

Colossians

Lesson #4-Ch.4

Day 1

Please read the text for today - Colossians 4:1

Prayer:

Lord, let my actions and my attitudes glorify you today. I give you my heart of stone, which is often passionless for the things of the Kingdom, make me clean before you and replace my heart of stone with a heart that is thankful and willing to love others and please my heavenly Father. Fill me with your Spirit that I may put others' needs before my own, go the extra mile when asked, extend love where none is reciprocated and do it all graciously and with a cheerful attitude as unto You Lord.

I need you, Lord. As you know, my flesh thoughtlessly dominates, and I continually think of myself above others. My needs are often foremost on my mind, and I go by the needy unbeliever in a hurried determination to get my daily tasks done. Please slow me down; let me see those passing me as You see them, and allow me to be Your instrument of love and encouragement in their lives. I want to be a dispenser of hope today. Amen

We are going to look at only one verse today. In Colossians Ch. 4 Paul deals with Christian conduct. At the end of chapter 3 Paul was addressing our attitudes in the work place or attitudes while at work. Whether you work in a large successful company every day or work diligently at home raising children, we are called to do what we do heartily as unto the Lord. God cares about your attitude when you “do what you do”.

In Colossians 4:1 the thread of that topic continues as Paul speaks to the way masters treat their servants. We don't have masters and slaves today, but we all answer to somebody, and most of us have a boss to please or person in authority to submit to. Even if we are stay at home moms/dads, we have young ones in training who submit to our authority.

1. Let's back up a little. Read Colossians 3:22-25.

What should the attitude of the servant (employee) be to his master (or boss)?

2. On the other hand, what should the master's (boss's) attitude be towards those that work for him? Colossians 4:1

Employees are called to serve with a grateful attitude as if they were working for Christ Himself, and bosses are called to treat their workers fairly just as they would want to be treated. Have you ever been taken advantage of from a boss or other employee? Maybe it was your own husband that did you wrong. It's a vulnerable place to be when the person you would go to with a problem IS the problem. Is your boss the problem, or even more difficult, how about your spouse? Does your husband treat you unfairly? Did he not keep his promise that he made before

you and the whole wedding party? This topic includes everybody and anybody who has a place of authority over others.

Every boss will be accountable to God for his actions towards his employees. Every husband will answer to God about how he treated his wife. Just as every father/mother will give an account for how they have raised their children. God will call all into account for how they lived their life and how they treated others while here on earth.

If you have been terribly mistreated by someone in authority over your life (whether boss or parent or teacher or husband), just know that God will hold them accountable for their actions when they stand before Him in the end. God says, “Revenge is mine says the Lord. (Rom. 12:18-19)

He will make the crooked places straight, settle the hidden wrongdoings and clarify every unknown, unfair circumstance. One day all will be brought to the light, and when the new Kingdom comes, God will reign over us as a just and gracious King, but today we have mere carnal men we have to answer to and sometimes life in that system just isn’t fair. Even then we have a heavenly Father who cares for us so sweetly. He really does bestow upon each of us great blessings – too many to count. No matter how unfairly you may have been treated by another human being, God has a way of making that up to you if you will be determined to see through it with Him. He gives back 10 fold and the second installment seems almost sweeter than the first!

a. The call to the church is simple here – treat those you serve alongside with dignity, honor and respect, knowing that you will answer to your Master one day for your actions. Use your authority to bless and encourage, not to oppress and belittle. God will honor you with favor if you do.

If you are currently going through something where you are being mistreated from someone who is in authority over your life, (even if it’s a spouse) give that some time in prayer now. Ask the Lord what should be your next response? (If your situation is putting you in danger or if it is extreme, please seek a godly counselor for prayer and advice.)

Personal Notes:

3. When we obey God and above all want to honor His name, we are blessed. If we serve under an authority that doesn’t treat us fairly, God will protect us, and we will be blessed. It is a “Law of Echos” of sorts, or, you could say, as you bless others God will return blessing to you.

Look up Ephesians 6:5-9 – What are we called to do as workers of God, and what will God bless us with if we have a good attitude while serving? Who are we really serving as we serve others?

There was a gal in Scripture named Abigail. Her husband was a fool. She was married to a fool, but she was wise as she dealt with him as difficult situations arose in their marriage. We can learn some things from her. She didn’t leave her husband or dishonor his name or God’s, but

she was very tactful yet strategic about how she handled being under the authority of her foolish husband.

Let's read her story.

Read 1 Samuel Ch. 25

God always makes a way for us to honor His name even when those in authority over us don't care about the ways of God. We never have to act unfavorably to our God.

a. How does Scripture describe the man Nabal? See 1 Samuel 25:2, 3.

(Just a side note: Nabal came from the house of Caleb. Caleb's name means man of "churlish" or mean disposition).

