
Colossians 4:2-6 *Devoting ourselves to Christ!*

Into Thy Word Ministries Bible Study www.intothyword.org

General Idea: Be a person who is devoted to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, so distractions and past or future hurts and problems do not consume you. Dedicate yourselves to prayer and be alert; think, and be aware of your situation and opportunities so you can be your best for His Highest in all situations. Above all, be appreciative to God and others. Allow a sense of gratitude for Christ fuel, mold, and encompass you so the days of your life go well. In this way, you can pray for others, be sensitive and kind, be open to the wondrous prospects and plans that God has for you, and be able to take action. Trust in Him and He will take care of you and allow you to be the good opportunist that serves and grows. Realize that Christ is for all ethnicities and societies and positions. He is not hidden from anyone. *I, Paul, am in prison, and all I can think and pray about is for the Gospel to go out effectively. Can you do likewise? Yes, you can and you can proclaim His Message with power, conviction, clarity, and in Truth. So, make sure you live wisely and make the most of what He has for you so you can invest in what Christ brings you. Do not squander what He has given for you or what He still has for you. Be kind with your actions and words so your gratitude will allow you to be gracious, as Christ was with you. In this way, you will be far more effective and content in the Kingdom and be used far more successfully and with more power.*

Contexts and Background:

This passage is about what we do with the call, gifts, resources, and opportunities at our disposal. Paul was concerned that this church would be ingrown and unconcerned about other churches or personal opportunities to spread the Gospel. Thus, he implores them to keep him in prayer and be aware of open doors to let people know about the Gospel. This all starts with our obedience and willingness to do as we believe and to pray for open doors and the ability to be used. This passage is set in the context of a second set of aspects which we are to follow, what we are to put on and to put off, and what blocks us from our growth in Him and our character towards others. It is a laundry list of desires that can easily become who we are and distract us from our call. Since we are in Christ, we are to live in response to what He has done for us. Not out of obligation, but out of gratitude so we can, as Lazarus demonstrated, (Luke 11:44) take off the grave clothes of sin and put on His clothing. Although in whatever we face, we may think we are surrounded by our fears and the “I can’t do it” thinking may come into play, more importantly, we are surrounded and indwelt by our Lord!

Commentary—Word and Phrase Meanings:

- *Devote yourselves/continue earnestly/persevere.* Meaning to “occupy yourselves” with Christ, as in to live out your new life by being loyal and faithful to our living Lord. If we are truly devoted to Christ, we will be devoted to the things of Christ—His interests, principles, and plan. This phrase continues the theme to *set our minds on things above*, meaning to be in “fullness” with Christ, to live and perform from what we think and trust. To cement this precept, Paul gives several practical activities we can do to further keep our minds and hearts in Christ. This attitude is what spurs on our commitment and our outreach. Without persevering with Christ, we cannot keep trying to persuade others well, or even at all. Our fullness in Christ will reflect His work in us and be the beacon of hope to others. This is how Paul lived out his life and hoped others would follow (Isa. 7:9; Acts 1:14; 2:42; 6:4; Rom. 12:12; 1 Cor. 11:1; Eph. 6:18; Col. 1:3-12; 3:2)!
- *Prayer...praying.* This is the essential tool to knowing God and growing in Him. We are to consider others’ needs and bring them before God too. Here, this refers to more of a “militant prayer,” as in urgent and vigorous—not weak or superficial. Prayer is our dependence on Christ and our platform for His power (Jer. 33:3; Matt. 9:35-38; Luke 11:1-4; John 14:12-14; Rom. 12:12; Eph. 1:15-20; 6:18-20; 1 Thess. 5:17, 25).

