

Devote Yourselves to Prayer! Col 4:2-4

I. Introduction

- A. Do I have to convince anyone that we're in a time of Spiritual warfare?**
- B. Do I have to convince anyone that this life *REQUIRES* much prayer?**
- C. Does anyone here believe**
 - 1. They pray too much?
 - 2. Others pray too much for them?
- D. Does anyone here believe we get too much preaching on Prayer? You better answer *NO* because that's our sermon!**
- E. Last time – I took you to Ephesians on Prayer**
 - 1. Paul spends a lot more time there with some critical points concerning Battlefield prayer
 - 2. NOT going to review the whole section – just the RELATIONSHIP between Prayer and ALERTNESS
 - 3. Then We'll go to our passage in Col 2:2-4

➤ [TURN to EPH 6:18](#)

II. The Manner of Taking Up Your Helmet and Sword: Praying and Watching

[Eph 6:18](#) 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, [19](#) and 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,

- A. Look at V.18 – TWO MAIN ACTIVITIES HERE: PRAYING and BEING ALERT / WATCHING**
- B. How this section works...**
 - 1. V.14 COMMAND: [Stand Firm](#)
 - 2. THEN – a Series of phrases TELLING us HOW to STAND FIRM!
 - 3. SIX of those are the pieces of armor
 - 4. NOW TWO MORE that represent MEANS

C. Look at the keys to V.18

[18](#) 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,

- 1. TWO KEYS to V.18 – “[pray](#)” and “[be on the alert](#)”
- 2. BOTH
 - a) Continual activities –do always
 - b) Continue to explain / expand Spiritual Warfare
 - c) = Part of method of HOW we do Spiritual Warfare

D. First – when are we to pray and watch/be on the alert?

- 1. Think about this in battle terms – Praying and watching here is focused on BATTLE PRAYER!
 - a) IOW – Prayer and alertness in Spiritual warfare against Satan is

- (1) FOCUSED on the Battle
- (2) During the BATTLE!
- b) We all know that we remember to pray during trials and suffering and OFTEN FORGET to PRAY when times are good
 - (1) Paul's in chains – he could easily weaken and not fight as hard!
 - (2) His prayer request – pray that I fight just as hard on this part of the battlefield!

E. Second – what is the relationship between praying and watching (alert)?

1. Look at v.17-20 and see the flow
 - a) it's time to fight and you put on the helmet and raise the sword
[Eph 6:17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.](#)
 - b) What's the manner in which you do this? A: Prayer
 - c) With EVERY prayer you pray =
[Eph 6:18 With all prayer and petition](#)
 - d) Keep, continuously praying at every opportunity in the Holy Spirit:
[pray at all times in the Spirit,](#)
 - e) NOTICE what Paul says next:
[and with this in view,](#)
 - (1) = for this purpose
 - (2) = to this end
 - (3) ? for what purpose Paul?
 - f) To keep /alert keep watching!
[be on the alert](#)
 - g) How are we to be on the alert?
[with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,](#)
 - h) If you Pray for the purpose of staying alert, then why does staying alert need praying (petition)?!!!
 - i) = CIRCULAR REASONING! In a good sense!
2. Let me explain
 - a) You are going into battle or in battle and the manner in which you put on your helmet and use your sword is with prayer!
 - (1) Makes sense! Everything we do should be bathed in prayer!
 - b) So, you pray at all times in the Spirit
 - c) Then Paul added "[and with this in view](#)" = "for the PURPOSE of"
 - d) For the purpose of what? [Be on the alert](#) = keeping ALERT!

3. POINT 1: PRAYING LEADS to ALERTNESS!
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- a) Makes sense! If you're constantly praying in SPIRITUAL WARFARE – AREN'T YOU more ALERT to the SPIRITUAL WARFARE AROUND YOU?
- b) As you think of more things to pray for, you are MORE ALERT to the battle around you!

- c) So again POINT 1 PRAYING LEADS to ALERTNESS!
- d) BUT – how are we to be alert?
- e) A: with all perseverance and petition!
- f) What's Paul putting petition in there for?

