

8/15/99

Practice For Living
Col. 4:2-6

Paul the apostle comes to the concluding remarks of the practical section regarding the new man.

And his emphasis is on the tongue in these five verses.

- The tongue is one of the characteristics that distinguishes man uniquely from the animal kingdom, he is able to communicate by speech.
- Adam gave names to every living creature and spoke to God in the Garden. Gen. 2:19, 3:10

But the fall of man corrupted the heart of man that would express itself by the little member in his mouth, “the beast behind the ivory cage”.

-It is an unruly member that defiles the whole body. Ja. 3:5-8

- Their mouth is an open sepulcher; they flatter with their tongue. Ps. 5:9

- Woe is me! for I am undone: because I am... Is. 6:5

- They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adder's poison is under their lips. Ps. 140:3

For that reason the psalmist says that he will keep his mouth with a muzzle. Ps. 39:1

-He is to pray that the Lord set a guard over his mouth, to keep watch over the door of his lips. Ps. 141:3

Having been delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love, we are his instruments.

-We now serve Christ with our mouths, bringing glory and honor to him being the mouthpiece of God to this dark world

Therefore Paul gives to us the new practical perspective of every believer, as a new man by declaring three responsibilities. Col. 4:2-6

- I. The believer is to be persistent in prayer. vs. 2-4
- II. The believer is to be persistent in his walk. vs. 5
- III. The believer is to be persistent in giving biblical answers. vs. 6

I. The believer is to be persistent in prayer. vs. 2-4

A. The believer is commanded to continue earnestly in prayer. vs. 2a

1. The phrase continue earnestly “proskartereo” means to be devoted, steadfast and persevere.

a. The word is used for a boat that is near standing ready for someone. Mk. 3:9

- b. The word is used for the continual steadfast one accord of the early church in the word, prayer, fellowship and doctrine. Acts 1:14, 2:42, 46, 6:4
 - c. The tense is the present imperative, this is to be an ongoing practice, unceasing.
2. The word for prayer “prosucle” is always used of addressing God, never is it used to address man, indicating the needs that only God can meet
- a. Three samples will help us see this.
 - 1) The word is used by Jesus of prayer and fasting to cast out a demon. Matt. 17:21
 - 2) The word is also used by Jesus, as he prayed to the Father all night to choose his disciples. Lk. 6:12
 - 3) The disciples used when they said, “We will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word”. Acts 6:4
 - b. The word is used thirty-seven times in the New Testament, two of which appear in Colossians. 4:4, 12
- B. The believer is directed in the manner in which he is to pray, it is two-fold. vs. 2b
1. Prayer is to be being vigilant.

- a. The word vigilant “gregoreuo” means to give strict attention or caution, to be on guard and alert mentally.
 - b. The word is used of Christ’s return. Mk. 13:35, 1Thess. 5:6, Rev. 16:15
 - 1) I need to be aware of what God would communicate to me.
 - 2) I need to be sensitive to any distraction of thought.
 - 3) I need to watch for the answers of my petitions.
2. Prayer is to be with thanksgiving.
- a. This is the seventh times “thanksgiving” has been mentioned. 1:3, 12, 2:7, 3:15, 16, 17
 - b. The idea is that of appreciation and gratitude for what God has done and is about to do.
 - c. The person who is thankful is one who sees himself indebted to God for everything.
 - 1) It is a mark of an appreciative servant who acknowledges the goodness of God.
 - 2) It marks maturity, “Be careful for nothing...” Phil. 4:6
 - 3) It is a command, “In everything give thanks: for this Is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you”. 1Thess. 5:18

- 4) It is possible in the most difficult situations, as Paul's imprisonment, seen as God's will. Phil. 1:12-14
3. The command is based on what Paul has just commanded each of the family member of the household. 3:18-4:1
- a. Wives will not be able to submit to their husbands without prayer to God.
 - b. Husbands will not be able to love their wives and not be bitter against them, unless they also pray to God.
 - c. Children will not be able to obey their parents, without prayer to God.
 - d. Parents will not be able to not provoke their children or discourage them, without prayer to God.
 - e. Bondservant or employees will not be able to be hard workers, faithful and trusting God, without prayer to God.
 - f. Masters or employers will not be able to be just and fair, unless they pray to God.
- * The reason being is that if you go to prayer to God you have to acknowledge your own shortcomings to be heard and then you have to be as gracious to others as God has been to you in prayer!

