

"Characteristics of Godly Friends"**Colossians 4:7-9**

Introduction: The remaining part of Colossians contains verses with many names. The average reader will just quickly race through these verses because they do not seem to be very important. But let us understand that these people who are named here were very important to Paul and they are very important to God to the point that He inspires Paul to name them and therefore their names are forever recorded in the Word of God. For this reason, it is good for us to slow down and look at these individuals to see what it is that we can learn from them. Tonight, we are going to consider two of these men who are mentioned in verses 7-9. But before we get into the verses let us understand that God has created us in a way that we need one another, we need friends. God never intended for us to be isolated. We need good Godly friends in our lives that will hold us accountable and be there when we need them.

Proverbs 27:17

¹⁷ Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

⁹ Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour.

¹⁰ For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.

¹¹ Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone?

¹² And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

Let us now get to the verses to see the characteristics of true friends.

➤ **A true friend is friendly.**

Notice Colossians 4:6-9

Here in these verses, we see two of Paul's friends that he mentions. They are Tychicus and Onesimus. Paul was a man who had many friends in his ministry years and the reason was because he too was a friendly man.

Proverbs 14:24

²⁴ *A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.*

Application:

If a person does not have many friends, it is most likely because they are not friendly themselves. But what does it mean to be friendly? To be friendly as Paul and these men were, is to be truly concerned for others. In other words, if we are going to show ourselves friendly then we will not be focused upon ourselves but we will want to be a supply to help others.

Philippians 2:3-8

³ *Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.*

⁴ *Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*

⁵ *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:*

⁶ *Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:*

⁷ *But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:*

⁸ *And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

Before we go on to consider more points let us consider the two men Paul mentions in Colossians 4:7-9.

❖ **Tychicus**

This man shows up on Paul's third missionary journey. He became part of a team of seven men that accompanied Paul to Jerusalem as he would take the love offering for the Jews who were in poverty.

Acts 20:1-4

And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia.

² And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece,

³ And there abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia.

⁴ And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.

As Paul writes Colossians it is years later and Tychicus is still with Paul. Then we read of Tychicus in 2 Timothy.

2 Timothy 4:6-8, 12

⁶ For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

⁷ I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

⁸ Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

¹² And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus.

Here Paul is at the end of his life and Tychicus is still there.

➤ **Onesimus**

This man is very interesting. He was a runaway slave and somehow, he came in contact with Paul while Paul was in prison. The interesting point is that Rome, where Paul was imprisoned, was some 1500 miles from Colossae and Onesimus was from Colossae.

Notice Colossians 4:9

Onesimus was one of the Colossians meaning he was a Colossian. So, he fled his master Philemon, traveled 1500 miles and ran into the Apostle Paul. Coincidence? Absolutely not! God brought them together.

Philemon 1:1, 10-17

¹⁰ I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds:

¹¹ Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me:

¹² *Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels:*

¹³ *Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel:*

¹⁴ *But without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly.*

¹⁵ *For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever;*

¹⁶ *Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord?*

¹⁷ *If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself.*

Now let us get back to our text.

➤ **A true friend is faithful.**

Notice Colossians 4:7-9

Both of these men are called faithful. But what does it mean to be faithful? It is doing the right thing over and over again regardless of the circumstances around you. It is interesting that Onesimus is called faithful. He had been a runaway slave. Some teach that he had stolen money from Philemon but that cannot be confirmed. But either way this runaway slave is now called faithful by the Apostle Paul.

Application:

This is what happens when a person gets saved and God places the Holy Spirit within them. It changes their lives and they become new creations.

2 Corinthians 5:17

¹⁷ *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

As we have considered before, there is nothing in this world that can change the heart of a man. You cannot educate him and change his heart, you cannot rescue him from poverty and change his heart, and you cannot flood him with possessions and change his heart. It is ONLY Jesus Christ who can change the heart! This is man's greatest need. His greatest need is not for cures for diseases, it is not for more of this world's things, it is not for a new economy. Man's greatest need is for forgiveness and to have God change his heart

from the inside out. Nothing else can do that. Let us also learn from Onesimus that God can save anyone and when they are running away, He can direct their path right to the person whom they need to meet.

Ruth 2:2-3

² *And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter.*

³ *And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech.*

Getting back to faithfulness, we must understand that Jesus places great emphasis upon faithfulness and faithfulness determines what it is that we will be entrusted with in the Kingdom.

Matthew 25:21-23

²¹ *His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.*

²² *He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them.*

²³ *His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.*

We need to be faithful to the Lord and we need to be faithful as friends to one another. That means that we do the right things over and over again. To be a faithful friend also means that we speak the Truth into the lives of our friends.

This morning, we looked at Nathan who was a friend of David and Nathan did that which was hard and that was to tell David the Truth even when it was not easy.

Proverbs 27:5-6

⁵ *Open rebuke is better than secret love.*

⁶ *Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.*

Someone has said that an enemy will stab you in the back and a friend will stab you in the front. A true friend will tell you things that you will not desire to hear but they are things that you need to hear.

Leviticus 19:17

¹⁷ *Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.*

When we love someone, we will be sure to point out the sin in their life so that they might repent to avoid the chastening of the Lord.

➤ **A true friend is trustworthy.**

Notice Colossians 4:7-9 again.

Notice that both Tychicus and Onesimus are traveling to Colossae and they will make Paul's state known to them.

Notice Colossians 4:16

Let us now consider something. These two men who are friends of Paul are carrying this letter, they are carrying the letter to Philemon and they are carrying the letter to the Ephesians.

Ephesians 6:21-22

²¹ *But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things:*

²² *Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts.*

Then there was also a letter to the Laodiceans.

Notice Colossians 4:16 again.

There was also a letter written to Laodicea. I point all of this out because Paul trusted these men to deliver the letters. They had proven themselves to be faithful and trustworthy and therefore Paul would entrust them with these very important letters.

Conclusion/application:

As friends you and I should be trustworthy. Able to keep things confidential when asked. When someone confides in us, we must be willing to keep it confidential. To break that trust can be very damaging.