

Made Fit, Delivered, Carried Across

COLOSSIANS 1:9-14 (WEB) · SMALL-GROUP LESSON · DIGDEEPER.AI

The Big Idea

Every strong verb in this passage is something God did to you while you weren't even in the room, so the strength you keep trying to manufacture is actually a supply line you just haven't tapped yet.

Opening Lines

Paul is praying hard for a room full of people he has never met, from a prison cell, and everything he asks God to give them is something God has to do — not something they can pull off. Watch who does the verbs. That's the whole lesson.

Before You Teach

- Goal: Get the room to see that 'made fit,' 'delivered,' and 'carried across' are all done to them, not by them, so they stop straining to earn a spot they already hold. They should leave lighter, not busier.
- If you're short on time, cut: If time is tight, cut the second cross-reference detour and keep the three passive verbs front and center. Don't lose the transfer language.
- Where the moment lives: It lives in the moment someone realizes they've been trying to walk themselves out of the darkness God already carried them out of. Protect the silence after that lands.
- Your prep: Read verses 12-14 out loud three times before you teach, marking who is the subject of every verb. If you can't feel the weight of 'you didn't move yourself,' the room won't either.

Run It In Your Setting

The same lesson, sequenced three ways. Pick the one that fits your group and your clock.

CLASSROOM · ~20 PEOPLE · 45 MINUTES

Classroom opening — read 12-14 twice, hunt the verbs (5). Teach 'methistēmi' with the sideways steps (8). Questions 1-3, using silence hard after Q2 (18). Argue-the-other-side on Q5 as a whole-room assignment (8). Out-loud commitments and prayer (6). Transformation lives in the Q2 silence — don't shortchange it. Cut the cross-reference detour first.

SMALL GROUP · ~8 PEOPLE · 60 MINUTES

Small-group opening — 'what have you tried to earn that was already given' (8). Read passage, teach the verb (10). Questions 1-4 with real silence between each (25). Argue-the-other-side, assign one person the skeptic role (7). Commitments out loud and

spontaneous prayer over their actual words (10). Transformation lives where someone names their strained verb; stay there if you must. Cut Q3 first if needed.

COFFEE · 2-3 FRIENDS · 30 MINUTES

Coffee opening — 'which of the three do you try to do for yourself' (5). Read 12-14 together, say the 'carried across' image in plain words (5). Sit with Q1 and Q2, mostly Q2 (13). One-sentence commitment each (4). Short prayer over what they named (3). Transformation lives in the single honest admission — protect it, don't stack more questions on top.

Silence

This week we drill silence — a habit for every lesson you'll ever teach, this week we drill it deliberately. Remember week 1, when you went first and went real? This is the twin skill: after you ask a real question, close your mouth and let it sit. Count to ten in your head. Do not rescue the room. The average teacher waits about two seconds and then answers their own question, which trains people that questions are rhetorical and they don't have to think. Silence feels like failure from the front and feels like respect from the chair. At level 1, just practice not filling one specific gap tonight: after your hardest question, say nothing until someone else does, even if it's genuinely uncomfortable. Watch what surfaces when you stop protecting people from thinking.

Why This Passage Matters

Most people in your room are exhausted from trying to qualify — for God, for a promotion, for their family's approval, for a sense that they're doing enough. They read a passage like this and their eyes slide right past the grammar to the moral: try harder to know God's will, walk worthy, bear fruit. And they leave heavier than they came. But Paul buried the good news in the verbs. He does not tell the Colossians to deliver themselves or make themselves fit. He tells them God already did it — made them fit, dragged them out of the dark, and picked up the whole community and set it down in a Kingdom they cannot be evicted from. The strength Paul prays for isn't willpower they crank up; it's power on loan from God's own glory. When your room catches this, the pressure valve opens. They stop performing and start receiving. That's why you get to teach this: you are handing tired people the one thing they've been trying to earn and telling them it's already in their hands. Few passages let you do that so cleanly. Don't waste it on a to-do list.

Catch the Fire First

Before you stand in front of anyone, do the exercise yourself. Take verses 12-14 and write down every verb with God as the subject: made fit, delivered, translated, redeemed, forgave. Then, opposite each one, name one concrete area of your life where you're still acting as if it were your job to do that verb — where you're trying to make yourself fit, or deliver yourself, or earn back in. Say it out loud alone in the car: 'I keep trying to deliver

myself from ___, and Paul says God already did it.' If it doesn't move something in you, you'll teach it as information. Feel it first, then walk into the room.

Bring Your Own Story

- A time you strained to earn something that turned out to already be yours — and how it felt when you found out.
- Someone who prayed for you before you ever met them, whose name you learned only later.
- A stretch of waiting where 'endurance with joy' was not automatic — where the strength clearly wasn't coming from you.
- SAMPLE (polished vs real): Polished — 'I learned to rest in grace.' Real — 'I paid off my dad for a car he'd already given me because I couldn't believe it was a gift; he cashed the check, then framed it and handed it back.'
- Guardrail: keep it one honest scene, not a raw dump — the story serves the verse, it isn't the whole hour.

Three Ways to Open

CLASSROOM: "Read verses 12-14 aloud once. Then say: 'I'm going to read it again. This time, tell me who is doing the action in every sentence.' Read it slowly. Let them catch that it's God, God, God — before you say a word about what that means."

Prime the grammar before the meaning — make them look before you tell them.

SMALL GROUP: "Ask: 'What's something you've tried to earn that you were actually already given?' Let two or three answer. Then: 'Paul is writing to people who are being told they haven't done enough. Listen to what he says God already did.'"

Start with the felt problem, not the text, so the passage lands as an answer.

COFFEE: "'Paul says God did three things to these people that they couldn't do for themselves — made them fit, pulled them out of the dark, and moved them into a new Kingdom. Which of those three do you most often try to do for yourself?'"

