professional success and relentless wealth accumulation are treated as the ultimate measures of human worth, leading individuals to sacrifice their families, ethical boundaries, and spiritual lives on the altar of career and cash.

c. Make your applications specific by creating real-world scenarios or by contemporizing.

Scenario 1 - A middle manager at a corporate firm discovers that cutting corners on safety regulations and falsifying sustainability reports will secure a massive year-end bonus and fast-track a promotion. Applying the principle means choosing integrity over income—recognising that the craving for financial status is tempting them to compromise their moral boundaries, and opting instead to report the true state of affairs, even if it costs them the financial gain.

Scenario 2 - A Christian family experiences significant lifestyle "improvements" as their household income increases. Instead of increasing their generosity or practising contentment, they tie their self-worth and security entirely to upgrading their home, car and investment portfolio, slowly edging God out of their financial decision-making. Applying the principle involves auditing their budget to intentionally practise financial contentment, setting strict caps on lifestyle "improvements" and prioritising radical generosity to break the psychological grip that money has on their sense of security and social status.

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