

## Colossians 4:2-18 — How Does Jesus Change Everyday Life?

**January 7, 2018**

Good morning. It is great to be back in a routine after a busy Christmas and New Year. I hope you were able to enjoy time with family and friends as we celebrated the birth of our Savior and hope, Jesus Christ.

This morning, we return to our study in the book of Colossians. We were 11 weeks into the study when Christmas showed up on the calendar. We put our study on hold until the New Year. This morning we return to Colossians. This is our 12th and final week in the book. Next week, we begin a short two-week series on the book of Philemon. Philemon is the companion book to Colossians. As you will see next week, the books are intimately connected. Philemon is the story of how God takes the life of a runaway criminal named Onesimus and turns his life around. God then uses him in a great way for the kingdom of Christ. Once you know his story, you will see why this little letter is in our Bible. Philemon is also a powerful story of forgiveness and reconciliation. If you have someone that hurt you deeply, Philemon will help you when it comes to restoring a broken relationship.

After Philemon, we will move to the Old Testament and study Malachi. Malachi talks about marriage, tithing, and leadership. That will take us to Easter.

In our last few studies of Colossians, we were taking things slow and digging deep as we studied only two verses a week. This morning, we are picking up the pace and covering 17 verses to finish the book.

Paul's theme in the second half of Colossians is how Jesus changes our everyday lives. In previous weeks, we learned how Jesus changes our marriage,

parenting and work. Today, we will learn three more practical ways Jesus changes everyday life. They are: Jesus makes us people of prayer; Jesus changes ordinary choices; Jesus changes the way we speak.

After that, almost like we come to the end of a movie, Paul rolls the credits and gives the names of the friends with him in prison at Rome. We usually skip those credit sections, just like we walk out of a movie while the credits are still scrolling across the screen. We will take a few minutes to study these names. Behind the names of each of Paul's friends are stories of how God uses Christian friends in our lives. Let's jump into our study.

### **Jesus makes us people of prayer.**

#### **Pray all the time.**

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

Paul told them, and he tells us, to continue in prayer. We should always pray and not give up. The word steadfastly means persistence. It means holding onto something like a pit bull. Why did Paul say this? Paul knew life is busy. Paul knew prayer gets squeezed out of our days because there doesn't seem to be enough time to pray. Paul reminded the Colossians, and he reminds us, don't let talking to God in prayer be something that gets squeezed out of our lives in the busyness of everyday living.

Let's be honest. Bible reading is easier than praying. Attending church is easier than praying. Eating in the chili cook-off is much easier than praying. Even though prayer is hard, it is an essential part of our life with God.

Jesus told two parables teaching us to persist in prayer. They are in Luke 11:5-10 and Luke 18:1-18. In Luke 11, Jesus talked about someone who goes to his friend at midnight and only because of his persistent knocking on his door in the middle of the night does this friend finally get up and meet his need. Then Jesus said our God is not like that.

And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him! Luke 11:9–13 (ESV)

Luke 11 is called a parable of contrast. We don't need to beat down God's door in prayer to get him to respond. Our heavenly father doesn't ignore us when we call to him in prayer. He loves us. He doesn't always answer our prayers the way we want them answered but he is still a good father that gives us good gifts when we call out to him. Sometimes God will say, "No," in answer to our prayers. Sometimes he will say, "Not now." Sometimes he says, "Yes."

If God says, "No," to our prayers, it is not because he doesn't love us or because we didn't pester him enough. It is because he does love us and he has a better plan for us when he said, "No."

How many of you have children who ask you for things? Do you always give you kids what they want when they want it? Absolutely not. What our children think is good for them may not be what is good for them. In our love we often say, "No," or "Not yet," because we love them. We still want to hear our

children's requests but we also want our children to trust our answer, especially if we need to say, "No." The same is true with God.

The last thing we want our children doing is shutting down communication with us because we don't give them what they want when they want. We love hearing our children's hearts. We love hearing our children's desires. We love meeting those needs, but we love to do it in the right way and at the right time.

This is why we always pray and tell God our desires but we trust his love for us to meet our needs and respond to our desires in the right way and at the right time.

