



# **Does God Want Us to Pray Better?**

**Colossian 4:2**

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“**Devote yourselves** to **prayer**,  
**keeping alert in it** with *an attitude of*  
**thanksgiving**”



**“The Church's greatest curse is unanswered prayer,  
and many people do not seem bothered by that.”**

*(A. W. Tozer points this out in his book “Going Higher with God in Prayer”)*

- *What are your first thoughts? What emotions flood to the surface?*
- *Paul David Tripp’s article **“Change the Way You Pray”** evoked different responses & conversations*
- **Let’s ask ourselves ask a few questions:**
  - “Are you happy with your prayer life?”
  - “Do you ever question why God answer some prayers and not others?”
  - “Why do some people find it tedious and boring, while others get invigorated?”

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**Huge topic:** GOOGLE: Over 1.5 billion; VIDEO About 101,000,000; Amazon : 100,000 results for "**prayer**"

- *The Bible? Some variations that build up to our passage tonight*
- **Hebrew: 99 = 73) “pronounce judgment, be the arbitrator, intercessor, advocate, pray; 16) emphatic particle: “surely,”; the other 10) in summary, involved somewhat a sense of the first 73, with a few literary variation, and then several indicating having a level of greater intensity.**
- **Greek (NT): 93 = 81) standard use of “pray”; 7), ask, request, beg, pray; 4) pray, pray for, wish; 1) prayer, pray (James 5:17 “prayed earnestly”)**

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## 3 Commands & A Corrective Perspective

### Command #1: Devote Yourself to Prayer

- *Devote: definition “stand ready, personal attendants, continuing, etc.”*
- *Septuagint: “be, **grow or make strong**, prevail, have or show courage, seize, grasp, keep hold of*
- ***“Do you take words for granted? Sometimes it’s good to slow down and let the definitions sink in!”***
- ***The Apostle’s charge here is not by itself.***
  - *Acts 6:4 “but we will devote yourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word).*
  - *A unique emphasis; English usage of “devote” = 1 Corinthians 7:5*

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### Command #1: Devote Yourself to Prayer

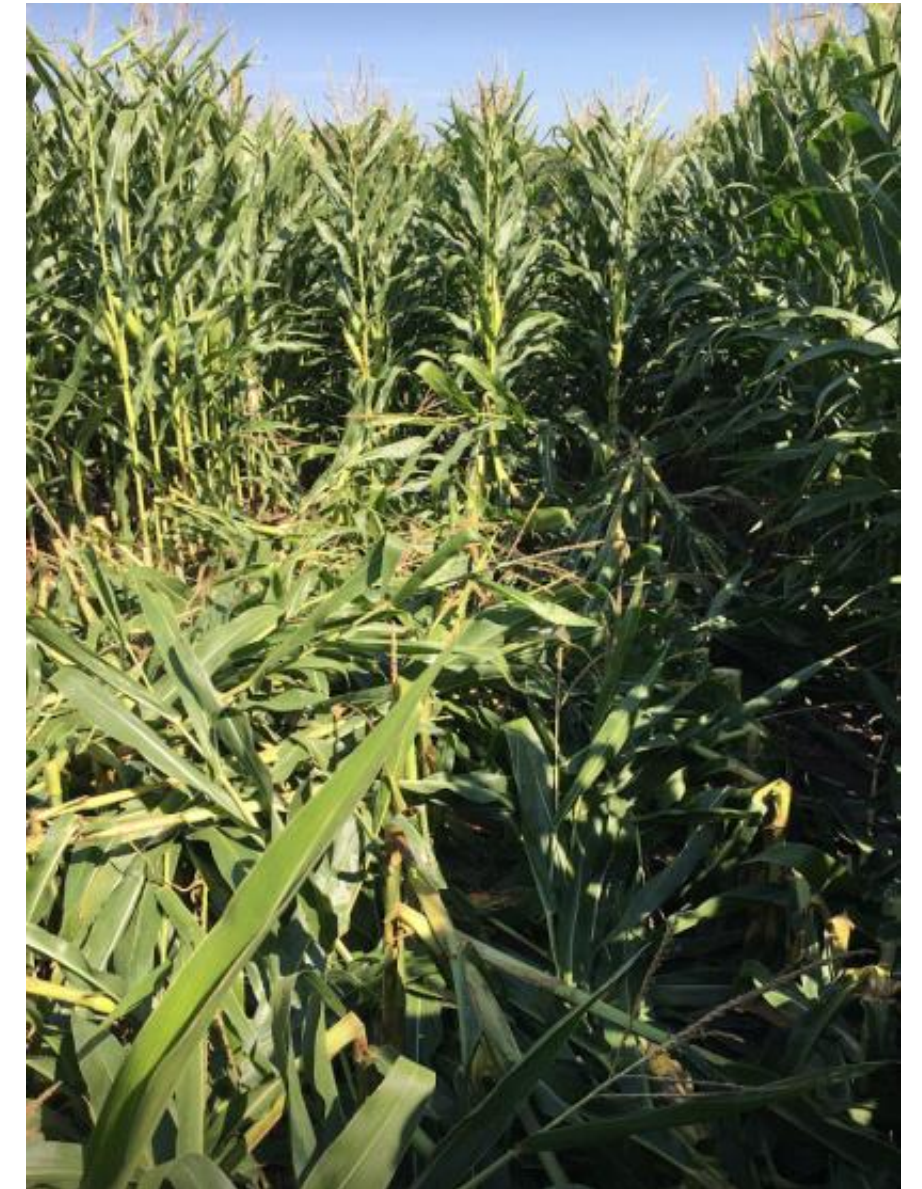
- *Other examples, Not exact, but in context, reflect similarities providing helpful contrast.*
  - Titus 3:14, 3:8 “engage in good deeds” + “to meet pressing needs,”
  - 1 Tim 4:13 “give attention to.”
  - 1 Tim. 4:15 “take pains with these things.”
- ***Taken together***, these examples bring collective power to the simple command = ***devote yourselves!***

