

Epaphras 3: Qualities Of A Faithful Servant

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[0 : 00] Welcome. Thank you for listening to this wholesome word by David Entry. The words you catch will change your world. May your story change from this message. Be blessed.

Colossians chapter 1, reading from verse 1. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God, and Timothy, our brother, to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ, which are at Colossae, grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which you have for all the saints, for the hope which is laid out for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of truth of the gospel, which is come unto you, as it is in all the world, and bringing forth fruit, as it does also in you, since the day you heard of it and knew the grace of God in truth.

As ye also learned of Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ, who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.

For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God, strengthened with all might according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joy, with joyfulness.

[1 : 55] Here ends the reading of God's holy word. Amen. Well, in our previous teaching, I spoke about Epaphras. The reason why I had to take time to speak about Epaphras, we are doing, we are actually doing a book study, exposition on the book of Colossians.

It is called expositional preaching. Expositional preaching is taking verse by verse and explaining the verse, leading to the next, leading to the next, leading to the next, and making sense of that whole theme.

Right? So we are doing expositional preaching on Colossians. That means there is no verse in the book of Colossians we are going to leave unattended to. Now, one of the reasons why expositional preaching is so healthy and important is that the Bible touches on so many subjects, so many subjects.

And those of you who have made attempts, or those of us who try to read the Bible, or who read the Bible, will always notice that there are things in the Bible, there are statements in the Bible, there are terms in the Bible, or something said in the Bible which doesn't really make proper comprehension.

You don't get it. What does this mean? Because if this is so, how about this? And how many of you agree with me that there are some difficult topics in the Bible? Difficult statements, phrases, verses in the Bible that are very hard to handle.

[3 : 37] For instance, Peter said concerning Paul, the writings of Paul in 2 Peter 3, verse 15-16, talks about how Paul in his writings tackled or said some hard things that are hard to understand.

Can you imagine? He says that, and consider that the long suffering of the Lord is salvation, as also our beloved brother Paul. So hold down.

He's talking about Paul. Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you. So Paul has written on a subject. And then verse 16 says, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand.

There are things that are, this is Apostle Peter. He wrote scripture. He was writing scripture and saying that there are hard things to understand in scriptures.

In some of the scriptures it says, hard things to understand, which the untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction as they do also the rest of what? Scripture. So the rest of

scripture also contains some hard things to understand.

[4 : 48] Now why did I say that? So then when you enter, when you engage in expositional preaching, what happens is that even things that are hard to tackle, you are forced to deal with it.

You can't jump it. If people just preach every now and then different, different things, there are some subjects they will never touch on in the scripture. But if you do expositional preaching, you are bound to touch on some things.

Because as you are reading the verse, okay, you've explained verse 1, you've explained verse 2, verse 7. Now, why are you leaving verse 8? Tell us verse 8 in the context.

See, that's why expositional preaching is important. And every healthy church must be exposed to expositional preaching, which is not too common in our generation, within certain groupings.

But it's necessary. Somebody will say, oh, but pastors, not every pastor can teach. So what's he doing behind the pulpit? The pulpit is not for demonstration.

[5 : 46] It's not for display. It's for feeding. And feeding is teaching. And teaching of God's word within the context of what he said.

All right. So back, this is just to help you to every now and then get a grasp of what we are talking about. Now, we are now doing a book study.

Why are we focusing on Epaphras? Epaphras is mentioned in the book. But that is a topical study. So why are you stopping book study and digressing into topical? It's within the book. But as I said, Epaphras is such a significant personality.

Without whom, we wouldn't have heard the book of Colossians. So it's good to explore such a unique character who has, through whose faithfulness to God and faithful service in God has necessitated the book of Colossians.

So I said that there are eight, but we increased it to 12. Yes, yes, yes. Twelve things. Twelve things to know about Epaphras or qualities of an Epaphras.

[6 : 53] I believe Epaphras is not representing just a person somewhere. It's representing a certain type of persons in the church. And so when you look at Epaphras, you have to look, consider yourself, use the measuring rod of Epaphras to compare yourself and see if you are an Epaphras.