And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought [always to pray and not lose heart](#). Luke 18:1 (ESV)

Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, [be constant in prayer](#). Romans 12:12 (ESV)

James reminded us of the importance of prayer and of asking for things in prayer.

You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. [You do not have, because you do not ask](#). James 4:2 (ESV)

James was very honest when he said there are things we don't have in life simply because we didn't ask for them. That is why we must persist in prayer. God is our loving father. Keep talking to him and keep asking him. Trust how he responds to our prayers.

This week, the best application for some of us will simply be to make time for prayer and to honestly tell God our fears, our hopes for the future and the desires of our hearts. Then trust him to respond in the way he sees is best.

## Stay awake in prayer.

Paul also said to be watchful in prayer. Some of your translations say “be alert in prayer.” I love this because it is so practical. In its most basic sense, this means don’t fall asleep when we pray. Does anyone else have that problem? Sometimes I feel like Jesus’ disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane. Let me give you a few ideas on how to not fall asleep in prayer besides drinking plenty of church coffee.

1. Don’t limit the time you pray to before bed or when you are in bed. There is something about bed that puts us to sleep. That is why bed is not the best place for prayer.
2. Pray during the commute. Turn off the radio and pray in the car. If you are a high school student driving to school, pray out loud in the car on the way to school. People won’t think you are weird. They will think you have someone on speakerphone. You won’t fall asleep. If you fall asleep while driving, that is a different problem.
3. Go for a prayer walk. I don’t recommend this in -20-degree weather but do this in the summer. Walk and pray. It helps you stay awake.
4. Use a prayer journal. I have used one for years. I write out my prayers. It helps me stay focused and awake. I write Bible verses in my prayer journal. A prayer journal helps me put shape to my thoughts when my world is in emotional turmoil.

While being alert literally means not falling asleep in prayer, some scholars point out it can also mean staying alert for opportunities to pray. When

you see someone going through a hard time at work, seize the opportunity and pray for them. When you are at a football game and someone is injured on the field, bow your head and pray for them. When your friend is stressed in a relationship, stop and either pray with them or pray for them. When you are studying for a test, pray before you start. If you have a friend whose son or daughter is injured in high school sports, offer to pray for his or her healing. Many times the best time to pray for people and with them is on the spot.

### **Pray with thanksgiving, not just requests.**

Paul also said we are to pray with thanksgiving. Our prayer time is not to just be requests of what we need but it is also to be a time of worship, giving thanks to God for all we have. Are your children healthy? Are you healthy? Do you have a roof over your head? Do you know Jesus as your savior? There are so many things for which to be thankful in our prayer time. Paul said don't just persist in praying for our needs but persist in thanking God for what he has done, especially through Jesus. Prayer time is also worship time.

### **Pray for an open door to share about Christ.**

At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison— that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak. Colossians 4:3–4 (ESV)

Paul reminded us that in our prayer, we are not to simply pray for our needs but we are to pray for the needs of others, in particular the opportunity to share the gospel.

Praying for the needs of others is one of the reasons we have the prayer chain at church. How can you get on the prayer chain? First, we encourage

everyone to sign up for a free Realm account. That is our church social networking app. All the information to sign up for a free account and to download the app is on our web site at [www.crosswinds.tv](http://www.crosswinds.tv). Just make sure you create your account in a regular web browser then download the app for your phone. Once you have a Realm account, you can sign up for groups. Join the prayer chain group and you will receive weekly prayer e-mails. We are commanded to pray for the needs of others in our church family, not just our own needs. This helps us pray for one another at church.

How do you share a prayer request? You can either submit them through our website or you can use the tear-off section from the bulletin and leave it in the pew after the service for ushers to pick up.

Another way you can pray for others is to join me at the church prayer meeting. Every Wednesday night at 7 p.m. I meet with people from the church to pray for the needs of the church in the church office. Some of you are already busy on that night with AWANA. That is a good thing. If you can, feel free to join me as we pray for the needs of the church.

Paul had one particular prayer request. It is not that he would be released from jail in Rome but that God would provide an open door for the Word.

This is interesting. When it comes to telling people about Jesus, the Bible tells us there are times when people are more receptive to the gospel than others. There are occasions when God provides an open door in people's lives so they are particularly receptive to hearing and responding to Jesus. Other times, people's hearts are closed to hearing about Jesus and the gospel doesn't

make much progress. It is like a bullet off a rock. This is the way evangelism works. The church grows in spurts.

