

## What Kind of a Christian are You?

**Colossians 4:14 Luke, the beloved physician, sends you his greetings, and also Demas.**

We have noted several heroes of early Christianity: the beloved brother Tychicus; the beloved brother Onesimus; Paul's fellow prisoner Aristarchus, Barnabas, Mark, the Jew Justus, the great prayer warrior Epaphras. Now we come to Dr. Luke.

**Luke.** His name means luminous, light-giving; enlightening, instructing.

1. He is the writer of the 24 chapters of the gospel of Luke and the 28 chapters of the book of Acts.
2. He was a gentile. This comes from the fact that he is not mentioned in Colossians 4:11 where Paul mentions those who are Jewish and then later mentions Luke.
3. He was not an 'eyewitness' of Jesus Christ's life and ministry. Luke 1:2.
4. The last mention of Luke is in 2 Timothy 4:11 where he is one of the very few who remained with Paul when many were deserting him. "Luke alone is with me."
5. Because of events not listed in Acts nor in Luke, it is believed that he wrote both the gospel and Acts before 70 A.D.
6. There is no information on when or where he received his medical training. But he traveled extensively with Paul.

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7. In Colossians chapter 4, he is called the beloved physician. But, he was more than just a physician to Paul. He assisted in spreading the Gospel, where in Philippians he is called ‘fellow worker.’

**and also Demas.** Here is a warning to us all in our Christian life. His name is very interesting as to his life. His name means ‘popular’ or ‘of the people.’ In Philemon 24, he is referred to as a fellow worker with Paul. But later in 2 Timothy 4:10 he deserts Paul:

**2 Timothy 4:10 for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens *has gone* to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.**

I am sorry that the NASV translated it in this order. In the Greek manuscripts the desertion is mentioned before saying why he deserted. Paul stresses that Demas deserted him, while NASV stresses his love of the world.

Well, what difference does that make?

It makes a lot of difference if you are in the battle. When you are in a battle along with someone and they desert you, that is what is really important. As to why they deserted or the cause of their desertion is secondary. The Greek word means to forsake, to desert, to abandon. Paul has had many believers abandon him when in physical danger. On the other hand, he has also had believers come to his aid when in physical danger.

Next we have ‘why’ Demas deserted Paul.

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**having loved this present world.** Here we have the *orist active participle* of the all-important verb *agapao*. Right here is an excellent place to understand why we spend so much time on ‘Spiritual Love.’ The word for love is the same verb or noun *agape*, but obviously there is a great difference in the uses of the word love. Remember, there are basically three categories of love.

**Divine love** which is love of and from God.

There is **human love**, which is love of and from the flesh nature of man.

Then there is **spiritual love** which is love from the Holy Spirit poured into the believer who is empowered by the Holy Spirit by faith in the Holy Spirit. People, it does not matter what or who is the object of human love, it has no merit before God. Many people boast of their love of Jesus Christ, but it is love from their flesh nature. Remember, our righteousness is filthy before God’s Righteousness and our love is filthy before God’s Love. We have studied the various categories of human love. There is human love toward family, toward husband or wife, toward others in our lives. Then there is human love toward geographical locations, like Jerusalem or Texas! There is love of one’s country. So, there are various categories of love. But in the Spiritual Warfare the only love that matters is love as a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22) poured into us when we are empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Now we come to the human love of Demas.

**Having loved this present world.** In one way or another, this is at the heart of all distractions to living one’s life by faith in the Holy Spirit. Let’s note some key verses on this issue.

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1. Let's look at words from our Savior's own teaching.

**Luke 9:25 For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself?**

This describes a multitude of people throughout history who chose the world over the Word.

