

Keep looking up, keep looking out

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[0 : 00] Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for gathering us here in your presence.! As we open your word, we ask you to open our hearts, quiet our thoughts, remove every distraction, and help us to listen attentively to your voice. Amen.

! December, five Christian sisters, five Christian sisters gathered at the food court for fellowship, makan fellowship.

They ordered different kinds of food to share, and one of the sisters, let's call her Susan, Susan ordered five plates of kaya toast that is on top of all the food they ordered.

As they were eating, they noticed an old and elderly lady sitting at the next table. So they invited her to join them.

You know, one lonely elderly lady there. So they asked her, join us, please, please join us, you can join us. But the old lady refused, declined, saying that she was waiting for her husband.

[1 : 17] Susan talked to her, talked to her, and found out that this old lady is a Christian, but not her husband. Another Christian sister, out of the five, right, out of five Christian sisters, another one.

Let's call her Susie. So Susie asked the elderly woman, can we share the gospel with your husband? Surprisingly, the elderly lady said, no, no, no, no, no.

This elderly lady said, forbid them. She objected, saying her husband is a hard nut to convince. Her husband is a hard nut to convince.

No point talking to her husband. Later, the husband joined the old lady at the table. The couple ate their breakfast, and each one of them were looking at their respective handphones.

This is the modern way of spending quality time with one another. The five Christian sisters wanted to reach out to this couple, especially the husband.

[2 : 28] What did they do next? They put into practice some of the principles found in Colossians 4, verses 2 to 6.

Let's unpack this short passage before I tell you the conclusion of this true story. So don't go away. In the first two chapters of Colossians, Paul talks about the supremacy of Christ.

Jesus is supreme overall. Paul also talks about the all-sufficiency of Christ. Christ is sufficient for us all. The supremacy of Christ and the sufficiency of Christ.

We have been redeemed from the dominion of darkness and brought into his kingdom. We have been rescued. We have been redeemed.

We have found hope. We have the greatest treasure living in us. What next? We are to live out the gospel.

[3 : 33] What Jesus is. He is the Lord of the universe. And what he has done, whatever he has done, should motivate us to live out the gospel.

So in the later chapters, chapters 3 and 4, we have instructions. We have instructions how to live out the gospel in the Christian community, including within the household.

We also have instructions on how to live out the gospel in the world. Colossians chapter 4, verses 2 to 6 is the last part of this instructions.

Paul says, keep looking up and keep looking out. This deals with three areas of life. On the screen, please.

The way we pray. The way we live. Ned. On the screen, please. The way we pray. The way we live. And the way we speak. Anything? Has a problem? On the screen?

[4 : 37] Ned? Yes. Pray, live, speak. P-L-S. Please. The short form for please. P-L-S. Remember it. You remember the gist of this sermon.

Pray, live, and speak. Let's start with the way we pray. Prayer is a lifeline between the believer and God.

Prayer is simple. It's just talking to God. What is so difficult about talking? Everybody can talk. Yes, prayer is simple. But yet, it is also the most difficult part of a Christian life.

Maintaining a warm and consistent prayer life is one of our greatest challenges. For many, for many of us, prayer is difficult because we are talking to someone whom we cannot see.

If only, if only we can see God like the way we see each other, then talking to God will be so much easier. I am sure some of you, when you come into this church, you see each other, you say, Hi, hello, good morning.

[5 : 47] So easy, so natural to talk, to open your mouth. Because we can see each other. Yes, prayer is difficult.

It's easy to neglect our prayer life. It's easy to put off our prayer life. So all of us, all of us need to be challenged and be reminded again and again to pray.

And here is what Paul is doing. Challenging us to pray. In Colossians chapter 4 verse 2, he gives the Colossian church and us a direct command.

On the screen please, yes. Devote yourselves to prayer. Be watchful and thankful. It teaches us to be devoted, persistent and committed in prayer.

Be watchful, spiritually alert and attentive. Be thankful. Always filled with gratitude. Devoted, watchful, thankful.