Nabal seemed to come from some "unkind folk". He himself had a reputation of being hard to deal with. David moved into Nabal's territory after battling the Philistines. David protected his sheep while there and looked after his men in the land, but when David asked for some good-neighborly help in feeding his men, Nabal rejected David's request. Nabal knew who David was. It was common knowledge that David was the next King-elect. He pretended he didn't know so he wouldn't have to go out of his way to do what was right.

David was angry. David looked at Nabal's answer as him rejecting God, and he was about to take his life for it.

b. How does Abigail intervene, humble herself and take on a problem that came about because of her husband's unkind temperament and foolish decision? 1 Samuel 25:18-31.

c. Abigail was prophetic. She had a keen understanding as to what God was going to do through David. This wisdom only comes from spending time with God. Because Abigail was close to God, she understood just what to do in a bad situation.

What was the outcome? 1 Samuel 25:32-35

d. Is it wise to try to deal with hostile people when they are intoxicated? 1 Samuel 25:36; Proverbs 23:20

e. How did God honor Abigail for being wise in a difficult situation with her foolish husband? 1 Samuel 25:37-42

God oversees the affairs of men and women here on earth. There is nothing you are going through that the Lord isn't in control over. He still rules over heaven and earth, and even when you feel "lorded-over" by someone in authority over us who is ungodly and unkind, God has dominion over you and that situation. He can move people in and out of a situation as He wishes.

There is no human being here on this earth that God cannot lift up to a place of prominence or remove at any time He wishes. God is our ultimate authority! That truth should give us great peace when we are dealing with difficult people that treat us unfairly. Honor God, and He will honor you. God will turn that difficult situation around to work in your favor.

Day 2

Please pray then read the text – Colossians 4:2-4. (Amplified)

Col 4:2 Be earnest and unwearied and steadfast in your prayer [life], being [both] alert and intent in [your praying] with thanksgiving.

Col 4:3 And at the same time pray for us also, that God may open a door to us for the Word (the Gospel), to proclaim the mystery concerning Christ (the Messiah) on account of which I am in prison;

Col 4:4 That I may proclaim it fully and make it clear [speak boldly and unfold that mystery], as is my duty.

1. What kind of prayers was Paul asking for? Colossians 4: 2

Here are a few excerpts from a classic book called “Prayer – A Holy Occupation” by Oswald Chambers.

“It is SO difficult to get quiet, you say. What about the time you were ill? Oh, it can be done, but you must know how to shut the door. For example, it is easier to pray in a place only used for prayer than in a theater.”

“Did you ever say to yourself, “It is a difficult to select a place?”

What about the time you were in love, was it impossible to select a place to meet? No, it was far from impossible. Think how long our Lord has waited for you; you have seen Him in your visions now pray to Him; get a place, not a mood, but a definite material place and resort to it constantly, and pray to God as His Spirit in you helps you. Bring to earth the promised life you have longed for. Curb your impulsive, undisciplined wayward nature. Concentration is only learned little by little, and the more impulsive you are, the less concentrated you will be.”

a. If you have a problem concentrating while you are in prayer, ask the Holy Spirit right now to begin to work that ability in your prayer life.

Do you have a specific place you go often to pray? Can you find a secluded place in your home even if it's in early morning hours? What distracts you the most?

How can you remove those distractions?

b. Look up the word “vigilant” in the English dictionary. (The one used to describe prayer here in v.2)

What did you discover it means? _____

Can you list some synonyms (similar words) and antonyms (opposite words)?

Does this describe what it was like the last time you were in prayer?

J. Vernon McGee says, “Christians are to inhale by prayer and exhale by thanksgiving!

So often in Scripture, the words “with thanksgiving” are tacked on at the end of the command to pray. We see that once again in v.2. It’s so important that we don’t go to God as if He were the great “gifter in the sky”. It would be a sad thing if the only time He heard from us is when we were in need of something, and then when we did come to Him with our need, we continually forgot to thank Him for all that He has already done for us.

I don’t want to be a child of God who’s “got the gimmies”... Let’s make it a habit to never leave the presence of God without thanking Him for something!

2. We can bring more to pass by praying than by any other kind of human effort. Real prayer may take more out of us than hard work, but we can accomplish more by time and strength put into prayer than the same amount of time and strength put into anything else.

Paul believed that. That’s why he asked his community of believers to pray vigilantly that the Lord would open the door for them to share the gospel - to make the “mystery of Christ” not so much a mystery anymore to the hearers. He wanted to make an invisible God visible to the non-believer.

Prayer will bring the power of God into your work.

a. Write out James 5:16 - _____

b. God will give eternal life to those we pray for.

Write out John 5:16 - _____

c. Prayer can help rescue the believer that is caught in sin. Satan might have his claws in him, but our prayers can help set them free. Passionate prayer for their release can unclench the hold of the evil one over their life one claw at a time.

Read Luke 22:31-32 - Who prayed for Peter? _____
Simon Peter came out of Satan’s sieve a purer believer than he was before. What Satan meant for evil – God used for good!

