

Helping Others Encounter Christ: [Prayer and Conversation](#)

What's the Big Idea?

God calls his people to devote themselves to prayer and wise living among those who don't know Jesus.

What's the Problem?

Prayer is often not something we're devoted to, and many times we fail to make the most of the opportunities God gives us to point people to Jesus.

What's our Response?

We should draw on the Spirit's power and let Christ live through us so that he would express his devotion to prayer and heart for people through us.

Memorize

Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity.

Colossians 4:5

What Do I Need to Know About the Passage?

This passage concludes the main body of Paul's letter to the Colossians. It's the final part of his explanation of how to ground our lives in Christ (2:7). It focuses on the roles of prayer and relationships with those outside the circle of Christian faith.

Devotion to Prayer-Colossians 4:2-4

Paul calls his readers to devote themselves to prayer. When people are devoted to a person or thing, they maintain that focus even when other things fall by the wayside. Paul wants his readers to know that two expressions of devotion are alertness and gratitude. God's people should be alert because Christ will return some day, and he calls them to order their lives by his priorities in light of that return. And he calls his people to gratitude because of who he is and all the ways he's expressed his goodness to them. Help your group to see that even though we fail miserably in our devotion to prayer, Christ was perfectly devoted to prayer and empowers us through his Spirit to devote ourselves to prayer as well.

Paul doesn't stop with a general call to prayer. He enlists the Colossians to pray specifically for him and his associates. He wants them to pray that God would open a door for the word for them so that they may speak forth the mystery of Christ. He asks that God would give them clarity as they speak his word. Help your group to see the priority of prayer for the advancement of God's word. Help them to see that God is the one who needs to open the doors for his word to go forth.

Devotion to People-Colossians 4:5-6

Paul shifts his focus from asking for prayers for the outreach he's involved in to encouraging the Colossians about the outreach they're involved in. He wants them to act wisely toward those who aren't Christ-followers and make the most of the opportunity to point them to Jesus. Paul emphasizes the importance of speech that is with grace: speech that is attractive, draws people in, and leads them to consider Jesus. This kind of speech gives God's people a better idea of how they should respond to each person they interact with. Help your group to see that as they submit to God's Spirit and trust Jesus to seek and save people through them (Luke 19:10), he will empower their speech to be gracious and attractive in a way that points people to himself.

What Are the Questions?

Launch

What are some of the things that you're most passionate about? How do you express your devotion to these things?

Explore

Read Colossians 4:2-4

1. What is the main command in these verses?
2. What does it mean to be devoted to something?
3. How does Paul encourage his readers to express their devotion to prayer in verse 2?
4. In light of the immediate context of verses 2-6, why do you think Paul calls his readers to be alert in their devotion to prayer?
5. How do you think an attitude of thanksgiving contributes to a devotion to prayer?
6. How does Paul ask his readers to pray for him in verses 3-4?
7. What is significant about Paul asking for prayer for opportunities for the gospel in the midst of his imprisonment?
8. Read Luke 5:15-16 and Luke 19:10. How do Paul's words in these verses serve as a picture of Christ?

Read Colossians 4:5-6

9. What do you think is the main point of verse 5?
10. What do you think Paul means when he says your speech should always be with grace?
11. What purpose does this gracious speech serve?
12. Read John 3:1-8. How does Jesus exemplify what Paul talks about in Colossians 4:5-6?

Apply

13. What keeps you from being devoted to prayer?
14. What is a practical step you can take to see Christ's devotion to prayer expressed in your life in the power of the Spirit?
15. What hinders you from praying for people the way Paul encouraged the Colossians to pray in verses 3-4?
16. What is one specific way you sense God calling you to pray differently in light of verses 3-4?
17. When you think of Paul's encouragement in verses 5-6, who are the particular people in your life who don't know Jesus that you need to "conduct yourself with wisdom toward"?
18. Jesus wants to seek and save these people through you in the power of the Spirit. In light of verses 5-6, what's a practical way you can let him work through you in the way you relate to the people you identified?

What Are the Answers?

1. Be devoted to prayer.
2. Devotion means you're really committed. Even if you stop doing other things, you keep doing what you're devoted to.
3. Through alertness and thanksgiving.
4. Alertness in prayer helps God's people make the most of the opportunities he gives them to point people to Christ.
5. It's natural to express thanksgiving to God in prayer since he's the source of our blessings.
6. He wants them to pray that God would open a door for their message and that he would proclaim it clearly.
7. One might expect him to ask for prayer that God would get him out of prison. It's significant that he wants to see God's message advance.
8. Christ was devoted to prayer and pursued people who needed to know his love.
9. Make the most of relationships with people who don't know Jesus as a way of pointing them to him.
10. Our words should be winsome and attractive in a way that points people to the beauty of Christ and his message.
11. It helps us know how to respond to each person as we seek to point them to Christ.
12. He acted and spoke wisely toward Nicodemus and made the most of the opportunity to show him his need to be born again.
13. Allow the group to discuss.
14. Allow the group to discuss.
15. Allow the group to discuss.

16. Allow the group to discuss.
17. Allow the group to discuss.
18. Allow the group to discuss.