- *Open to us a door.* This means the opportunity and the freedom of movement. It refers to the willingness to be alert and take advantage with good character the occasions of relational connections and ministry opportunities. It is to be discerning with our time, talent, and resources as an offering to God and to use for others. It is a choice for us to make rather than a command, but as mature Christians, we ought to do so because of what Christ did for us and wanting the same in the lives of others (Matt. 24:42; Luke 16:1-12; Acts 20:31; 1 Cor. 16:8-9, 13; 2 Cor. 2:12; 1 Thess. 5:6).
- *Message/utterance.* Meaning *logos* the word as in, “our God reigns,” the Gospel, the good news of Christ, who He is, and what He has done for you and me. This means the redemption that gave us salvation and the kingdom of God paid for by the work of Jesus, preached by the Apostles, and stated in the Bible that Jesus Christ suffered and then died as a sacrifice for our sin. He died for us and was buried; He then rose again to prove His divinity and power, giving us victory over sin and death. The Gospel is good news because it is the news of forgiveness of our sins through a free, unearned gift of God who reconciles us to Him. We have no means to earn it by our work, beliefs, penance, or self-improvement. It is only by Christ’s accomplished work (Psalm 16:10; Isa. 52:7; 53:8-10; Matt 5:2-11; 11:1-5; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 4:16; 7:18-23; John 3:16; Rom 1:3, 16; 2:16; 3:2; 5:8-11; 6: 1-4; 10:1-21; 15:19; 16:25; 1 Cor. 9:12, 18; 15:1-9; 2 Cor. 2:12; 4:4; 5:14-19; Gal 1:6; 3:8; Eph. 1:13; Col 1:5; 1 Thess. 1:5; 2 Tim. 1:10; 2:8; Tit. 2:11–14; Rev. 14:6).
- *Proclaim.* Meaning to speak as a messenger of gladness, to proclaim the Good News. This shows a passion for our faith and the conviction to know our Lord and do as He modeled and taught. We declare Christ in our lives as individuals and decree Him in unity as a local congregation. This comes from our Lord’s work that gives us an inner connection of Word and Spirit, solidified and known by the facts that we believe, His commands that we obey, and the promises that we can trust and will one day have (John 1:40-42; 2 Cor. 5:20-21).
- *Mystery of Christ.* The more we grow, the more we mature. And, as we grow, we understand much more. Christ is the Light and He gives us the enlightenment. See Colossians 1:24-29 study for more (Eph. 3:4; 6:19; Col. 1:26-27; 2:2).
- *Chains.* Sharing Christ is not a forced requirement for us to do; rather, it is an obligation we should desire to do no matter what situation we are in. Paul was in a heinous prison as he prayed for others and shared the Word (Rom. 1:14-15; Phil. 1:7-16; Col. 4:8)
- *Proclaim it clearly.* Be bold. Because of the Gospel, we share in His triumph, and thus we should desire to tell all who will accept Him (Gen. 6; 1 Kings 18; Prov. 28:1; Isa. 7:9; Dan. 3,6; Mark 12:29-31; Rom. 1:14-15. 2 Cor. 5:6-8; 7:16; Eph. 6:13-14; Heb. 13:6).
- *Be wise.* We are to recognize the opportunities and open doors, and help and equip one another for the mission of the Gospel. This is also what we call “evangelism,” which is always to be done with patience in His Fruit and with tact.
- *Toward outsiders/who are outside/among unbelievers.* A statement to remind us what we are to be about in ministry—reaching the lost and being hospitable and kind in doing so. This means people who are not in the Church, the universal Body of Christ, thus who are not Christians. To the Jew, this term meant those who did not understand the Law of God, and referred to Gentiles (Eph. 5:15-16).
- *Make the most of every opportunity/redeeming the time.* Meaning to buy something out of hock or pay a ransom. The NKJV and the NIV together bring out this phrase very well, as we are to make the most of every opportunity and time; it is honoring our redemption by seeking for others to have it too. We are never to be idle or slack in the time the Lord has given us. Our time is short and precious (Psalm 90:12; Dan. 2:8; Gal. 3:13; 4:5; Eph. 5:16)!

