

THE NEW LIFE  
*Growing In Christ*  
Colossians 4:2-6

I. MATURE THROUGH YOUR PRAYER LIFE: (vs. 2-3a)

Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; praying at the same time for us as well (vs. 2-3a)...

It's fitting that Paul begins with prayer, because it's *foundational* in man's *growth* and *maturing* in his *new life* in Christ. Prayer is the *strength* of the believer's *fellowship* with the Lord, and it's the *source* of his *power* against Satan and his fallen angels. Prayer isn't a *spiritual luxury*...it's *essential* for *spiritual growth*...*spiritual life*.

*"...The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much."*

~James 5:16b

Devote yourselves...means *to be courageously persistent* ...*to hold fast and not let go*. Paul is calling on believers to *persist in prayer*...to be *persistent in prayer*.

The Lord told *two parables* illustrating the *importance of persistent prayer*:

*"Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart, saying, 'In a certain city there was a judge who did not fear God and did not respect man. There was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, 'Give me legal protection from my opponent.' For a while he was unwilling; but afterward he said to himself, 'Even though I do not fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow bothers me, I will give her legal protection, otherwise by continually coming she will wear me out'." And the Lord*

*said, 'Hear what the unrighteous judge said; now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?'"*

~Luke 18:1-8

*"Then He said to them, 'Suppose one of you has a friend, and goes to him at midnight and says to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; and from inside he answers and says, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.'" I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs. So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened."*

~Luke 11:5-10

If *sinful humans* will *yield to* and *give in* to *persistence*... how much more will our holy, loving heavenly Father?

This stands in stark contrast to the *shallow, self-centered prayers* of our day. Much of the contemporary church has *lost its reverence* for God. He is too often viewed as sort of a spiritual ATM. He's there for *our convenience*.

Christians also tend to *pray* such *vague, general prayers* that it's difficult to know *if* or *when* God *answers*. To be *devoted* to *prayer* requires something *specific* to pray for. We will never *persistently pray* for something we are not concerned about.

True prayer often involves *struggling* and *wrestling* with God...revealing to Him the deepest concerns of our heart ...similar to **Jacob wrestling** with God (**Genesis 32:24-32**). Prayer is to be a *persistent, courageous fight* from which the believer may come away *feeling exhausted*. Such praying gives the believer a *holy boldness* to pray *fervently* and *forcefully* when convinced of God's will.

**Keeping alert...**means *to stay awake, stay focused, to not fall asleep...to be watchful and aware*.

*“Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.”*

~I Corinthians 16:13

*“And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, ‘So, you men could not keep watch with Me for one hour? Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.’”*

~Matthew 26:40-41

**With an attitude of thanksgiving...**

This is the *fifth time* that **Paul** has mentioned **thanksgiving** in this epistle:

- Thankful for *salvation* (**Colossians 1:12**).
- Thankful for *spiritual growth* (**Colossians 2:6-7**).
- Thankful for *fellowship with Christ and His Church* (**Colossians 3:15**).
- Thankful for the *opportunity to serve* (**Colossians 3:17**).
- And here...thankful for the *guarantee that God will answer prayer in accordance with His purpose* (**vs. 2**).

**As believers...when we pray...we should pray with thanksgiving:**

- For the *spiritual blessings and privileges that have been given us* (**Ephesians 1:3**).
- For God's *presence* (**Matthew 1:23**).
- For God's *provision* (**Matthew 6:25-33**).
- For God's *pardon and our salvation* (**Romans 6:17-18**).
- For God's *promises* (**II Corinthians 1:20**).
- For God's *purpose in everything* (**Romans 8:28**).

*“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”*

~Philippians 4:6

**Praying at the same time for us as well...**this was a request Paul often made of those he was writing to.

*“Pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel.”*

~Ephesians 6:19

*“Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord will spread rapidly and be glorified, just as it did also with you.”*

~II Thessalonians 3:1

**Ways to pray for those engaging in ministry and missions:**

- That they will *always keep their eyes upon Jesus* (**Hebrews 12:2**).
- That they will *have self-discipline to diligently study God's Word and to follow our Lord's example in prayer* (**II Timothy 2:15**).

- That their *motives will always be Christ-honoring... Christ-glorifying* (**II Corinthians 2:17**).
- That the Lord will *grant them His divine wisdom* (**Colossians 1:9-10**).
- That they will *refuse to take any step apart from the Lord's leading* (**Romans 8:14**).
- That they will *seek to live out a Godly example worthy of others imitating and following* (**I Corinthians 11:1**).
- That they will *refuse to rely upon their own strength* (**II Corinthians 12:9**). To be filled with the Holy Spirit.
- That they will *preach and teach accurately, faithfully, boldly, and fearlessly* (**II Timothy 4:1-5; Titus 1:9, 13**).

