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Read, Connect, and Reflect

I read 100% of Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians.

There is a very clear pattern that exists in each of the letters that Paul writes. The second section in the pattern, thanksgiving, is what caught my eye during my reading because is sometimes seems unusual. Paul always says something along the lines of, “We always thank God for you and your love.” Because Paul always makes a point of including these thanks, it almost seems like he is just going through the motions and that he is not really all that thankful for the churches. After all, he is writing them because they need correcting in some way of another, so why would Paul include this deep expression of thanks? I think it is because, beyond the fact that the churches are Christian and are attempting to follow the ways of Christ, they have shown Paul some hospitality and they have been kind to him. Paul is also sort of softening the blow by first making them feel good with praise. These are, of course, just my speculations; they may be completely wrong.

Before taking Bible classes in college, I never really thought of the Bible as being both fully human and fully divine. I probably would have aligned myself with the view that the Bible was strictly the Word of God and nothing more. Although I realized that the Bible was physically written by human beings, I thought that God dictated to them exactly what to say word for word so that in all matters, the Bible was 100% correct. There are obvious instances where the Bible has incorrect information, however, such as some of the anatomical references made. These inconsistencies do not discredit the Bible, but rather they point to another view of it. The Bible is the Word of God written by humans in history. Thus it both a fully divine document and it is an historic piece of writing. Now that I see the Bible in this way, I am able to think of certain passages and books differently. For instance, in this section of reading, all of the books are letters to churches. I always knew this growing up, but now I am able to take this into account more and think about Paul, the author, and what may have been going on in his life at the time or for what reasons he decided to write to the churches. Thinking this way gives me insight into the true meaning of these books of the Bible so that I can apply them to my everyday life in the way that they were intended to be applied to the lives of their original recipients.