

Are You A Hot, Cold or Lukewarm Christian?

Colossians 4:13 For I testify for him that he has a deep concern for you and for those who are in Laodicea and Hierapolis.

Note the beginning 'for.' This conjunction introduces why Paul told them of the fervent prayers and even the subject of the prayers of Epaphras for them.

Then we have the *present active indicative* of the Greek word meaning to give testimony. Here, Paul gives them information that he has first hand knowledge of. Remember, Epaphras was in prison with Paul. They talked with each other and prayed with each other. And Paul actually witnessed the fervent prayers of Epaphras for them. Praying for one another was very important to Paul. I hope this has become very important to you in your daily lives, to pray for everyone in this assembly that we will all stand fast and stand firm in our faith. Please do be in prayer for all our young people, they need our prayers daily. When you like someone, you pray for them.

When you love someone, you pray fervently for them.

Spiritual Love - You love everyone in the assembly, so you pray for everyone in the assembly.

First, you must make up your minds as to the importance of prayers to God the Father. That He hears, listens to your prayers when you are empowered by His Spirit and that He answers your prayers. That you can

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actually make a difference in someone's life by your prayers!!! Having come to this conviction, then, you will be motivated to pray for others and for yourselves.

For I testify for him. In reference to him. (Epaphras).

that. This conjunction introduces the content of Paul's testimony.

That he has a deep concern for you. This introduces why he 'labors earnestly' in his prayers for them—because he has deep concern for them. Think about it in your own lives. You tend to pray fervently for those you have deep concern for, like your husband, your wife, your children, those close to you.

The King James says: **he has a great zeal for you.** We have *zelos* preceded by the *adjective* of amount, therefore **great zeal.** This phrase is variously translated:

NIV: He is working hard for you;

New Living Translation: He prays hard for you;

Berean Study Bible: He goes to great pains for you;

Berean Literal Bible: He has great concern for you;

Contemporary English Version: I have seen how much trouble he has gone through for you;

Good News Translation: His hard work for you;

Darby Bible Translation: He labours much for you;

Webster's Bible Translation: That he hath a great zeal for you.

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In context, I like the translation of *zeal*. *Zelos* is defined as ‘to be hot,’ ‘fervent.’ Since we see that he prays fervently for them, we understand why not: since he is zealous or fervent for them. “The use of this Greek word (*zelos*) is split almost equally between positive zeal and negative ‘envy’ or ‘jealousy’” (the Complete Biblical Library; vol. 3). “Zeal may be ardor for the gospel (2 Cor. 7:11; Rom. 10:2) for God, or for others (2 Cor. 9:2; Col. 4:13). Christ applies Psalm 69:9 to His own ‘zeal’ for His Father’s house (John 2:17).”

With this in mind, we should have a zeal, and will have, when empowered by the Holy Spirit, for God, for Christ, for one another and for our heavenly home.

In our study in Colossians 4:13, we learn more about Epaphras. He has a deep zeal for these believers in Colossae. Let’s examine what is involved in the word ‘deep.’ Here, deep concern, deep zeal, but we have all heard of ‘deep love’ or I am sorry to say, ‘deep hatred.’ Deep refers to what is deep in the soul, deep into what is important. Added concern:

About their spiritual wellbeing.

About their growth in the Word of God.

About their increasing in the Knowledge of God.

About their growing in the Knowledge of Jesus Christ.

About their continuing to walk and live by faith.

About their spiritual love for one another.

About their marriages, their families, their health.

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About their welfare in the Angelic Conflict.

Therefore, having this deep concern for them, he prays fervently for them in verse 12. Here is the dynamics of intercessory prayer.

It is my prayer for each of you that you will develop a deep concern for Spring Valley Bible Church, for one another, for our young people, for those who listen on the internet.

and for those. Especially for believers and that unbelievers would respond to the gospel.

who are in Laodicea and Hierapolis. Here we see yet another reason why Epaphras labored at his prayers. He has so many that he cared about and prays to God concerning.

These three assemblies (churches) of believers are very close to each other in Asia Minor. Laodicea was about 10 miles west of Colossae and Hierapolis is about 20 miles North west of Colossae.