Prayer will always be *boring* until it becomes *personal*. When it becomes *personal* it will become *fervent*. When it becomes *fervent* it will become *powerful*. When it becomes *powerful* it becomes God *glorifying*.

## II. MAGNIFY THROUGH YOUR PROCLAMATION: (vs. 3b-4)

That God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak (vs. 3b-4)...

That God will open up to us a door for the word...

A door in the New Testament usually refers to *an opportunity*.

*“I will remain in Ephesus until Pentecost; for a wide door for effective service has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.”*

~I Corinthians 16:8-9

Believers are to pray for **open doors** because it's God *who opens them*...not themselves.

*“He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens...”*

~Revelation 3:7

So that we may speak for the mystery of Christ...

*“By revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief. By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ.”*

~Ephesians 3:3-4

*“Pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel.”*

~Ephesians 6:19

The term **mystery** refers to *something hidden in the Old Testament but manifested in the New Testament*. In the present context, it refers to the *Gospel*. Paul asked the **Colossians** to pray that *he would have an open door to speak the full truth of the Gospel*.

For which I have also been imprisoned...it was for the sake of the Gospel that Paul was **imprisoned**. Paul's *imprisonment* didn't end his ministry...it only redirected it. It was during this time that he wrote **Colossians**, **Ephesians**, **Philippians**, and **Philemon**.

He also evangelized anyone he came in contact with, whether *the mob in Jerusalem* (**Acts 22:1-ff**), *Felix* (**Acts 24:10-ff**), *Herod Agrippa* (**Acts 26:1-ff**), *Roman soldiers* (**Philippians 1:13**), *members of Caesar's household* (**Philippians 4:22**), or *members of Rome's Jewish community* (**Acts 28:17-ff**). Paul's activity during his

imprisonment in Rome is summed up in **Acts 28:30-31**...*“And he stayed two full years in his own rented quarters and was welcoming all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered.”*

For Paul...there were *no devastating circumstances*...only *unique opportunities*.

**That I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak...** this refers to the unique method that Paul would use to present the Gospel. To a *Jew* he would *use one method*, to a *Gentile* a *different approach*. He was always *aware of who he was sharing with*. But always...Paul *boldly* and *purposely presented the Gospel*...tempered with *love* and *grace*.

*“I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘But the righteous man shall live by faith’.”*

~Romans 1:14-17

Paul wanted people to **pray** that he would speak as he **ought to speak**...as God *wanted him to speak*. And that should be our prayer...that we would *proclaim Christ in the most effective way*.

### III. MANIFEST THROUGH YOUR PERSUADING: (vs. 5-6)

**Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so**

**that you will know how you should respond to each person (vs. 5-6)...**

How believers live either gives *credibility* to what they say, or *distracts* from *who they say they are* and *what they say they believe*. As believers we are to live a *consistent, righteous life* in Christ. If those who *say they believe* then *act and live as fools*...*unbelievers* will see them as *no different* than anyone else...actually worse...as *hypocrites*.

**Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders...** **wisdom** is *seeing through God’s perspective*...*seeing as God sees*. This allows the believer to *properly evaluate* every *circumstance* and gives them the ability to make *godly decisions*.

*“Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom...But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.”*

~James 3:13, 17

**Towards outsiders**...this refers to *unbelievers*. That they may see the power of the Gospel at work.

*“And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”*

~I Timothy 3:7

**Making the most of the opportunity**...**opportunity** is fleeting...life is short...every day more people die without Christ.

*“Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.”*

~II Timothy 4:2

*“Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.”*

~Romans 13:11-14

The time is *now* for believers.

*Consistency of life* must be followed by *consistency of speech*.

Let your speech always be with grace...in *all circumstances* believers are to *make gracious speech a habit*. To speak with **grace** means to say what is *edifying, wholesome, kind, sensitive, purposeful, gentle, truthful, loving, and thoughtful...according to the need at that time*. There is no place for the *believer's speech* to characterize the *unredeemed's mouth*.

*“Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.”*

~Ephesians 4:29

As though seasoned with salt...salt can *sting* when rubbed into a wound...but it also *prevents corruption*. It also *adds flavor*. *Truth* can *hurt* or it *can set you free*.

*“You are the salt of the earth...”*

~Matthew 5:13a

So that you will know how you should respond to each person...the believer must know how to *say the right thing...at the right time...in the right way*.

*“Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence”*

~I Peter 3:15

*“Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips.”*

~Psalm 141:3

## LESSONS WE CAN LEARN:

- **PRAYER** is the strength of the believer's fellowship with the Lord...and the source of his **POWER** against Satan.

*“With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.”*

~Ephesians 6:18

- One's **SPEECH** will reflect the kind of person one is. It's the truest indicator of their **SPIRITUAL** state.

*“...For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.”*

~Matthew 12:34b

- The tongue is the **BEST** and **WORST** of man.

*“But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing...”*

~James 3:8-10a

## **Colossians 4:2-6**

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**5 Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. 6 Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.**