

Even as acting lovingly and justly is a Christian duty, so is prayer. Paul calls for believers to **devote yourselves to prayer** (4:2). Literally, he says to be wakeful, not to fall asleep as often happens with disciples fatigued at crucial times (Luke 9:32; Matt. 26:40). Paul asks prayer for himself, not necessarily that his imprisonment would end, but that he may have opportunity to complete his missionary calling of sharing Christ with the world. He also instructs readers about how best to share the good word of God in Christ. Often the “how” of Christian witnessing is nearly as crucial as the “what.”

Opportunities for witness are to be sought. Once found, Paul counsels, it is time for wisdom, respect, and even charm. The good news about divine grace is to be shared gracefully, even with a touch of wit, and always in the context of a gratitude to God that can be infectious. Overt “evangelism,” in the sense of marching for Jesus and passing out tracts on street corners, is not pressed on most believers as a primary duty. Christian disciples usually witness best by living wisely as they function responsibly in the world. Transformed lives will be observed by the public and opportunities for Christian witness will arise naturally when the witness is **seasoned with salt**

(4:6). Rather than trampling on the sensibilities of nonbelievers by aggressive insistence on their attention to a message for which they may not be ready, reliance should be placed on the work of the Spirit in opening doors of conversation and loving relationships that mediate hope and faith. The goal of the Christian life is to **make the most of every opportunity** (4:5) to **proclaim the mystery of Christ** (4:3).