[6 : 53] Why not say it together? Say it together. Devoted, watchful, thankful. Thankful. You are very good students. I was a, I'm a retired teacher.

So okay. Very good students. Let us walk through each of them. Let us walk through each of these dimensions. And explore how they form the foundation of a healthy, powerful and joyful prayer life.

Pray with devotion. Just means being prayerful. Just means being prayerful. Not playful, prayerful. Being prayerful.

Paul is asking us to cultivate a lifestyle of ongoing faithful prayer. Prayer is not like our smartphone. Listen carefully. Listen carefully. Listen carefully. Prayer is not like our smartphone. The more you use a smartphone, the battery power decreases.

[7 : 58] You know, when you use a smartphone, your battery power decreases. The battery power runs down. Prayer is not like that. Prayer increases in power.

Prayer increases in power the more you use it. And when you hang it up, when you hang it up, when you don't use it, the power drains out of it.

The more you pray, the more power you have in your Christian life. Pray with devotion. And pray with watchfulness.

Be watchful means being alert. Being aware of what's happening in and around you, physically and spiritually.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus told his disciples, Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation.

[8 : 58] The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. In that situation, the disciples fell asleep.

Fell asleep instead of praying. And as a result, they were unprepared when the testing came. They failed. They failed miserably when they were tested.

Prayerlessness often leads to spiritual weakness and confusion. For the Colossian Christians, For the Colossian Christians, They especially needed to be watchful.

Because they were constantly being tempted to stray away. To go away, to stray away from Christ. They, just like us today, Were tempted to follow wrong teachings.

Instead of following Christ. That's why we need to pray with watchfulness, So that we continue to depend on Christ. Pray with devotion.

[10 : 10] Pray with watchfulness. And pray with thankfulness. No matter how hard, No matter how terrible life is, There is always something in life to thank God for.

Gratitude. Gratitude changes the way we perceive life. Gratitude changes the way we look at life. It transforms our perspective on life.

It reminds us. It reminds us that God is still good. God is still faithful. Even when we experience trials and troubles. For example, Paul, who is writing this letter, Colossians, Paul, writing this letter of Colossians, Is in prison.

Yet, he can still find reasons to thank God. Colossians 1. Colossians 1. Paul thanked God for the Colossian Christian.

What are the things he thanked God for? He thanked God for the love, For the faith shown by the Colossian Christian. One day, I was walking in the park.

[11 : 25] Some boys were playing football. And one of the boys accidentally kicked the ball towards the footpath. And the ball rolled towards me. When I was about to kick the ball back, The boy said, Thank you, Uncle.

And the ball was rolling halfway. The boy said, Thank you, Uncle. When the boy was about to pick up the ball, He looked in my direction.

He said, Thank you, Uncle. How many times did he thank me? How many times? Three times. This boy thanked me three times For just kicking the ball back to him.

How much more should we give thanks to God Who has done so much for us? There are many things that we can thank God for. We can thank Him for His presence.

We can thank Him for His provision, For His pardon, For His promises, And for His purposes. It is always a good practice To give thanks to God Before we pray.

[12 : 35] When we start praying. It's always good To give thanks to God first When we pray. Now, I would like to tell you a story, A true story Of how one woman develops A prayerful life.

One day, This woman shared her problem With her. For many years, This woman had cared For her crippled daughter.

She had a crippled daughter. The daughter, Though crippled, Had brought great joy to her, To bring joy to this mother. Every morning, The mother would make tea For her daughter Before she left for work, Before she went to work.

Knowing that in the evening, Her daughter would be there When she arrived home from work. But, But the daughter died. Your daughter passed away.

And the woman was alone And miserable. Home was not home anymore. After hearing her Pour out her heart, The preacher gave her This advice.

[13 : 42] It's on the screen. When you get home And put the key in the door, Say aloud, Jesus, I know you are here. And be ready To greet him directly When you open the door.