This reminds me of growing my lawn. People told me there are two windows of opportunity to grow a lawn — one in the spring and another in the fall. Don't waste your time watering it all summer because it won't grow. I tried to grow the lawn in the summer. I put a lot of water on my lawn but it didn't work. The window of opportunity was closed. When that window of opportunity returned in the fall, the lawn took off without me watering it. This is the way the gospel works. We need to pray for those open doors for the gospel to grow, then lean into them when they come.

But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries. 1 Corinthians 16:8–9 (ESV)

And when they arrived and gathered the church together, they declared all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. Acts 14:27 (ESV)

What we can take away from this is there are times and seasons when we will find people become very receptive to the truth of Jesus because God opens a door of opportunity in their hearts. It may take place after a tragedy in life. It may be something God does supernaturally in a culture or city. We need to make use of those times. They don't last forever. Secondly, we pray for those times of opportunity because these doors of opportunity for the gospel are opened by God. We pray for an open door for the gospel for our missionaries and for ourselves as we spread the gospel.

## Jesus changes ordinary choices.

Use wisdom to make wise choices, not just right choices.

Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Colossians 4:5 (ESV)

When the Bible uses the term “walk,” that means how we live our daily lives. In our everyday lives, Jesus calls us to live wisely around those who are not Christians. I want you to notice how Paul framed this — the Christian life is not just a matter of right or wrong choices which only affect ourselves. The Christian life is a matter of wise and foolish choices that affect people around us who do not know Christ.

Most younger Christians do not understand this. The operative question of many young Christians is “what can I get away with that is not sin? If the Bible doesn’t explicitly forbid it, I should be able to do what I want no matter how it makes others feel about me and no matter what other people think about Jesus from my life.”

As we get older we realize that even if something is not explicitly sinful, that doesn’t mean it is particularly helpful. Something may not be sin but it may not be wise. As we live around people, we want to make Jesus attractive not just by avoiding sinful choices but by making the wisest choices we can to make Jesus attractive to other people.

As I was thinking about this, I thought I should share a little of my own foolishness. As many of you know, we recently built a home. In any building process there is plenty of opportunity to offend the neighbors as the yard becomes an eyesore and a constant source of litter. One day I planned to spread

40 tons of river rock around the house for landscaping. I had permission from the city to use the street as a dumping spot for one day while I spread the rock around the house. It was a project that would be done by evening. In the busyness leading up to the day, I forgot to inform my neighbors that I was blocking off the road. Let's just say they freaked out a bit. I wasn't in the wrong. Everything was cleared with the city, but I forgot to apply some wisdom and communicate what was happening to my neighbors. Let's just say I didn't make Christ look the best that day, not because of sinful living but because of unwise living where I added tensions to the neighborhood.

The wisdom of our choices will either draw people to Jesus and help open door to the gospel or our everyday choices can be foolish and repel people from Jesus. This is why one of the best ways to open the door to the gospel message in our community is by generously loving people. That is why one of our goals this year is to love our firefighters, police, ambulance crews, school teachers, and Iowa Department of Natural Resources officers. It is not a right or wrong thing. It is a wise thing to put Jesus in the best light.

#### **Make the best use of time.**

Paul also said Christians should make careful use of their time. This is very important. The way this is worded in Greek is quite vivid. It says "time is in short supply, don't fritter it away." When we are 20 years old, it feels like life will last forever. It doesn't. It goes by very quickly. Paul reminded us we want to use the limited time in our lives wisely. Don't throw it away.

**So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom. Psalm 90:12 (ESV)**

We need to consciously think what kind of return on investment we are getting for the way we use our time. This is a conversation I often have with young adults. For example, there is nothing wrong with playing video games. The problem is many young adults spent lots of time on video games. Video games can become a very poor use of your time. Video games are fun but they have limited eternal value and limited life skill value return. I don't care how high your score is on a video game, you cannot put that on your resume. Often it is more valuable to get a job and learn a skill than play a video game. At least that can go on your resume. It is more valuable to read a book than play a video game. Books help us grow in knowledge and wisdom. It is more valuable to memorize a Bible verse that God will bring back to our minds when we need to hear it for the rest our lives. It is more valuable to read your Bible than play a video game. It is more valuable to learn an instrument. Video games are not wrong but we need to limit the time we spend on them. Don't blow too much time on them. Give yourself three-five hours a week on video games then find something else more productive to do with your time.