Paul’s encouragement was to continue earnestly in prayer - being vigilant in it.

d. The Old Testament speaks about intense prayer also.

Jeremiah 29:13 describes earnest prayer. How is it described by Jeremiah?

What is it that occupies most of your prayers? Fight that thing on your knees. Oh, I know when you determine to do that, it seems like all “hell” breaks loose on your prayer time. Satan HATES it most when we decide to pray and read God’s Word. He HATES it. He hates it because He knows we have discovered our source of power. Well, what should we do - give up? No, fight for that prayer time – fight harder – wrestle with God on your knees in prayer – and WIN!

Please close this day’s lesson with at least 15 minutes in prayer.

Make a note of your personal needs:
List the urgent.

Make a quick a list of miracles He has done for you in the past: (what jams has God gotten you out of?)

End by thanking Him for what He has already done and what you believe He is going to do for you according to the promises in His Word.

Day 3

Pray. Read the text – Colossians 4:5-6.

1. Please write out the instruction Paul set before Christians in Colossians 4:5.

a. Who are the outsiders Paul was referring to? _____

Paul reminds us that we are being watched. The choices we make, the attitudes we have and the values we hold dear are all out there for the unbelievers in the world to evaluate. They do take notice, they do keep score, (fair or not) they do watch.

Dear Christian, it's so important to honor Christ in all our affairs because we represent WHO He is to a world that knows nothing about Him. It's that very reason that high profile preachers are crucified by the media when they fall morally. The world waits for anything they can claim as proof that Christianity is a farce and, deeper than that, that Jesus has no holding power.

A quote I love to repeat says it all, "I can either be a great example or a horrible warning."

Oh Lord, help me by the power of Your Spirit to maintain my testimony for You. If you say you are a Christian, than take that calling seriously because what you do says a lot about who your Savior is to an unbelieving world! It would be better not to claim the authority of Christ and fall than it would be to claim He is "your everything" and dishonor His name. This is serious stuff because it's Kingdom stuff, and every day it is determined where souls will spend eternity.

2. Read through Ephesians 5:15-17.

How can we make time on this earth count?

What is one of our greatest battles according to v.16?

3. We need to establish credibility among the non-believing world.

Who would take the word concerning the gospel from of a foolish man/woman? The first thing non-believers do as you share Jesus with them is try to establish some kind of credibility about your life before they decide if they will believe or not believe the truth you are sharing with them. If you have no credibility in your life, what you say will have very little impact.

A credible person is one who can be believed because of a good track record. She is dependable, believable and convincing because she has integrity.

Credibility will cause the believer to prosper.

The Psalmist describes the life of one who has established credibility.

Read Psalm 1:1-3.

Describe the person established in the faith – the one who lives by what she preaches.

a. Add to that understanding 1 Corinthians 14:20 and Philippians 1:27.

After reading those passages, what comes to mind? Where are you challenged the most to represent Christ well?

Right after Paul brings up the point about our credibility to the nonbelievers, he throws in a verse that talks about our mouths, specifically our speech. Wow – how did he know that our failures to represent the Kingdom well almost always includes our failure to say something we shouldn't have said? Gosh! That little mouth that contains a tongue behind those bars of pearly whites gets us in trouble every time.

“Let your speech always be with grace seasoned with salt.” (v.6)

“Speak when you are angry and you will give one of the greatest speeches you will ever regret!”

With one moment of volatile conversation our whole Christian walk can become suspect, unsure and unbelievable. That is why Scripture tells us to rule over our tongues. It's a demonstrative little muscle that can cause great harm for the Kingdom of God.

b. Pastor James says it well, James 1:19, 20.
Write his wise words below.

c. What is the source of our wrath? James 3:5, 6.

d. Out of the same mouth can come blessing and cursing. James says, this isn't right. Remember a believer's speech should be full of grace, seasoned with salt, not all salt and no grace. Salt erodes; grace leaves room for hope.

What was the last thing you said that you wish you could take back?

The good news is – the Lord can restore the things the locust have eaten. That means with your repentance He can rebuild what we tore down!

Close in prayer.

Ask the Lord to make you a woman/man of credibility. One that speaks with grace and kindness. Ask the Holy Spirit to remind you to back off when you are tempted to blow; step back, take some time to cool off and revisit the conversation.

All of us can do better with this challenge. God will continue to grow each one in this area.

Day 4

Read through the end of the book which is Colossians 4:7-18.

Paul goes through a stroll down memory lane. He names in scripture all those who have helped him in the ministry.

List the ones Paul named and his description of them.

Ok, I want you to think about those who have come alongside you in the faith. Make your own list, and next to each name write a description of what first comes to mind when you think of what they have meant in your walk with God.

Now close, praying for them by name that they would be able to stand complete in all the will of God! (v.12b)

Thank God that it was by no mistake that all of these people were in your life when they were. These are all sent to you by God to help you grow and mature and bring you blessing. Praise Him for each one!!