And as you light up the fire, Tell him What happened during the day. If anybody Had been kind, Tell him. If anybody Had been unkind, Tell him.

Just as you Would have told Your daughter. At night, Stretch out your hand In the darkness And say, Jesus, I know you are here.

A few months later, The preacher Met this woman again. This time, Her face Radiated joy Instead of misery.

She told the preacher I did as you told me. And it has made All the difference In my life. And now, I feel I know Jesus.

[14 : 48] Constant contact With our beautiful Savior Will bring beauty Into our scarred lives. All of us All of us All of us Are wounded people.

All of us Scarred. Constant contact With our beautiful Savior Will bring beauty Will bring beauty Into our Scarred lives.

So, We constant in prayer. We devoted To prayer. Sometimes, We do not know How What to say What to say In our prayers.

Every day, Talk about the same thing. Do you talk about Same thing Every day With your friend? Every day, Same thing? Even if you want To talk about Same thing, Use different words. So, I would like to Recommend Two very good Prayer apps Which you can Download free From Play Store.

Daily prayer guide Can help you Put words In your prayer. They have morning And evening prayers For each day. Every day, You got theme. Morning, A theme for the morning, A theme for the evening.

[15 : 57] Every day, The prayers Will be different. It helps you To put words In your prayer. You want to thank God? Thank God for what? Then, They will put a lot of things There to thank God for. So, You know what to say.

It helps you To develop A richer Prayer life. Prayer made Prayer made Is a great app For organizing Our prayers For others. Try it out. Try it out. They're good.

You try it out. If you haven't tried it before, You download. If you don't like it, You can always delete. Okay, Try it out. It's very good. I'm still using it. Especially prayer app For me, Daily prayer guide.

Verse 2, Verse 2, Colossians 4, Verse 2, Tells us how to pray. How we should pray. We pray with devotion, Watchfulness, And thankfulness. Verse 3 and 4 Tells us what to pray.

What are some of the things We can pray. What are some of the things We can pray for. Verse 3 and 4, 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.

[17:01] Pray that I may proclaim it Pray that I may proclaim it Clearly, As I should. There are at least two things We can pray for. Pray for open doors. Pray for open doors.

It is amazing To know that Paul Was under house arrest. And yet, He didn't ask for prayers For his release. He didn't ask for prayers For better food, For better comfort.

Instead, He requests prayers For an open door To preach the gospel message. Paul knows When others pray for him, God will open doors for him To preach the gospel.

He will have more opportunities. To proclaim the gospel message. I can open a door for you. You can open a door for me. If we pray for one another.

Next, We can pray for clarity. Pray for clarity. When God opens a door, It is essential That we proclaim the gospel clearly.

[18:07] To proclaim with clarity, To proclaim the gospel clearly, Means, Means, Means, Means, We are able to get The essential content, The essential elements Of the gospel across.

So that the listener Understands What the gospel message Is all about. Paul is the greatest missionary Of all time.

But, He still asks God, He still asks God to help him To proclaim the word clearly. You don't need to be a very clever person.

You don't need to be very clever Or, Theologically trained person To share the gospel. Anyone, Who trusts in Christ, And, Is willing, To depend on him, In prayer, Can always, Can also, Share the gospel clearly.

Let's pray for each other. To have open doors And, To share the gospel clearly. After talking about our inner life, Our inner life, Our prayer life, Paul talks about our outer life.

[19:19] Verse 5, Be wise in the way you act Toward outsiders. Make the most of every opportunity. Verse 5, Tells us how believers Should live before outsiders.

These outsiders Are those who do not yet Believe in Christ. Be wise in the way you act. We must live wisely. We must live in wisdom.

What does living in wisdom look like? What does it look like? Living in wisdom. Living in wisdom Means To live thoughtfully.

Applying God's truth Into our lives. It is living in such a way That our lives Command the gospel Rather than Contradicate.