4. A: POINT 2 – BEING ON THE ALERT (Watching) LEADS to MORE PRAYER!

- a) Again – Makes sense! Now that you are ALERT from Prayer, YOU SEE MORE THINGS TO PRAY FOR! – THINGS FOR other saints in Spiritual Warfare!
- 5. It's a circular cycle that should just keep feeding you to PRAY and WATCH MORE and MORE and MORE! One feeds the other!
- 6. Until you understand this, you'll find v.18-19 just a lot of repetitious wording that is hard to structure!
- 7. A lot of preachers and commentators don't see the structure and just flatten the whole section out into a bunch of points on prayer!

F. Paul : PRAYER and ALERTNESS are A NECESSARY PART of SPIRITUAL WARFARE

- 1. It is NOT a PIECE of ARMOR
- 2. BUT is A NECESSARY PART of the METHOD of the COMMAND to STAND FIRM.
- 3. It's the MANNER / the WAY in which we are to put on the helmet and take up the sword
- 4. We are to pray for the purpose of being alert
- 5. And being alert we are to pray more!
- 6. One more time – Praying and watching:
 - a) ARE NOT a piece of armor
 - b) ARE a necessary part of spiritual warfare
 - c) = IS a necessary part of the method of how we are to STAND FIRM – AT THE ACTUAL TIME of BATTLE
 - d) It's HOW we take up the helmet and sword and fight – FIGHT WITH PRAYER and ALERTNESS!

G. There's an emphasis here that we need!

- 1. And – you know what? Paul's own request for prayer – FITS this interpretation – PRAY FOR ME IN BATTLE!
- 2. THEN – we need to do the same for each other!

III. Col 4:2-4 Devote Yourself to Prayer!

Col 4:2 Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with *an attitude* of thanksgiving; **3** praying at the same time for us as well, 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; **4** that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.

A. The Requirements: Devotion, Alertness, Thanksgiving!

- 1. **Col 4:2 Devote yourselves to prayer**
 - a) "**devote**" = Persist in, adhere to, continue steadfast in, keep close company

with!

- (1) Used for a boat always ready for someone = the boat is DEVOTED to a single use and is always ready for that
 - (2) Also used often for CONTINUANCE in Prayer or Ministry of the word

[Ac 1:14](#) These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with *the* women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

[Ac 2:42](#) They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

[Ac 2:46](#) Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart,

[Ro 12:12](#) rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer,

[Ac 6:4](#) "But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word."
 - (3) = COMMON Command used for a Christian's PRAYER LIFE!
 - (4) = COMMAND
 - (5) = CONTINUAL form of the verb!
- b) Luke 11:5-10
- (1) Storeowner asleep with family
 - (2) Man bangs on door for food
 - (3) Persists UNTIL man gets up and gives him bread
 - (4) What do you think a loving Father will give to a son who has a need?
 - (5) This famous verse is in this parable!

[Lk11:9](#) "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.
- c) Luke 18:1-8 Unjust judge
- (1) Woman keeps coming and begging
 - (2) Finally – judge gives her what she wants
 - (3) If this is what an UNJUST judge will do in the face of PERSISTENCE, what do you think a Just GOD will give to His own child who PERSISTS in prayer?
 - (4) Listen to Christ's words at the end of this parable!

[Lk18:7](#) now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? **8** "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?"
2. [keeping alert in it](#)
- a) one preacher: "don't shift into devotional neutral!"
 - b) = CONSTANT Spiritual alertness
 - c) = ALWAYS alert in your prayer!
 - d) NOT mechanical dullness
 - e) Cycling vs. running

- (1) Cycling – you can coast!
 - Easy to cover LOTS of ground with NO EFFORT
- (2) Running – have to focus on EVERY STEP.
- (3) Roadracing superbikes – used to get off the track and realize that I thought of NOTHING ELSE for the past 30 minutes! NOTHING!
- f) =How often do you realize you've stop praying for several minutes and are mentally on to something else?
- g) =How often are your prayers mechanical, shallow, vague, dull because you don't ACTIVELY THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU ARE PRAYING?

3. with an attitude of thanksgiving:

- a) literally "with thanksgiving"
- b) Alertness and thanksgiving go together
- c) Thanksgiving is a MOTIVATION / STIMULUS to alertness!
- d) FOCUS on what you are thankful for and it will keep you alert in prayer!
- e) Did you know that ONLY Christians are thankful AND it's commanded of us?
 - (1) Rom 1:21 says UNSAVED REFUSE to Honor God or give Him THANKS
 - (2) But to Christians:

1 Th 5:18 in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

- = command to CONTINUALLY give thanks! It's GOD'S WILL!
 - f) Giving thanks is a MAJOR theme of this application section!

