

Silent Warfare or Devoted to Prayer

Colossians 4:2 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

Colossians 4:3 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.

Colossians 4:4 Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.

Colossians 4:2 Devote yourselves to prayer. Prayer is the Silent Service of the unseen warfare. In the late 50's there was a TV series on The Silent Service of the US Navy, mainly on the submarines who fought an unseen war. Every episode began with these words: "Tonight, we bring you another thrilling episode of *Silent Service*, stories of warfare under the sea." What a beautiful analogy to our dynamic prayer potential. *Tonight, we bring you another thrilling episode of Silent Service, stories of Christians praying in the power of the Holy Spirit.* Some of your greatest contributions to the spiritual warfare will be in silent service of prayer. No one will know that you just struck a blow in their defense when you prayed for them. No one that is, except you and God. You will discover in a proper study of the defeat of the Japanese, that it was not the A-bomb but the marvelous submarine activity of the US Navy. And at the Judgment Seat of Christ you will discover that one of the greatest contributions to the spiritual warfare was your silent

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prayers. No one will know that it was because of you that things happened in their lives, in their ministries, because of your consistent silent prayers. Oh people, if you truly knew how powerful your prayers are in the spiritual warfare of others' lives you would be in prayer all the time. I am often jealous of my wife, because while I am lying there knocking out zzzs, she can't sleep so she is in silent prayers in the darkness of the night. She is in the warfare while I sleep!

Devote yourselves. This is the *present active imperative* of the verb meaning to endure, to remain, to persist, be dedicated to as a sailor is dedicated to submarine duty. So should every Christian be dedicated to the silent offensive of prayer. This Greek word gives great emphasis to duration in being persistent in some task. That is, you don't grow weary of praying nor tired of praying for the same thing or the same person, even if you don't see any change. We have a powerful personal weapon in prayer but because it is silent. Far too few believers are dedicated to this silent weapon. To give you an idea of the persistence in prayer, let's read what our Savior-friend Jesus had to say about being devoted to prayer.

Luke 18:1 Now He (Jesus Christ) was telling them (His disciples) a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart, (so as to stop praying)

Luke 18:2 saying, "In a certain city there was a judge who did not fear God and did not respect man.

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Luke 18:3 “There was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, ‘Give me legal protection from my opponent.’

Luke 18:4 “For a while he was unwilling; but afterward he said to himself, ‘Even though I do not fear God nor respect man,

Luke 18:5 “yet because this widow bothers me, I will give her legal protection, otherwise by continually coming she will wear me out.”

Luke 18:6 And the Lord said, “Hear what the unrighteous judge said;

Luke 18:7 “now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them?

Luke 18:8 “I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?” (Will He find you using your secret weapon of prayer?)

Colossians 4:2 Devote yourselves. The *present tense* conveys the idea of consistency. Being persistent and consistent in your prayer life. The *active voice* points out that this is your private, silent weapon. And the *imperative mood* is used to remind everyone of us that this is God’s will

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for us every day. Please never say, this is a boring day, I have nothing to do. You always have something to do in your private submarine. You always have silent warfare to engage in. There are people in this very assembly who need your prayers, consistently! Like Jim and Annelle Langston.

Devote yourselves to prayer. Please think about this. Here you are, unimportant to the world, and here you are talking with the sovereign omnipotent God. People, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is not the same God as Allah. Muslims do not, indeed cannot have an intimate relationship with Allah. He is just too mighty for that. But here is the One True God, Father of our Savior and we can have an intimate relationship with Him. In fact, this is one of the reasons why Jesus came to earth, into the human race, to give us an intimate relationship with His Father. And He desires to interact with each one of us so much that He has created and designed prayer that we communicate with Him 24/7. You can use this silent weapon anytime and as often as you wish. Trust me, you will grow tired of praying before He grows tired of listening to you.

Without going through the entire doctrine of prayer remember these primary principles of prayer.

Pray without Ceasing. 1 Thessalonians 5:17.

Pray at all times in the Spirit. Ephesians 6:18.

Pray in Thanksgiving. Ephesians 5:20.

Pray to God in good times and in bad times, He is your heavenly father—keep in close contact...

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Colossians 4:2 (revised translation) Keep on devoting yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving;

keeping alert. is a *present active participle* of the verb meaning to be alert, pay close attention to dangers to your prayer life. The *present tense* goes along with the *present tense* of devoting yourselves to prayer—and while you are devoted to prayer—keep alert. Now, this can be *middle voice* which means you act upon yourself to stay alert and the *participle* is used to correspond to the previous *imperative*—devote yourself to prayer.

Keeping alert. Let's not pretend here. It is difficult to keep alert in prayer: phone, cell phone ringing, children, or someone else, someone at the door and God forbid, a TV program etc. This is why it is so important when you pray to keep alert. In the 9:15 class we just studied a very important passage on the same urgency.

1 Peter 4:7 The end of all things (of the Church) is near; (rapture) therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer. (make your prayers in sound judgment means to pray according to the Plan of God. And sober means not distracted, but paying close attention.)

