

## March 4

**Scriptures:** Read Colossians 4

**Key Verse:** “Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving.”  
(Colossians 4:2)

### Overview

Paul had a very strong view on prayer. The Greek verb he uses here was also used by an historian (Polybius) in describing the stubborn persistence of a siege. This powerful imagery is not an overstatement — it is merely consistent with the high view scripture has of prayer: “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” (James 5:16). But it’s to be something else too.

Prayer is to be the communication of someone who is ‘Vigilant’ (or, “watchful”) and “thankful” (NIV). It’s not just to be the crying out of felt needs, but the intelligent expression of alert observation and grateful dependence.

To be alert in prayer means, among other things, to be in touch with the world. Prayer is not an “eyes-closed-get-in-touch-with-my-inner-needs” kind of exercise. Rather, its a “what’s-happening-in-the-world-and-what-are-my-neighbours-needs” kind of exercise. That’s not to say we don’t include personal concerns in our prayers from time to time. But it is to say that prayer is to be much more than it is for many of us in reality; prayer is so often an exclusive petitioning on behalf of one person: ourself. What’s more, that self-absorption is also presumptuous — we presume to give God our agenda, expecting him to perform our will.

That’s why gratitude in prayer is so important. Gratitude says you acknowledge God’s grace, accept your dependence upon Him, and recognize you’re just one of the millions who have embraced His offer of forgiveness for sin in Christ. Most importantly, gratitude is the context in which we most naturally pray, “Not my will, but Thine be done.”

### Prayer

Lord, may we continue earnestly in prayer, not just focussing on ourselves but on the needs of others, and may our attitude in prayer be one of gratitude for this great privilege that is ours in Christ.