We are careful Not to do anything That will make it difficult To share the gospel. We must consider How our lives Are seen By those Outside the church We are ambassadors Of Christ And our daily choices Reflect on the gospel We believe in.

[20:34] Our lives Are our testimony. Whether we know it or not Our actions Our actions Communicate What we believe. We need to remember That those Who don't know Christ Are watching us.

Oscar Thompson writes On the screen The most effective evangelism Take place in the context Of loving relationships Of loving relationships Where lost people Can see the changes That Jesus Christ Is making in your life.

For example Teenagers If you come to Christ And go home And tell your Unbelieving parents About your new faith It is almost certain That they will not be open To the gospel.

What will open them To the message? Go home And start Cheerfully Obeying them Cheerfully Clean your room Without being asked Cheerfully Help out With family chores Cheerfully Be home When they tell you To be home After they recover From severe shock They want to Hear from you Why you are different That's when You tell them Now These are These are from Non-Christian family What about those From Christian family Like Claire and Joshua What do you do?

You do the same thing Cheerfully Obeying your parents Cheerfully Clean your room Without being Ask Cheerfully Help out With family chores Cheerfully Be home When they tell you To be home And I want to add One more For Christians Teenagers Immediate obedience Okay Don't say Any minute Your minute Becomes half an hour Your half an hour Becomes two hours Two hours Becomes three hours Don't Don't And your Your parents Love it Right Jonathan Right Immediate

obedience Clean your room Now Now Don't say Wait Yeah Jonathan Is very happy This message For the children For the children When Christians Live wisely Being honest Being generous Being kind And faithful It opens Hearts To the gospel When we are Careless Or selfish It can harden Hearts One Christian Went to shop To buy something This is true story

[22 : 52] Okay One Christian Went to a shop To buy something For the church The salesman Asked him Is so and so A member Of your church The Christian Said yes He's a member Of our church The salesman Then said That church member That church member Owe me some money And it's so difficult To get him To pay up So difficult To get the money Back Now you tell me You tell me Is it easy For the Christian To share the gospel With this salesman When we pray God will give us Open doors Let us not Shut the door By our behaviour Let us not Shut the door By our conduct Live wisely And seize The opportunity Time is short And opportunities Opportunities To share Christ Will not be there Forever So we must Make the most Of every opportunity We have to Cease the opportunity This doesn't mean

Doesn't mean We have to Constantly preach The gospel It means We live Intentionally Always ready To seize Gospel opportunity Every conversation Every act Of kindness And every trial It's a chance To reflect Christ in you I include Trial here Trial here It's very important When your friends See you in sickness See you in trouble How do you respond? You curse God You complain How do you respond To trials and trouble? You do what they are doing They also complain Grumble See how you respond You have a God Who cares for you How do you respond?

To trouble Yes They are looking at you They are watching you Remember Paul asked us To pray for open doors We also need to ask God To open our eyes To see The open doors To see These opportunities If we don't see The opportunity We will not Seize The opportunity After talking about Prayer and conduct Paul now turns to speech Verse 6 Let your conversation Be always full of grace Season is sought So that you may know How to answer everyone Words There is power in words A judge Says a few words And a man's life Is saved Or condemned A doctor Speaks a few words There are a number Of doctors here Doctors here Some are going to be doctors The doctors Say a few words To the patient And the patient

Either rejoices Happily Or gives up In despair Yeah I talk to the doctors The doctors will tell you If it's true or not Right True Isabella Isabella Doctor Dr. Kenny See if it's true or not Ask them I'm very sure I'm very sure All of us here Have been affected By what people Say about us When they say Good things about us We are happy When they say Nasty things about us We are unhappy Words are powerful They can heal Or hurt They can encourage Or discourage They can build up Or tear down In this verse Paul reminds believers That our conversation Should always reflect Our conversation Should always reflect Christ Gracious And wise To be full of grace Means Our speech Should be kind Our speech