And it's good for everyone to be an Epaphras in the church because Epaphras becomes a blessing to a whole community. Okay, so the 12 things about Epaphras. Number one, he's one of us. Okay. Number two, you learn from Epaphras. Number three, he's a fellow bond slave for Jesus Christ. Number four, he's a faithful minister of Christ.

A minister of Christ. Pastors are supposed to be ministers of Christ, not ministers of states.

Not even just ministers of religion. Because there are many ministers of religion who are very far from Christ. Therefore, those ministers of religion who are in Christ must make sure they should be ministers of Christ, not ministers of something else.

[8 : 12] Because if we ministers of Christ become ministers of other things, focus on ministering other things, who would then minister Christ? Because no one can minister Christ but the minister of Christ.

But when it comes to other things like encouraging people, motivating people, steps to buy a house, anybody. In fact, you can go for a conference somewhere. The person doesn't have to be a Christian.

It's just conferences. And those of us who work in a professional field, right, you must have attended some conference one or the other. And sometimes even you upgrade yourself by taking some other courses and stuff like that.

They are good. All right. So are you trying to say a pastor shouldn't be teaching on how to save money? You can. There's nothing wrong with that. But then others can teach some of those other things.

But nobody can minister Christ. Nobody can minister Christ without being an actual minister of Christ who has an active relationship with Christ.

[9 : 13] Actually, some of the things that reflect an active relationship with Christ of a minister is every now and then. Even anything he's talking about, Christ keeps coming up. Christ keeps coming up. That is actually, you don't have to intend, but it comes by default based on the relationship a minister has with Christ.

So it's important for the ministers of Christ to be ministers of Christ. Christ, they can minister other things, but mainly there should be only one thing that they really focus on ministering, which is

Christ.

So epiphraze is a minister of Christ. A minister of Christ doesn't also have to be, watch this, thank you, Jesus, just a pastor. And ask for me, I'm not a pastor.

No, no, no, but you are a minister of Christ. What qualifies a person to be a minister of Christ is not ordination. No, it's not formal ordination. What qualifies a person to be a minister of Christ is being in Christ.

When you are in Christ, you should be able to minister Christ. Somebody say amen. Amen. So epiphraze is a minister of Christ. Point five is that epiphraze is faithful on the behalf of the Colossians.

[10:27] So he's assigned or he was serving the Colossians and he was faithfully serving them. A Christian brother, Christian sister, a Christian minister whose faithfulness is spread so thin everywhere, you are faithful to everybody, eventually won't end up being faithful to any group of people and you are not actually faithful.

When you talk about faithfulness, you are talking about context. He says, well done, thou good and faithful servant. And the Bible says that a faithful man shall be blessed.

So faithfulness must be, that's why it is necessary for, or it behooves a husband or a wife. When you say it's a faithful husband, you are not talking about he's faithful to people.

When you say it's a faithful wife, you are not talking about he's faithful to people with their children. No, please. A faithful wife is focused on one man.

A faithful husband is focused on one wife as long as Christianity is concerned. How many brothers wish.

[11:43] So... Faithful on the behalf of the Colossians, number six we say that it's always laboring fervently. Always. Not every now and then.

Even in lockdown, you still labor. always laboring. Always laboring. Always laboring. Some of us, when we get the slightest chance, we will take it at holiday.

Those who go on holiday, and on Sunday morning, you're on holiday, and you won't look for a church to attend. So there are no churches in Spain. At least go and... Yeah.

Maybe look, maybe there's a Presbyterian church somewhere. A Baptist church somewhere. A Methodist church somewhere. Something. Go into where they mention the name of Christ. And some of those places, maybe the service will be just one hour.

But always laboring. Always laboring. There are people whose labors in the Lord. When you left one department, you went on a sabbatical. And for a long time.

[12:52] Some people are listening to me after lockdown. They are watching, I mean. After lockdown, you haven't gone back to active labor. I met a gentleman recently who, after lockdown, hadn't been to his church.

He's left. And I said, so what are you doing? So which church are you going? So no, I've not found a church yet, but... I said, but go back to... So... Yeah, yeah, yeah. Always laboring.

