

## Colossians 4

Colossians Chapter 4

*Distributed by: KJV Bible Studies*

*Website: [www.KjvBibleStudies.net](http://www.KjvBibleStudies.net)*

*E-mail: [mailKjvBibleStudies@gmail.com](mailto:mailKjvBibleStudies@gmail.com)*

**Introduction:** In the last half of Chapter 3, Paul warned of a number of practices which have no place in the lives of the saints. We studied about practical instruction of how we are to put on charity, showing the love of God to all who come in contact with us.

Chapter 4 begins with a few injunctions for day-to-day Christian living. The greater remaining portion concludes the book with Paul sending personal greetings, commendations, and instructions to various individuals he knew in the church.

### I. The Christian Employer's Life

*Col 4:1 Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.*

At the end of chapter 3, the Apostle had given instructions for servants to be obedient to masters. He now addresses the Masters. He admonished masters to "give unto your servants that which is just and equal." The word translated as just in this instance means 'righteous' or 'right.' The word translated as equal also has the sense of 'fair.'

Employers are instructed to pay their employees that which is right and fair. This matter is not a suggestion, it is an imperative, (i.e., a commandment). Moreover, masters (employers) are reminded that they "also have a Master in heaven."

A Christian employer has two important responsibilities. His first responsibility is to serve God. His second responsibility is to his employees. He should treat them fairly and never threaten them. Like God, we should not be a respecter of people. We should treat others as we would want to be treated, and pay a fair wage for a fair days labor.

*Ephesians 6:9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him*

*James 5:1 Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. 2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten. 3 Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have*

*heaped treasure together for the last days. 4 Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. 5 Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. 6 Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.*

## **II. The Christian's Prayer Life**

*Col 4:2 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;*

*Col 4:3 Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:*

Prayer is a very important thing in the life of the believer. I don't think we realize the power each of us has with God when we get on our knees and really mean business with God in praying. The early Christians had great power with God, and you and I can still move the heart strings of the Father when we pray and believe.

*Acts 4:31-33 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. 32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. 33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.*

We see in verse 2 that the Christian is to continue in prayer, he is to watch, and he is to be thankful. Our prayers should never be self centered and always asking for things for ourselves only. We should remember the answered prayers we have received, and thank the Lord for all the wondrous things he has done for each of us. If you know Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you have something to praise God about every day.

Paul tells them to pray for him that God would open unto both him and the people associated with him a door of utterance. And they were to do that by the mystery of Christ. Paul was in prison due to his determination to preach the gospel and to tell others about the mystery of Jesus Christ. And while still bound, his desire was to continue to preach the gospel and to do so with a plain message that all might understand and turn to Christ.

A second command is enjoined. Continue in prayer. The word translated as continue (proskarterew proskartereo) has the additional sense of 'perseverance.' The thought parallels Paul's injunction in I Thessalonians 5:17 to "pray without ceasing."

*1 Thessalonians 5:17 Pray without ceasing.*

The idea is of ongoing prayer that perseveres even in the face of discouragement. Moreover, we are further enjoined to watch in the same with thanksgiving. The word translated as watch (grhgorew gregoreuo) has the additional sense of being diligent (in prayer). Additionally, our prayer ought always be liberally seasoned with thanksgiving.

Paul then draws the focus of their prayer more sharply. Withal (i.e., at the same time) praying also for us. Though Paul no doubt coveted their prayers in a general way, he went on to be more specific. that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of the Christ.

The Apostle detailed his desire that they would pray in order that they would be able to speak (preach) the gospel. It is herein referred to as the ‘mystery of Christ.’ This probably is not the same mystery of the church he detailed earlier in this book, but rather of the gospel.

### **III. The Colossians Outward Walk and Speech**

*Col 4:4 That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.*

Paul admonished them to pray in order that he might make the gospel known as he should. That same prayer request remains for all that are in the ministry today.

*Col 4:5 Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.*

*Col 4:6 Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.*

One final command is enjoined. Walk in wisdom toward them that are without. The several following clauses are all subordinate to this basic imperative. We are enjoined to be wise in our interaction with unsaved people. The wisdom directed is not so much for our benefit, but rather for a testimony to the lost world around us.

This godly wisdom involves redeeming the time. The thought literally is ‘purchasing the time.’ The greater idea is of being judicious in our use of time, being punctual and not wasting it. It certainly testifies to godly wisdom. We are enjoined to “let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt.”