[26 : 37] Should be compassionate And patient Even when others Are difficult The way we speak Can be a reflection A reflection Of the gospel The way we speak Can be a reflection Of the gospel Showing others The same grace God has shown us To be seasoned With salt Means our speech Should have wisdom Our speech Should have truth And impact Salt Adds flavor And it also Preserves In the same way Our words Should add value To conversation Preserve What is good And guide others Toward Christ Conversation The word conversation Implies Mutual Interest As we speak With others We genuinely Take an interest

In what They are saying And as we listen To them We look For points Of connection To Christ And to his gospel What is the purpose Of this kind of speech What's the purpose Paul says So that we may know How to answer Everyone When we live When we speak With grace And truth We will be ready To respond To questions We will be ready To respond To doubts And challenges In a way That honors God Now Back to the story Of the five sisters And how They put Colossians chapter 4 Verses 2 to 6 Into a real Life situation Remember The old couple They were both Looking at the Handphones While eating You know Modern Way of Spending Quality time Okay They eat Makan And then Looking at The handphone These five

Christian sisters Could not finish The five Kayatos Too much food So They offer Two plates Of Kayatos To the elderly Couple The elderly Men said Yes To the offer And happily Accepted the toast That opened the door You know The opportunity Now Open a door And a way For Susan And Susie To talk to them And they Cease this Opportunity To have a Conversation With the couple In particular The husband Then After some time They ask the husband Ask the elderly The uncle If

they could pray A prayer Of blessing Over him Who do not want To be praying For Blessing right To receive blessing right So can we pray A blessing over you The uncle say What Yes Yes Yes Yeah You can pray He agreed He agreed

Without hesitation See The Christian sisters Are prayerful So after praying A blessing A prayer of blessing Over him Susie asked Susie asked his uncle Uncle Would you like to receive Jesus Would you like to receive Jesus As your saviour and lord What do you think Was his response What do you think His response was Yes The five Christian sisters Were so surprised So Susie Let her Let him in prayer The uncle followed And prayed After Susie To receive Jesus The wife The uncle's wife You know The wife of the uncle Was so overjoyed She cried You know She cried The wife cried You know She was so overjoyed She cried And she excused herself To go to the toilet While the wife Was in the toilet Susie asked

The uncle Susie asked the uncle Why didn't you Accept Jesus Before this You know What was the reply His reply was No one Asked him No one asked him Then Why did the wife say He is a hard nut To commence You know Husband and wife Right Both husband and wife You know Past experience Those are married No Past experience They could have Heated arguments About Jesus In the past And so To keep the peace In the family It is better Not to talk about Christ But In the intervening years God has been working In the heart Of the husband Softening his heart God Has his timing God works In the heart of man In marvelous ways Amazing God

[31 : 45] Amazing grace In God's In God's perspective No nut Is too hard For him To crack No nut Is too hard For him To crack The writer Of this letter The writer Apostle Paul He himself Was once A persecutor Of the church He is all out To destroy The church He is all out To destroy The church Of God If you are living In that period Of time You will be put Into prison And some of you May be killed By him And yet God turns him Around To be the greatest Missionary The church Has ever had God turns him around To be the greatest Missionary The church Has ever had No nut No nut No nut Is too hard For God To crack So As you step out Into this week Carry this truth

In your heart Every encounter Is a divine Encounter That conversation In the Kopitiam That encounter With a difficult Colleague Or difficult Classmate That choir Prompting To share The gospel These are all God's hand At work Through your life Don't let them Pass you by Don't let them Pass you by Look out for them Keep looking up And keep Looking out Let's pray Heavenly Father Thank you for your word Help us To be people Who are devoted To prayer Devoted Watchful And thankful Lord Open doors For the gospel Through our lives Give us courage To speak About Christ Clearly Fill our words With grace And let our Conversations Reflect the beauty And truth Of your kingdom Teach us to walk In wisdom Toward those Around us Making the most Of every opportunity Let our lives Be a witness That points Others to Jesus We pray all this In the name Of our saviour And lord Amen Amen