

Colossians - Chapter 4
“Learning to Work With Others – Part 1”
Colossians 4:9-10

Verse 9

1. Paul mentions a faithful and beloved brother by the name of Onesimus. Then Paul states, “...*who is one of you.*” This could mean one of two things:
 - Onesimus was now a believer and part of the body of Christ.
 - Onesimus was from this geographic area, and was one of them in the same sense we would be an American or a Floridian.
 - Most likely, Paul was referring to both.
2. Do you remember Onesimus? We learn a lot more about him in another letter that Paul wrote – the epistle to Philemon.
 - Paul actually led Onesimus to Christ while in prison at Rome. But Paul found out that Onesimus had been a servant of his dear friend, Philemon. Onesimus had rebelled against Philemon, stolen from him, and fled. Philemon 10-11
 - So now Paul was caught in the middle. Philemon and Onesimus were at odds, and Paul dearly loved both men, and had a close relationship with them both.
3. Onesimus had become very valuable to Paul in his ministry. He had already proven himself to be faithful. Paul wanted to keep Onesimus in Rome with him, but he knew this wasn’t right. Philemon 12-14
 - Paul sent Onesimus back with Tychicus. He also sent him back with a personal letter to Philemon, encouraging Philemon to receive back Onesimus, forgive him, and restore him. Philemon 12, 15-18
4. Can you imagine the scene? The local church is meeting at Philemon’s house, and here comes Tychicus with a letter in his hand. With him is Philemon’s runaway servant, Onesimus. He also has a letter in his hand.
5. I can just imagine Philemon reading Paul’s letter, tears coming into his eyes, and him embracing Onesimus as a brother in Christ. Paul knew Philemon would respond this way (Philemon 21). What a testimony for Christ! Forgiveness is such a sweet thing.
6. After this matter was settled, Tychicus and Onesimus had instructions from Paul to do three things:
 - They were to check on these Colossian believers and see how they were doing spiritually - “...*know your estate...*”
 - They were to encourage the Colossian believers in their faith - “...*comfort your hearts...*” This could be done by reading Paul’s letter to them.
 - They were to give them a report as to Paul’s personal situation - “*All my state...*” - and his ministry activity - “...*all things which are done here.*”
7. Paul didn’t quit ministering just because he was in prison.
 - Paul still was heavily involved in missionary activity by working through a ministry team of people.

- Paul had opportunities to witness for Christ, he could train and equip others, and he wrote letters to churches and individuals that still live on today, in God's Word.
8. It is easy to make excuses as to why we can't minister for Christ, but Paul found ways to overcome the obstacles, and still continue ministering for Christ.

Verse 10

1. If a person is going to make an impact in ministry, he or she must be able to get along with others, and work with others. The Bible likens us to a body with all the different members working together in unity.
2. Even while in prison, Paul was not an island to himself. He worked with and through others. Paul practiced the principle of 2 Timothy 2:2 - *"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."*
3. This is how Paul could continue to have a fruitful ministry, even after being imprisoned. He invested his life in others and learned how to work with all kinds of different people from different backgrounds. Acts 20:4
 - Over one hundred believers are associated with Paul in the book of Acts and his epistles.
 - He mentions 26 different collaborators in one chapter. Romans 16
4. In the next several verses, we are introduced to many of these faithful coworkers who had the distinct privilege of not only working with Paul, but having their names mentioned by him in God's Word.
5. Before we just breeze through this list of people, we need to realize that there is so much that we can learn from these individuals. They were just people, like you and me.
6. The first person mentioned is Aristarchus. Paul called him his *"fellowprisoner."*
 - We know that this man was one of Paul's traveling companions on Paul's missionary journeys (Acts 19:28-41), and that he sailed with Paul to Rome (Acts 27:2). This means that he went through the terrible storm and shipwreck that is graphically described in Acts 27.
 - But, why was Aristarchus in prison with Paul? We are not sure. Either he was also charged with some sort of crime, or he just willingly chose to remain with Paul and be his helper while Paul was in prison. Most likely, the latter is true.
 - Aristarchus is another one of those unsung heroes of the faith. What a faithful man. He was with Paul during the city uproar in Ephesus, the long voyage to Rome, the violent storm and shipwreck of Acts 27, Paul's imprisonment in Rome, etc.
 - Aristarchus never bailed on Paul. He hung in there through good times and bad times.