- C. The believer is asked to prayer for those preaching the gospel. vs. 3-4
1. Paul's petition was, pray for us. vs. 3a
 - a. Paul, Timothy and the others with him in Rome.
 - b. The same word is used for prayer as in verse two.
 - c. The phrase meanwhile "hema" means at the same time, in other words, he desired that when they prayed for their needs, they might pray for them.
 - 1) He asked for their fervent prayer as he went to Jerusalem with the gift from the gentiles. Rom. 15:30
 - 2) He asked that utterance be given him. Eph. 6:18
 - 3) He asked Thessalonians, "Pray for us". 1Thess. 5:25
* Samuel told the people of Israel, "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you". 1Sam. 12:23
 2. Paul's petition was specific, for the opportunity to preach the gospel. vs. 3b-d
 - a. The phrase open door for the word, literally refers to opportunity to preach. vs. 3b
* 1Cor. 16:9, 2Cor. 2:12
 - 1) To the church of Philadelphia, Jesus identifies Himself as, "He who has the key of David, He who

- opens and no man can shut and the one who opens.” Rev. 3:7
- 2) Paul gathered the church and shared how God had opened the door to the Gentiles in the first missionary trip. Acts 14:27
 - 3) The apostolic church was a missionary church, their primary concern was not buildings, comfort or self, but lost people!
 - a) Paul was always praying and looking for new territory to preach, he would not build on another man's foundation, so he told the Romans of his desire to go to Spain. Rom. 15:20,24
 - b) Paul was commissioned to preach the gospel to the Gentiles and Israel. Acts 9: 15
 - c) Paul was in prison for the very word of God.
 - * Unless we are willing to pray that God would open doors, we should not complain that He has not.
- b. The message was God’s word, the mystery of Christ, for which he was in chains for at the present time. vs. 3c
- 1) The word mystery “mysterion” was used by the Greeks for initiating members in religious rites and

ceremonies, being possessors of certain knowledge, unknown to others.

- a) The root meaning is muo, to shut the mouth, something previously kept secret in the past, but now revealed in the present.
 - b) The mystery was Jew and Gentile one in Christ, it appears four times in Colossians. 1:26, 27, 2:2, 4:3
 - d) Jesus spoke of the mysteries kept secret from foundation of world. Matt. 13:35
 - e) Paul says we are stewards of the mysteries. 1Cor. 4:1
- 2) The present residence of Paul was a Roman prison, in chains for preaching the gospel, the mystery of Christ. vs. 3d
- a) He was nearly killed in the temple and the Antonius fortress by the Jews for declaring it.
 - b) He was being persecuted by some, thinking if they preached Christ, it would add afflictions to his chains. Phil. 1:16
 - c) Paul says though he was bound, the word of God was not bound. 2Tim. 2:9, Eph. 3:1-6

3. Paul's petition was also that he might preach clearly. vs. 4
- a. The word manifest "phaneroo" means to make known, apparent or visible. vs. 4a
- 1) The word appears three times in the epistle.
 - a) It is used for the clear manifestation of the mystery of the gospel. 1:26
 - b) It is used of the clear appearance of Christ and us in glory. 3:4
 - 2) The amazing thing is to see how man can ruin the gospel message.
 - a) By complicating the gospel, so as to obscure the mystery of Christ.
 - b) By deluding it so much that it has no resemblance to being gospel.
 - 2) For I am not ashamed of the gospel... Rom. 1:16-17
 - * It is the wisdom of God and power. 1Cor. 1:18, 21-25, 2:4, 7-8
- b. The personal responsibility for proclaiming the gospel clearly and faithfully is emphasized by the phrase "as I ought". vs. 4b

- 1) The word ought communicates the idea of obligation and translated at times by the word "must".
 - a) Elijah must first come. Matt. 17:10
 - b) I must be about my Father's business. Lk. 2:49
 - c) So must the Son of man be lifted up. Jn. 3:14
 - d) We ought to obey God rather than men. Acts 5:29
- 2) Paul was fully aware of his God given obligation by his call.
 - a) For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! 1Cor. 9:16
 - b) Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech. 2Cor. 3:12
 - c) The god of this world has blinded the minds of them that believe not... 2Cor. 4:4

Illustration

Spurgeon was once asked the secret of his ministry and he took that man and showed him a little room where prayer was offered constantly, while he preached the word to the people.

