

I. We should Walk in Prayer

A. Our Prayer should be steadfast

1. Jesus taught of steadfast or persistent prayer in two of his parables
 - a. **Luke 11: 5-8** about the guy who bangs on his neighbor's door at midnight asking to borrow bread for a guest. He won't go away so he finally gets what he asked for.
 - b. And then in **Luke 18: 1-8** He taught the parable of the widow who keeps bugging the unwilling judge - **Luke 18:1 "And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart."**
2. As Paul writes, "continue earnestly in prayer"
 - a. Just as he wrote to the Romans - **Rom 12:12 "Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer."**
 - b. And also to the Thessalonians - **1 Thes 5:17 "pray without ceasing,"**
 - c. And also of Epaphras, himself a member of the church at Colosse **Col 4:12 "Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God."**

B. Our Prayer should be watchful

1. On several occasions, Jesus warned His disciples to be watchful in prayer
Mark 13:32–33 "But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come.;
Mat 26:41 "Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done."
2. Through watchful praying,
 - a. We will not be caught with a wandering mind, vain repetitions, trite or meaningless expressions or with limited or selfish desires but we will be alert to God's guidance of our prayers in Scripture
 - b. We will not be caught unprepared by Satan, and the temptation to sin or by death, and the judgment to follow but we will be prepared for Christ, and the glories for those who are ready when He comes again

C. Our Prayer should be thankful

1. Throughout Colossians there has been an emphasis on being thankful
Col 1:3 "We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you"
Col 1:12 "giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light." Also, Col 2:7 Col 3:15 Col 3:17
2. We should thank God just as diligently in our prayers as we make requests of Him.
Phil 4:6 "do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."
Rom 1:21 "For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened."

D. Our Prayer should be specific

1. Prayers are often too general in their requests, lacking specific purpose But as here in our text, Paul often asked for specific prayers in his behalf - **Rom 15:30–32 “I appeal to you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf, that I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company.”**
2. What specific requests can we make in our prayers?
 - a. Opportunity ("an open door")
 1. that there be open receptive hearts
 2. that those we meet will be open to the gospel – **Acts 16:14 “The Lord opened her [Lydia’s] heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul”.**
 - b. Wisdom to make the mystery of Christ clear. **1 Tim 3:16 “Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness”.**
 - c. Boldness – **Eph 6:19–20 “and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.”**

II. We should Walk in Wisdom

A. We are to walk in wisdom especially "toward those who are outside"

1. By proper conduct, we can influence them for good - **1 Pet 3:1–2 “Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct.”**
2. The world is constantly making judgments concerning us by our conduct, and according to Jesus, this is their privilege.
John 13:35 “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”
John 17:20–21 “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

B. Making the best use of our time - To be exact, the lack of time

1. **Eph 5:15–17 “Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”**
2. The time we have in this life is short and we cannot afford to waste much of it. And there are some people who need Christ whose time left on this earth is even shorter than ours so we need to make the most of the time we have.

III. We should Talk with Grace

A. The tongue is powerful

1. It effects the entire body – **Jam 3:2 “For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body.”**
2. It can have great destructive power - **Jam 3:6 “And the tongue is a fire, a world of**

unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell.”

3. It is inconsistent for us to use it for both good and evil - **Jam 3:9–12 “With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.”**

B. Therefore we need to learn to speak with grace

1. Like Jesus - **Luke 4:22 “And all spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth. And they said, “Is not this Joseph's son?”**
2. As Paul also commanded in **Eph 5:29 “For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church”**
 - a. No corrupt communication is to proceed out of our mouths
 - b. Only that which edifies, imparting "grace to the hearers"
3. Our speech is to be "seasoned with salt" - speech properly flavored so that it well received by others

“So the wonderful thing about Paul's advice here is that the best way to prepare to be an advertisement for the satisfying taste of Jesus is to enjoy him yourself. Every day we should go to the Bible and look for reasons why knowing Christ is the greatest thing in the world. And when we get up off our knees with our hearts happy in him, we will be in the best position to make our speech appetizing for Christ.” – (Piper, 1998)

4. We need to give each person we speak with individual attention “so that you may know how you ought to answer every one.” - Christ is the same and the gospel is the same but each person and situation is different so pray to understand how to present Christ in a way that meets each person individually.

IV. We should Pray, Walk and Talk with other followers of Christ

- A. Faithful Servants like Tychius - Described as "a beloved brother, a faithful minister, and a fellow servant in the Lord" (**Eph 6:21–22, Tit 3:12, 2 Tim 4:12**)
- B. Transformed Criminals like Onesimus - We learn in Philemon that Onesimus was a runaway slave converted by Paul and sent back. He was also "a faithful and beloved brother" who was from Colosse ("who is one of you"). He was serving as a messenger for Paul.
- C. Former Failures like Mark
 1. The writer of the second Gospel, he was the cousin (nephew) of Barnabas who Started out with Paul and Barnabas on their first journey, but then turned back - **Acts 13:1-13**. He later became a bone of contention between Paul and Barnabas - **Acts 15:39 “And there arose a sharp disagreement, so that they separated from each other. Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus”**
 2. But eventually proved "profitable" to Paul for service - **2 Tim 4:11 “Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry.”**
 3. Now he is included with those who Paul said "proved to be a comfort to me"
- D. Future Failures like Demas - At the time Colossians and Philemon was written, Demas was a

"fellow laborer" But not long after, it was said of him, "Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world" - **2 Tim 4:10** **"For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia."**

- E. Loyal Companions like Aristarchus & Justus
 1. Aristarchus was a "fellow prisoner" who had been a fellow traveler of Paul - **Acts 20:4, Acts 19:29, Acts 27:2** and was now in Rome with Paul, sending greetings.
 2. Jesus, called Justus - Little is known of this man, except that he was a Jew ("of the circumcision") and a "fellow worker for the kingdom". He, too, was a comfort to Paul.
- F. Prayer Warriors like Epaphrus
 1. He was from Colosse ("one of you") and he started the church there - **Col 1:7-8**
 2. He too was a "fellow prisoner" **Phil 23** **"Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you"**
 3. He was a prayer warrior
 - a. He prayed constantly
 - b. He prayed fervently
 - c. He prayed personally
 - d. He prayed with a goal in mind
- G. Skilled Professionals like Luke, "the beloved physician"
 1. A fellow traveler with Paul on a number of his journeys - **Acts 16:10, Acts 20:5, Acts 27:1**
 2. He was used by the Holy Spirit to write over half of the New Testament
 - a. He penned both the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts
 - b. In total volume, they constitute the majority of the New Testament
 3. He was faithful to Paul to the end - **2 Tim 4:11a** **"Luke alone is with me."**
- H. Hospitable Laymen like Nymphas
- I. Divinely called Ministers like Archippus

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