

The Practice and Importance of Prayer

Colossians 4:2-4

NKJ	² Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; ³ meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, ⁴ that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.
BGT	² Τῇ προσευχῇ προσκατερέετε, γρηγοροῦντες ἐν αὐτῇ ἐν εὐχαριστίᾳ, ³ προσευχόμενοι ἅμα καὶ περὶ ἡμῶν, ἵνα ὁ θεὸς ἀνοίξῃ ἡμῖν θύραν τοῦ λόγου λαλῆσαι τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ Χριστοῦ, δι' ὃ καὶ δέδεμαι, ⁴ ἵνα φανερώσω αὐτὸ ὡς δεῖ με λαλῆσαι.

If then you were raised with Christ,

1. **BE SEEKING** the Above Things (Col 3:1)
2. **BE THINKING** the Above Things (Col 3:2)
3. **PUT TO DEATH** Sinful Motivations (Col 3:5-7)
4. **PUT OFF** Sinful Actions (Col 3:8-11)
5. **CLOTHE YOURSELF** with Spiritual Clothing (Col 3:12-14)
6. **LET** the Peace of Christ **RULE** Between You and Others (Col 3:15)
7. **LET** the Word of Christ **DWELL** in You Richly (Col 3:16-17)
 - a. As Wives, **BE SUBJECTING** Yourselves to Your Husbands (Col 3:18)
 - b. As Husbands, **BE LOVING** Your Wives, and Do Not Be Embittered Towards Them (Col 3:19)
 - c. As Children, **BE OBEYING** Your Parents in All Things (Col 3:20)
 - d. As Fathers, **DO NOT BE AGITATING** Your Children (Col 3:21)
 - e. As Slaves, **BE OBEYING** Your Masters in All Things (Col 3:22-25)
 - f. As Masters, **BE GRANTING** Your Slaves what Is Just and Fair (Col 4:1)

From positions to practices (prayer 2-4, walk 5, & talk 6), to people (7-15,17) with two commands in v. 16 & 18.

I. Persistence (“Continue earnestly in prayer”)

[FRI] (a) *occupy oneself diligently with* (b) *persevere in*

[LN] *to continue to do something with intense effort, with the possible implication of despite difficulty*

[LS] *to persist obstinately in*

Acts 1:14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Acts 2:46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,

Acts 6:4 "but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

Rom 12:12 rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer;

[UBS] προσκατέρησις, εως f perseverance

Eph 6:18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints --

- Commanded prayer (imperative) – must
- Continuous prayer (present tense) – now
- Inclusive prayer (plural) – this is not just an assignment for leaders, but for the entire assembly – me
- Relentless prayer – whatever prayer is, it is not easy or natural – never quit

II. Protection (“Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving”)

- Alertness – Being Awake

Primarily means “not sleep” – the idea of being alert – spiritual wakefulness – to watch – to refrain from sleep

Set in contrast with not sleeping – Does this mean that if we are not praying, we are spiritually asleep?

Matt 26:38 Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me."

Matt 26:40 Then He came to the disciples and found them asleep, and said to Peter, "What? Could you not watch with Me one hour?"

To Keep Focused on the Return of Christ (cp. 1 John 2:28; 3:1-3)

Matt 24:42 Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.

To Overcome Personal Temptation and Weakness

Matt 26:41 "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak."

To Guard Against Enemies of the Sheep

Acts 20:31 Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

To Be Able to Stand Fast in the Faith

1 Cor 16:13 Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.

To Keep Alert to What Is Happening Around Us (1 Thes 5:1-11)

1 Thes 5:6 Therefore let us not sleep, as others *do*, but let us watch and be sober.

1 Thes 5:10 who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

To Guard Against the Devil and His Schemes

1 Pet 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

To Give God a Reason to Keep Us Here as an Assembly

Rev 3:2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God.

Rev 3:3 Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.

To Be Blessed of God (tied in with purity)

Rev 16:15 "Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame."

- **Attitude – Being Thankful**

As Opposed to Uncleanness, Foolish Talking, or Vulgar (Dirty) Speech

Eph 5:4 neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.

As Opposed to Worry

Phil 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

As a Practice of Maturity

Col 2:7 rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

As a Priority for Peace and Evangelism

1 Tim 2:1 Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, (1-7)

As a Routine in Eating

1 Tim 4:3-4 forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving;

As a Proper Response to God

Rev 4:9 Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, (Rev 7:12)

III. Proclamation (“meanwhile praying also for us”) – Praying for proclaimers (evangelizers) and pastors (elders)

- That God might open a door to evangelizers to speak the Word – Opportunity

Acts 14:27 Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.

1 Cor 16:9 For a great and effective door has opened to me, and *there are* many adversaries.

2 Cor 2:12 Furthermore, when I came to Troas to *preach* Christ's gospel, and a door was opened to me by the Lord.

Col 4:3 meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains,

Rev 3:7 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, 'These things says He who is holy, He who is true, "He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens":

Rev 3:8 I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.

- The Content: “*the mystery of Christ*”

- something unknown (and unknowable) that God has revealed
- Christocentric nature of the gospel – not just “god” but God’s Sinbearing, Risen Again Son

- The Cost: “*for which I am also in chains*” – Preaching the gospel brings persecution

- That Paul might properly reveal the Word – Necessity

- The Word must be revealed

- our actions reinforce, but do not replace, the Gospel (Rom 10:14-17 cp Matt 5:14-16)
- the Word is special revelation – It must be taught (Matt 28:18-20; Eph 4:11-16)

1:26 the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints.

1:27 To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

2:2 that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and *attaining* to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ,

- The Word must be revealed properly - dei

- Accurately – proper content (John 3:7; Gal 1:6-9; 2 Tim 2:15)

John 3:7 "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

John 4:24 "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

Acts 16:30 And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

- Honestly – proper conduct (Matt 5:14-16;

Acts 5:29 But Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men.

1 Thes 4:1 Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God;

2 Thes 3:7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you;

1 Tim 3:2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; (v. 7)

1 Tim 3:15 but if I am delayed, *I write* so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

2 Pet 3:11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of *persons* ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,

- Responsibly – proper attitude

2 Cor 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

- Boldly – proper approach

Eph 6:20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.