**Colossians 4:2**

I. Colossians 4:2

 A. Devote yourselves to prayer

1. The Greek word behind “devote” means, “to continue to do something with intense effort, to persist in even despite difficulty.” (see also Ro 12:12 and Eph 6:18)

 2. The Christian life is a life of persistent, constant prayer

B. Being watchful

1. The word implies being alert and staying away to the realities of life

2. Eph 6:18: “stay alert.” The context is the spiritual battle we are in. Life is not a cruise ship; it is a spiritual battle.

3. Mt. 26:38-40: “watch and pray.” The disciples were called to stay awake in prayer since temptation was coming. Their failure in prayer led to their failure in the moment of temptation (“The spirit is willing but flesh is weak.”)

C. Being Thankful

 1. This is the necessary complement to being watchful

2. See also Philippians 4:6 (Grateful prayer is a great antidote to anxiety)

3. Thankfulness acknowledges we aren’t just in a spiritual battle that requires all fight, responsibility, and work, but God has already won the decisive battle. So we aren’t just soldiers, but we are God’s children who have received salvation and who experience the many blessings he brings to our lives. We live as children: playful and grateful

II. Practical Take-Aways

 A. Physical health and spiritual health.

1. You don’t lose weight by reading books on weight loss or having conversations about weight loss (although those are helpful). You lose weight by engaging in the habits and disciplines of healthy diet and exercise.

2. We grow in prayer by praying and allowing God to shape us as we engage in the habits and practices of prayer.

 B. Pursue discipline in prayer

 1. Identify specific times in your weekly schedule to set aside for prayer

 2. Identify some approaches/plans for prayer that work for you

a. Pairing prayer with Scripture reading (Let the Scripture you are reading shape your prayers)

b. ACTS (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication)

c. Prayer Cards: using prayer cards as a way of praying through the various key people and issues in your life

d. Journaling

e. Prayer tools: “Pray as you go”, etc.

3. These may feel formulaic, but having a structure can be very helpful in shaping our hearts and minds in prayer.

C. Pursue freedom in prayer

1. Prayer is not about system or program, but a relationship with God

2. God’s relationship with each of us is unique (don’t compare yourself with others)

3. Know yourself (discover how you’re wired and what works for you)

examples: praying inside vs. outside, stationary vs. walking, in your mind vs. on paper vs. out loud, worship music vs. silence, morning vs. evening, tactile vs. cerebral

D. Prayer is not a duty; it is a wonderful blessing and privilege

1. Enjoy your times with God (listen as much as you speak)

2. 90% of the discipline is simply showing up. Let God shape your time with him—he is capable to do that.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Read Colossians 4:2 together. Which of those three words connects with you most at this time and why (“devote,” “watchful,” “thankful”)?

2. How do you respond to the analogy made on Sunday comparing spiritual health to physical health?

3. We talked about pursuing discipline in prayer. As you consider some of the practical suggestions made on Sunday (or others you might think of on your own), is there any specific commitment you want to make in your prayer life this Summer?

4. Finally, we talked about pursuing freedom in prayer on Sunday. Share a bit about how you’re wired and what types of praying and environments/times have naturally worked best for you, given how God has made you.