The same can apply to older adults who have the money and freedom to travel. There is nothing wrong with travel but it can become a way to fritter away time on things that are not of lasting value so we avoid serving others and Christ's kingdom. Time is like money. Each day we get 24 hours to spend. Spend that limited amount of time wisely. Don't waste it.

## Jesus changes the way we speak.

The grace we received from Christ should be experienced by others through our gracious words.

Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person. Colossians 4:6 (ESV)

When it comes to living our Christian life, one distinctive quality of the Christian life is the way we speak to others and about others. We are to be gracious. This means people should sense the grace we have received from Jesus being conveyed to others through our speech to them and our speech about them. The easiest way to treat other people is to pick on them or tear them down in conversations. It takes no brains or courage to belittle people. We see this all the time on the news. Everybody is looking for something terrible to say about other people.

As Christians, we are not to be known for tearing others down but for building others up. People should feel the grace of Jesus through the way we speak to them. This is especially true at home. Picking on your brother or sister is not gracious speech. You may think those little fun jabs are just part of the family atmosphere, but they get old. That is not gracious speech. It is demeaning speech. Home should be the place where we are built up, not torn down.

Picking on our spouses with little jabs and snide comments is not being gracious in our speech toward our spouses.

Not only should we extend gracious speech to our families, but we should also be gracious in conflicts when someone does something we don't agree with. As Christians, we approach them graciously and gently, not vindictively. We use

the golden rule. We treat others in conflict like we want to be treated in that situation. We approach people not in a way to shame them but in a way that allows them to repent and save face.

**Let our speech be attractive, as if seasoned with salt.**

Our speech should also be seasoned with salt. In Greek, this phrase is a little hard to understand, but we have a good idea what Paul meant. In ancient Greek culture, salty speech meant interesting or lively speech. A salty conversation was an engaging conversation where you wanted to stay involved because you enjoyed the conversation. Just as salt makes bland potato chips enjoyable, salty speech is a metaphor for having engaging, enjoyable conversations with others. As Christians, when we talk with people, we honor God and make Christ attractive by giving people our full attention. We honor God by being interested in the life of other people and what they have to say. Even if we are not naturally interested in what somebody does in his or her life, because it reflects on our faith, we become interested in his or her life and ask questions. You may be a body builder that has no interest in knitting but if the person you are talking with is a knitting guru, you learn to love knitting while talking with her.

Another way to be engaging in conversations is don't answer someone with one-word answers. Answer in complete sentences. Look people in the eye during conversations. Give people your full attention. In conversations, don't talk about yourself but be interested in other people's lives and what they have to say about their world. That is how we bring honor to Christ in our words.

## **We need good Christians friends.**

Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts, and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you of everything that has taken place here. Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and Mark the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have received instructions—if he comes to you, welcome him), and Jesus who is called Justus. These are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me. Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God. For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. Luke the beloved physician greets you, as does Demas. Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house. And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea. And say to Archippus, “See that you fulfill the ministry that you have received in the Lord.” I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you. Colossians 4:7–18 (ESV)

Paul closed by rolling the credits and telling people in Colossae about those with him in prison at Rome. Paul’s friends were the unsung, behind-the-scenes heroes in the New Testament. We often think of Paul single-handedly reaching the ancient world for Jesus. The truth is his friends were the unsung heroes that made reaching the ancient world for Jesus possible. Like Paul, we also need good Christians friends in our lives if we are going to make a difference for Jesus. Let me take a few minutes to introduce you to Paul’s friends.

### **Tychicus**

Tychicus is mentioned five times in the New Testament. He first shows up in the city of Ephesus. He probably became a Christian in Ephesus while Paul preached in the city of Ephesus for three years. Tychicus was known as a man of intense devotion to God and to Paul. Paul called him a loved brother, faithful

minister and fellow servant of Christ. As Paul's friend, Tychicus was the faithful behind-the-scenes guy Paul could always trust. When Paul wrote the letters of Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon, who did Paul trust to carry these letters to the churches in those cities? Tychicus. Paul knew that if he asked Tychicus to do something, he could trust Tychicus to get it done. Dependability was his middle name.

