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Experiencing Christ in Colossians

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Week 8 | Colossians 4:2–4:18

## Memory Verse for the week:

Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. (Colossians 4:5)

# Day 1

## Read

### Colossians 4:2 (NIV)

2Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

## Study

* Another translation of the Greek has verse two saying, “Prayer—devote yourselves to it.”[[1]](#footnote-2) Read a parallel verse, [Ephesians 6:18](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Eph6.18). What observations can you make about the importance of prayer to the Christian life?
* Jesus also tells the disciples to be watchful, or alert because Jesus will return. Read [Mark 13:32–37](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Mk13.32-37). How does Jesus describe his second coming? Do you think that Paul has similar reasons for telling the Colossians to be watchful? Or do you think something else is at play here?

## Think about

* Consider how Paul is coming full circle as he begins to wrap up this letter. According to N.T. Wright: “Having begun with thanksgiving for God’s world-wide work through the gospel ([1:3–8](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Col1.3-8)), his thoughts turn again to that work and his part in it. But he does not thereby turn away from the Colossians. He claims them as partners, setting before them in general terms the tasks appropriate to them as a new community, in Christ and in Colossae (1:2).”[[2]](#footnote-3) Since writers usually begin and end with what’s most important, what does this say about Paul’s priorities?

## Pray

* Devote yourself to prayer today. Take some time to pray now, and then set a reminder to have another prayer time later. Consider using one of the following Psalms to guide your prayers: [Psalm 37](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Ps37), [Psalm 40](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Ps40), [Psalm 46](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Ps46) or [Psalm 103](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Ps103). Ask at least one other person for their prayer request and pray for them or with them today as well.
* What other ways can you devote yourself to prayer?

## Talk about

Have a meaningful conversation about this passage with one of your CF Encouragers, your small group, or join us virtually in the Faithlife Community. (Search groups for Engage God Daily. For full instructions, [click here](https://cfhome-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/lscheffler_cfhome_org/EYNh8cUxJRxClFV-Wt6QNe0BtkK34MHJDqeHamAwxlGmbQ?e=RL3RSh).)

* Why do you think so many of us find it hard to devote ourselves to prayer? How come we aren’t more watchful and thankful? Discuss some of the obstacles to a devoted prayer life and how you might overcome those obstacles.

# Day 2

## Read

### Colossians 4: 2-4(NIV)

2Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. 3And 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. 4Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.

## Study

* Remind yourself of what “mystery” Paul is talking about by reviewing [Colossians 1:26-27](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Col1.26-27) and reading the Faithlife Study Bible note on [Colossians 1:26](https://biblia.com/books/fsb/Col1.26).
* On Colossians 4:4: “The verb translated ‘proclaim it clearly’ literally means ‘reveal’ or ‘make manifest’, and belongs closely with ‘mystery’. Paul must not simply explain everything with clarity. He must announce, and so ‘reveal’, the mystery of Christ. He is under obligation to do so in such a way as to bring true knowledge and understanding to his hearers.”[[3]](#footnote-4)

## Think about

* Notice what Paul’s primary prayer request is in verses 3-4? I don’t know about you, but if I were in prison on trumped-up charges, my first prayer request would probably be “Pray I get out of here!” What does Paul’s request say about his commitment to sharing the gospel? How can we be inspired and motivated by his commitment?

## Pray

Turn Paul’s prayer in Colossians 4:3-4 into your own. Pray that a door may open for you to have a meaningful conversation about Jesus with someone you know and that you might be able to share the amazing mystery that God has revealed in Christ.

## Talk about

* Discuss a time when God opened a door for you to have a meaningful conversation about Jesus. What was it like? What did you learn from that experience?

# Day 3

## Read

### Colossians 4:5­-6 (NIV)

5Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. 6Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

## Study

* Watch this short [5 minute video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hlAqKucH-gQ) with Tim Keller and Becky Pippert discussing how to have conversations about Christ.

## Think about

* What does it mean to you to “make the most of every opportunity” when it comes to having meaningful conversations about Christ?
* Even the apostle Paul asked for prayer in communicating the gospel. How is prayer essential to having meaningful conversations about Jesus?

