

# Examples of How to Live Your Faith

*Colossians 4:7-17*

## I. v9 - Onesimus: the Servant Life

### A. His character.

1. He is called a “faithful & dear brother”.
2. He had been Philemon’s slave (**Philemon 16**).
  - a. Philemon was a leader of one of the churches in Colossae.
  - b. The church may have met in his home.
  - c. Onesimus ran away & probably robbed Philemon in the process.
3. He found Paul in prison in Rome & was converted by him.
4. As a new Christian, he did what he decided was the right thing - return to his old master.
  - a. A master had the power of life & death over a slave - this was a scary decision!
  - b. Paul had never been to Colossae but met & converted Philemon somewhere else.
  - c. The relationship between Onesimus & Philemon now was that of brothers in Christ!
  - d. The Letter to Philemon, delivered with this letter, was Paul’s appeal to his former convert to do the right thing with Onesimus - hinting that freedom & return to Rome to help Paul might be the right thing.
  - e. Paul’s fellow prisoners & companions - Epaphras, Demos, Luke, Aristarchus & Mark - are mentioned in the Letter to Philemon as well as here.
5. **This the story of obedience to what is right in the face of terrible possible consequences!**

### B. Onesimus’ later ministry.

1. He may have actually become Ignatius of Antioch.
2. Ignatius was one of the “Church Fathers” of the 2nd Century.
3. Ignatius became the Bishop of Ephesus.

## II. v10 - Mark: the Reformed Life

### A. His character.

1. Background history.
  - a. He was Barnabus’ cousin.
  - b. **Act 12:12** - His house, shared with his mother Mary, was the location of one of the churches in Jerusalem.
  - c. **Act 13:5** - Mark was Paul’s assistant on his 1st mission journey.
  - d. **Act 13:13** - Mark chickens out about half way through the mission journey & goes home.
  - e. **Act 15:37ff** - Paul & Barnabus, Paul’s best buddy, have a falling out over Mark’s desertion.
2. **v10** - About 10 years later, Mark is reinstated in Paul’s affection & is now with him in Rome.
  - a. **Philemon 24 & II Tim 4:11** - Mark is now a fellow laborer & very useful in Paul’s ministry.
  - b. **I Pet 5:13** - Peter calls Mark his son.
  - c. **This is the story of genuine repentance & restoration to Christian fellowship!**

### B. Mark’s later ministry.

1. Clement of Alexandria (150-215 AD) quoted Papias (60-130 AD):
  - a. Mark was Peter’s interpreter when they were in Rome.
  - b. Mark wrote the Gospel of Mark using Peter as his primary source.
2. Eusebius (325 AD).
  - a. Mark founded the churches in Alexandria, Egypt.
  - b. Mark made so many converts that it amazed the Jewish philosopher Philo.

### III. v12-13 - Epaphras: The Prayer Life

#### A. His character.

1. **Col 1:7** - "A dear fellow servant" & "faithful minister of Christ".
2. **v13** - "A hard worker".
3. **v12** - "Always wrestling in prayer". **ILL: Jacob wrestling for the blessing (Gen 32:24-29).**
4. **This is the story of a prayer warrior - hours of prayer & a lot of emotional energy involved!**
5. **ILL: The Story of Paul Yonggi-Cho & the Yoido Church in Seoul, Korea.**

#### B. Epaphras' later ministry.

1. He may have founded the churches at Colossae, Hierapolis & Laodicea.
2. He evangelized the cities of the Lycus valley in Phrygia.

### IV. v14 - Luke: the Faithful Life

#### A. His character.

1. He was a physician who came from Antioch of Syria.
2. **Philemon 24** says that he labored with Paul.
  - a. He went with Paul on his 2nd, 3rd & final mission journeys.
  - b. He stayed with Paul for 2 years when Paul was imprisoned in Caesarea.
  - c. He was shipwrecked with Paul on their last journey to Rome.
3. **II Tim 4:9-11** - He remained faithful to Paul when the others left.
4. **This is the story of faithfulness to the ministry under great adversity!**

#### B. Luke's later ministry.

1. He wrote the Gospel of Luke & the Book of Acts.
2. **This is the story of humbleness as a Christian servant!**
  - a. He was a physician - a medical doctor - yet gave up his practice to serve the Lord.
  - b. In volume, he wrote 1/4 of the whole NT & yet never mentioned himself.

We have such a great heritage in Christ to live up to. These disciples became great heroes of the faith. Look to their examples. Develop the obedient servant life; the genuine repentant life; the consistency in prayer life & the life of faithfulness so that one day you could be considered a hero!

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