- *With grace/full of grace.* This means we are to be good and godly examples with positive, good character and credibility through which we are to act towards others. This means to speak rightly and uplift others, not tear them down. The call is for us to be gentle and pleasant, acting with the refinement of grace towards others, whether they are Christians or not! Christianity is never to be a force of our will upon others; rather, it is to show the benefits of the Kingdom by people seeing it being exhibited in our very lives. Witnessing must be done in love and care, and with encouragement. Being argumentative or confrontational is devaluing our Lord, giving us a bad reputation, and going against His call to us to be kind and gentle in our persuasiveness! This, of course, does not mean we approve of their sin or participate in sin and wrongdoing to gain approval (Prov. 12:25; 15:23; 25:11; Zech. 1:13; Eph. 4:25-31; 5:3-4).
- *Salt.* This is a life-essential flavoring and preserving agent. Our words and deeds need to make sense and be of benefit to others. This verse is a call for us to be relevant and involved. A Christian or Church should never cower away from the beckoning of Christ to be filled with Him so His love and character can flow from us to others. The analogy of “salt” in the Bible leads to the idea that the Christian’s role in the world is to be an influencer of the world! We are not to be influenced by it, hide from it, ignore it, or alienate it! We have to find a way to influence it (Job 6:6; Matt. 5: 13-16; 24:14; Luke 16:9; Rom. 10:18; Col. 1:6; 23; 2:20-23) without being insipid as in distasteful, or influenced negatively by its sin and corruption (Matt. 6:19-24; 32; Luke 12:13-21; I John 2:15-17)!
- *Answer everyone/answer each one.* This means we are to be ready to share by our lifestyle and with our words. We are not to fear or be shy telling our Lord’s story or retreat from opportunities because we’re afraid of what others might think or say. To the Aristocratic Jews and Greeks, correct rhetoric and oration—including being sarcastic—was crucial over all else. The impact, benefit, and care of the words were not a concern. Paul switches this so that our focus will be on the benefit of what we say to others to Glorify God, not to be cynical or focus on the eloquence of what we are saying. At the same time, we are to watch what we say and say what we mean (Prov. 15:1; Matt. 12:34; 16:23; Gal. 3:1-5).

Devotional Thoughts and Applications:

We are called to go beyond ourselves and into the lives of others. We are to seek those who are saved and spur them on further in the faith. We are to seek those who are not saved and make Christ known to them by our attitudes, lifestyle, and deeds. The way we become a good effective witness for our Lord is to remember we are doing it for Him. It is about Christ’s work, not our efforts. Then, we can be better at walking closer to and wiser in Him and seeing the opportunities He has for us. We can do them, not by our abilities, but by allowing Him to work in and through us. Paul was in prison when this letter was written. He did not seek to be released even though he must have wanted to be; rather, he sought how the Lord could use him regardless of his situation. He sought opportunities for ministry not opportunities for his freedom. In other words, he placed the call of God over his perceived needs and desires, even if they were good. Perhaps, with such a mindset, we can grow ever so much more to see opportunities to make our Lord known and not just to make ourselves feel good (1 Cor. 16:9; 2 Cor. 2:12; 1 Pet. 3:15-17; Rev. 3:7-8).

When we have the right attitude and aptitude to set our minds on Him, we can be of better use to those around us, powerfully and effectively. Our words and deeds will show His love and care. Our relationships and the details of our conversations will ooze of His love and precepts because our minds are focused on Him and our hearts are poured out to Him. People will see this; some may come against us, but that is their problem. Others will see Christ through us and receive the power and impact of the Spirit through our example being the means God uses. What an incredible opportunity we have! Let us make the most of it!

The Essential Inductive Questions (for more Inductive questions see Inductive Bible Study):

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me?
4. How am I encouraged and strengthened?
5. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
6. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
7. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
8. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
9. What can I model and teach?
10. What does God want me to share with someone?

Additional Questions:

1. What are the qualities you like to see from people with whom you want to be friends? How is this like being contagious for the Gospel?
2. How would you define “being devoted to Jesus Christ?” What are the distractions and past or future hurts and problems that may cause one to not be so devoted? What can you do about it?
3. How have you shown dedication in praying for others? Do you consider yourself alert and aware of others’ situations and your opportunities to assist? How can this help you be your best for His Highest in all situations?
4. How have you shown appreciativeness to God and others? How is this reflective of Christian maturity?
5. Who are the people for whom God wants you to pray? What do you need to do to be more sensitive and kind and be open to the prospects and plan that God has for you?
6. What does it mean to you to trust in Jesus? How does this mindset help you be more aware that He will take care of you? How can this help you to be able to take action in the Kingdom of God?
7. How does the fact that Paul is in prison, and all he can think and pray about is for the Gospel to go out effectively, help motivate you to be more content and to pray more too?
8. Have you considered that the way you live and make the most of what Christ has for you is how you are investing in Christ, in your church, and in your Christian life?
9. What do you need to do or be aware of so you will not squander what Jesus has given you or has for you?
10. If you were more devoted to Christ, what would your life be like? Relationships? Worries? Past issues? Future problems? Or?
11. How can you be more effective and content in Christ’s Kingdom and be used more effectively and with more power?
12. What do you need to do to have a sense of gratitude for Christ? How can this fuel you, mold you, and encompass you so your day and life goes well?