If Tychicus dropped the ball, we would be missing at least three of our New Testament letters. Tychicus was so trustworthy and faithful that he left his family at home and stayed with Paul during his time in prison in Rome to make sure Paul had what he needed. In Titus 3:12 we see Tychicus was sent by Paul to serve as a temporary pastor to the church of Crete while Titus was gone. At the end of Paul's life, during his second imprisonment in Rome, Tychicus was a faithful friend that was still with Paul helping him. Tychicus was a complete behind-the-scenes guy that was never prominent but was a faithful friend to Paul. If Tychicus hadn't been such a faithful friend to Paul, we might not have three of our New Testament letters. Each of us need a Tychicus in our lives.

### Onesimus

I won't say much about him because we begin our study of his life next week in the book of Philemon. He was a runaway slave from Philemon, his master. Philemon was a wealthy man in Colossae. The church met in his house. In Philemon 11, Onesimus is described as a useless slave. He was all hassle and no help. He stole money from his master and ran away to Rome.

He was an escaped slave and a criminal. In Rome, he met the apostle Paul. Onesimus heard about Jesus. He repented of his sin and was born again. His life was completely changed. Then, instead of calling him a runaway criminal, Paul called him a faithful and beloved brother. Next week we will see how Jesus used Onesimus' friendship with Paul to make a big difference for Christ in this world.

### Aristarchus

He was a Jewish believer with a Greek name. He was a native of Thessalonica (Acts 20:4). He first appeared during Paul's three years of teaching in Ephesus. That is when he most likely became a Christian. He was also a faithful friend to Paul that helped him in his travels. In Acts, we learn that when the entire city of Ephesus rioted against Christians they took two new Christians into the amphitheater, where they were likely beaten for their faith and association with Paul. One was Aristarchus. Even when he realized that associating with Jesus and Paul could mean he would lose his life, Aristarchus stayed a faithful friend, traveling with Paul and helping him. Aristarchus was also with Paul on the ship that took him to Rome in Acts 27. The ship was wrecked in a storm where Aristarchus and Paul swam for their lives. Facing hard times in life when you are alone is tough. Aristarchus was the friend God gave to Paul so he didn't face his hard times alone.

### Mark

Here is another unsung hero with a different story. Mark was a cousin of Barnabas. Young Mark joined Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary

journey in Acts 13. Partway through the trip, Mark deserted them because things were too tough. Later, when Barnabas wanted to take Mark on another missionary journey with Paul, Paul refused to let him join. That led to Paul and Barnabas parting ways because Paul didn't trust Mark to be loyal in the hard times. Thankfully, that is not where the story ends. From what we can tell, Mark — also called John Mark — spent time with the apostle Peter. We read about this in 1 Peter 5:13. If you remember, Peter was no stranger to mid-life failures. He denied Christ three times at Christ's arrest. Jesus later restored Peter after his failure. Just as Jesus forgave and restored Peter after his failure, Peter helped forgive and restore Mark after his failure.

When Paul wrote this letter to the Colossians, it was 12 years after Mark abandoned Paul and Barnabas. Things changed. Mark was then one of Paul's most faithful companions and greatest helpers. In fact, in 2 Timothy 4:11, which is Paul's final letter, at the end of the letter Paul asked Timothy to pick up Mark and bring him to see Paul because Mark was so useful.

Since Mark spent so much time with the apostle Peter — who knew Jesus firsthand — Mark became intimately acquainted with the life of Jesus. Mark used that experience to write the Gospel of Mark that is in our Bibles. It is based off the firsthand accounts of Christ's life told to Mark by Peter in the time they spent together. While Onesimus is the story of how God can take a life far from God, transform that life and use it in a great way for God's kingdom, Mark's story is what God can do through Christians even after they have a mid-life faith failure.

### Jesus also called Justus

We don't know much about this guy other than Paul pulled into a town and this Jesus had a lot of explaining for why he couldn't feed 5,000 or raise the dead. That was a different Jesus. This is why they nicknamed him Justus to avoid any confusion.