2. The Problem with Demas.

**1 John 2:15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.**

Right here, we discover the problem with Demas. The love of the Father is not in him at this point in his life. I am sure that earlier he was in the power of the Holy Spirit and the love of the Father was in him. Then, trouble came upon him and his relationship with Paul and he chose to go the way of the world. This is the great problem with so many Christians today. They have to choose between the world and the Lord. And many pastors think they are choosing the Lord when they choose the world under the lie that this will bring more people into my church. So many churches are not only welcoming those who are an abomination to God, but they are appointing them as their pastors or deacons etc. Chrislam is rampant among many pastors today, wanting to combine Christianity with the evil of the Muslim religion. People, you have to make up your mind, is it the world or the Light of the World, it cannot be both. This is what Jesus Christ was teaching in:

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**Matthew 6:24 No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth. (Of the world)**

3. Please, never forget the world hates Jesus Christ and the world hates anyone who follows Jesus Christ.

**John 15:18 “If the world hates you,** In the Greek, this is a first class condition meaning if and it does, if you are following Christ. Does the world hate you? Does it know that you believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, your savior? People, this is why we are to love one another, serve one another in love (Galatians 5:13). Dog gone it people, we are all hated by the world and we must stand together! Some are put off by Republicans not standing behind a Republican President. But oh, people it is far worst when Christians do not stand behind other Christians who are striving each day to glorify Jesus Christ.

**Since the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before *it hated* you.** This is what is going on in the USA and throughout the world—supernatural hatred of Christianity and Jews. Why? Because the world hates the light and Jesus is that light. Our very presence condemns them and they know it and they hate it. They hate Jesus Christ and they hate Christians independent of individual qualities. They must get rid of Christians and Jews. Universal, supernatural hatred. I find it amusing that atheists do not believe in God but they hate Him. Hatred of Jesus Christ and Christians is world-wide: Nigeria and throughout all Africa, India,

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North Korea, throughout the Middle East and growing in America. But people, remember Jesus Christ tells us the field to spread the gospel is the world. Matthew 13:38. And in Matthew 15:16 He exhorts us to go into all the world. And always remember that in spite of its hatred, *God so loved the world.*

And when the pressure got too intimidating, Demas walked away from Paul and from the Lord.

**John 15:19 If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.**

**John 15:20 Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also.**

**Colossians 4:15 Greet.** In word or in physical action of saluting or even kissing on the cheek.

**the brethren.** Believers in Jesus Christ.

**who are in Laodicea and also Nympha and the church that is in her house.** We have some manuscript difficulties here. Nympha could be masculine or feminine. And the ending could be plural *their house*. No one is certain. Be that as it may, the early church met in homes. I am not

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so sure that church buildings are that much of an improvement. They can...and do get too large for an intimacy in the assembly.

**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. (This letter is lost. We do not have this letter.)

**Colossians 4:17** Say to Archippus, “Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it.”

**Archippus** means master of the horse. We do not know that much about this man. Some think he is the son of Philemon since he is mentioned with Philemon and his wife and then comes the name Archippus.

**Philemon 1:1** Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our beloved *brother* and fellow worker,

**Philemon 1:2** and to Apphia our sister, and to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:

**Our fellow soldier.** What an endearing designation. Even if you were in the military for a short time you should have some hint of this word. But if you have ever been in combat, this word takes on a strong term of a fellow warrior. You learn to trust them, you actually depend on them and

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you will never forget them. Paul describes only two with this designation.

**Philippians 2:25 But I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger and minister to my need;**

Paul uses this term to refer to fellow communicators of the Word. We are looking at several heroes of the early church. I want you to know them, be familiar with them, be encouraged by them. Develop a desire to be like them. Know them when you meet them in eternity. The name Epaphroditus means one devoted to Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty. She was the most famous woman in the ancient world. We do not know anything of his past but one might guess that his parents were pagan worshippers of Aphrodite and so named their son Epaphroditus. But somewhere along his growth he heard the gospel and believed in Jesus as his Savior. And not only that, God the Holy Spirit gave him the spiritual gift of pastor-teacher. He apparently started out as a member of the assembly at Philippi. He was trusted with offerings for Paul in prison in Rome and they also knew he would be an encouragement to Paul. Be honest with yourself. Some people have the innate ability or character of encouragement, some are given the gift of encouragement from the Holy Spirit. What about you? Do you bring sadness, or confrontation to others? Ask yourself what do you bring when you meet with other believers?



