



# Sharing Christ

Colossians 4:2-6

- ❑ As the apostle Paul approaches the end of his letter to the Colossians, he gives further instructions. Read Colossians 4:2-6.<sup>1</sup>

## Persist in Prayer

- ❑ Paul writes, “Devote yourselves to prayer...” (4:2a, *NIV*) or “Continue steadfastly in prayer...” (*ESV*). In another letter, Paul writes, “pray continually” (1 *Thessalonians 5:17*).
    - “being watchful...” (4:2b)<sup>2</sup>
    - “...and thankful.” (4:2c)<sup>3</sup>
1. What kinds of things do *we* usually pray about? What motivates us to pray?



- ❑ Paul writes, “And pray for us, too...” (4:3a)
    - “that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains (in prison).” (4:3b)<sup>4</sup>
    - “Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.” (4:4)
2. What kinds of “open doors” do *we* usually seek? (As Christians, how much do we pray for opportunities to share Christ, either for ourselves or other Christians?)

## Walk in Wisdom

- ❑ Paul writes, “Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders”<sup>5</sup> (4:5a). “Wisdom” involves knowing and applying God’s will (*see 1:9*). It is knowledge properly applied. To “walk in wisdom” is to live according to God’s revealed will for our attitudes and actions.
  - “Make the most of every opportunity”<sup>6</sup> (4:5b, *NIV*). Make “the best use of time” (*ESV*).

<sup>1</sup> This particular series will end with this passage. While the study of Colossians 4:7-18 is certainly worthwhile (and would normally be part of the series), with the beginning of a new semester, it is time to begin a new series.

<sup>2</sup> When Jesus and his disciples were in the garden of Gethsemane on the night Jesus was arrested, he told them, “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation” (Mark 14:38). Jesus wanted them to be spiritually alert or awake because of the forces coming against them. In Colossians 4:2, Paul is not specific, but his instructions may be similar. Believers should be spiritually alert – alert to the opposing spiritual forces, but also alert to God – alert to His will and what He is doing. When we are attentive to how God is working, it helps us know how to pray.

<sup>3</sup> Also see Colossians 1:12; 2:7; 3:15, 17. Thankfulness is an essential component of the Christian faith and prayer. It is good to begin our praying with praise and thanksgiving, so that all of our praying will be with an attitude of gratitude.

<sup>4</sup> “open a door” – provide opportunity. The opportunity is for “our message” (*tau logou*, “the word”). The message concerns “the mystery of Christ” (see 1:27). In other words, Paul wants prayer for opportunities to tell others about Jesus. Paul does not necessarily seek release from prison, but opportunities regardless of his situation (2 Timothy 2:9).

<sup>5</sup> More literally, “Walk in wisdom toward those outside” – that is, those outside the Christian faith (or nonbelievers).

<sup>6</sup> The phrase comes from “redeem, buy up” (*exagorazō*) and “time” (*kairos*), which may refer to a particular time or “opportune time” (as opposed to *chronos*, which usually refers to time in general). In any case, we are to “use it to the full”. We do not know how much time we have, but when opportunities arise, we need to make the most of them.

3. How can we make the best use of time? How do we know if we are using time well? What do you think Paul means by “making the best use of time” in this passage?<sup>7</sup>

- ❑ Paul writes, “Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt...” (4:6a, NIV)
  - “so that you may know how to answer everyone” (4:6b)

4. What do you think Paul means by speech that is “full of grace” and “seasoned with salt?”<sup>8</sup> How might this apply to telling others about Jesus?



📖 “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15, NIV).

### The Sufficiency of Christ

- ❑ Through faith in Christ, we have “the hope<sup>9</sup> that is stored up for [us] in heaven”. (1:5; Lesson 1)
- ❑ If we have received him, Christ has rescued us from the dominion (tyranny, oppressive power) of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of light. (1:12-13; Lesson 2)
- ❑ Christ is supreme over all creation, including the spiritual powers that seek to oppress us and separate us from God. Christ is supreme because he is God in the flesh. (1:15-20; Lesson 3)
- ❑ “All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” are found in Christ. (2:2-3; Lesson 4)
- ❑ Christ defeated the evil powers by his death and resurrection. Through faith, believers are united with Christ and receive the benefits of his victory. Believers have been set free from the penalty and controlling power of sin; and raised to a new, victorious life in Christ. (2:11-15; Lesson 5)
- ❑ Christ, not man-made religion, is the way into a harmonious relationship with the Creator. Only Christ can solve our real problem, which is the power of sin in our lives. (2:16-23; Lesson 6)
- ❑ In Christ, the “old self” has died, and we have a new identity in Christ. The “new self” is renewed as we “put off” the old attitudes and actions and “put on” the new. (3:3-10; Lesson 7)
- ❑ In Christ, we have a new life, and we must “put on” Christ-like attitudes and actions. Such change is possible because of the transforming power of Christ. (3:12-17; Lesson 8)
- ❑ Christ supplies the desire and ability we need to relate to others as God commands. We love because of his love. We serve because “it is [Christ we] are serving”. (3:18-24; Lesson 9)

### Reflection/Application

- Do you believe in the Christ presented in Colossians? Continue to seek knowledge of Christ.
- As a believer, are you praying continually, watchfully and thankfully, especially concerning the purposes of God? Are you sharing Christ with others? Pray about this, and “walk in wisdom”.

<sup>7</sup> In this passage, Paul is talking primarily about “kingdom business”. That is, he is talking about opportunities to further the purposes of God. As Jesus said, Christians are to store up “treasures in heaven” rather than “treasures on earth” (Matthew 6:19-21). In this passage, Paul is probably talking about making the most of opportunities to share Christ.

<sup>8</sup> Interpretations vary, but “full of grace” probably refers to the manner of speech. Believers should share Christ (who is full of grace) in a gracious manner, “with gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15). In this context, “salt” may refer to “witty” or “winsome” (as commonly used in Paul’s day), or it may be related to wisdom (as used in Jewish rabbinic literature). O’Brien notes, “Their words must not be dull or insipid (lacking taste) but should be interesting and judiciously chosen... So not only must the... conversation be opportune as regards the time; it must also be appropriate as regards the person” (Peter O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon* [Waco, TX: Word, 1982], 242-243).

<sup>9</sup> The Christian hope includes the blessings of complete salvation, eternal life, peace, joy and righteousness, in fellowship with our holy and loving God.