



eLesson 014

Text: Colossians 4:7-18

Subject: People are Important

Colossians - Part 12

A short assignment. Paul's personal greetings and comments conclude this letter to the Colossians. He ended many of his letters that way. More than 50 similar verses are in his letters to Timothy, the Romans, and the Corinthians. These verses were important to the original readers ... particularly to the people mentioned by name. Should these verses be skimmed over by us as an unimportant afterthought? No ... but they often are. Are these verses important for us? Yes! *"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness."* 2 Timothy 3:16. These last 12 verses in Colossians are part of Scripture. Therefore, they are very important. I want you to do something before you continue this lesson ... read Colossians 4:7-18 praying that God will teach you, improve you, correct you, and train you with this important part of His Word.

What did you learn from those verses and your prayer? Did you see that Paul and Timothy had a heart for people? These verses teach us that people are important. However, some of God's children do not feel very important. David wrote, *"No one cares for my soul."* Psalm 142:4. Today, too many Christians feel that same way. They know that someone does care for their attendance ... does care for their contributions ... and does care that they are on the membership list. However, they feel that no one truly cares for their soul. They feel alone even though they are active in the programs of the church. Too often, the program is cared for ... but the person is not. These last verses in Colossians give us proof that Paul and Timothy truly cared for people. It is interesting that they did not write about programs. They never mentioned new methods to increase attendance. They did not even mention a building program. Were programs, methods, and buildings not important to them? These things may be important. However, people are more important. Only three things last forever ... God, God's Word, and people. Paul and Timothy cared for individuals. They mentioned a number of people by name. In addition, they mentioned believers from the neighboring cities of Laodicea and Hierapolis ... their fellowship did not end at the door of the church, at the end of the membership list, or at the city line. Who truly cares for your soul? Maybe your answer is that no one does ... then you need to pray that God will bring someone who does care into your life. Whose soul do you truly care for? Maybe you already know who that person is ... or maybe you need to pray that God will show you who that is.

Tychicus and Onesimus? Paul wrote, *"As to all my affairs, Tychicus, our beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow bond-servant in the Lord, will bring you information."* Colossians 4:7. Have you ever thought about Tychicus? Who was he? What did he do? Tychicus accompanied Paul on his third missionary journey. He was Paul's messenger to Colossae, Ephesus, and Crete. Would you like to have had his ministry ... traveling around the Mediterranean through Italy, Greece, and Asia Minor? Maybe you could even have spent the summer with Titus on the island of Crete. A

Mediterranean vacation sounds good. However, think a minute before you answer. The trip from Rome to visit the Colossians was more than 1,000 miles (1,600 km) ... south through Italy ... across the Aegean Sea ... and then inland to Colossae in Asia Minor. The trip to visit Titus in Crete was not easy either. Crete is about 200 miles (320 km) south of Athens out in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea. Jewish non-believers undoubtedly persecuted Tychicus for spreading what they considered to be heresy. In addition, the priests and followers of the local pagan religions might have persecuted him. There were no cars, buses, trains, or planes. There were no diesel-powered commuter ferries ... only ships powered by wind in their sails. There were no telephones to call ahead to make reservations ... no e-mail to pre-arrange or confirm his schedule in Colossae ... and no wristwatches to control the schedule. There were dangers from disease, storms, and robbers. There was no indoor plumbing. So I ask you again ... would you like to have had his ministry? Tychicus was a beloved brother, faithful servant, and bondservant of the Lord. Maybe that is why he accepted the assignment ... maybe that is why he was entrusted with it. Onesimus traveled with Tychicus to Colossae. Onesimus had been a runaway slave from Colossae. Paul brought him to faith in Jesus while they were in prison together ... and he was transformed from a non-believing runaway slave to a *"faithful and beloved brother"* 4:9. He became a servant of the Lord. Tychicus and Onesimus traveled together to Colossae to encourage the believers with news of how Paul was doing in his chains in Rome.

Greetings from others. Aristarchus, Mark, and Justus sent their greetings, Colossians 4:10-11. Aristarchus went with Paul on his third missionary journey. This Macedonian from Thessalonica traveled with Paul to Rome. He was Paul's fellow-worker and fellow-prisoner. Mark was a relative of Barnabas and likely Jewish by birth. Do you remember the account of Peter's miraculous release from prison in Acts 12? Christians had gathered to pray. God sent an angel to free Peter. After his release, Peter went to the home where they were praying. That was the home of Mark's family, Acts 12:12. Maybe it was then that Peter led Mark to Jesus, 1 Peter 5:13. Mark accompanied Paul on his first missionary journey ... but deserted during the trip. Paul refused to take him on his second missionary journey because of that failure. However, Barnabas took Mark on a missionary journey to Cyprus. Mark had again become an associate of Paul by the time of this letter to the Colossians. Moreover, at the end of Paul's life, he was Paul's useful co-worker, 2 Timothy 4:11. God often gives second chances. Mark got a second chance to serve. The second time he was faithful. What might Mark's answer have been if someone asked, "Who cares for your soul?" He could have said, "Peter does ... Barnabas does ... Paul does." If you were an important leader like one of those three men, would you have been too busy to care for someone like Mark? Would your schedule have been too full to bother with an unimportant man who had already failed once? Peter, Barnabas, and Paul realized that their important work was people. They cared for Mark as an individual. He was important to them in spite of his failure. Were they right? The answer is obvious. People last forever ... programs do not. This man is probably the Mark who wrote the second Gospel. Justus also sent his greetings. These three men were Paul's fellow-workers *"from the circumcision"* Colossians 4:11. That might simply be a reference to their heritage as Jewish by birth or conversion. It is more likely that they had been involved formerly in the legalistic *"party of the circumcision"* Galatians 2:12, or with the rebellious teachers *"of the circumcision"* Titus 1:10-11. However, one thing is clear ... Aristarchus, Mark, and Justus had *"proved to be an encouragement"* to Paul, Colossians 4:11.

