

Connect360: Paul's Unsung Heroes

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- *Lesson 13 in the BaptistWay Press Connect360 unit "The Fullness of Christ" focuses on Colossians 4:7-18.*

Apparently, there was a connection to the needs and issues between the churches of Laodicea and Colossae. The Apostle Paul requested that, after the church in Colossae heard the letter, it should be passed on to their sister church in Laodicea (Col. 4:16).

Both in Colossians 4:18 and in Philemon 1:19, Paul spoke of writing these letters by his own hand. Paul was giving his bond and extending the hand of friendship, even from afar. He asked for them to remember his "chains," perhaps further identifying himself as a servant and relating to Onesimus' circumstances. Paul's final plea was for grace to be extended to the Colossians and then through the believers to the rest of the world.

Who spurs on your faith?

Hebrews 10:24 admonishes us: "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds." Who are the unsung heroes who spur you on in your faith? We would do well to take the time to recognize those who assist and partner with us in ministry. We all need others to help us fulfill God's call in our lives. Paul wanted to recognize those who had helped him in the ministry of the Gospel and honors his co-laborers: Tychicus, Onesimus, Mark, Aristarchus, Justus, Epaphras, Luke, Demas and Archippus.

Like Jesus, Paul also reached out and affirmed women who served in

leadership capacities in the churches where he ministered. In addition to Nympha (mentioned in Colossians 4:15), consider these additional unsung heroines of the early church: Junia, Priscilla, Phoebe, Lydia, Mary, Trypena, Tryphosa, Persis, Rufus' Mother, Eudodia and Syntyche.

Having looked at the lives of these unsung heroes and the various roles they played in the ministry of the kingdom of God, let's consider some applications. As Christians, we need a spiritual family of believers to aid us in our personal lives and the fulfillment of our calling. Stop and consider those who have invested in your life over the years, shaping your Christian journey to be what it is today. Reflect on those whom God placed in your life for "such a time as this" (Esther 4:14).

Consider how God has uniquely placed people in your life to encourage you, hold you accountable, spur you on in your faith, and inspire you to greater commitment and service to him. Think about those who serve alongside you with giftedness that complements, but differs, from what you bring to ministry. We need others who often are taken for granted and overlooked, but who are indispensable to the kingdom of God.

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