Though the English translation implies another imperative, it actually is a participial phrase, further modifying the imperative to “walk in wisdom.” Part of such godly wisdom is being gracious in our speech (literally, words). Our verbal contact with others ought always be appropriate.

Salt was a common food preservative. It prevents putrefaction. Likewise, our speech ought to be free of corruption. Another part of wise, godly speech patterns is being free of any questionable or inappropriate statements. It is part of walking in

wisdom to them that are without. Additionally, such graciousness and carefulness of speech is that we might be able to give an answer to those without of the hope that is in us.

Each of us needs to realize that a day has 24 hours in it, and once it is gone, it is gone forever. So if we want to do something in the work of the Lord, NOW is the time to do it. Yesterday is gone, and tomorrow never seems to get here. Time is valuable, and we should not waste it away.

So we should walk in wisdom towards those that are without, making the very best use of our time. This could be speaking of those who have little of this world's goods, but it almost might be talking of those who don't know Christ. The world looks to the Christian and should see Christ in our lives.

*Romans 13:11 And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.*

J. Vernon McGee had some good insights on verse 5.

“Walk in wisdom.” The child of God has a responsibility before the world today. Don't be foolish as a child of God.

We hear so much pious nonsense in our day. There are those who said the Lord would return by 1980. I don't know where they got such information. There were probably a lot of embarrassed folk with red faces in 1980. Christians have no right to make such statements before an unsaved world. Nor should we say we are trusting the Lord when our actions show that we really are not trusting Him. We should not do foolish things before the world.

A woman in Southern California wrote me a letter and rebuked me for going to the doctor for treatment of my cancer. She said that that was not trusting the Lord. She wrote, “I have cancer and I am trusting the Lord. I don't go to the doctor.” They buried her not long ago; she died of her cancer. I'm afraid at times we are guilty of causing our neighbors to smile and say, “This Christianity is a foolish sort of thing.” We need to learn to “walk in wisdom toward them that are without.”

“Redeeming the time.” Buy up your opportunities. When you see an opportunity, pray that the Lord will lead you. Don't force yourself on people. Just pray and ask the Lord to open the door,, and He will open it. I wish I had space to tell you how many times this has happened in my life and in the lives of others. Let Him open the door—before you make the mistake of putting your foot in your mouth. I knocked on many doors when I was a pastor, and I often stepped in and put my foot in my mouth the very first thing. Since then I have learned to do a lot more praying before I walk in.

When we speak, we need to let God guide our speech. We should know the Word of God and be able to give an answer to anyone who desires to know about Jesus Christ. Our speech should be clear, and it should be clean. Nothing can kill a testimony quicker than for a person claiming to be a Christian to start cursing. It is appalling to man, and is not pleasing to God. Many times we offend others through our words. We need to temper our tongue and ask God to guide us in all our speech.

*James 3:8 But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.*

*James 3:9 Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.*

*James 3:10 Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.*

*Proverbs 18:19 A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle.*

#### **IV. Christian Fellowship with Fellow Workers**

We notice in the remainder of this chapter that Paul distinguishes between his Jewish and Gentile companions in their labors together.

*Col 4:7 All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellowservant in the Lord:*

*Col 4:8 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts;*

*Col 4:9 With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things which are done here.*

The remainder of the chapter and epistle now concludes with personal comments sent either by Paul or his associates to the church at Colosse. Paul sent his epistle to Colosse by the hand of Tychicus. (Of note is that his epistle to the Ephesian church was also sent by Tychicus, probably at the same time.

*Eph 6:21 But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things:*

*Eph 6:22 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts.*

It is thought that Tychicus was one of Jesus' seventy disciples and later was the pastor of the church at Chalcedon. He also is mentioned in Acts 20:4 as an associate of Paul. The Apostle Paul verified to the Colossian church that Tychicus would declare his state of affairs to them. Paul goes on to describe Tychicus as a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. What a compliment particularly when considering the source thereof.

Paul further indicated that he had sent Tychicus that he might return to him with word of their spiritual estate as well as encourage them. Moreover, Paul had sent with Tychicus Onesimus. As he noted, this Onesimus "was one of you." They knew him. He had been a servant to Philemon who also was a member of the church at Colosse. As described in Philemon, Onesimus had run away. In the meantime, he had met Paul at Rome, been gloriously converted. Now he was being duly sent back to his master, Philemon.

Paul's epistle to Philemon was his personal letter to him seeking to resolve the matter and verify Onesimus' conversion. Here, Paul refers to him as "a faithful and beloved brother." Both of these messengers (Tychicus and Onesimus) would apprise them of Paul's situation at Rome.