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1 Peter 4:8 Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.

The effective use of this silent weapon of prayer is dependent upon two things that Peter mentions here: **sound judgment**. What should I pray for? What should I not pray for? And being sober—not allowing anything to interfere with your prayers. When you handle a weapon, a pistol, you better be of sound thinking. Many accidents occur when a person is not sober—that is when he is distracted...people are wrongfully killed. Well, let me tell you something when you handle prayer, you are handling a silent weapon—so you better not be distracted but be alert. There are several things we are to keep on doing in these last days:

1. Live in the Holy Spirit. (Galatians 5:25).
2. Abide in His Word. John 8:31 *—meno—abide.*

2 John 9 Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son.

3. PRAYER

Colossians 4:2 (revised translation) Keep on devoting yourselves to prayer and keep on being alert in that prayer with thanksgiving

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**Colossians 4:3 praying at the same time for us
as well.**

First, be dedicated to prayer.

Then, keep alert in that prayer.

Third, with Thanksgiving and now when you pray---pray at the same time for us. Here we get back to that silent team work.

Oh, people if you only knew how effective you can be in your prayers. Yes, they are silent and no, no one else will know but you will know and so will your heavenly Father. This is application of

**Colossians 3:4 When Christ, who is our life, is
revealed, then you also will be revealed with
Him in glory**

When you stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ, and you walk away with eternal rewards from Jesus Christ and people will look at you in amazement –*why they did not do anything great, they did not go to the mission field, they did not lead some grand crusade, we did not even know they were there.* Remember, no one can see those submarines—they were silent, but we later saw the result of their being there. Well, this can be said of you. You can be one of the powerful silent weapons in the Angelic Conflict—learn how to pray, then dedicate your life to prayer. Over the years we have heard over and over of the many people Bill and Pat Risley have brought to the Lord. Well, I don't know if you know this, but Bill is in the habit of getting up early in the morning before anyone else and stealing away somewhere and going into long fervent prayers that God would use him that day, or pray for those they

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were going to speak with. His success did not come without the weapon of prayer.

Colossians 4:3 praying at the same time for us as well. This is the principle of ‘teamwork.’ Here is where each believer makes his or her own prayer list. Everyone cannot be on everyone’s prayer list. You under the direction of the Holy Spirit compile your own prayer list. And yes, I hope that those of you who are benefited by this ministry have me on your private prayer list. I ask you to put everyone in this assembly on your list. As you compile your own private prayer list it will change over a period of time. As God answers prayers for some sick—then you replace them with new names.

Next, Paul tells them exactly what he wishes for them to pray.

That. This conjunction introduces what specifically Paul desires them to pray. When you ask someone to be in prayer, it is helpful to give them a specific request. For the sake of privacy this is not always desirable, but a good prayer warrior understands and knows that God knows what needs to be done. But it is always helpful to make it clear what you desire in your prayer request.

That God. In the Church Age, prayers are addressed to God the Father. In the Lord’s prayer in John 17, He addresses the Father several times. Always remember whom you are addressing, God the Father. And you are asking Him for His acting in various circumstances. Or you are giving thanks to Him.

that God will open up to us a door for the word. Here is a specific prayer from Paul the apostle. Remember, he is in prison at this time. He

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does not ask for his release, he does not ask for better food etc. No, he asks for more opportunities to witness for Jesus Christ. Here, Paul asks for prayer that God will give him more opportunities to witness to the Praetorian Guard and to various VIP's in the palace or who might come and visit the palace. Paul uses the *aorist active subjunctive* of the Greek verb which means just that 'open doors.' And don't be misled by the *aorist tense*. This is an *ingressive aorist* which contemplates the action of the verb at its beginning. It is generally translated *to begin opening the doors*. Apparently up to this point since Paul has arrived at the place where he is being held prisoner, he has not had much opportunity to witness for Christ. He feels the doors have been shut. And why would he feel this way? Well, when he was held captive in Caesarea for two years he had many opportunities to communicate the gospel. To the Sanhedrin, to the Roman commander, in charge of peace in Jerusalem, Felix, governor of this area of Israel and to Felix's wife, to Festus, to King Agrippa II and Bernice, to a court filled with dignitaries from Rome. In other words, doors were always being opened to Paul to speak the truth of the Gospel. But apparently, he has not had much opportunity since being transferred from Caesarea to Rome. So, Paul desires them to be in prayer that doors would be open for him to tell others of Jesus the Christ. It is God who will open the doors. But God may be motivated to open the doors because of the prayers of these believers in Colossae.

Oh, people, please know that you are in position to 'incite' God to act where He may not have acted had you not prayed. We learned this from the first book God gave to man, the book of Job. In the first chapter of Job, we saw where we can incite God to act. Always remember: '*you have not because you ask not* (James 4:2).

