

Lesson 9

**Rooted in Christ;
He is our Encourager...
so live in him, fulfilling our own
ministry**

GETTING STARTED

1. Our Study: Colossians 4:7-18

Overview

For a few minutes think through the entire Letter to the Colossians. See if you can recall the major emphases in each chapter.

Review your memory passages.

Pray for new insights as you study this lesson.

Concerns About the Life in Christ

Pastor Dix unconsciously tapped the desk with his pencil as he gazed out his study window, watching Mrs. Bly walk toward her car. Discouragement engulfed his spirit as he admitted to himself, "Well, I guess we have lost her to the other group... I was too late... We did too little."

He thought about his brief acquaintance with her and their conversation during this one visit. Relatives of the woman had written him an email, asking him to contact her, because of their concern that she was being influenced by this other group.

"Have you really joined the other group?"

"Yes, they put pressure on us, and we joined two weeks ago."

"But do you really believe what they teach? Some of what they profess and practice is contrary to the Scriptures."

"It is true - I don't understand a lot of things they teach, but then I didn't understand everything that your church taught either."

"But why did you change then?"

"You see, we were new to town. We attended several churches, but no one paid any attention to us. We were lonely and they visited us. When we went to their meetings, they acted as if we were important and welcome. Once, I attended here and no one spoke to me. The members of this other church did something which no one else did - they offered us friendship."

If you were a member of Pastor Dix's congregation, how would you feel? _____

DIGGING IN... for the facts

2. Paul's Faithful Companions (Colossians 4:7-18)

It is only natural that Paul would close his letter with greetings from other persons. Do we not often close our communications with greetings from members of our family? Paul is introducing some of his "brothers in Christ," some whom the Colossians knew and some they were to meet. Paul gives sort of a snapshot picture of each one.

Read these word pictures of Paul's companions and summarize what is said about each one. Study references from other portions to get a more complete picture of each person.

A. Snapshot

1. *Tychicus* - Colossians 4:7, 8; Ephesians 6:21; Titus 3:12. _____

2. *Onesimus* - Colossians 4:9; Philemon 1:10-14. _____

3. *Aristarchus, Mark, Justus* - Colossians 4:10, 11; Acts 15:36-39. _____

4. *Epaphras* - Colossians 4:12, 13; 1:7. _____

5. *Luke and Demas* - Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:10, 11. _____

B. Greetings

1. To the churches - Colossians 4:15, 16. _____

2. To Archippus - Colossians 4:17. _____

3. Paul's signature - Remember his hands were most likely chained to a guard. _____

What is his appeal? _____

What is his greeting? Note 2 Thessalonians 3:17. _____

DIGGING DEEPER... for understanding

3. What Is the Work of the Saints?

A. Paul has given us brief sketches of individuals who were very important to him personally and to the work of the early church. These companions of Paul reflect characteristics which should be found in the lives of the saints. Restudy this section (Colossians 4:7-18) and apply its message to the saints in our churches of today. What should be our characteristics if we claim to be workers in Christ's kingdom? Make a list of at least six.

B. What kind of persons does God need as workers in His church? For further insight make a quick study of Romans 12. What does Paul have to say to you if you are to be a witness in Christ's body, the church?

1. In terms of commitment? (12:1, 2) _____

2. In terms of your importance in the body of Christ? (12:3-8). Paul lists here a variety of gifts. We sometimes hear people say, "I have no talent. There is nothing I can do." As you study this list, enumerate those gifts which every person can have in some measure and can use for the advancement of the Gospel. Note that the emphasis is on the use and not on the gift! _____

3. In terms of attitudes toward other members and the work of the church? (12:9-13) _____

4. In terms of attitudes toward those who oppose and disagree with you? (12:14-21) _____

GROWING... in Christ

4. What Does This Mean to Me?

The purpose of Bible study is not just to observe facts in the Bible, but to help followers of Jesus to become more certain about their relationship with Christ and more concerned about their relationships with others.

A. How would you interpret the love and concern of Christ reflected in his followers, if you heard the following statements?

1. "My elder came to my house and we talked about sports and the weather, but we didn't speak much about Jesus Christ." _____

 2. "The little children make so much noise during worship. We should have 'children's church' for them during worship so that we aren't distracted by the noise." _____

 3. "I would attend the meeting, but it's difficult for me to support all the changes going on around here." _____

 4. "Yes, I did hear that Mrs. Jans was in the hospital, but I'm so busy I really don't have time to visit her or prepare a meal." _____

 5. "I think the (younger generation/older generation) don't understand. Being a member here is frustrating because the (younger generation/older generation) don't want from a church what I want." _____

- B. Reread the story in Section I of this Study Guide. Is this a problem in our congregation? How might it be approached? _____

- C. If you were as committed to spreading the Gospel as some are committed to their favorite team/show/cause, what are some things you would be doing that we are not doing now? _____

- D. Why is it so much easier to talk about recipes with our friends or family than to talk about Jesus? _____

6. How to Respond

Reflect... on Thomas á Kempis description of Jesus' followers: "Jesus always has many who love his heavenly kingdom, but few who bear his cross. He has many who desire consolation, but few who care for trial. He finds many to share his table, but few to take part in his fasting. All desire to be happy with him, but few wish to suffer anything for him. Many follow him to the breaking of bread, but few to the drinking of the cup of his passion. Many revere his miracles, but few approach the shame of the Cross. Many love him as long as they encounter no hardship, many praise and bless him as long as they receive some comfort from him. But if Jesus hides himself and leaves them for a while, they fall either into complaints or into deep dejection."

Evaluate... yourself as a member of your congregation. Ask yourself some inventory questions: With whom do I always drink my coffee at church? What one new person have I become acquainted with during this last month? Have I taken time out to encourage someone else in his or her faith by sending a text or email, by making a visit to a shut-in, by inviting someone to attend worship or Bible study with me?

Pray... for the called workers and those in leadership positions in your church. They all have moments of discouragement, too. Especially pray for members who volunteer in their communities, at their workplace, and at church... often without thanks or recognition. Ask God to make clear to you ONE thing you can do to help someone experience the love of Christ through you!