Aristarchus, Mark, and Justus are all Jewish Christians. You notice in verse 11 it speaks of them being of the 'circumcision'. Luke, Demas, and Epaphras are all Gentiles. (note in verse 12 it speaks of Epaphras as 'one of you').

Paul seems to have a special love towards Tychicus as he calls him a 'beloved' brother and faithful minister. When others really serve God with sincerity, it makes us proud to know them and to be associated with them.

*1 Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; 2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; 3 Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. 4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: 5 For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. 6 If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.*

*Col 4:10 Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;)*

*Col 4:11 And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellowworkers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.*

Paul sent greetings from Aristarchus. This brother was originally from Thessalonica and had accompanied Paul in his later ministry. He here is referred to as a fellow prisoner of Paul implying he, too, was under house-arrest at Rome with Paul. John Mark (who was Barnabas' nephew) sent his greetings. Though John Mark had at one point deserted Paul (which likely was known to the Colossian church), Paul now gives his recommendation to him for them to receive him.

These several men are noted as sending their greetings to the Colossian church. He mentions also one Jesus known as Justus who evidently was a Jew. (The name Jesus was the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew Joshua). The others mentioned are implied to likewise be Jewish believers.

Paul laments that these several had been his only coworkers "unto the kingdom of God." The kingdom of God is a broad synonym for God's work in this age. Its ultimate fulfillment is when the King returns establishing His kingdom. Paul also compliments them for their comfort (i.e., encouragement) to him.

Paul was blessed with many good and faithful Christian friends. He speaks of Onesimus with much love for all the things that he had done for Paul. If you remember, Onesimus and Tychicus were the two faithful brothers that were to give a report of Paul's work to the brethren these in Colosse.

Aristarchus, Mark, and Justus were men who had been a comfort to Paul. When things are going against us, there is nothing more rewarding than to have a fellow Christian brother or sister come and encourage us. Many of you know exactly what I'm talking about as it may have been you that encouraged me at a time when I was down. I know that one of the major focuses of these lessons and the ongoing work of the website is to encourage Christians to a greater walk with the Lord.

*1 Th 5:14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.*

*1 Th 5:15 See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.*

*1 Th 5:16 Rejoice evermore.*

*1 Th 5:17 Pray without ceasing.*

*1 Th 5:18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*

It is worthy to note that earlier Paul had little good to say about Mark and was very unhappy with the young man earlier. Things are totally changed at this time.

*Acts 15:37 And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. 38 But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. 39 And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; 40 And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.*

*Col 4:12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.*

*Col 4:13 For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea and them in Hierapolis.*

The Apostle conveys the greetings of one Epaphras who evidently was from Colosse and possibly one of the pastors of the church there.

*Col 1:7 As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;*

Paul describes Epaphras with soaring spiritual praise. He is noted as “a servant of Christ” and one always laboring fervently on behalf of the Colossian church in prayer. The Apostle was a witness of how that Epaphras prayed fervently that they might “stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.”

The greater thought is that they might be in the center of God’s will. Paul continued bearing witness of the great zeal Epaphras had on behalf of the Colossian church as well as their brethren in the churches in Laodicea and Hierapolis.

Evident is the spiritual fervency on the part of Epaphras for not only those in his own church, but in neighboring communities as well. (What may be implied is that he was a ‘circuit riding’ pastor who ministered to these other smaller congregations in neighboring communities.)

*Col 4:14 Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.*

We see several men mentioned here that have helped Paul. Demas was one that later had forsaken Paul for the things of this present evil world. Why a man would leave God’s work for the world is hard to understand, but we all need to ask God to give us grace to stay with the work God has for each of us. It doesn’t



take anyone special to serve Satan, but it takes a real man or woman who can serve God with faith and integrity.

*2 Timothy 4:10 For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.*

Paul sent the greetings of “Luke, the beloved physician” along with Demas. Luke had accompanied Paul through most of his later ministry, perhaps as his personal physician. Demas still was at Paul’s side. However, after Paul’s final incarceration noted in II Timothy; Demas bailed out, having loved this present world. People to this day name their children Luke. No one seems to name them Demas.

*Col 4:15 Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.*

*Col 4:16 And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.*

Having passed on the greetings of his companions, Paul now sends his own greetings to the brethren which are in Laodicea. He particularly did so to one Nymphas who evidently allowed the church there to meet in his house. Over the ensuing thirty years, the church at Laodicea would come to the state which Jesus addressed in Revelation 3. Implied is that the church at Laodicea was still relatively small inasmuch as it still met in Nymphas’ house.