Epaphras. Always laboring. You don't realize that when you are laboring in God, you are marking your timesheet with God. Come on. So people may not realize, they may think you are laboring, they may be saying, yeah, yeah, yeah, but God, on your timesheet, a lot of us, on our timesheet, there will be a lot of blank spaces.

Blank. You didn't mark it. You didn't mark it. You didn't mark it. I'm telling you. And God will reward you based on your investment in God. Your timesheet, when they pull it up, there are blank moments.

Meanwhile, your actual job, that pays your salary, that can take off your health. But you don't have, you hardly miss work.

[13:59] No. Yeah. You actually do overtime. Can I advise you? Why don't you start considering doing overtime in God's room? Do overtime in God.

Overtime in God. They said, Asha should be here for, let's say, nine. But you had a chance. Why don't you say, okay, no, but set up guys are there for eight.

Why don't I? I'm not part of, but I will still go. Just in case I can help. That's what we call overtime. You are doing what your stipulated contractual hours above your contractual doesn't demand.

Overtime. There are some people, when work finishes, they have, I mean, people work from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Most of those people don't want to spend too much time in church.

Yeah, they don't. Because they don't have time. They don't have time. They don't have time. But I challenge you to be an Epaphras who always will be laboring. Always will be laboring. So are you supposing that I should stay in church for eight hours?

[15:07] I didn't say that. I didn't say that. But you must be found faithful in God. Your energy God has given you is not to sit on chair and say, that's the music is nice.

That preaching is good. What's the use of good preaching? That is not producing godly fruits in your life. And when I talk about godly fruits, please remember, I'm not only talking about testimonies, things that are happening in your life.

I'm also talking about your commitment towards God. It is boosting your commitment to God. It's increasing your faith in God and your commitment in God. What's that kind of faith? I have faith in God which is not increasing your investment in God, your dedication to God.

In the day of your need, what are you going to stand on to make demands on God? In the day of your need, and there are always days ahead, some interesting days ahead.

So the little strength you might have, reserve some for God. Sunday morning, you are playing golf because you are looking for business deals.

[16:17] I ain't trying to say we can't play golf. I don't know. I didn't say that. I didn't say that, but at least we are at Epaphras. I think we should go on from there. Always liberating. Somebody say, always liberating.

Always liberating. Be steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. 1 Corinthians 15, verse 15. Be steadfast and unmovable. Steadfast and unmovable.

Always abounding. May God help us all to always abound. Amen. Right. So always liberating. And we go to the point 7.

Always praying for the people. Always praying for the people. And I spent a lot of time talking about his prayer topic for the people. Epaphras, let's look at it again.

Chapter 4, rather verse 12. In the chapter 4 of Colossians, verse 12, it says that, Epaphras, As who is one of you, a servant of Christ, salutes you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that he may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

[17:25] So his prayer topic is that they may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. I'm hoping to come back to the prayer topic of a leader, church leader for the people.

But let's move on to the point 8. Point 8, when you look at what I just read in Colossians chapter 4 again, verse 13, for I bear him record that he has a great zeal for you.

Let's all say, for I bear him record. For I bear him record. Say that again, please. For I bear him record. Let's look at how the NIV puts it. I vouch for him.

An epiphras, you can vouch for him. You can count on him. Epiphras, you can vouch for an epiphras.

You can stick your reputation and your confidence on the line for an epiphras about his commitment to the people of God. He said, can you imagine, an apostle said, I vouch for him.

[18:34] You don't need a lot of prayers to make it in life. An apostolic vouch for you is an endorsement of open heavens on your life. You see, there are a lot of testimonies in life that are not based on prayers.

There are a lot of testimonies in life. Those of you who have had a certain push in God, you will realize that there are things that happen, good things that happen in your life which you didn't even pray about.

Yeah. A lot of good things happen to epiphras type of people who never prayed about them. A lot of good things. God does not wait always for you to pray for everything.

He told Solomon, what you have been asked, I will give you. The same God. He doesn't wait for you to ask everything because there are things you need but you didn't know you need.

for Romans chapter 8 verse 26. Likewise, the Spirit himself helps us in our infirmities. For we do not know what we should pray for.

