

**Message #19****Colossians 4:2-6**

Paul wrote all of these letters to all of these churches because he wanted believers to go to new levels in their relationship with God. He was not content with the fact that they were saved. He wanted these believers to develop and make a difference.

In the so-called “Christian life,” believers will devote themselves to many things. Many times these aren’t the right things. Paul wanted the believers in the church dedicated to the right things. He wanted them to make right decisions; in fact, in these verses he commands it.

**BELIEVERS HAVE BEEN COMMANDED BY GOD TO DEVOTE THEMSELVES TO A LIFE OF PRAYER TO GOD AND PROCLAMATION ABOUT GOD.**

We have been commanded by God to be people of prayer and people who proclaim God’s truth by our lives and our lips.

**MINISTRY #1** – We have been commanded to have a ministry of prayer. **4:2-4**

Paul was a man who knew the benefits of a persistent prayer life.

The Apostle Paul began this letter to the Colossians focused on the subject of prayer (1:3, 9, 12), and he ends the letter with the same focus.

It was H.A. Ironside who said: “One of the most common sins among Christians today is that of prayerlessness.”

In these verses, we are commanded to “devote” ourselves to prayer. The verb “devote” is one that speaks of continual and constant dedication, steadfastness and strength in prayer (G. Abbott-Smith, p. 385).

We have been commanded by God to be a church that is strong and steadfast in prayer. Prayer meetings are to exist in the church continually.

Now the verb “devote” is present tense, meaning prayer is to be a continual and habitual practice of the Christian life and in the Christian church.

**Concept #1** - Continually keep yourself awake and alert in prayer. **4:2a**

The prepositional phrase “in it” refers to keeping oneself devoted to prayer. By virtue of Paul making this statement, we may assume that one of the great dangers of the spiritual life is that of a believer being sleepy and sluggish in his prayer life.

**Concept #2** - Continually keep yourself awake and alert in thankfulness. **4:2b**

If we remember that when Paul wrote this letter he was in jail, we may immediately understand that Paul knew first hand of the importance of thankfulness in a prayer life, even in the most difficult of circumstances.

- 1) We can be thankful for God's providence .
- 2) We can be thankful for God's pardon .
- 3) We can be thankful for our position .
- 4) We can be thankful for God's presence .
- 5) We can be thankful for God's promises .
- 6) We can be thankful for God's peace .
- 7) We can be thankful for God's provisions .
- 8) We can be thankful for our possessions .
- 9) We can be thankful for our pleasure .
- 10) We can be thankful for God's purposes .

**Concept #3** - Continually keep yourself awake and alert in prayer for ministry. **4:3-4**

Undoubtedly one reason why some churches never accomplish what God wants them to accomplish is because they do not continually pray for the church and the ministry and the minister.

H.A. Ironside made an interesting observation when he observed here was the greatest preacher and teacher that this Christian dispensation has ever known, yet he realizes the great need he has for prayer help (Ironside, p. 168).

Now the truth is when Paul wrote this letter, he wanted prayer for himself and his ministry. J. Vernon McGee observed—"You can't help Paul any longer by praying for him, but you can help your Pastor and other Christian ministers" (McGee, p. 190).

**(Request #1)** - Believers should pray that God will open doors for the ministry of the Word.  
**4:3a**

In the N.T., especially in the writings of Paul, “door” oft times was a metaphorical picture of opportunity for ministry (i.e. I Cor. 16:8-9; II Cor. 2:12).

Paul is specifically asking these Colossians to pray that God would give him many future opportunities to minister the Word of God.

**(Request #2)** - Believers should pray that God will give the ability to speak the mysteries of Christ. **4:3b**

The words “speak forth the mysteries of Christ” have to do with being able to both physically and spiritually communicate things about Jesus Christ to people which previously were not revealed to them.

The ability and opportunity to unlock the things of God for others is a supernatural ability and opportunity that comes from God.

**(Request #3)** - Believers should pray that God will give the ability to clearly speak God’s message. **4:4**

The ability to clearly open God’s Word so that it is expounded in a way that people can understand is an ability intimately connected to prayer.

The ability to open God’s Word in such a way that comes alive to the people is an ability that comes through prayer.

Clear communication of the Word that rips into the souls of those listening is a work of God. Making God’s Word clear takes prayer and preparation.

**MINISTRY #2** – We have been commanded to have a ministry of proclamation. **4:5-6**

**Way #1** - We proclaim God’s truth through a wise walk. **4:5**

We have been commanded by God to live our lives in a wise way toward outsiders. What this means is that Christians are to function in this world and look and act like wise people.

The tragedy is that many Christians send a signal to lost people that they are kooky, not wise. H.A. Ironside said the person who seems to be solemn about God but in practice is a giggling buffoon in life will not make any positive or permanent impression on anybody (p. 172).

**Way #2** - We proclaim God's truth through a gracious talk. **4:6**

Our speech must always be seasoned with the grace of God. In other words, we must always present God's grace to people in forgiving all sins through Jesus Christ. However, notice carefully our speech must also be seasoned with salt.

Salt, in Paul's day, sterilized, seasoned and saved food. Gracious speech must never forfeit the flavor of God's truth. There will be times when God's truth will be gracious and stinging. In fact, God's Word often stings like salt before it purifies by God's grace.

Proverbs 18:21 tells us "Death and life are in the power of the tongue."

Through a life devoted to prayer and through a walk and talk that proclaims we have a living relationship with God, we will make a difference and we will be living in obedience to the commands of God!