

## Praying, Proclaiming and Reaching

We come to the end of our current study in the letter to the Colossians. It began with a very broad scope and as we approach the close of the letter we are sharply focused on Jesus and how we are to live this life. Our final attention will be how we are to witness to the world.

*"Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. 3 And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. 4 Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. 5 Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. 6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone." (Colossians 4:2-6)*

### 1. Personally Praying

Prayer in its simplest form is and offering up to God of our desires, needs and request...a dependence on God.

We are coming to God with a need that only he can meet. We need to remember that it's the very nature of God to give.

- **Perseverance** – *whatever you do, don't stop praying!*

Paul exhorts us to "Devote ourselves to prayer, be "watchful" (or vigilant). We're being challenged to stay committed, awake to the task, persevering; we can never stop, never quit.

The original Greek word for "devote" προσκατερεΐτε (proskartereite) carries with it the idea to be "for something", "to be strong in your movement toward..." To continue to move, steadfastly continue forward.

Devotion and perseverance in scripture is always related to prayer.

*"Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up." (Luke 18:1)*

*"Pray without ceasing." (I Thessalonians 5:17 NKJV)*

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*“They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.” (Acts 1:14)*

*“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”  
(Acts 2:42)*

*“...and we will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.”  
(Acts 6:4)*

*“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.” (Romans 12:12)*

*“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.”  
(Ephesians 6:18)*

- **Priority** – *Prayer is not a small thing, not some marginal or incidental activity.*

This is a private type of prayer; it’s Jesus and me, this is the type of prayer that changes us.

*“In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.” (Ephesians 3:12)*

Our status is; “in him” what is true of Jesus is true of us, because we are in him. Being in him will affect every area of your life.

We’re called to a relationship, not to just *believe* but to *follow* Jesus.

*“For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.” (Hebrews 10:14, 19)*

*“Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. 16 Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.” (Hebrews 4:14-16)*

## 2. Praying for Others

*“Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured.” (Colossians 4:12)*

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Epaphras probably came to faith under Paul’s ministry. He then took his new life in Jesus back to his city and shared it. Paul tells the people of Colossae that Epaphras is “always wrestling in prayer” for them. So much of God’s work happens right here as people commit to contending in prayer for others.

- **An Open Door**

*Prayer is utterly necessary for the spreading of the gospel.*

*“And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ...”*

*“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them...”*  
**(John 6:44)**

Hearts have to be open to his drawing, we need to pray that doors would open and hearts will be receptive.

- **A Clear Presentation**

*“Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.”*

*“For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.” (Romans 1:17)*

### **3. Stepping through open doors**

- **Acting in wisdom**

*“Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders;”*

*“Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.”*  
**(Daniel 12:3)**

*“Love does not dishonor others (act unbecomingly)...”*  
**(I Corinthians 13:5)**

- **Opportunistic**

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*“Make the most of every opportunity”*

*“Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.” (Ephesians 5:15-16)*

- **Grace filled conversation**

*“Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.”*

*“Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister.”*

**(Romans 14:13)**

*“...because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.” (James 2:13)*

Let's commit ourselves to prayer this week and during this Christmas season.

## **Discussion Questions**

1. How would you personally describe, “praying” and how does perseverance play a role in your prayer life?
2. Re-read all the related scriptures on page 2 of your notes and discuss common themes that you see.
3. Pastor Randy taught us that prayer has to be a priority in our lives or that something else would take its place. Take time to examine your heart, has prayer been a priority for us? If not, despite the business of life, how do we make this change?
4. Looking at verse 12, we see a humble church leader constantly wrestling in prayer for these readers. Who or what are you contending or wrestling for? Take time to seek the Lord and allow him to show you who or what to contend for.
5. What doors are you believing God to open? What does it mean to you to have a “*clear presentation*” and to “*act with wisdom*” once you step through that open door?