[19:40] So wait, wait, wait. So if God has to wait for your prayers before he does everything necessary in your life, there are some things he will do. There are some things because some of us, you actually don't know what you should be praying for.

You don't know what you should be praying for. You don't know that some people as you are here, they have sat down plotting about your job and they are about to put you into trouble. You didn't know. How would you pray about it?

How would you pray about this doctor who is going to misdiagnose you? How would you be able to pray about it? So if God should wait for you to say, hey, this doctor who misdiagnosed me, I'll pray about it, I'll pray about it.

If God should wait before he delivers you or before he turns things around or before he makes the doctor for that morning, get stuck in a bar traffic, didn't show up, someone else attended to you. If God should wait for your prayers to do everything for you, I'm telling you, you'll be stranded in life most of the time because God knows how to take care of his people.

Then why should we pray? We pray so that we can team up with God. Prayer is an expression of dependence on God. So how can you say you depend on God and you are not praying? How can you say I'm looking up to God and I'm not praying?

[20 : 58] That's why sometimes a bit of problem is good for us. How many of us notice that sometimes you pray more in problems? You will call on God.

You will call on God. Oh, Lord! Oh, Lord! It's good! It's good! It's good! So whoever attacked you, whatever is behind the problem, will find out that God is also behind you.

So it's good. But the point I'm making is that our commitment to God makes him do some things that we haven't prayed about. Yeah. And I see God doing that for somebody.

Somebody. He said, I vouch for him! I vouch for him! I, I, I, listen, I can speak out for this guy. What is he vouching for?

I vouch for him that he is working hard. I don't have to be there to know, but I know he's working hard. There are some people when you give them work to do, every now and day you have to, or you have to get someone on standby because you know they might not show up.

[22 : 05] And, you know, sometimes they are, they are not really reliable or dependable. No, how many people can vouch? Your departmental leader, can they vouch for you?

Yeah. Before you start claiming entitlement to blessings, you have to make sure you have enough equity of physical investment in God, not only a good heart because God doesn't reward us purely based on good heart.

He said, my reward is with me to give everyone according to his works. Revelations chapter 22, verse 12. He said, I come quickly and my reward is to give everyone according to what is work. So why are you neutralizing works and putting the emphasis on goodwill?

Oh, my heart is good. My heart is good. My heart. A good heart will always produce good hands. So God rewards us based on our works. He doesn't save us based on our works.

No one gets saved based on their works, but everyone gets rewarded based on their works. So then, if heaven can vouch for your dependability and reliability, can you imagine, heaven will always not wait for you to be in need.

[23 : 26] Sister, get busy serving God. I told you, I met someone in Ashbenham a few days ago, a man who said he had stroke. He's in his 70s or so a while ago. He had stroke and he couldn't use this part of his body.

And his pastor prayed for him and he's an artist. He's a painter. And his pastor said, why don't you start painting nice pictures for church? Maybe that will make God heal you and bring or facilitate or accelerate your healing.

He said, that seems a good idea because I'm not able to do any much. Let me start attempting to do it for church. And now he has perfect strength and he said he hasn't stopped painting. He's painting, but he's doing a lot of painting for church.

Painting for, because once he got busy about God, God got busy for him. I see God getting busy for somebody here. My wife told me some time ago, the Methodist Church, the Women's Fellowship have, she used to be in the Methodist Church and I married her and brought her into Caris.

She said that the Women's Fellowship, they had a slogan that do God's work so yours will progress. So, I think, attend to God's work so yours will progress.

[24 : 44] If you want your work to progress, give attendance to God's work. It's a deep secret a lot of people don't know. It's a deep secret. That is one of the major secrets behind my good health.

Yes. Major secret behind, when I look at some of the senior ministers in the Lord, I became born again when they were way born again preaching.

Some of them are growing old but they are still strong. So, every now and then, ah, please, if people die early, your family, why don't you embed yourself in the work of God? It will guarantee long life.

Get busy for God and stop this excessive dependence on your health experts. It's good but listen, they can't guarantee.

Recently, yesterday, someone told me about a gentleman who passed, 48 years. Passed. It was such a sad story. Left many children behind the scene but she passed and the guy was telling me that what beats us.