Col 3:15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17 Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.
- ### 4. What a great checklist for your prayer life!
- a) Am I DEVOTED in my prayers?
 - b) Am I ALERT in my prayers?
 - c) Am I THANKFUL in my prayers

B. The Requests: Opportunity and Clarity!

1. 3 praying at the same time for us as well,

- a) This phrase REALLY brings the Christian life home to me!
- b) We so often don't think of Paul and Apostles as PEOPLE LIKE US in their Christian walk
 - (1) They're empowered by God and don't need others
 - (2) They have a direct line to God and don't need others, etc.
- c) Paul spent THREE YEARS in the desert with Jesus Christ learning!
 - (1) Yes, he had a direct line
 - (2) BUT, Christ put him back in the "normal Christian life" we all have!
- d) Don't ever forget that!

- (1) No matter how great God uses you
 - (2) No matter how sure you are of God's calling and direction for your life
 - (3) No matter how sure you are that you are walking in God's power and will
 - (4) YOU STILL NEED PRAYER FROM OTHERS!
- e) We saw in Ephesians that Paul asked them to pray for him there
[Eph 6:19](#) and *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, [20](#) for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in *proclaiming* it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.*
- (1) "Almost" the same prayer request as here! More focused on his personal need than Colossians
 - (2) BL: Paul wanted EVERYONE he knew praying for him!
 - (3) Paul NOT AFRAID to ask!
- f) Daniel requested his friends prayer too!
[Da 2:16](#) So Daniel went in and requested of the king that he would give him time, in order that he might declare the interpretation to the king. [17](#) Then Daniel went to his house and informed his friends, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, about the matter, [18](#) so that they might request compassion from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his friends would not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

2. [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](#)

- a) What's one of the greatest all-time debates in Christianity? A: Sovereignty of God
- b) Often said: No matter where you stand on Sovereignty, you ALWAYS acknowledge GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY in your prayers "[that God will open](#)"
- c) "[that God will open up to us a door](#)"
 - (1) =Prayer for OPPORTUNITY
 - (2) Amazing how some metaphors are still with us today!
 - (3) Sometimes God opens and sometimes CLOSES doors
[1 Co 16:9](#) for a wide door for effective *service* has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.
[Ac 16:6](#) They passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; [7](#) and after they came to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them; [8](#) and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. [9](#) A vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."
- d) "[for the word](#)"
 - (1) This tells us what kind of door opening!
 - (2) Paul WASN'T asking PRAYER for FREEDOM from captivity!
 - (3) Paul was CONTENT where God had him!

- (4) Paul wanted an OPPORTUNITY to PREACH THE GOSPEL!
- (5) Again – think about your prayers!
- Are they for the right thing?
 - Are you MORE CONCERNED about being in a place of comfort
 - OR don't care WHERE you are and just want God TO MAXIMIZE your service there?
 - Is it...
 - God get me OUT OF THIS SITUATION?
 - OR- God GET THE MOST OUT OF THIS SITUATION?
- (6) “for the word”= the gospel!
- (7) I want opportunity to preach the gospel!
- e) so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ
- (1) What's the specific purpose he wants to focus on?
 - (2) Taking the Gospel TO THE GENTILES AROUND HIM
 - (3) “the mystery of Christ” is one of the great themes of this letter
Col 1:27 to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.
 - (4) We'll come back to this in a minute –
 - (5) BL: Paul's ministry was to take the GOSPEL to the GENTILES – that they ARE FULLY PART of GOD'S PLAN in CHRIST
- f) for which I have also been imprisoned
- (1) Remember the whole story of Paul preaching the Gospel in Jerusalem and the Romans saved him
 - (2) 2 years spent in Cesaerea and then off to Rome
Ac 23:11 But on the night *immediately* following, the Lord stood at his side and said, “Take courage; for as you have solemnly witnessed to My cause at Jerusalem, so you must witness at Rome also.”
Eph 3: 1 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—
 - Paul is a PRISONER of our SOVEREIGN GOD who has a plan for Paul
 - AND – PAUL STILL ASKS for PRAYER!
 - Why? This is God's way of involving His people in His work.
 - Paul is here because Christ came to him and said he was to witness in Rome
 - AND Paul still asks for Prayer that God will open the door for his opportunity to witness.
3. 4 that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.
- a) Here's Paul's SECOND petition – for CLARITY
 - b) “that I may make it clear” = just that – CLEAR SPEECH, UNDERSTANDING!
 - c) “in the way I ought to speak” =