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**Philippians 4:18 But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.**

I certainly am not talking about those ‘preachers’ around the world who make millions. But to most pastor-teachers a nice gift is always encouraging. And a fellow pastor like Epaphroditus is especially encouraging. The believers at Philippi were gracious and considerate of the needs of Paul, especially while he is in prison in Rome.

Epaphroditus was especially important to these believers in Philippi, for both he and Paul taught them the Word of God.

**Philippians 2:25 But I thought it necessary to send to you.** For your spiritual advantage.

**Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker.** He is a communicator of the Word of God.

**and fellow soldier,** Neither of these men were in the military but they are together in the angelic conflict. They are both on the front line of battle with a common enemy. We are all in a battle, people. This is another reason why we are to love one another and serve one another in love, instead of being rude to one another, instead of being jealous of one another, instead of hating one another, instead of biting one another.

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We are in an invisible spiritual warfare. Let's help each other, let's pray for each other.

**who is also your messenger and minister to my need;** Wow, he is their pastor-teacher and he ministers to Paul's needs. Not just his physical needs but his spiritual. He is a prayer partner for Paul. Why did Paul think it necessary to send Epaphroditus to Philippi?

**Philippians 2:26 because he was longing for you all and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick.**

Here is a true warrior, pastor-teacher and prayer-warrior. Here is an excellent example of selflessness. Usually, when we are sick we want others to know about it so they can feel sorry for us. Epaphroditus was on his death bed and was distressed because his Philippian friends were distressed about his condition. So please, learn from what is going on in his soul: **longing for you all**. He is deathly ill and he longs for them. The Greek construction means that this was an abiding condition in his soul. This Greek word is used to reveal a strong need or desire for someone or something. It describes an unfulfilled desire or longing of the soul. It reveals the character of the one it describes. So here we learn about Epaphroditus. This is what kind of leader, and pastor and friend he was. People, again, we learn what we should aspire to be. A study of these early church heroes lays out what kind of believers we should 'long' to be. Like Tychicus, Onesimus, Mark, Justus, Epaphras, and Epaphroditus.

**Philippians 2:27 For indeed he was sick to the point of death, but God had mercy on him, and**

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**not on him only but also on me, so that I would not have sorrow upon sorrow.**

First, and very important, notice that he is healed by the ‘mercy of God,’ not by some gift of healing. With all the gifts that Paul possessed he could not heal his close friend Epaphroditus, but had to depend solely on the sovereign mercy of God. Here we learn something about Paul. He needed the spiritual help of Epaphroditus and would be sorrowful if God took him home at this time. God has a perfect time for every believer to go home. Don’t ever be angry at God for His perfect timing.

**Philippians 2:28 Therefore I have sent him all the more eagerly so that when you see him again you may rejoice and I may be less concerned *about you*.**

Paul, knowing that they have a good bible teacher, will not be concerned about them falling away from the truth and from the faith and from Spiritual Love – filling of the Holy Spirit.

**Philippians 2:29 Receive him then in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard;**

We should hold every ‘sound’ teacher of the Word in high regard and be in constant prayer for them. Verse 30 tells us that Epaphroditus exhausted himself to the point of death in the service of the Lord.

**Philippians 2:30 because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to**

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**complete what was deficient in your service to me.**

**Colossians 4:17 Say to Archippus, “Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it.”**

Three vital issues for every male with the gift of pastor-teacher:

First: **Take heed to the ministry** *Present active imperative* of the verb *blepo*, which basically means to see with your eyes, to pay attention to what you see. We teach young people learning to drive, ‘to see’ the speed limit signs. This word is used metaphorically to mean to pay close attention to something. It is so easy for a pastor-teacher to lose sight of what his gift is all about. And it happens so subtly that he is not even aware something has gotten him distracted from the study and teaching accurately the Word of God. He begins to pay too much attention to being a pastor—shepherd and not at teacher! Or he gets off by trying to increase his membership than by teaching those who come. Or he gets interested in building buildings and increasing the offerings. Or he just gets distracted by things going on in his own life...his family, his hobby’s etc. Every Pastor should ‘take heed’ to his ministry. However, this is in the *imperative*. We know that the *imperative* is the mood that is furthest from reality, meaning that not many pastor-teachers give too much heed to their ministry of studying and teaching the Word of God, and this is especially true today.