## Pray

Think about people you know who don’t know Jesus. Take some time to pray for them right now. Pray for opportunities to love them, serve them, and have conversations about Jesus.

## Talk about

* Discuss the reasons why some Christians get a bad reputation when it comes to sharing the gospel. What pitfalls can we avoid?

# Day 4

## Read

### Colossians 4:7–9 (NIV)

7Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. 8I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts. 9He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here.

## Study

* Let’s be honest. A lot of times we skim over the end of Paul’s letters when he starts his personal greetings. We miss out on some interesting connections when we do that. Take a look at the Faithlife Study Bible notes for [Colossians 4:7-9](https://biblia.com/books/fsb/Col4.7). What do you learn about Tychicus and Onesimus?

## Think about

* Onesimus has a starring role in Paul’s letter to Philemon. Think back to last week’s passage when we discussed Paul’s instructions for slaves and their masters. Now read [Philemon](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Phm) (It’s short! Only one chapter.). How does Paul undermine the institution of slavery by using family language to describe the relationship between Philemon and Onesimus?

## Pray

Paul not only encourages the Colossians to have Christ-centered relationships, but he practices what he preaches. Paul had lots of friends and co-workers in the cause of Christ. Pray for your friends and co-workers for Christ. Pray that your relationships within the family of God will grow and deepen.

## Talk about

* Although Paul is the one in prison, he sends Tychicus to encourage the hearts of the Colossians. Whose heart can you encourage as a [CF Encourager](https://cfhome.org/cfencourager/)?

# Day 5

## Read

### Colossians 4:10–18 (NIV)

10My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.) 11Jesus, who is called Justus, also sends greetings. These are the only Jews among my co-workers for the kingdom of God, and they have proved a comfort to me. 12Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. 13I vouch for him that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis. 14Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings. 15Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house.

16After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea.

17Tell Archippus: “See to it that you complete the ministry you have received in the Lord.”

18I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

## Study

* There are some familiar names in this passage. Take some time to read through the Faithlife Study Bible notes starting at [Colossians 4:10](https://biblia.com/books/fsb/Col4.10) to learn more about the people and places Paul is talking about.

## Think about

* Paul has a team of people, men and women, with whom he served Christ. If we’re going to serve Jesus and proclaim him as sufficient and supreme, we need one another! At Christ Fellowship, we want to be united to make a difference with each one of us being “all in” to help people find and follow Christ. Are you a part? How can you be more intentional about having meaningful conversations with others so that they can experience Christ in you?

## Pray

Take a moment to go back through Colossians. Notice the verses that stand out to you now that you’ve finished studying the whole book. Ask the Spirit to speak to you through God’s Word.

* + For what can you praise God?
  + In what areas of your life are you convicted of sin?
  + How is the Spirit encouraging you through Colossians?
  + How has your faith been strengthened through this book?
  + Pray over any lingering questions or concerns you have.
  + Ask the Spirit to reveal your best, next step.

## Talk about

* Discuss your biggest takeaways from Colossians. Talk over any questions you still have and seek the answers together.
* Together, pray and thank God for this amazing letter!

1. Scot McKnight, [*The Letter to the Colossians*](https://ref.ly/logosres/nicnt72colmcknight?ref=Bible.Col4.2&off=153&ctx=+brings+to+the+fore+~the+emphases+of+the+), ed. Ned B. Stonehouse et al., The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018), 369. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. N. T. Wright, [*Colossians and Philemon: An Introduction and Commentary*](https://ref.ly/logosres/tntc72colus?ref=Bible.Col4.2-6&off=315&ctx=and+in+consequence%2c+~Paul+is+drawing+the+), vol. 12, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 155. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. N. T. Wright, [*Colossians and Philemon: An Introduction and Commentary*](https://ref.ly/logosres/tntc72colus?ref=Bible.Col4.4&off=124&ctx=early%2c+as+I+should.+~The+verb+translated+), vol. 12, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 156. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)