- (1) This just brings together the whole request
- (2) WHEN: God opens the door
- (3) WHAT: He speaks the mystery of Christ
- (4) = give me specific clarity for WHEN and WHAT I MUST SAY – for what is necessary for me to say in that situation

IV. Col 1:24-29 The Ministry of Paul – The Mystery of Christ

A. It is a Ministry of Suffering (v.24)

B. It is a Ministry of the Gospel

25 *Of this church* I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit

C. It is Proclaiming Jesus Christ in You, the Hope of Glory (v.25end-29)

v.25...so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God.

1. = BRING the full Gospel of Jesus Christ = all its meaning/ understanding / application to you

D. The Full Gospel of Jesus Christ WAS a Mystery!

v.26 that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations

- a) =a truth never before revealed, from the foundation of the world that are FINALLY REVEALED in the NT.
2. which has been hidden from the past ages and generations
 - a) = something not revealed by God in TIME PAST and the PEOPLE of the past!

E. The Full Gospel of Jesus Christ is Now Made Known!

1. Means: Manifestation

a) 26...but has now been manifested to His saints.

- (1) “now” = Church age! Us!
- (2) “manifested” talks about REVELATION – something un-SEEN, now SEEN
- (3) “to His saints” = us!

2. Motivation: God's will

Col 1:27 to whom God willed to make known

- (1) God's own choice! NO merit on Paul's part!
- (2) Now we know all about Jesus Christ AND all the glorious MYSTERIES revealed in the NT!

3. Magnitude: Riches of the Glory of this mystery among the gentiles!

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

- a) “of the Glory” = Future Glory = the glory of which the Gentiles are to become partakers by the revelation of this mystery – completed when the Lord returns!
- b) “among the gentiles”

(1) = God's ultimate plan

Eph 3:6 *to be specific*, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

- (a) In NT, NEW BODY FORMED
- (b) One NEW MAN (Eph 2:14)
- (c) ONE BODY, One Church

F. The full Gospel Message of Jesus Christ is Christ in You, The Hope of Glory

1. The OT Saint looked forward KNOWING that Gentiles were part of the plan of salvation
2. They didn't know about "CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE of GLORY!"
3. This is part/facet of the MYSTERIES revealed through Paul!
4. = Christ LIVES in US = Christ indwells us!
 - a) Christ is EVEN IN YOU GENTILES!

G. "the Hope of Glory"

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

1. Grammatical construction called "apposition"
 - a) = two phrases set next to each other, side-by-side to SAY the SAME THING!
 - b) Might as well put an equals sign! (=)
 - c) Here: Christ in you = the hope of glory
 - d) Paul – You have CHRIST in YOU
 - (1) AND – that ALONE is your ASSURANCE of ETERNAL GLORY!
2. Key: "Hope"
 - a) Biblical HOPE = CERTAIN FUTURE
 - b) "hope of glory" = CERTAINTY of YOUR FUTURE GLORY – FUTURE ETERNAL LIFE in GLORY
 - c) MacArthur wrote: What makes the gospel attractive is not just that it promises present joy and help, but that it promises eternal honor, blessing, and glory. When Christ comes to live in a believer, His presence is the anchor of the promise of heaven—the guarantee of future bliss eternally. In the reality that Christ is living in the Christian is the experience of new life and hope of eternal glory.

V. CONCLUSION:

A. The Requirements: Devotion, Alertness, Thanksgiving!

1. What a great checklist for your prayer life!
 - a) Am I DEVOTED in my prayers?
 - b) Am I ALERT in my prayers?
 - c) Am I THANKFUL in my prayers

B. The Requests: Opportunity and Clarity!

1. Ask others to Pray for these for you

2. PRAY for these YOURSELF!

C. These verses give an excellent, simple, focus to prayer – use them!