Paul directed that the epistle to the Colossian church also be read to the church of the Laodiceans. He instructed that the Colossian church “likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.” This epistle is not clearly defined, though known to the Laodicean church. Two divergent thoughts have been advanced thereto.

(1) The letter in question may have been a non-inspired epistle in possession of the church.

(2) The other and more probable thought is that this is the Epistle to the Ephesians which was intended as a circular letter like unto Galatians.

Ephesians was evidently written at the same time and delivered by Tychicus to them. Apparently, it then was sent in due course to Laodicea. Paul now directs that it be read at Colosse.

**4:15 The church in Laodicea met in the house of Nymphas and his family.**

Back in the early days of the church, the scriptures were written on manuscripts and had to go between individuals to be read. Paul asks them to encourage Archippus in the ministry of the Lord, and to remember to pray for him that he might be freed from the bonds of prison. Clearly signed by Paul, we know this

book was written to those of Colosse while Paul was in prison.

*Col 4:17 And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.*

*Col 4:18 The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen.*

Paul asks that the brethren circulate his letter and let others read it also. We need to understand that the bible was not written at that time like we have it today.

Paul completes the epistle with one ominous injunction. It was directed to one Archippus who in light of Philemon 1:2 evidently was one of the deacons of the church. The pastor, Epaphras was imprisoned with Paul at Rome. Implied is that he had become discouraged in the work. The fact that Paul directed this message be said to him implies he may have even quit the ministry.

Paul enjoined the church to say unto him to “take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.” The ministry is never easy. Archippus had apparently quit. Paul sent similar admonition to Timothy where he directed him to “make full proof of thy ministry.” The respective words here and in II Timothy 4:5, though not identical, are closely related. Paul thus admonished Archippus to get back on track and fulfill the ministry which the Lord had given him.

The epistle concludes with Paul’s own personal handwritten note. The epistle apparently had been scribed by a secretary (any of the several men mentioned in verses 7-14). His health was such he probably could no longer write at length and be legible. However, he evidently added this final greeting with his own hand. I personally believe his eye sight was a contributing factor.

The epistle ends with the mournful reminder to remember his bonds. As is so common in many of Paul’s epistles, he concludes with an invocation of God’s grace to his readers. The epistle ends with the appropriate, typical, and salient amen.

John Gill concluded his notes on chapter 4 with these words:

#### **Colossians 4:18**

**The salutation by the hand of me Paul,**.... After his amanuensis had finished the epistle, he added his usual salutation to it with his own hand, to prevent all counterfeits and impositions, and that the churches to whom he wrote might be sure of the genuineness of his epistles; but before he added it to it, he either

wrote with his own hand, or ordered to be written the following words,

**remember my bonds;** this he says, partly that they might be animated to abide by the Gospel, for which, as he had told them before, Col\_4:3 that he was in bonds; and partly to encourage them, by his example, patiently to endure what afflictions and persecutions soever they should meet with, for the sake of it; as also that they might be moved hereby, to remember him in their prayers, that, if it was the will of God, he might be released, and be yet further useful in preaching the Gospel; or however, that he might be supported in his bonds, and cheerfully bear them, and remain steadfast in his faith in Christ unto the end: and then follows the salutation,

**grace be with you, Amen;** which is common to all his epistles, and well suits them; in which he so much displays the grace of God, as it is expressed in the Gospel; and which his heart was full of, and earnestly desired might be more largely manifested to, and bestowed upon the saints. This epistle is said to be

**written from Rome to the Colossians, by Tychicus and Onesimus;** and though the subscriptions of the epistles are not always to be depended on, yet this seems to be right; that it was inscribed to the Colossians, there is no doubt; and that it was written from Rome is clear enough, since by several expressions it is plain that he was now a prisoner, and in bonds; and that it was sent by Tychicus and Onesimus is more than probable, from Col\_4:7.

*KJV Bible Studies are prepared and distributed free of charge. The lessons may not be sold without consent. If you have questions or wish to discuss the lessons, or possibly need help in finding Jesus Christ as your Personal Lord and Savior, contact us at the email below.*

*Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*

**Website:** [www.KjvBibleStudies.net](http://www.KjvBibleStudies.net)

**E-mail:** [mailKjvBibleStudies@gmail.com](mailto:mailKjvBibleStudies@gmail.com)

**Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.**