

The MYSTERY Hidden for Ages Is Now REVEALED

A Study of the Book of Colossians

LESSON 22

This Week's Passage:
Colossians 4:2-4

New International Version (NIV)

² Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. ³ And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. ⁴ Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.

Memory Verse: Colossians 4:2

² Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

**Day One: Read Colossians 4:2-4.
Devotion.**

1. The Westminster Shorter Catechism defines prayer as “an offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.”¹
Is there anything you would add to this definition? If so, what?

2. In this week's passage, Paul begins by exhorting the Colossian believers to “devote [themselves] to prayer” (v. 2). What does he mean by this?
1:9a

Acts 12:5

Rom. 1:9–10a; 1 Thess. 5:17

Rom. 12:12

Eph. 6:18

3. Jesus modeled and taught what it meant to be devoted to prayer.
 - a. How does he model devotion to prayer in the midst of a full life? (Lk. 5:15–16)
 - b. What does he teach about devotion to prayer in the parable in Luke 18:1–8?

4. Sam Storms writes, “The easiest thing about praying is quitting.”² Persevering in prayer is hard work. What hinders your devotion to prayer or tempts you to give up?

For further thought:

Read 1 Samuel 1:1–20 and jot down words that describe Hannah’s prayers and show how devoted she was to praying.

What practical things can you do to avoid these hindrances and temptations?

Day Two: Read Colossians 4:2–4. Watchful and Thankful.

5. Why does Paul caution the believers to be “watchful” (v. 2) as they pray? (Mt. 26:40–41; 1 Pet. 5:8)
6. Paul also encourages the believers to pray with thankfulness (v. 2). Why should thanksgiving always accompany our prayers?

How can thankfulness help you as you watch and wait for God’s answer to your persistent prayers?

Day Three: Read Colossians 4:3–4. Open Door.

Paul was supernaturally appointed by the risen Christ to take the gospel message to the Gentiles (Acts 26:17b–18). Sam Storms notes how remarkable it is that “an *apostle*...would ask *ordinary Christians* like these Colossians to pray for his evangelistic success.... Paul refused to trust in his skill or eloquence or theological knowledge alone.” He knew he was completely dependent on God’s power to fulfill his calling; “[h]e needed the intercessory support of other believers.”³ [emphasis added]

7. What is the first specific request for prayer that Paul makes? (v. 3)

8. Where is Paul when he makes this request? (v. 3)

Why is he there? (v. 3)

What does he believe is the purpose for his imprisonment? (Phil. 1:12–14)

9. What do you think Paul has in mind when he asks for an “open door for our message” (v. 3)?
(Hint: see Acts 14:27; 1 Cor. 16:8–9)

Paul was suffering in chains when he makes his request. How have you seen God “open a door” for the gospel message even in the midst of difficulties in your life?

Day Four: Read Colossians 4:3–4. Proclaiming Clearly.

10. Once Paul receives an open door to “proclaim the mystery of Christ” (v. 3), his desire is to be able to proclaim the gospel clearly (v. 4). What does Paul need to do this? (Eph. 6:19–20)

11. What assurances does Paul have that God will answer the prayers of the believers on his behalf?
(Mk. 11:22–24; Lk. 11:9–13; Jas. 5:16b)

How do these assurances give you confidence as you intercede in prayer on behalf of others?

Day Five: Read Colossians 4:2–4. Pray.

12. How has a deeper understanding of this week's passage encouraged you to "devote [yourself] to prayer" (v. 2)?
13. As the Colossian believers interceded for the apostle Paul, so we should pray continually for our pastors, elders, deacons, and others serving the church who seek to faithfully and clearly "proclaim the mystery of Christ" (v. 3) as God gives them opportunity. Take some time now to intercede for the leaders of your church, and commit to praying for them regularly.
14. Proclaiming "the mystery of Christ" (v. 3) is something all believers are called to do, and all of us need the prayers of others in the body. Use the prayer below to pray for one another.

"O, grant us open doors, Father, that we may speak boldly and clearly and joyfully of your Son and all that you have done for sinners in and through him! Work in us by your Spirit that we might have just the right story, the most telling illustration, the most persuasive phrasing as we declare the mystery of Christ Jesus! Amen."⁴



Reminder: Remember to read the entire book of Colossians this week.

¹ Westminster Shorter Catechism Q & A 98, http://www.reformed.org/documents/wsc/index.html?_top=http://www.reformed.org/documents/WSC.html

² Sam Storms, *The Hope of Glory: 100 Daily Meditations on Colossians* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2007), 312.

³ Storms 323–324.

⁴ Storms 324.