

# Preeminent. Christ's Place in Your Walk

## WEEK 17 Greetings from the Brethren



*“Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord” (Colossians 4:7).*

It was common for letter writers in the first-century Greco-Roman world to include several greetings from the author and his companions in the closing lines of their epistles. This was true also when the apostles sent their correspondence, and in today’s passage, Paul begins to draw his epistle to the Colossians to a close with remarks about two of his brothers-in-the-Lord, Tychicus and Onesimus.

Tychicus was likely the courier who brought the epistle to the Colossians to the church in Colossae. Many commentators believe that he also carried the letters to Ephesians and Philemon with him for delivery in the region, but in any case, he was going to stay in Colossae at least long enough to provide the church there with more information about Paul’s imprisonment (Colossians 4:7–9). We do not know very much about Tychicus. He first appears in Scripture in Acts 20:1–4 as one of the apostle’s traveling companions through Macedonia. Hailing from Asia, it is possible that he was originally from Ephesus, as that city would have been considered part of Asia in the ancient Roman world. In any case, it is plain that he was regarded as a “beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord,” for that is how he is described in Ephesians 6:21 and Colossians 4:7. He also appears in 2 Timothy 4:12 and Titus 3:12 as one whom Paul sent to work among the believers in other places.

Onesimus, as we will see in due time, was a runaway slave who once belonged to Philemon. Apparently, Onesimus was an unbeliever when he ran away from

### COLOSSIANS 4:7-18 CORAM DEO

As believers in the gospel of Jesus Christ, we must always speak the truth, but we must always speak it in love (Ephesians 4:15). Our default position should be to build networks with other believers and churches who are passionate for the gospel even when they may have different styles and priorities, not to work or act as if ministries and churches that do not do things the way we do are somehow unworthy of our friendship.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> From Ligonier Ministries, the teaching fellowship of R.C. Sproul. All rights reserved. Website: [www.ligonier.org](http://www.ligonier.org)





## EXPLORE IT

3. How does Paul describe Tychichus, and what did Paul ask him to do?
4. What did Paul say about the ministry of Epaphras in verse 12?
5. According to verse 16, with whom were the Colossians to share this letter?
6. In verse 18, what does Paul ask the Colossians to remember?

## GET IT

*This passage is about Paul's last reflections and instructions to this fledgling church. Then, he issues a series of blessings and endorsements on the people who helped him. It is a testament to the importance of influence, mobilization, faith in action, and being kind and good people who get excited and joyful about their task and call. If someone in leadership has all the gifts and abilities except the ability to get it across to others, then he is pretty*

*much ineffective and in the wrong position. The list of names in this passage shows us the importance of mentoring and working through one another as ministers or in ministry. This is about being utilized and taught, willing to grow from our relationships and network so they are utilized and flowing, especially with God. Then we can be used to energize and complement one another. We can collectively be used with the gifts and abilities to strive to the fullest to the Glory of God and persevere with the Gospel.<sup>2</sup>*

7. What can we learn about first-century Christianity and church involvement from this passage?

What similarities do you see today? What differences?

8. Paul gives us a list of many people with different areas of giftedness, who came from different backgrounds, and who had been of great service to Paul and his ministry. How should this encourage and motivate us as believers?
9. "Friendships expand the capacity of the soul to experience life." How have you seen or experienced this? What qualities make for a deep friendship?

**Onesimus.** Was a slave of Philemon's who sought Paul's help to become free. Paul did something even greater; he brought him and Philemon forgiveness and reconciliation as well as human rights and showed them the importance of Christian unity and brotherhood, which is what that Epistle is about. Thus, Paul instructs this church to welcome Onesimus as a brother, even though he was an escaped slave! An "Onesimus" eventually becomes a bishop of Ephesus, this region in the early second century, but it is not certain that this is the same person.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> R. J. Krejcir Ph.D. *Into Thy Word Ministries* [www.intothyword.org](http://www.intothyword.org)

<sup>3</sup> R. J. Krejcir Ph.D. *Into Thy Word Ministries* [www.intothyword.org](http://www.intothyword.org)

10. How does the fact that an escaped slave might be welcomed back into the church as “a fellow and beloved brother” help us to understand how the first-century church was countercultural?

**Mark.** The human author and/or *secretary* for the Gospel of Mark, that Paul and perhaps another Apostle supplied that information to, was a cousin of Barnabas, the great disciple maker. Paul had a rocky relationship with him and Barnabas earlier, all of them going their separate ways for several years; but, now the rift is healed and they are working together powerfully.<sup>4</sup>

11. The life and ministry of Mark remind us that our failures should not define us. How do we help fellow believers who have experienced failures find restoration and return to ministry?

**Demas** was a foreign name, neither Jewish nor Greek, but he was a trusted Christian worker who later has a falling out and deserts Paul; this shows us an example of not allowing reconciliation to take place.<sup>5</sup>

12. Read 2 Timothy 4:10. What lessons do we learn from the life of Demas? What might have been some reasons for his desertion?

In what ways can we keep from following him in deserting the faith?

*Wrestling/struggling/laboring fervently in prayer.* Meaning to agonize, as in doing and going beyond our best in labor or in an athletic competition, applying extreme exertion and effort. A model of that discipline and consistency is paramount; we too need to practice to become more mature and faithful (Colossians 1:29).<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> R. J. Krejcir Ph.D. *Into Thy Word Ministries* www.intothyword.org

<sup>5</sup> R. J. Krejcir Ph.D. *Into Thy Word Ministries* www.intothyword.org

<sup>6</sup> R. J. Krejcir Ph.D. *Into Thy Word Ministries* www.intothyword.org

13. When others look at your faith, would they speak about it as Paul did of Epaphras?

What does this type of life look like, and what things must be pursued for it to become a reality?

14. Paul spoke of his friends being people with zeal and a desire to do ministry. Why is this such a rarity today within the church?

How can believers help one another become more focused on godly pursuits?

15. Take a couple of moments to read the entire book of Colossians. What aspects of this letter come to mind now that you have become more acquainted with it?

16. Our time in Colossians has fallen under two headings: First, we saw that Christ is preeminent over our world and second, that He is to be preeminent in our walks. What truths from this letter help make you aware of Christ's place in all things?

17. What things can you be doing in the coming weeks to allow the place Christ has in your life to grow?

In what ways can the members of your group help you achieve this goal?