One verse, one hook, no runway.

Teaching the Word

The word to teach is the verb behind 'translated us into the Kingdom' (verse 13) — the Greek 'methistēmi.' It's not a soft, spiritual word. It's the word an ancient empire used when it conquered a region and physically deported an entire population — uprooted them, marched them across a border, and resettled them in new territory. Nobody in that population volunteered. Nobody packed their own bags. Stand up and take three deliberate steps sideways as you say it: 'You did not walk yourself out of the domain of darkness. You were picked up and carried across, an entire people relocated by a King.' Then let it land: you have already been transferred into a Kingdom you cannot be

expelled from. [Silence.]

Discussion Questions

1. In verses 12-14, who is doing the verbs — and what does that change about how you read the whole passage?

Coaching note: You want them to say 'God' out loud. If they jump to application, pull them back to the grammar first. The insight has to be theirs, not yours.

If it stalls: Just point at verse 13: who 'delivered' and who got delivered? Say it as a fill-in-the-blank.

2. Where in your own life are you still trying to do a verb God already did — make yourself fit, deliver yourself, earn your way back in?

Coaching note: This is the heart question. Ask it, then use this week's drill: go silent and count to ten. Do not rescue them. The first honest answer usually breaks the dam.

If it stalls: Ask a yes/no way in: 'Do you ever catch yourself feeling like you have to prove you belong to God? Just nod or shake your head.'

3. Paul prays their knowledge of God's will would produce a changed walk. Why does he tie knowing and doing together so tightly?

Coaching note: Steer them off the idea that this is 'study more.' Knowledge that leaves the life untouched isn't the knowledge Paul means. Let someone name knowledge that never moved them.

If it stalls: 'Think of something you know is true but don't live like it's true. What's the gap made of?'

4. The strength Paul prays for is 'endurance and perseverance with joy.' How is that different from just gritting your teeth?

Coaching note: Watch for the willpower answer and gently correct it — the power is 'according to the might of his glory,' on loan, not manufactured. Let them feel the difference.

If it stalls: 'Have you ever endured something hard and it drained you dry, versus endured something hard and somehow had joy in it? What was different?'

5. Let's argue the other side: make the strongest case that this passage IS asking you to perform — that 'walk worthily' and 'bearing fruit' put the burden right back on you. Who'll steelman it?

Coaching note: Assign it as a role so it's safe — it's a job, not a confession. Let them build the real objection before you answer. The room that has honestly felt it holds the truth differently. Then walk them back to who does the verbs.

If it stalls: 'If a skeptic said this is just religion telling you to try harder with extra steps, what's their best line? Say it in one sentence.'

Questions You May Hear

"How did Paul know what to pray for a church he'd never even visited?"

Epaphras, who brought the gospel to Colossae, traveled to Paul in prison and reported on their faith and love. So these aren't recycled template prayers — they're a real report turned into intercession.

"What does 'made us fit to be partakers of the inheritance' actually mean — fit how?"

It means God qualified you; you didn't qualify yourself. Paul deliberately makes it something done to us, so the inheritance is a gift you receive, not a status you achieve.

"Isn't 'walk worthily of the Lord' asking us to earn our standing?"

No — notice the order. The passage grounds everything in what God already did in verses 12-14, then the walk flows out of that. You're not walking to get in; you walk because you've already been carried in.

"Why does Paul talk about being 'delivered from the power of darkness' — were the Colossians into something dark?"

False teachers were pushing them toward secret knowledge and philosophies that promised more than Christ. Paul's language echoes Christ's own commission to him in Acts 26:18 — turning people from darkness to light and from Satan's power to God.

For Experienced Leaders

- Don't teach the verbs as a vocabulary lesson. Perform them — the sideways steps for 'carried across' will do more than any explanation.
- When someone confesses a real place they're straining, do not immediately fix it with theology. Let it sit for a beat. The silence honors what they risked.
- The 'argue the other side' move works best when the room is nodding too easily. If everyone agrees this passage is pure grace, that's your cue to make someone defend the performance reading — hard.

Landing the Lesson

Commitments: Ask each person to finish this sentence out loud: 'The verb I keep trying to do myself is ___, and this week I'm going to let God have it by ___.' Make them name a concrete action, not a feeling.

Close by praying out loud over the specific verbs people just named — the exact things they said they've been trying to do themselves. Don't reach for a written prayer; saying their own words back to God, thanking him that he already did those verbs, is the whole point.

If you run out of time: If the room never gets past question 2, stay there. Watching people admit out loud where they're straining is worth more than finishing the list.

Midweek follow-up: Midweek, text one person: 'Have you managed to let God have that verb this week, or are you still white-knuckling it?' Just that. See what comes back.

Free at digdeeper.ai/devotionals/colossians/1-9-14/lesson

Handout

COLOSSIANS 1:9-14 (WEB) · DIGDEEPER.AI

During the lesson:

- Write the five things God does in verses 12-14 (made us __, __, __, __, __):
- One verb I keep trying to do for myself (make myself fit / deliver myself / earn back in):
- Somewhere I'm 'enduring' by gritting my teeth instead of drawing on God's strength:
- One person waiting on hard news I could carry in prayer this week — their name:
- The sentence I said out loud tonight: 'The verb I keep doing myself is __, and I'll let God have it by __.'

Take-home actions:

- Next time you're stuck on a decision, pray Paul's actual words — ask God to fill you with wisdom to know his will here — then wait through the day without forcing an answer.
- When someone asks how you are, skip 'fine' and name one real thing you're thankful for out loud.
- Before you sleep tonight, thank God for one specific sin you know is forgiven — name it, and thank him it's buried at the cross.

You are not being asked to earn a place you already hold.