[25 : 48] Do you know the cause of his demise? Heart attack. Heart attack. And he said, this guy is, is, does gym about four days, four days a week.

He said, they all admire him and he was very fit. Always at the gym. Please, listen to what I didn't say.

Don't say, see, there's no point in gym. You, you don't go and say that. Go to the gym, you to you. But I'm trying to say that balance diet is not a guarantee for balance health.

Going to the gym doesn't necessarily guarantee long life. It will add to your health. Please, let's just be playing at that. Doing some exercise, regular exercise.

If you are doing life insurance, one of the things they will ask you, depending on your age, is what is your kind of activity. Do you do anything active? If you don't do anything, always sitting down and your life insurance, the premium will go very high.

[27 : 03] Because, because they know you are likely to. But I said that to let us all know that even though exercising and whether, you know, some people don't have to go to the gym, but they can find a way of keeping fit one way or the other.

Even though that is necessary and healthy eating is necessary, it does not guarantee something. Because some people are eating healthy, but your type, your genes, your blood type is prone to a certain type of sickness.

So, that's why I said that if you realize that there's something running through your family line, if it's running through your family line, then advise yourself and find a way of getting that aspect that thing affects.

So, if it's like people who are, everyone in your family, like, and by the age they are 40, they can't walk.

Just extreme, being extreme, okay? They can't walk. And it's common in the family. Please, you are 35, start joining the ashes so that you can, you see your, like, always, join the ashes.

[28 : 15] So, always, you are walking in church. I'm telling you, that thing won't get to you. I'm telling you, if you, and you do it well for God. All right. So, vouch for Epaphras.

Let's move on. Point number nine. He has great zeal for God's people. Wow. Epaphras has great zeal for God's people.

Epaphras has great zeal for God's people. Chapter four, verse 13. Colossians 4, 13 says that, for I bear him record that he has great zeal for you.

What does that mean? You have zeal for God's people. You, you have great eagerness to do something for God or to be around them, to see them. Epaphras has great zeal.

That's why he doesn't, I struggle to say, okay, it's church, let's go. Anything church, where you mean the people of God, he has great zeal. And when someone has great zeal, that also stands to imply that he wishes them well.

[29 : 24] He wishes them well. What, you see, one of the things that I'm beginning to, as I grow in the Lord, I am praying and exercising myself onto is that, you know, there will always be people you really particularly might not like, whose style you might not like, their style of maybe Christian approach, their style of the way they talk, or, there's something about people that, no, no, this is not my type.

How many of you know what I'm talking about? The way this guy, you know, the way that. I'm a pastor. There are people who are also pastors whose style are not my style. But, are they in Christ? Yes. So, listen, if Christ is not ashamed to indwell somebody, why must I be ashamed to embrace them?

Everybody must not fit into my world view or opinion of how people must be. The fundamental principle of embracing people is, are they in Christ?

Are they God's people? If this person is in Christ, is part of God's people, I must have zeal for God's people. So then, sometimes, when people belong to a certain group, you really, outsiders can't tell the difference.

the way you are busy attacking the other Christian, outsiders, for outsiders, they are all Christians. They are all Christians. So, let's begin to, even though we can tell the differences amongst us, let's begin to embrace each other.

[30 : 59] You must have zeal for the people of God. Have zeal for the people of God. Don't join the outsiders in attacking the insiders. They don't know the difference.

You have also jumped online, blasting the pastor, blasting that church, blasting them. Unbelievers are attacking, you are also joining, attacking them. What are you getting? Epaphras, you are not an epaphras.

Epaphras has zeal for the people of God. He has zeal. Jesus puts it this way. The zeal, in fact, they put it this way about Jesus. The zeal of your house has consumed me.

John chapter 2, verse 16, 17. The zeal for your house has consumed me up. The zeal, Epaphras has zeal for the people of God. Number 10.

Let's look at verse 13 again. For I bear him record that he has, has a great zeal for you and them that are in Laodicea and them that are in Herapolis.

[32 : 04] His zeal is not everywhere. Everywhere. Some people say, ask for me, I like Jesus and I like the people of God. So where is your commitment? I'm committed to every church.