Laodicea was named after Laodice, the wife of Antiochus II (B.C. 261-246) after he had rebuilt the city. In 60 A.D., it was destroyed along with Colossae and Hierapolis by a massive earthquake. It was rebuilt and remained an important Christian center for centuries. The Muslims destroyed the city in the eleventh century. Today it is a heap of ruins, called by the Turks, 'old castle.' It would stand to reason that the Muslims would destroy this location since it was rich in Christian history. The assembly of this city is mentioned four times in Colossians and twice in Revelation.

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Colossians 2:1 For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf and for those who are at Laodicea, and for all those who have not personally seen my face

Colossians 4:13 and again in verses 15 and 16:

Colossians 4:13 For I testify for him that he has a deep concern for you and for those who are in Laodicea and Hierapolis.

Colossians 4:15 Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea and also Nympha and the church that is in her house.

Colossians 4:16 When this letter is read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and you, for your part read my letter that is coming from Laodicea.

In Revelation 1:11 and 3:14 Laodicea is the seventh church of the seven churches in Revelation 2-3.

Revelation 1:11 saying, “Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.”

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Revelation 3:14 “To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this:

Let’s look at Laodicea in Revelation 3.

Great description of the universal church today!

Destination: verse 14 **To the angel (the messenger) of the church, the assembly in Laodicea write:**

Why to the Pastor (angel of the messenger)? He is responsible to pass the message on to the people, just as Ezekiel is to pass on the Word of the Lord.

Laodicea. *judgment or evaluation of the people!* This is the final evaluation of the churches in Revelation 2-3.

Today Laodicea lies in ruins – excavated. But in 1st century A.D. this was a prosperous city!

Again, it was founded by Antiochus II – between 261 and 253 B.C. He fortified an earlier outpost and named it after his wife or sister Laodice. This city was called *Laodicea on the Lycus River* to distinguish it from at least four other cities by the same name.

It was located on a prominent trade route, six miles south of Hierapolis and ten miles west of Colossae. These three cities are mentioned in Paul’s letter to Colossae.

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Under the rule of Rome, (133 B.C.) Laodicea became a very wealthy city. These three cities had very large and prosperous Jewish communities.

It experienced several large earthquakes. Rome gave money to help rebuild the city, but when it was destroyed in 60 A.D., it was so wealthy that it refused Roman money and paid for its own rebuilding! This was the mindset of the people of Laodicea – even in the church.

It was a banking town, very wealthy.

Extensive commerce—wool especially black wool and cloth and clothing.

It was a ‘judicial center’ court of appeals...lawyers etc.

There was a great medical school here. Doctors discovered an *eye ointment* called Collyrium. Naturally, one of the great problems that haunted mankind were problems related to the eyes, diseases etc. It was the best-known eye salve or ointment, discovered here in Laodicea for which the city was well known throughout the world.

It had more theaters than any city outside of Rome: three great theaters.

It had the best horse racing course in Asia Minor.

It had a center for collecting tax for Rome: hated (banking center).

The wealth of this city probably contributed to the middle-of-the-road stand this assembly took.

This church is so different from the other six churches. It’s danger is not from persecution or even harassment. This is a church in an affluent society! It existed in the midst of great prosperity and strange as it may

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sound, this presents great dangers. When people are suffering, etc. they are aware of it. But when everything is going well, money, activity, presents the great danger of setting God aside.

This is the only church where Jesus Christ has nothing good to say about it! Nothing! To all the other churches even Ephesus, a church without love, or Sardis or Thyatira and it's Jezebel, there was something commendable, something to build on! And while with Smyrna, and Philadelphia, all good things. But here, nothing could be found that is good! Not Laodicea!

Perfect picture of the church today!

Revelation 3:14 “To the angel/messenger of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, (Jesus Christ) the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this:

Revelation 3:15 ‘I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot.

Revelation 3:16 So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.

Revelation 3:17 Because you say, “I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,” and you do not know that you are

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wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,

Revelation 3:18 I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.

Revelation 3:19 Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.

Revelation 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.

