

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

Examples of How to Live Your Faith

Colossians 4:7-17

¹ The last few verses in the Book of Colossians lists a few people that provide good examples of how to live your Christian life. I would like to pick out four of them I know something about. Let's look at Colossians, chapter 4, verses 7 through 17. ²

Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts. He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here. My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.) ¹ ₃

Jesus, who is called Justus, also sends greetings. These are the only Jews among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have proved a comfort

¹ Colossians 4:7-10.

to me. Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. I vouch for him that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis.² ⁴

Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings. Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house. After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea. Tell Archippus: “See to it that you complete the work you have received in the Lord.”³ ⁵

My first example is . . .

² Colossians 4:11-13.

³ Colossians 4: 14-17.

I. Onesimus - The Servant Life - v9

Onesimus. ⁶

Let's look at his character. ⁷ He is called here a **faithful**
and dear brother. ⁸

He had been the slave of another Christian brother
named Philemon. ⁴ ⁹

Philemon was a leader of one of the churches in
Colossae. The church may have met in his house. ¹⁰

Onesimus ran away and probably robbed Philemon in
the process. He found Paul in prison in Rome. During
their encounter Paul led Onesimus to the Lord. ¹¹

As a new Christian, Onesimus had a problem. He was
a run-a-way slave. He decided he had to do the right
thing and return to his old master. But, at that time, a
master had the power of life and death over a slave.
This was a scary decision! ¹²

Paul had never been to Colossae but had met and

⁴ Philemon 16 - . . . no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear
brother.

converted Philemon somewhere else. ¹³

The relationship between Philemon and Onesimus now was that they were brothers in Christ! ¹⁴

The Letter of Philemon (another book in the New Testament), delivered with this letter, was Paul's appeal to his former convert and friend, to do the right thing with Onesimus.

Paul hinted that freedom and a return to Rome to serve Paul might be the right thing to do! Paul's fellow prisoners and companions; Epaphras, Demos, Luke, Aristarchus and Mark, are mentioned in the Letter to Philemon as well as here! ¹⁵

This is the story of obedience to what is right in the face of terrible possible consequences! ¹⁶

Apparently, Philemon did the right thing and freed Onesimus to return to Rome.

Onesimus later may have become Ignatius of Antioch. Ignatius was one of the early Church Fathers in the second century! History tells us Ignatius ended up

becoming the Bishop of Ephesus! ¹⁷

The second example of a Christian life here is . . .

II. Mark - The Reformed Life - v10

Mark. ¹⁸

Let's look at Mark's character. ¹⁹

We know he was Barnabus' cousin. ²⁰

His house, shared with his mother Mary, was the location of one of the churches in Jerusalem. Peter went there after being delivered by an angel from prison. ⁵ ²¹

Mark was Paul's assistant on his first mission journey. ⁶ ²² But then, Mark chickens out about halfway through the mission journey and goes back home. ⁷ ²³

Paul and Barnabus, Paul's best buddy, have a falling

⁵ Acts 12:12 - When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying.

⁶ Acts 13:5 - When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. John (Mark) was with them as their helper.

⁷ Acts 13:13 - From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where John left them to return to Jerusalem.

out over Mark's desertion. ⁸ ₂₄

Now, notice verse 10 here. ⁹ About ten years later, Mark is reinstated in Paul's affection and is now with him in Rome! ₂₅

Mark is now a fellow laborer and very useful in Paul's ministry. Philemon, verses 23 and 24, **Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings. And so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers**. Again, in Second Timothy, chapter 4, verse 11, **Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry**. ₂₆ Peter even calls Mark his son! ¹⁰ ₂₇

This is the story of genuine repentance and restoration to Christian fellowship! ₂₈

⁸ Acts 15:37-39 - Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company.

⁹ Colossians 4:10 - My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him).

¹⁰ I Peter 5:13 - She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you her greetings, and so does my son Mark.

What was Mark's later ministry? ²⁹

Clement of Alexandria, who lived 150 to 215 AD, quoted Papias, who lived 60 to 130 AD, telling us that Mark was Peter's interpreter when they were together in Rome. Mark wrote the Gospel of Mark using Peter as his primary source of information. ³⁰

Eusebius wrote in 325 AD that Mark founded the churches in Alexandria, Egypt. He made so many converts that it amazed the Jewish philosopher Philo!

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**The third example of a biblical Christian life is that of
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III. Epaphras - The Prayer Life - v12-13

Epaphras. ³²

What was his character like? ³³

Colossians, chapter 1, verse 7 says he was a **dear fellow servant and a faithful minister of Christ.** ¹¹ ³⁴

In our text today, verse 13 states that he was a **hard worker** and ³⁵ verse 12 says **he was always wrestling in prayer** ¹² like Jacob wrestling with the angel! ¹³ ³⁶

This is a story of a prayer warrior who must have spent hours praying with a lot of emotional energy involved!

When I was stationed in Korea as a chaplain, I took a bus of soldiers to a retreat center in Seoul every other month. Sunday, before we headed home, we attended

¹¹ Colossians 1:7 - You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ.

¹² Colossians 4:12-13 - Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. I vouch for him that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis.

¹³ Genesis 32:24-29.

the Yoido Church, the largest church in the world. At that time their membership was about 650,000. When I checked their website a few years ago they had just broken the one million membership mark!

Pastor Paul Yonggi-Cho repeatedly emphasized this phenomenal church growth was solely the hand of God. He prays several hours each morning and the growth happens! He says prayer is the key. ³⁷

What was Epaphras' later ministry? He may have founded the churches at Colossae, Hierapolis and Laodicea. We know he evangelized the cities of the Lycus Valley in Phrygia. ³⁸

**Our fourth example of an outstanding Christian life is
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IV. Luke - The Faithful Life - v14

Luke. ³⁹

What about his character? ⁴⁰

We know he was a physician who came from Antioch of Syria. ⁴¹ **Philemon 24 says that he labored with Paul.**

¹⁴

The Gospel of Luke records him with Paul on his second, third and final mission journeys. He stayed with him for two years when Paul was imprisoned in Caesarea. Luke was shipwrecked with Paul on their last journey to Rome. ⁴²

Second Timothy, chapter 4 tells us he remained faithful to Paul when all the others had left. ¹⁵ ⁴³

This is the story of faithfulness to the ministry under great adversity! ⁴⁴

¹⁴ Philemon 24 - And so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers.

¹⁵ II Timothy 4:9-11 - Do your best to come to me quickly, for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me.

What happened to Luke? 45

He wrote the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts in the New Testament. 46

This is the story of humbleness as a Christian servant! He was a physician, a medical doctor, who gave up his practice to serve the Lord. In volume, he wrote one quarter of the entire New Testament and yet never mentioned his name!

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 and the life of faithfulness so that one day you could be considered a hero!

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