Epaphras sent his greetings, 4:12. Who was Epaphras? He was Paul's fellow-prisoner, Philemon 23, and a beloved fellow-bondservant who was a faithful servant of Christ, Colossians 1:7. Epaphras may have been the first to proclaim the Gospel in his hometown of Colossae, 1:5-7. He prayed earnestly that they would *"stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God."* 4:12. The Colossian people, and those in the

neighboring cities of Laodicea and Hierapolis, were important to Epaphras, 4:13. Luke also sent his greetings, 4:14. Luke was a great man of God ... physician ... missionary ... and author of the third Gospel and the book of Acts. He traveled with Paul on the second missionary journey ... and with him to Rome. On the way to Rome, he was shipwrecked with Paul on Malta. Luke was Paul's faithful co-worker and loyal friend until the end of Paul's life, 2 Timothy 4:11. Demas also sent his greetings, Colossians 4:14. He had been Paul's fellow-worker ... but not everyone that starts well ends well. Demas loved the world more than he loved his Savior. He deserted Paul and left for Thessalonica, 2 Timothy 4:10. Have you started well? Then finish your course. Fight the fight. Keep the faith. Do not love the world ... do not let it squeeze you into its mold. Fulfill your ministry. Will you finish well? Will you be steadfast until the end?

Paul sent his greetings to the believers in Laodicea ... singling out Nympha and the church that met in her house, Colossians 4:15. Some male leaders act as if women are invisible ... Paul did not. This letter was to be read in Colossae ... and then also read in the church of the Laodiceans, about 15 miles (24 km) to the northwest. Another letter had been sent to Laodicea ... it was to be read in Colossae also. Paul sent a special message to Archippus ... a man he described as his fellow-soldier in Philemon 2. Paul wrote, *"Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it."* Colossians 4:17. Those are good words for each of us. Each of us needs to take heed to, and fulfill, the work that God has planned for us. Paul's message to Archippus was his last personal greeting in this letter. People were very important to Paul. Are people important to you? Paul finished by writing some words with his own hand, as was his custom. He asked that they pray for him in his imprisonment. Then he gave a final blessing, *"Grace be with you."* People sure were important to Paul. Are they important to you?

Paul and Timothy wrote a powerful letter to the believers in Colossae. It is an important letter for us today. They wrote of doctrine and they wrote of obedience. They wrote as two men whose hearts were given to God ... and therefore given to their fellow-believers. Why did they write this letter? They wrote it to, *"Proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ."* Colossians 1:28. I pray that this series of lessons through the book of Colossians has helped you ... and will help you *"Be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light."* Colossians 1:9-12. I also pray that you will multiply it into the lives of your fellow-believers.

This concludes the study of Colossians.



Study Questions Answers at end of lesson.

1. Why are so many personal comments included at the end of Colossians?

4. What do you think changed Mark from a deserter to a faithful friend in the Lord?

5. How would you be different if you, like Mark, had spent considerable time with Peter, Barnabas, and Paul? Will you pray for disciples like them to come into your life? Will you pursue some?

6. Are you more committed to people or to programs? Why?

7. What do you need to do to prioritize people in your life?

8. In considering the entire study of Colossians, what important lessons have you learned?

9. In considering the entire study of Colossians, what changes do you need to make?

10. When and how will you make those changes?



Answers to Study Questions

1. Why are so many personal comments included at the end of Colossians? **People are important.**
2. List the people and groups mentioned in Colossians 4:17-18. **Tychicus, you (the Colossians), Onesimus, Aristarchus, Barnabas's cousin Mark, Justus, Epaphras, those who are in Laodicea and Hierapolis, Luke, Demas, Nympha and the church that is in her house, the church of the Laodiceans, Archippus, and Paul.**
3. What are the three things that last forever? **God, God's Word, and people.**
4. Describe the ministry of Tychicus. **He was faithful ... beloved ... a fellow bondservant with Paul ... a messenger ...and a traveler.**
5. What was a main ministry of Epaphras? **Praying for the Colossians.**
6. How does Matthew 13:22 apply to Demas? **Demas deserted the ministry because he loved the world and became unfruitful.**
7. What is a major lesson to learn from verses like Colossians 4:7-18? **People are important.**

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Special notes:

If one of your commitments to change is to learn more about God and the Bible, then you might benefit from www.eBread.org for a daily byte of the Word ... and/or you might benefit from the more comprehensive studies on www.MyDisciplemaker.org.

If one of your commitments to change is to become a more effective witness ... try the Level 2 course *Disciplemaking 2* on www.MyDisciplemaker.org.

In addition, you might find www.911GOD.org an effective tool in your witnessing.

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