Revelation 3:21 He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

Revelation 3:22 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.””

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This is not just some nice analogy that Jesus Christ came up with here. It is one that communicates to these people exactly what kind of assembly they were!

In the area around these three cities: Laodicea, Colossae and Hierapolis there were a multitude of hot springs and there was cold refreshing water around Colossae.

Pipelines were laid into all three cities, but, these pipelines were above ground. Therefore, sometimes by the time the hot water from Hierapolis got to Laodicea it would be lukewarm and horrible in taste and bad for you! When the water was hot, you could use it, drink it, use it for healing etc. When it was cold you could use it... But, when it was lukewarm...nasty tasting. And one of the most horrible things to try to drink is lukewarm, diluted and contaminated mineral water...disgusting to taste.

So if the water was neither hot nor cold, it was useless...you throw it out...

When a citizen tasted the water, and it was lukewarm, he spat it out, then threw out all the rest of the water. Why? It was useless!

So, these people were most familiar with the analogy Jesus Christ is using here!

Lukewarm = complacent.

When you are hot, you are fervent for the truth. When you are cold, you are in denial...But, when you are lukewarm, you are complacent. You

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acknowledge truth, but it makes no difference in your life! in your marriage; etc.

It is far easier to talk with an atheist or agnostic or just a good ole sinner than it is to talk with the religious person who knows a lot and does not see his need of truth! In fact, the more they know, the more difficult it is for them to see the truth: of salvation by grace through faith and spirituality by grace through faith.

Lukewarm preachers, missionaries, teachers, etc. are most difficult.

Compromised church!

No zeal: for study of the Bible, for truth, for evangelism, for loving One Another for serving One Another; just complacent! Not for or against!

Like about the Bible: you don't believe it is Divinely Inspired ... Yet, on the other hand, you don't believe that it is all man, corrupt; no you just pick and choose; mix it with so many other books by man... psychology, philosophy, even mysticism etc., wishy washy;... economic panacea's.

Part man; part God; we do our part, He does His etc.

Church of Laodicea—people are not persecuted, they are comfortable, profitable! Just like the church in America today!

There are three conditions of heart in the New Testament.

Burning heart: disciples on the road after the resurrection Luke 24:32

Cold heart: Matthew 24:12...cold love

Lukewarm heart. Lukewarm: The Greek word appears only one time in the New Testament—here.

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Three Types of members in a local assembly

We noted three types of people in the human race: unbelievers; Spirit-Filled believers and carnal believers.

Now let's take a look at three types of members in a local church. Any church has each of these three types in its assembly. And I have something else for you...A believer may experience all three of these states of existence at different times in their lives.

1st: Spiritual believer. Saved and walking in the Holy Spirit called Spiritual man – consistent in walking in the Holy Spirit by faith; fervent in the Holy Spirit. This believer is hot.

2nd: Cold! There is the believer who is cold! Hardly ever there, and does not care, and is always negative about everything going on in the church: the teaching, the teacher, the singing, the people!

3rd: The carnal believer. He is like the spiritual believer with one exception; the Holy Spirit does not control him. Lukewarm; he may come to church, but it makes no impact on his/her life...Oh they are there but that is about it! Not fervent about the teaching, music, missionary etc. Fills up a space...indifferent to the teaching, it does not really matter what is taught, truth, lies, as long as it sounds nice! Complacent!

Lukewarm: Is the worst of the three conditions a believer can be in!

Hot: You are just encouraged to continue to walk in Holy Spirit.

Cold: Holy Spirit can convict, turmoil; etc., point out how far away they are spiritually from truth – from Jesus Christ.

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But the lukewarm – the most difficult to talk with, they think they are alright with God. They think they are doing it right, they are doing ok, they are somewhat prosperous – which means to them that God loves them! That God is pleased with them just like the believers at Laodicea.

They are saved (whether they are or not) they are spiritual (and are not).

They even know some doctrine!

They know that Jesus Christ is Son of God.

They know that Jesus Christ is Savior.

They know the Bible is important etc.

Often the Lukewarm church looks so prosperous, looks so spiritual, so moral, so wonderful...but inside dead!