You are not a serious person. You are not, you are, actually, you don't have understanding. You can't be committed to every church because some are meeting this morning.

Others are going to meet in the afternoon. Others will meet in the evening. Some are fasting in June. Others are fasting in May. Others are fasting in July. Others are doing it in December. Where, where do you belong? Epaphras commitment, you can tell it is jurisdictional.

It is, it has a jurisdiction. It's committed to the Colossians. It's committed to the Laodiceans and those in Herapolis. It is a, all those in Asia and Corinth, Asia, no.

It mentions it directly. Hey, what's your department? Which department do you belong to? When we're having departmental meetings, some people show up because departmental, all departments.

[33 : 11] But now when we say, which department? We are not quite sure. We, we are not quite sure. We must be able to trace your commitment to a group. Ah, you are quiet, Papa.

Papa. You know, these things, if you are not told, sometimes you'll be missing out on the allocations of God for life without knowing.

How many of you who are a bit of age can agree with me that it is when you enter a certain age group, especially over 30 or 40, depends on what you are dealing with, sometimes you discover that when you enter 30s, you realize you've made some serious mistakes when you were in your early 20s.

Sometimes you, some people even don't have to enter 30. By 25, they realize that they shouldn't have read this, they're undertaking this project or this course. Some of us in your mid 40s, you remember, I shouldn't, my mistake was to have taken my child to this school.

No one told me. Some of us, when it is time for 11 plus, then you remember, oh, no one told me I should have been preparing this child since year four.

[34 : 30] No one told me. No one told me. So when every when this child is passing, your child is not bringing you honor. And it's not that because the child is not smart or the child is not academic, the child is not good, but you were not told earlier that do this.

some of you are studying some courses or you study some courses in university and now you are regretting. You really regret. The way you are so academic, you could have become a medical doctor by now.

You have classmates who are surgeons who are surgeons and you are just working somewhere. I can't mention them because everything is, every work is important, okay? Every work is important. Yeah.

Sometimes people say, I should have taken these things serious. I should have. That is why what I'm saying is important because there are so many people who are depending on prayers from the puppets who are not realizing that there is a better way to the blessings of God.

Prayers from the puppets are important because this is a pastor and he was telling them we pray for you. So it's important. But there are major things in life that cannot be left for the prayers of puppets.

[35 : 39] So someone needs to teach these things. Someone needs to tell you that instead of being a very committed attender, you can regularly.

It's about time you have some commitment which is also contextualized. And so I want to challenge somebody to be an Epaphras, you should get some commitment at your, you see, the work of God must affect your pockets.

what kind of, what, what kind of worship is this that doesn't affect your material possession? It must even go as far as affecting our will. Your will must affect your will.

Your commitment to God must affect your will. It must affect your time, your time. It must affect your finances. It must affect every aspect of your life.

It must affect you. But those who say, I'm a committed worshiper. Go and sit down. Oh, church was so good today.

[36 : 51] And then you go, and then you come and sit down again. Church was so good today. You go again. Now, I'm not saying don't come. Keep coming. But, but, I think, even your mobile phone, don't you upgrade it?

No, no, Pastor, I don't upgrade my phones. You can't tell me you're still using iPhone 2. Nokia. Please, please, please.

Life is progressive. You start from somewhere, but don't stay there. Progress. Grow up. Increase your commitment to God.

That's what I'm saying. Because commitment to God, it says that your labor in the Lord will never be vain. It can't be vain. So, then why don't we make an investment that cannot go vain?

When you're investing, why, okay, you look at the avenues of potential investment, and you look at where the dividend is solid. It's reliable. That's why a lot of people sometimes from overseas, they come and buy properties in the UK because they feel that this is worthwhile investment.

[38 : 03] But they won't buy properties somewhere, you know. In the same way, it says your labor in the Lord is not in vain. That means that when you are going to invest, you want to have a sure investment, invest in the things of God as well.

Your strength, your resources, your finances, I'm talking to an epiphras. Some of us, when you look at your bank statements in a year, church has featured one or twice.

Yeah. Asos, plenty. Asos, plenty. Some people claim they come to church regularly, but it never reflects in their bank account.