Application

1. There are Christians who have twisted the Scriptures, saying that it is a lack of faith, but the Bible doesn't teach that

- a. Elijah prayed for rain seven times. 1Kings 18:44
- b. The friend who came a midnight for bread was not turned away because of his persistence. Lk. 11:5-8
- b. The parable of the wicked judge speaks of not being discouraged about God's God avenging his elect, He does not have to be pestered like the wicked judge. Lk. 18:1-8a
* God delays are not denial, He is reluctant to give, but that we might lay hold on what He has for us.

1) God's will. 1Jn. 5:15

2) God's timing. Gal. 4:4

3) Resulting in confidence in God

- c. Daniel prayed three times a day in spite of the king's decree

1) We are to continue instant in prayer.

Rom. 12:12

2) We ought always to pray and faint not.

Lk. 18:1

2. The command to vigilant in prayer is a command to trust God to see for us and be totally dependent on Him.

- a. Nehemiah watched for distractions from the enemy. Neh. 4:9

- b. Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. Matt. 26:41
- c. Spirit helps our infirmity for we know not what we should pray for. Rom. 8:26
- d. Jude tells us to build up ourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost. Jude 20,
- e. Paul the apostle told the Ephesian elders to watch. Acts 20:31
- f. The Corinthians were to watch and stand fast in the faith. 1Cor. 16.13
- g. The Thessalonians were told to watch and be sober. 1Thess. 5:6
- h. The reason for prayer is given by Peter, he says because your adversary the devil as a roaring lion walks about, seeking whom he may devour. 1Pet. 5:8
* Prayer is essential for the life of the Christian and church, like breathing.

3. It is to God that we are to pray and depend on, not man, affirming the sufficiency of Christ who sits at the right hand of the Father, making intercession for the believer.

a. It is to be in the name of Jesus. Jn. 14:13-14

b. It is to be in petition to the Father. Jn. 16:23

4. Our lives should reveal the open door to preach like Paul's life. Acts 9:15.

- a. He preached at Damascus at the risk of his life, he had to flee. Acts 9-.20-22, 2 Cor. 11:32-33

- b. He preached at Jerusalem and was sent away to Tarsus. Acts 9:30
- c. He taught for a year in Antioch. Acts 11:26
- d. He preached in the first missionary journey, stoned at Lystra and went in to preach again. Acts 13, Acts 14:19
- e. He preached to Israel, Felix, Festus, and Agrippa, finally Nero. Acts 21-26
* Christ alone is sufficient to give us the clear words of eternal life.
- d. Now if we truly believe the gospel message and in eternal damnation, we will pray for open doors to preach the gospel clearly.

The believer is to be persistent in prayer!

II. The believer is to be persistent in his walk. vs. 5

- A. The believer is to walk in wisdom towards them that are outside. vs. 5a
 - 1. The believer is to practice what he preaches by walking in wisdom towards them that are without.
 - a. The word walk “peripateo” means to order one's behavior, Habitual action.
 - b. The reason being, if we say that we abide in Christ, then we ought to walk, even as He “Christ” walked. 1Jn. 2:6

- c. The manner is to be by putting off the old man and putting on the new man. Col. 3:9-10
 - 1) By walking in the newness of life. Rom. 6:4
 - 2) By walking in the Spirit. Gal. 5:16-17
 - 3) By living the crucified life, “I am crucified, nevertheless I live...” Gal. 2:20
* We preach the loudest by our walk!
- 2. He is to manifest a walk of wisdom, which speaks of the manner and quality of life.
 - a. Jesus said be wise as serpents and gentle as doves, but I am convinced some believe He said wise as serpents and clumsy as an ox. Matt. 10:16b
 - b. Wisdom is the proper application of the knowledge we possess by full understanding, in order to arrive at the best choice!
 - 1) And it can only be done through Christ, for in Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Col. 2:3
 - 2) Wisdom is personified as a woman calling out to the simple in Proverbs. Prov. 1-9