Second: **which you have received from the Lord.**

Oh, dear pastor:

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1. You did not receive this from man.
2. It came to you from the Lord by the Holy Spirit, the moment you believed in Jesus Christ as Savior. One of the 34 things that happened to you the moment you believed in Jesus was that the Holy Spirit gave you a spiritual gift or in some cases gifts.
3. You did not earn nor do you deserve this gift. It is a gift given by the head of the church on the principle of Grace.
4. You are therefore responsible to the Lord, not to man. So take heed to serve the Lord everyday in your ministry.

Third **that you may fulfill it.**” That, in order that, for the purpose that--- *the gift of pastor-teacher was given to you by the head of the Church in order that you may fulfill it.* The verb is a warning: *present active subjunctive* of the rich word *pleroo*. Some 55 years ago, I heard from R. B. Thieme the best summary of this Greek word. Some Lexicons have added a little to its understanding. But let’s take a quick look at what it means for a pastor-teacher to fulfill that gift.

1. It means to fill up a deficiency! Yes, Christ has come and yes He has provided eternal salvation by His cross work. But He departed earth and is now seated at the right hand of God the Father. So, there is a *deficiency* on earth. God and His Son Jesus Christ have supplied some key blessing to fill up this deficiency. He has provided us with the Completed Canon of Scripture. They have also given to everyone who believes in Jesus Christ as Savior the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit. But there is still a deficiency. And that is the emptiness or deficiency inside of everyone who believes

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in Jesus Christ. And to fill this deficiency God the Father and His Son as head of the Church have given to males throughout Church history the spiritual gift of pastor-teacher. So, every pastor-teacher is to fill the deficiency of spiritual knowledge and growth through the Word of God by the Holy Spirit. Every pastor-teacher is to fill this deficiency by faithfully studying and teaching the Word of God.

2. This word means to fill up with a specified quality. And this is so important. So many Christians fill their souls with false doctrines, sloppy teaching, emotionalism, music, service etc., but fall short of the highest quality God intended for our souls to be filled.

**1 Timothy 4:6 In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, *constantly* nourished on the words of the faith and/even of the sound doctrine which you have been following.**

Sometimes this becomes most difficult for the pastor-teacher.

**2 Timothy 4:3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires**

And I believe this is being fulfilled in our day.

**Titus 1:9 holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he**

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**will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.**

**Titus 2:1 But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine.** (This is what he is to fulfill.)

3. To fully possess. God desires that the pastor-teacher be fully possessed of the Word of God so that those who listen to him will also be fully possessed.
4. To fully influence. I think this is self-evident. First, the pastor must be fully influenced by the Word of God so that others will also be fully influenced by the Word of God. And what does this mean? It means being fully influenced, in every area of your life. Time, money, family, friends, politics, pleasure every area of our lives.

**Warning**, this verb is in the *subjunctive mood*, which means, maybe you will be filled with this richness, maybe not. It is up to you...making daily decisions about the intake of sound teaching of the Word of God.

Closing remark of the letter to the Colossians.

**Colossians 4:18 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my imprisonment. Grace be with you.**

Because of Paul's poor eyesight he had trouble writing. And he asked them to remember his imprisonment. Remember him in prayers and offerings.

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**That God would continue to deal with them in His Grace.**

**Make up your mind what kind of Christian you want to be. It is my hope that you will want to be like these heroes.**

**Faithful servant of the Lord like Tychicus.**

**Beloved by the Lord like Onesimus.**

**A fellow sufferer with others like Aristarchus.**

**One who recovers from failures like Mark.**

**One who encourages others like Justus.**

**A faithful prayer warrior like Epaphras.**

**A helpful companion like Luke.**

**A fellow warrior in the angelic conflict like Apaphroditus.**

**And, in the case of a few pastor-teachers who fulfill their mission before God and Christ.**