Oh, Christian worshiper. May God help us all in Jesus' name. All right, let me run up quickly. So, number 10, commitment is contextual.

Number 11. Oh, I like number 11. Let's look at 1 verse 8 again. Back to Colossians chapter 1, verse 8. Who, let's go at verse 7 so it can make sense.

[39 : 11] As you also learned of Epiphras, our dear fellow servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ, who also declare unto us, let's all say that together, who also declare, let's say it again.

Who also declare unto us. Please louder. Who also declare unto us. For the last time. Who also declare unto us. Epiphras will declare unto us.

This is an apostolic letter and he's saying that I know what's going on because Epiphras is there. Epiphras gives us feedback about what's going on.

There are people you give them a job to do. You have been visiting people. Calling, oh, Antivik, how are you? The pastor doesn't know. He doesn't know that someone, you never, so Antivik will say, oh, this one is always looking after me.

Hey! It's not an epiphrastric type of behavior. Give feedback to your departmental leader. They sent you, have a meeting, this guy, go ahead and do an interview or something.

[40 : 19] Give feedback. Give them feedback, report back. You go and visit some people because they are in the church and you are also a church member or a leader.

Tell whoever is senior to you, I visited this person and this is their situation. No, someone is giving birth. You have gone very surreptitiously to the hospital and presented flowers and cards and everything.

So, yeah, I don't know if they know, but me, I came to visit you. You know, nowadays, pastor, that phrase is very demonic.

Pastor is very busy. Don't buy into it. Nowadays, they are very busy, you know, because of the things that are going on, the gas problems and the energy issues.

So, you know, it's a, don't destroy the fraternity of the brethren. Some people don't believe in these things at all because of character issues.

[41 : 25] But these things help a local church remain strong. No wonder Paul had to write a letter to the church of Colossae because Epaphras was there. When Epaphras is there, he gives feedback.

When, in our cell group systems, every cell leader must give feedback or must report back. Someone is not feeling well. Someone is sick. Someone, because the pastor or all the pastors can't know everything.

So, that's why we have diversified the work so that there will be feedback. There will be reporting back. So, how come someone is in hospital and you are a leader, you've gone to visit them and no one in the church knows about it?

Then later, you keep calling them. I'm just calling to check on you. Where did you know them? Is it not the church? Epaphras!

Am I preaching the new church? You know, I'm not just preaching to Caris because there are people who will be listening and potentially you have destroyed the church. Can you imagine? Demise of a church is in your hands.

[42 : 32] Uh-oh. And you are believing God for your children. You are believing God for breakthrough. You are believing God for your business. Meanwhile, you have the demise of a church in your hands. You broke away from a church and created confusion.

People scattered. Some of them are backslidden because of the rumors and the confusion you created in the church because you are trying to get disciples for yourself because you believe that you are also anointed.

Recently, I heard a story about a certain pastor who was a branch pastor of a certain church. many years ago and after a while, I said, no, no, this one, I'm no more branch. I'm a headquarters now. I'm a headquarters now. Be careful about such churches. I'm a headquarters now. I'm a headquarters. No. No. Created confusion. Broke away. And you know what?

Usually before they do that, they start planning like Absalom. Sometimes two years ahead, three years ahead. The comments they make. When we are going, all of us are having general gathering.

[43 : 37] They won't show up. They say, oh, no, because they have flimsy excuses. You know, some of the members, things are not good for them. They have flimsy excuses. And it continues. And it continues.

We are all going to Cardford. They will go to Croydon. And they say, but it's all C. It doesn't matter. Croydon, Croydon, they are not too far. So, these things can be coming from a very far.

You can notice them from afar. You can notice them from afar. There are people who can be close to a leader and yet close to other people in the organization and the leader never knows how close you are to them.

You are a very dangerous person. Epaphras. I need to call you and check what is going on. No, Paul doesn't have to call. So, these things are very important and usually when such people who don't like order and don't like structure are within a certain fraternity or organization, especially a church organization, they say, this is a court.

This is a court. There's so much control. There's so much control. There's so much control. If you didn't pay a car for a parking charge, just simple, not speeding fine, the other one. Congestion charge.