- 3) How often are our prayers made void, the doors closed and our preaching ignored because we are not practicing what we are preaching!
- b. Jesus said wisdom is justified of her children. Lk. 7:35
 - 1) The context is of not being alert to discern.
 - 2) Literally, in wisdom walk, ordering one's behavior.
- 3. Wisdom of usually identified with positive results.
 - a. If a man is wise with his money, he multiplies it.
 - b. If a man is wise marketing a product, it sells.
 - c. Who is a wise man and endowed with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation (manner of life) his works with meekness of wisdom . Ja. 3:13d.
 - * If we lack wisdom, let's ask God for it, for He turns none away. Ja. 1:5
- B. The believer is to walk redeeming the time.
 - 1. The goal is to redeem the time.
 - a. The word redeeming “exagoarazo” to buy up the opportunity for oneself, to ransom.
 - 1) The word “ex” means, out from.

- 2) The word “agorazo” means to go to market or town square and is used of buying slaves at market
- 3) Christ redeemed those who were under the law. Gal. 4:5
- 4) We have been bought with a price, 1Cor. 6:20
- b. The word time “karios” means season, set time, strategic point in time
 - 1) Those opportunities that once they are gone will never arise again, window times!
 - 2) We as believers are to go to market and buy up the time given to us as an open door to preach to the unbeliever.
 - 3) The reason we are to be Redeeming the time, is because the days are evil. Eph. 5:16
- c. If we truly believe what we preach, we will be taking every opportunity to persuade men knowing the terror of the Lord, as Paul. 2Cor. 5:11
 - 1) Even pulling some out of the fire. Jude 23
 - 2) The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that wins souls is wise. Prov. 11:30
 - 3) Paul says one of the crowns going to be given at the bema seat is the

- crown of rejoicing, for soul
winning. 1Thses. 2:19
2. The believer is to walk in wisdom towards them that are outside, meaning the unbeliever, so as to give value and validity to what he is preaching, as well as attractive.
 - a. That word and deed become one!
 - b. That we may adorn the doctrine of God and not detract from it. Tit. 2:10
 - c. We are to walking circumspectly (exactly, accurately, diligently), not as fools but wise. Eph. 5:15
 - d. We are to walk worthy of the vocation. Eph. 4:1
 - e. We are to walk in love and worthy of the Lord. Eph. 5:2, Col. 1:10
 - f. We are to walk in Him. Col. 2:6
 3. Four interesting things the scriptures declare about those from without, the unbeliever.
 - a. We are not to judge them. 1Cor. 5:12-13
 - b. We are to walk honestly towards them. 1Thess. 4:12
 - c. The elders and bishops are to have a good report from the unbeliever, as a requirement. 1Tim. 3:7
 - d. The unbelieving husbands can be saved by the example of the wife. 1Pet. 3:1

Illustration

There was a soldier in Alexander the Great's army whose lived a debauched life and was named Alexander also and he was called in by one of Alexander's generals and told to either change is life or change his name.

Application

1. Remember that the mission of Jesus was to seek and save that which was lost and his ministry becomes our ministry.
 - a. In the great commission he said, "Go to all the world." Matt. 28:19
 - b. In Acts, you shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem. Acts 1:8
2. Paul says that Jesus gave us the ministry of reconciliation and are ambassadors of Christ. 2Cor. 5:18, 20
3. The unbeliever has beliefs much like those of Colosse.
 - a. Based on human philosophy, religion or opinion or philosophy. 2.8
 - b. Based on legalism. 2.16
 - c. Based on mysticism. 2:17
 - d. Based on asceticism. 2:18

The believer is to be persistent in his walk!