Which makes it all the worst! All the more difficult to heat them up!
Wake them up...

In life, the way overweight person; he knows it.

The person who exercises and takes care of himself is in good condition (inside and out); he knows it.

But the most difficult person to talk with about exercise and diet is the one who looks ok, without doing anything! He thinks because he is not over weight, etc. he does not need to exercise, take care of himself; until something happens! Only then is he ready to listen!

Hot water heals. And when the weather is really cold, hot water was good. Cold water is most refreshing...but lukewarm water is useless for either purpose.

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What is Jesus Christ saying when He says they are neither cold nor hot?

Lukewarm Christians. A lukewarm Christian is a comfortable Christian – complacent Christian, who does not realize his own need! If he were cold—he would feel it; If he were hot he would feel it!

Today as believers in Jesus Christ with the Holy Spirit in us and the Bible before us, we have every reason to be hot: as in Romans 12:11, fervent in the Spirit, serving the Lord...Colossians 4:12.

The Church today is failing in not teaching about sin and about redemption; about the Holy Spirit; about Jesus Christ; about God and about and from His Word.

View or attitude toward Bible by most today is that it is not Divinely inspired, not inerrant, not infallible and this from pastors across our nation.

And then there are those who find the Bible to say whatever they desire it to say...

Homosexuality is ok, Work for Salvation, prosperity gospel etc..; even in evangelical churches... Lordship Salvation; work for Filling of the Holy Spirit.

You have to confess or repent or do something!

Laodicean = Lukewarm. Take something cold or hot and setting in 'room temperature' and it will become lukewarm.

Mix something hot with something not hot – lukewarm.

Mix something cold with something not cold – lukewarm.

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Many Christians...no enthusiasm for Christ...sophisticated.

But still enthusiastic about other things: sports, politics, things our children are involved in...excited! But not about Jesus Christ.

Next, Hierapolis means ‘sacred city’ located about 5 miles to the north of Laodicea. It received its name from the mythical Amazon queen Hiera of a tribe of warrior women believed to live in Asia Minor; they were daughters of the nymph Harmonia and their main concern in life was war.

It was famous for the temple of Pluto. It also had springs of hot water.

Since we do not have that much from the Bible on this city, let’s look at what an archaeologist has uncovered. The following is sourced from the Hurriyet Daily News, August 21, 2018

[<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/archaeologist-bids-farewell-to-hierapolis-after-40-years-136024>]

“Italian archaeologist professor Francesco D’Andria, ... participated in excavations in the ancient city of Hierapolis in western Turkey for 40 years, ...”

“In 1978, D’Andria had come to Hierapolis for two months only but could not leave Turkey due to the friends he made, nature and the historical beauty, & interest in Hierapolis.”

“The professor, who has worked on the restoration of the 1,800-year-old Hierapolis Ancient Theater, which is considered the most important and most unique Roman Theater in the Mediterranean basin.”

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“D’Andria and his team have unearthed and restored many places, including where St. Philip was killed by pagans. St. Philip was one of the 12 apostles of Jesus the Christ, (the third disciple called by Jesus; John 1:43) who came to Hierapolis to spread Christianity in 80 A.D. (It is believed that he was martyred there, crucified on a tall cross.) They have also restored the monument built there after Christianity was considered an official religion, the tomb of St. Philip and the church built in his name.”

“Five years ago, archaeologists headed by D’Andria unearthed the entrance of an inn, which is regarded as the “gate to the country of the dead” in antiquity and called the Ploutonian (Pluto’s ‘Gate to Hell’).”

“The Italian archaeologist said the Gate to Hell and the Holy Area of St. Philip had been the most exciting for him in the ancient city.”

“Archaeologists before me have looked for these places but failed to find them. But the historian Strabon wrote, ‘birds die in front of the inn because there are gases.’ One day, I found many dead birds there and thought on it. I started digging 10 years ago and found this place. This place is a journey from hell to heaven. Thermal water comes from the Gate to Hell and creates the white haven of Pamukkale,” (a near-by city) he said.”

We will next look at other heroes of Colossae.