

Colossians – Chapter 4
“The Keys to Paul’s Prayer Life”
Colossians 4:1-2

Verse 1

1. Now, Paul turns his attention to those in the local assembly that had people serving under their authority.
2. When we hear the word “master,” our American minds immediately think of white slave masters in the 19th Century.
3. But, as we mentioned in the previous chapter, servanthood was not a racial issue in the Roman culture of Paul’s day. It was an issue of a person’s financial and social status. It was totally embedded in the culture, as it still is in many cultures.
 - The word “master” carries the idea of a person in authority or control.
 - For example, when you join the military, you are under the control of your commanding officer. He calls the shots and tells you what to do, where to do it, and how long to do it. He has supreme authority and control over your duties and actions.
4. Of course, it would be easy for a master to treat his servants with cruelty, unfairness, and harshness. Many in the culture of Paul’s day treated servants as “things,” not people. Few unsaved masters would have ever thought of treating their servants with fairness.
5. Paul addresses believing masters and admonished them to treat any servants with justness and equality: providing proper food and clothing, just wages, and using gentleness and fairness. cf. Ephesians 6:9
6. They were to treat servants the same way that they would want their heavenly Master to treat them. Paul said, “...*knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.*”
7. They were to treat any servant like a person, and if the servant was saved, they were to treat him or her as a brother or sister in Christ. Paul taught that, in the body of Christ, there is no bond or free, but that we are all one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:28
 - This was radical teaching that went against the grain of culture in that day. Paul’s teaching was revolutionary. Servants were to put on Christ in their relationship to their masters, and masters were to put on Christ in relationship to their servants.
8. What is the practical application? If you are a boss at your workplace, and you have people that work under your authority, your leadership should be characterized by fairness, kindness, justness, and equality. You cannot put on Christ at church and then put off Christ at work on Monday morning.
9. As you lead those in authority under you, you lead them the way Christ would lead; you treat them the way you desire Christ to treat you. Just because you are the “boss” does not give you the right to treat them cruelly or harshly.

Verse 2

1. The apostle Paul was such a prayer warrior. Virtually all of his epistles speak of his prayer life or contain admonitions for believers to pray (Examples: Ephesians 1:15-16, 6:18; Philippians 1:4, 4:6).
2. Paul encourages these believers to “*Continue in prayer...*” This reminds us of 1 Thessalonians 5:17, “*Pray without ceasing.*” What did Paul mean by this?
 - Did he mean that a believer is to be like a monk and kneel down beside his bed every hour of the day in meditation and prayer?
 - Some teach that Paul is saying that the believer is to stay in an **attitude** of prayer at all times. Is this really possible? There are times when a bookkeeper has to be occupied with his figures, or the workman has to be paying complete attention to what he is working on.
 - We certainly cannot be praying 24/7 because we have to sleep. So, there you have 7 or 8 hours when you cannot be praying.
3. When Paul says, “*Pray without ceasing,*” and “*Continue in prayer,*” he simply means that the believer is to faithfully continue the practice of prayer.
 - The word “*continue*” means “to be earnest towards; to persevere; to be constantly diligent.”
 - In other words Paul is saying, “Don’t quit praying. Be faithful. Keep praying!”
 - We need this reminder because, so often, we are tempted to stop praying diligently. We pray if there is a crisis or difficulty, but when things are going good, we can forget to pray. Prayer is an afterthought, or a token thing we do before we eat or go to bed.
4. Paul said to pray and “*watch in the same...*”
 - “*Watch*” means “to be alert.” Don’t just pray memorized, mundane, rote prayers where you’re half-asleep. This kind of prayer accomplishes nothing.
 - **Illustration:** Praying “The Lord’s Prayer” in Matthew 6:9-13. This prayer was never meant to be repeated verbatim over and over again (cf. Matthew 6:7).
 - “*Thy kingdom come*” – A believer in this time of grace isn’t looking for the kingdom to come. We are looking for the rapture.
 - “*Give us this day our daily bread*” – While we have a refrigerator full of food??
 - “*And forgive us our debts*” – We already **have** total and complete forgiveness as a present possession. Our debts have been nailed to the cross and canceled. We don’t forgive others to **get** God’s forgiveness. We forgive others because we already **have** God’s forgiveness. Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13
 - “*Watch*” means that you give God your best when you pray. Pray fervently, pray zealously, pray sincerely, and pray intelligently in conjunction with God’s Word, rightly divided.
 - You don’t pray as a Jew waiting for the kingdom to arrive on earth. You pray as a member of the body of Christ living in the dispensation of grace.

5. Pray with thanksgiving – “...*watch in the same with thanksgiving.*” This is a constant theme of Paul’s. In this little book alone, Paul has mentioned thanksgiving six times (1:3, 12; 2:7; 3:15, 17; 4:2). Prayer is not always coming to God with your hands open with a “give me” attitude. It is coming to God and saying, “Thank you, Lord.”
- Some people use prayer as an opportunity to whine, complain, and have a pity party before God. The believer can always pray with thanksgiving because our spiritual blessings in heavenly places never change – they are in Christ! Ephesians 1:3
 - We can always come before God and say, “*Blessed be the God and Father... who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.*”
6. By way of review, what have we learned about prayer in this little verse?
- Pray faithfully and consistently – “*Continue in prayer*”
 - Pray fervently and intelligently – “*watch in the same*”
 - Pray thankfully – “*with thanksgiving*”