III. The believer is to be persistent in giving biblical answers. vs. 6

- A.** The believer is to let his speech always be with grace, this speaks of its source. vs. 6a
- 1.** The word grace “karis” means beauty, charm, loveliness, benefit, gift, unmerited favor
 - a.** Our words to people should be God's words of grace that have been given to us by His Son, who is full of grace and truth. Jn. 1:14
 - b.** Grace is evidence of one’s own partaking, like all others, having an attitude of humility.
 - * Freely you have received, freely give.
 - 2.** In Paul's day, grace also meant speech of witness and clever remarks.
 - a.** We are to give the truth of the word that is able to save and dispel darkness, not our opinions or speculations.
 - b.** It also speaks of our attitude, that it be with love and longing that they embrace it, not self-righteousness
 - c.** But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord, first time grace appears is against judgment to come. Gen. 6:8
 - d.** The Scriptures repeat over and over that the Lord is merciful, gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth. Ex. 34:6

- 1)** We are not to be abusive, offensive or vindictive! 3:16-17
 - 2)** We are to speak the truth in love. Eph. 4:15
 - 3)** Our mouth should edify and minister grace unto the hearer. Eph. 4:29
- B.** The believer is to let his speech always to be seasoned with salt, this speaks of the content. vs. 6b
- 1.** One of the qualities of salt, is that it causes people to thirst.
 - a.** We are to cause people to thirst for righteousness.
 - b.** We are the salt of the earth..Matt. 5:13
 - 2.** Another quality of salt, is that it stops decay.
 - a.** We are to let people know the power of God's word to prevent them from sinning and crucify their lives, even as salt deters corruption.
 - b.** We are to let them know that God desires to use them in the same way once they come to Christ.
 - 3.** A third quality of salt is to season food, when it is bland.
 - a.** We are to be agents of the gospel making it palatable, rather than

something that is bitter or unattractive.

- b. We are to present the gospel in such a way by God's grace, that it cause them to desire to partake.
- c. We in all this are very aware that it is the work of the Holy Spirit that makes it all possible, not our excellency of words. 1Cor. 1-2

C. The believer is given the reason for these two commands. vs. 6c

- 1. That we may know how we ought to answer every man.
 - a. The word "know" implies that we have learned the answers by study. 2Tim. 2:15
 - b. The word "ought" is the same as in verse three, obligation, not an option.
 - c. The command is based on the privilege of having received something.
 - d. The proper understanding is that we cannot give what we do not have, like the farmer! 2Tim. 2:6-7
- 2. The implication is that questions will be asked.
 - a. The word for answer "apokrinomai" simple means a response to the question addressed.

- b. The entire new testament is a witness to the many questions that were posed to Jesus and His disciples.
- c. Man is full of questions that have no answers or he has answers that do not really answer the questions.
 - 1) The lips of the righteous feed many: but fools die for want of wisdom. Prov. 10:21
 - 2) Every idle word that men speak, they shall give account of in the day of judgment. Matt. 12:36
- 3. Jesus once likened the man who heard and did what He said as a wise man who built his house on the rock and the one who didn't on sand. Matt. 7:24-27
 - * If in fact we are building our house on the rock, we will be obedient to what Paul is saying!

Illustration

Let me give you a beautiful description of the greater percentage of the church in the United States today.

* "I would like to buy \$3 worth of God, please, not enough to explode my soul or disturb my sleep, but just enough to equal a cup of warm milk or a snooze in the sunshine. I don't want enough of Him to make me love a black man or pick beans with a migrant. I want ecstasy, not transformation. I want the warmth of a womb, not the new birth. I

want a pound of the eternal in a paper sack. I would like to buy \$3 worth of God, please."

Application

1. Are you communicating the grace of God to sinner regarding their sins or are you communicating the horror of their sin more? Jn. 3:16
2. Are you in fact causing sinners to drink of the waters of life, freely or to flee from them? Rev. 22:17
3. Are you being a good Berean, studying and examining everything, so you can correctly discern truth from error? Acts 17:11
4. Are you able to give answers to the unbeliever? 1Pet. 3:15
 - a. About evolution versus creation.
 - b. About the Trinity.
 - c. About the way sin entered the world.
 - d. About the way that He made salvation possible.

The believer is to be persistent in giving biblical answers!

Conclusion

Paul has gives to us the new practical perspective of new man by these three responsibilities.

- I. The believer is to be persistent in prayer!
- II. The believer is to be persistent in his walk!

- III. The believer is to be persistent in giving biblical answers!