### Epaphras

If you were here for the first week of this study, you will remember Epaphras. He was the founder of the Colossian church and its pastor. He was the one who heard about the good news of Jesus from Paul while traveling through the city of Ephesus on business as Paul preached in the city. Epaphras returned to his hometown of Colossae and planted the church. Epaphras was their pastor. Philemon was the man who took care of all the building and ground needs by hosting the church in his home. Epaphras was also likely the one who planted the nearby churches in the cities of Laodicea and Hieropolis, which were only 10 miles away.

What we see in Epaphras is a pastor's heart. When some false teachings about Jesus began to surface in the city of Colossae, it was Epaphras who traveled 1,800 miles to find Paul in Rome and learn from him the truth about Jesus to protect the church. Even though Epaphras was far from his church, he didn't stop praying for his church. Paul said Epaphras was always struggling on their behalf in his prayers. This word for struggling is the word *agonizomai*, from which we get our word agony. When Epaphras prayed for his church, he

genuinely cared. What did he pray for them? He prayed they would become mature in Christ.

This is a great challenge, not just for myself as a pastor, but for the elders, Life Group leaders and children's leaders. We are to be good pastors like Epaphras. We are to genuinely love the people we shepherd. We are to genuinely pray for them with authentic concern and emotion in our hearts. When we pray, we pray for what is most important in their lives, which is that they would mature in Christ.

### Luke

Luke was Paul's personal physician and close friend. He traveled with Paul on most of his missionary journeys. Luke was extremely intelligent, like most doctors. He came from Antioch, which was a highly educated city in Egypt. Why would Paul need his own personal physician? If you were stoned and left for dead, five times given 40 lashes minus one, beaten with rods, three times shipwrecked and left a full day and night adrift on the sea, it would take a toll on your body. If you were Paul, you would be thankful for a friend like Luke that could bandage you up after you were beaten for your sermon about Jesus.

While Luke was not a theologian, he was very bright and spent a lot of time with Paul as his traveling companion. God used the gift of his keen mind to write most of the New Testament. While Paul wrote more of the New Testament letters, it is Luke who wrote most of the words in the New Testament. Luke wrote a two-volume work known as the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts. The

Gospel of Luke is Dr. Luke's carefully researched history of the life of Christ. Acts is Dr. Luke's carefully research description of life in the early church.

If you are somebody that thinks God can't use you in a big way because you are not theologically educated and you work in the business world, Luke is your man. God used an ordinary guy to write most of our New Testament. Luke is a great reminder that God loves to use ordinary people in some of the most unexpected ways.

### Demas

Demas is an example of somebody who started out well but finished poorly. He made a substantial commitment to the Lord's work. He was with Paul through both of his imprisonments. He eventually deserted Paul.

Look what Paul said about Demas in his final letter.

Do your best to come to me soon. For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. 2 Timothy 4:9–10 (ESV)

Demas started well but eventually threw in the towel on following Jesus when things were too rough for too long. Demas is a sober reminder for all of us that starting well in our faith doesn't always mean we will finish well. We need to stay faithful to Christ all the way to the end. At times, it will be hard to follow Christ but that doesn't mean we turn away from him like Demas. Did Demas turn back like Mark? We don't know.

### Conclusion

We learn in Paul's final words of Colossians how Jesus changes our everyday lives. Praying all the time and taking advantage of any opportunity we

have to pray for others helps make Christ attractive and open the door for the gospel.

Not just focusing on right and wrong and how it affects us but living wisely and graciously toward others because we are concerned with how our choices affect others helps makes Jesus attractive. How we speak to others and the gracious words we have toward them helps others taste the grace of Jesus through our words.

We pray for open doors for the gospel, pray for others, live wisely around others and speak gracious words to open that door so people can know about the love of Jesus, our savior.



Dr. Kurt Trucksess is ordained in the Evangelical Free Church of America. He enjoys reading, writing, time with his family and wrestling with his sons. His favorite topics are preaching and ancient rhetoric. Feel free to contact him at [www.Christ2RCulture.com](http://www.Christ2RCulture.com) ([www.c2rc.com](http://www.c2rc.com))

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