

Colossians 4:2 Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. (ESV)

Intro:

Walk in constant communication with your Master in Heaven.

1. Consider the beautiful simplicity of the Doctrine of Prayer. [Continue steadfastly in prayer...]

- Dr. Spear - [Prayer] is personal communication that is addressed to the living God.
- Lord teach us to pray... Luke 11:1.

2. Understand (and live in!) the vital necessity of Prayer . [...steadfastly in prayer...]

- "Endure with fortitude..."
- Dr. John Piper - *Let the Nations Be Glad!: The Supremacy of God in Missions* - Page 49.
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3. Know that this goes against every fiber of your natural being. [Continue steadfastly...]

- We would want to die and shrivel while on our knees, at times.
- John Chrysostom (Archbishop of Constantinople - 347-407) - When I see any one not diligent in prayer, it is forthwith clear to me, that he can possess nothing exalted in his mind: again, where I behold any one earnest and very persevering in prayer, I conclude that he is endowed with all virtue and piety.

4. Pray with earnest perseverance. [...steadfastly...]

- "Pray without ceasing" points us toward our "to do" list in the quiet times, when our vocations and daily work cease. Yes, we seek after a "spirit of prayer" that shades all we do in life. But how does one measure that? We seek also to bow the head, the knee, the heart before our Savior and God, crying out to him in a way that seeks him to move on our behalf, the behalf of his people... his elect... and for the sake of his gospel in Jesus Christ.
- Luke 18 shows us the persistent widow up against the un-gracious judge. Much like earthly fathers, imperfect, frail, short-sighted, sinful, etc. who know how to give good gifts to our children, this earthly judge, angry, bitter, lagging in justice, etc. knew how to give justice to this one who came repeatedly.
- So... we pray. We pray when the heavens are open and when they seem to shut us out. We pray when communion with the Father through Christ and in the Spirit is sweet and melodious... and we pray when the gears of our minds grind against those of our mouths with a resulting cacophony of selfish utterances. We pray when we know what to pray. We pray when we don't know what to pray, sitting quietly before the Father... allowing the spirit to pray for us.

5. Pray with cautious watchfulness. [...being watchful in it...]

- There may be times you can remember when praying through the watches of the night was necessary.
- Keeping a watchful spirit. Waiting for the Lord to return, but not waiting in idleness. Waiting in labor. Waiting in good deeds. Waiting in prayer.

6. Pray with pious gratitude. [...with thanksgiving.]

- Our thankfulness keeps us returning, again & again, to the source of all life & blessing.
- And here, again, we have this mark that Paul has given us in 3:15 & 16.
- 1 Thess. 5:18 - In all things give thanks.

O [God], grant to us thy blessings whether we pray for them or withhold our prayers,
And repel from us all evils even though we pray for them.