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## 3 Commands & A Corrective Perspective

### Command #2: Keeping Alert in It

- *Have you ever had to keep raccoons out of your sweet corn patch in the summer just before harvest?*
  - ***Things are going well, plants are growing, showing results, then swift destruction!***



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### Command #2: Keeping Alert in It

- *R. J. Utley in his book “Paul Bound, the Gospel Unbound: Letters from Prison” describes it this way:*
  - ***Prayer takes planning, persistence, and vigilance. It needs to become a lifestyle, not an event.***
- *Possibly the clearest reason to stay alert i.e. “keep watch.” Mark 14:34-38 - Jesus in the garden*

## 3 Commands & A Corrective Perspective

### Command #3: With an Attitude of Thanksgiving

- **R. J. Utley** *“Remember Paul was imprisoned, yet this letter emphasizes “thanksgiving”. Biblical truth (world-view) radically change ones perspective on life. Thanksgiving is a characteristic of a Spirit-filled life).”*
- **Several reasons** straight from **God’s own Word** that should help for **cultivating this attitude**.
  - 1. Simple obedience (1 Thess 5:18)
  - 2. As a NT offering (Hebrews 13:15)
  - 3. It delights the Lord ([Proverbs 15:8](#))
  - 4. Peace that protects (Philippians 4:4-7)

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  - 4. Peace that protects (Philippians 4:4-7)
  - 5. Providential prayer partner (Romans 8:26)
  - 6. Looking for things to give thanks (1 Thess 3:9)

## 3 Commands & A Corrective Perspective

### Final Point: Correcting the Conflict of Interest

*Give credit to Faith Horgen for sharing the sermon by Jim Tillotson, 2024 BJU Bible Conference.*

#### **“Eight Hindrances to Prayer”**

- **We don't pray.** (James 4:2)
- **Unconfessed or unrepentant sin.** (Isaiah 59:1-2; Psalm 66:18).
- **Not in the word of God.** (John 15:7; Proverbs 28:9).
- **Wrong motives.** (James 4:3).
- **Failure to forgive others.** (Mark 11:24-25)
- **A poor marriage relationship.** (1 Peter 3:7)
- **Vain or unthinking repetition.** (Matthew 6:7)
- **We must have faith.** (James 1:5-8; Hebrews 11:6)

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## 3 Commands & A Corrective Perspective

### Final Point: Correcting the Conflict of Interest

*Don't let This Discourage You!*

*There are 2 Main Reasons God Answers Prayer*

1. *God wants to be glorified. John 14:13*

2. *That our joy may be full. John 16:24*

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God takes great pleasure in the prayers of upright men; He even calls them His delight. Our first concern is to be upright. Neither bending this way nor that, continue upright; not crooked with policy, nor prostrate by yielding to evil, be ye upright in strict integrity and straightforwardness. If we begin to shuffle and shift, we shall be left to shift for ourselves.

If we try crooked ways, we shall find that we cannot pray, and if we pretend to do so, we shall find our prayers shut out of heaven.

Are we acting in a straight line, and thus following out the Lord's revealed will?

Then let us pray much, and pray in faith.

***If our prayer is God's delight, let us not stint Him in that which gives Him pleasure. He does not consider the grammar of it, nor the metaphysics of it, nor the rhetoric of it; in all these men might despise it.***

***He, as a Father, takes pleasure in the lisplings of His own babes, the stammerings of His newborn sons and daughters.***

***Should we not delight in prayer since the Lord delights in it?***

***Let us make errands to the throne. The Lord finds us enough reasons for prayer, and we ought to thank Him that it is so.***

***C. H. Spurgeon***