

“YOU ALL”

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Here in the southeastern part of the United States, it is a normal part of polite speech to refer to more than one person as “you all,” or by the shortened form “y’all.” This idiomatic form of speech may sound strange to those of other regions, but it is a natural part of southern conversation.

The closest the Bible gets to this “southern” language is the King James Version of Matthew 26:27 when Jesus gives the disciples the cup and tells them to “drink ye all of it.” The New King James Version translates it with the more basic “Drink from it, all of you.”

The apostle Paul used the phrase “you all” in his writings, but not because of a language peculiarity. He used it as an expression of Christian unity and fellowship. His every “you all” was a reference to some local portion of “all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor. 1:2). He used it as he informed brethren that they all were mentioned in his prayers:

- ◆ I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for **you all** with joy (Phil. 1:3-4)
- ◆ We give thanks to God always for **you all**, making mention of you in our prayers (1 Thess. 1:2)
- ◆ I thank my God through Jesus Christ for **you all**, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world (Rom. 1:8).

He also wished his love and the blessings of God upon His brethren:

- ◆ My love be with **you all** in Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 16:24)
- ◆ Now the God of peace be with **you all** (Rom. 15:33)
- ◆ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with **you all** (2 Cor. 13:14)

Peter also wished “peace to **you all** who are in Christ Jesus” (1 Pet. 5:14). All faithful Christians should know that they share in a unique relationship with God and one another. All of us are striving together for the same goal. How appropriate it is that the Bible ends with John’s desire that “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with **you all**. Amen” (Rev. 22:21).