[44 : 43] It went from 50 pounds to 828 pounds. And they say, if you don't pay in the next 20 minutes, there's a tow car coming to take your car away.

Oh, the system works. There is order and that's how every church that is growing and must be effective in the generation must have strong systems and strong order.

And it needs a lot of epaphras. I see God raising some epaphras in the house. And finally, finally, epaphras focuses on what is more important.

Look at the last verse 8, the last verse we read. Who also declared unto us your love in the spirit? He didn't talk about your dressing, your shoe, your new job, and all those things are important. But really, your spiritual state, your spiritual state is more important to epaphras. He builds alliances based on people's spirituality, not people's pockets. Am I saying something?

[45 : 51] Some people, as soon as they see you have got, they see, is this the car this guy is driving? They'll make you their friend. Whether you are a thief, whether you are a gossip, that

doesn't bother them.

They see a new car, they see a nice car, they see nice dress, they see designer, yeah, I like that one. So they'll befriend you. But epaphras does not choose alliances based on trivial things. It makes this alliance based on more important things than love in the spirit. Epaphras comes to talk about your love in the spirit. Because that's the more important thing in church.

Your love, and for that matter, your love in the spirit. Your spiritual state is more important than your financial state. Because if you are in good spiritual state, it will catch up with your financial state. If you are in good spiritual state, it will catch up with your marital state. If you are in good spiritual state, it will catch up with your approach to life, general approach.

[46 : 54] If you are in good spiritual state, it will catch up with the way your children can do well in life. Some of you are here because you know mama is a praying mama. Some of us are here.

you know, dad is a praying dad. Some of us are here because grandma, grandma, grandma, grandma will always be praying for you. So sometimes you might not have everything to leave for your children, but make sure you don't leave them spiritually bankrupt.

Let your spiritual investment, the more important things in life, it is speaking for your future. It's speaking, and what a beautiful thing is, it's even speaking for your grandchildren who are now born. Speaking, it's speaking for your future.

It's speaking for your children. You can't be always there for your children. You can't be there always. What I mean is, people are making decisions about your child and you can't go and say, no, no, please, grandma, let me also sit in.

Like the woman who's, somebody's wedding, they're about to take a picture. She said, no, I must stay between the bride and the groom. So I must be at the center of it. You can't do that. But your spirituality, there are things that are very important.

[47 : 57] As you pursue career, don't do it at the expense of spirituality and your love for God. As you pursue marriage, don't do it at the expense of your spiritual things.

As you pursue acquisition, you want to buy houses, you want to buy cars, you want to be into investment, you want to be an investment banker. Whatever you want to do, I know you want to have high educational attainment.

It is very good. Please, don't get me wrong. Those things can be very, most of the time they are very good. But don't do all these things at the expense of healthy spiritual living.

What do I mean? Don't leave that. Don't, you are pursuing education. You are pursuing good marriage. Don't do it at the expense of spiritual life. You can, the two can go together and they can go well together.

Good career life can go well with good spiritual life. Good marital life can go well with good spiritual life. Good parenting life can go well with good spiritual life. Good academic life, that's why I don't see why you can be so spiritual you are also failing at your education.

[49 : 03] It's not right. Your spirituality must translate into showing up in your academic life. So don't stop failing the exam. If you have failed, go ahead and write it and this time pass.

So epaphrase is these 12 things. Number one, epaphrase. What about epaphrase? We learn, sorry, it's one of us.

Number two, we learn from epaphrase. Number three, it's a fellow bond server. Number four, faithful minister of Christ. Number five, faithful on the behalf of the collusion. Number six, always laboring fervently in prayer.

Number seven, always praying for you. Number eight, we can vouch for him. Number nine, he has great zeal for God's people. Number 10, his commitment is contextual.

Number 11, he reports back. And then number 12, he focuses on what is more important, which are spiritual things. In Jesus' name. May God make us all epaphrases.

[50 : 00] In Jesus' name. Did you receive something? Give Jesus praise. Hallelujah. Thank you for listening to this message by David Entry. You're welcome to connect with David Entry on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

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Be blessed. Be blessed.