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Praying at the same time for us as well that God will open up to us a door. By this time in the city of Rome there are other men with the gift of pastor-teacher. Right now, Rome is ready for harvest. By application, I encourage you to be in prayer for Spring Valley Bible Church. For me in my studies; for our internet outreach; for our youth—more open doors, for our missionary outreach.

so that we may speak forth. The NASV reads like this is a *subjunctive* but it is an *aorist infinitive*—*to speak* of the verb to communicate.

Open doors

1. Lets begin with noting who opens doors and who shuts doors

Rev. 3:7 “And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens, says this:

So, when we pray for open doors, remember you are praying to the one who opens and who closes doors.

2. Believers filled with the Holy Spirit can pray effective prayers for God to open doors for the teaching of the Word of God. Colossians 4:3.
3. An open door means an open opportunity.

2 Corinthians 2:12 Now when I came to Troas for the gospel of Christ and when a door was opened for me in the Lord,

In the study of Acts 20, where they were so interested in the study of the Word of God that Paul kept right on teaching up to midnight. A young man sitting in the window sill fell asleep and fell out the window and died. But Paul brought him back to life (resuscitation—he will permanently die). But after raising him back up, Paul kept right on teaching till day break and they stayed awake listening to him teach. So there were some powerful prayers for Paul to have open doors in Troa. God answered those prayers by opening this door.

4. Open doors often changes our plans.

1 Corinthians 16:7 For I do not wish to see you now *just* in passing; for I hope to remain with you for some time, if the Lord permits.

1 Corinthians 16:8 But I will remain in Ephesus until Pentecost;

1 Corinthians 16:9 for a wide door for effective *service* has opened to me,

Paul would love to go to Corinth and fellowship and teach. But right now, the doors are wide open for him to teach where he is. He cannot leave with such positive response to the teaching of the Word of God.

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5. Open doors are often accompanied by Satan's counter attack.

1 Corinthians 16:9 and there are many adversaries.

6. And when you pray for 'open doors' pray that they be 'wide' open.

1 Cor. 16: 9 for a wide door for effective service has opened to me.

Pray that many will hear the gospel, not just a few. On the other hand, sometimes, circumstances call for just one small door to be opened.

7. There are two aspects of 'open doors.' First, that the door will be open for the presentation of the Gospel or the Word of God. But then, also, that the hearts of unbelievers will be open to the truth of the gospel.

Acts 14:27 When they had arrived and gathered the church together, they *began* to report all things that God had done with them and how He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.

Colossians 4:3 Praying at the same time for us as well that God will open up to us a door so that we may speak forth the mystery of the Christ. (This refers to the content of the message

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Paul wishes to speak forth.) **For which I have also been imprisoned;**

Colossians 4:4. pray That I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak

The mystery of the Christ

1. The Greek word refers to information (doctrine) that was not known throughout all the Old Testament period, from Adam up to the coming of Jesus Christ. It refers to doctrine never revealed until the Church Age. It refers to secrets which could not be revealed until the Church Age, not revealed until the Lord Jesus Christ became the first prophet of the Church.
2. In the Old Testament, the coming of Jesus the Messiah, was revealed: His birth, His perfection and both of His deaths on the cross were revealed. His Resurrection, ascension and session were all revealed in the Old Testament. Then, the Old Testament became silent. Then, the Old Testament picked up with the Tribulation in Daniel and other Old Testament prophets, His Second Advent and His reign in the millennium. They were all revealed in Old Testament. But again, there is a blatant silence as to this period of history that we now live in.
3. The mystery simply means Church Age truth not taught in the Old Testament. The word 'mystery' in the New Testament is never used for anything obscure. It is used for something deliberately hidden from the Old Testament believers.

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4. Very interestingly, part of the mystery includes the blindness of Israel during the Church Age.

Romans 11:25 For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation (replacement theology)—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; until the end of Church Age.

We are given the truth of what was hidden from the Old Testament so that we would not be uninformed of what is going on during the Church Age.

5. The mystery of the Church Age was part of the Plan of God decreed in eternity past.

1 Corinthians 2:7 but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom* which God predestined before the ages to our glory;

6. Very important: the pastor-teacher of the Church Age is responsible for the teaching of the truths of the mystery and is therefore a steward of the mysteries.

1 Corinthians 4:1 Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

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7. So that you will not be deceived. The rapture of the church is part of the mystery.

1 Corinthians 15:51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed,

1 Corinthians 15:52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

8. To fully grasp the mystery, requires a full understanding of the Word of God.

Colossians 2:2 that their hearts may be encouraged having been knit or united together in Spiritual Love resulting in all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding. *resulting* in a true knowledge of God's mystery, *that is, Christ Himself,*

You cannot learn too much about Jesus Christ. The more you learn about Jesus Christ, the more you have true knowledge of the mystery which is Jesus Christ Himself. More and more people in the world today are turning away from Jesus as the only Messiah, the only savior, the only way to eternity with God the Father. But to us He is the fulfillment of God's mystery, that is our eyes are open the more we focus on Him.

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Colossians 4:3 ...The mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned;

Colossians 4:4 that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.