

The Study

Paul concludes the letter to the church at Colossae with greetings *to* and commendation *of* several people.

Vs. 7-9 • Tychicus & Onesimus are on their way from Paul to Colossae, no doubt returning with Epaphras (v. 12), a pastor at Colossae. Tychicus is mentioned five times in the New Testament, always connected with Paul, who depended on him to carry important communications. Onesimus was a runaway slave who came to faith through Paul's ministry and was helpful to him. Onesimus is the central focus of another of Paul's letters, *Philemon*, Onesimus' master.

Vs. 10-11 • Aristarchus, Mark, & Justus were the only Jewish believers who dared associate with Paul, who was under imperial disfavor. Mark's presence on that list is remarkable in light of the earlier falling out between him and Paul.

Vs. 12-13 • Epaphras was not only the pastor of Colossae; he also seems to have been a pastor of the nearby cities Laodicea and Hierapolis.

V. 14 • Luke & Demas sent their greetings to the Colossians. This Demas later fell away, much to Paul's grief. (2 Tim 4:10)

Vs. 15-18 • Closing greetings to the Colossians & Laodiceans.

The Discussion

In light of the comments Paul makes regarding all these folk, along with the hint at their stories those comments suggest, this might be a good time for your group members to give their testimony.

If there are only a few of you, all can give their testimony. If your group is large, maybe a few now and then in the coming weeks until all have shared.

Another helpful exercise is to do what Paul does here. Instead of your group members telling their Jesus-story, go around the group and verbally affirm one another.

Describe what spiritual gifts you see at work in one another.

What qualities of spiritual maturity do you see in each other?

How do each of the members of your group "show" Jesus.

Though in v. 14 Demas was with Paul when he penned Colossians, he later bailed on him and on Jesus. (2 Tim 4:10)

Think about all Demas had seen and heard while a companion of Paul.

If he could turn his back on all that in favor of a "love for this world" none of us is beyond the danger of slipping away from The Faith.

In the end, faith isn't a matter of evidence and pure reason. It's far more about desire. It's less about the head and more about the heart.

How ought that shape our prayers for ourselves and others?