

LESSON 12

FINAL REMARKS

ADMONITIONS

After Paul wrote about individual Christian conduct (3:5–17), he gave instructions to various groups within the church (3:18—4:1). Next, he addressed the whole Colossian congregation. Two lessons can be drawn from his concluding remarks: Christians are to practice positive activities such as praying (4:2–4) and to engage in special service for Christ, leading the lost to Him (4:5, 6).

TO PRAY, ESPECIALLY FOR PAUL (4:2–4)

Near the end of several of his letters, Paul encouraged his readers to spend time in prayer and often asked them to pray for him. To the Colossians, he said, “Devote [προσκαρτερε/ω,προσκαρτερεῶ] yourselves to prayer.”

1. What does Paul’s warning of “keeping alert” insinuate about the world?
2. What New Testament verses show how vital a role the Word of God plays in the live of a Christian?

TO ACT WISELY TOWARD OUTSIDERS

(4:5, 6)

Christian living is important not only in regard to our relationships with God and within the church, but also in the examples set before the world. Paul gave the Colossians four guidelines on how to conduct themselves toward outsiders.

3. What does the phrase translated “conduct yourselves” in verse 5 literally mean?
4. What does the phrase translated “making the most of the opportunity” literally mean?
5. What did Paul mean by using the word “grace” in verse 6?

6. When Paul said “know” in verse 6, what type of knowledge was he referring to?

INSTRUCTIONS AND COMMENDATIONS

In his letters to the churches, Paul closed with final instructions and sometimes with greetings from his fellow workers. The letter to the Colossians included more personal references and commendations than usual concerning those who were with him.

RELATED TO TYCHICUS (4:7, 8)

Two messengers were chosen to deliver Paul’s letter to the Colossians—a freeman, Tychicus, and a slave, Onesimus.

7. Who was Tychicus, and what role had he played in Paul’s ministry?
8. Is it wrong for Christians to have favorite people?

RELATED TO ONESIMUS (4:9)

Onesimus was with Tychicus. The Colossians may have only known Onesimus as a runaway slave, not as a Christian (Philem. 10–20). Paul’s reference to him conveyed that Onesimus had changed from being an unfaithful slave to a “faithful and beloved brother.”

9. What did Paul mean when he said that Onesimus was “one of [their] number”?
10. Why did Paul not divulge any information about his situation in the Colossian letter?

GREETINGS AND REMARKS

Paul wrote a longer list of people in only two other letters (Rom. 16:1–23; 1 Cor. 16:10–20). These letters listed people to whom he sent greetings, but in the Colossian letter he was sending greetings to the Colossians from those who were with him in Rome. These people ministered to him, taught others with him, and may have been in prison with him. If they were with Paul while he was writing the letter, they were no doubt eager to have Paul include them in the greetings.

11. Why might Paul have made a distinction between the nationalities of his coworkers?

GREETINGS FROM COWORKERS (4:10–14)

12. What did Paul mean by calling Aristarchus his “fellow prisoner”?
13. What guesses have been made as to why Mark left the mission work he had been doing with Paul and Barnabas?
14. What does the term “fellow workers” mean when Paul uses it?
15. How did Paul greatly honor Epaphras in verse 12?
16. What might have been Luke’s background, according to various scholars?
17. Why might Paul have refrained from commending Demas as he did the others he mentioned?

GREETINGS AND REMARKS TO THE BRETHREN (4:15–17)

Greeting the Laodiceans and sharing Paul’s letter with them would create no difficulty for the Colossians because their two cities were about ten miles apart. Even though Paul may not have known many in Laodicea, he did know a few members of the congregation. He knew Nympha by name. Some in Laodicea could have visited Paul while he was staying for about three years in Ephesus (Acts 20:31).

18. What are the arguments for and against Nympha’s being female?
19. To what letter might Paul refer as being “from Laodicea” in verse 16?

CLOSING REMARKS (4:18)

Numerous commentators think that Paul dictated the letter to the Colossians and then wrote the greeting and signed it with his “own hand,” which served as the stamp of his apostolic authority—a safeguard against forgery.

20. Why did Paul include the request, “Remember my imprisonment” at the end of his letter?