

Come, Ye Thankful People, Come: Colossians 1:1-14

It is to be noted that Colossians has more references that teach us to give thanks or to be thankful (6 times) than any other New Testament book, except II Corinthians (7 times). Considering that II Corinthians is over three times larger than Colossians, that means the theme of thankfulness is a more concentrated teaching in Colossians than in II Corinthians. So, next to the book of Psalms, you might include Colossians in your list of things to read during the Thanksgiving season.

Colossians 4:2 gives us a general instruction to “*Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving*” (cp. Ephesians 6:18). Literally, we are being told to pray earnestly, steadfastly, devotedly while also being vigilant, alert, watchful. This reminds us of our Lord Jesus, who repeatedly told us to “Watch and Pray” (Matthew 26:41; Mark 13:33; 14:38; Luke 21:36). Peter also gave this admonition (I Peter 4:7). Let’s examine the book of Colossians to see more specifically how we should “*Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.*”

Be a Thankful & Watchful Member of the Family of God & the Kingdom of Christ – Colossians 1:3-14 (vs. 3, 12)

It is a privilege that God’s grace has brought us to faith in Christ, so that we can be members of His “forever family” and members of Christ’s powerful kingdom. It is not only a privilege, but also a responsibility. We need to be thankful and watchful to develop ourselves in the areas of:

- Faith
- Love for the brethren / Love in the Spirit
- Hope
- Fruitful character and works / a worthy walk
- Knowledge of His will with wisdom and spiritual understanding
- Patience
- Joy
- Gratitude and the expression of Thankfulness to God

Our responsibilities extend beyond thoughts of ourselves to having concern for the other members of the family of God and the kingdom of Christ. Prayerful concern for others and involvement with them must be conducted with a thankful spirit. Other Christians are not to be a mere “case load.” We need to honor and cherish them – grateful that God has loved them and bestowed grace upon them. We need a tender desire that God will cause them to grow in the above-mentioned graces. We should feel grateful / privileged to be a part of that process in their lives.

See John 13:34-35; Ephesians 1:12-19; 3:14-21; 4:1-6,11-16; Philippians 1:1-11; 2:1-4; I Peter 1:22; I John 5:1-3.

Be Thankful & Watchful for Gospel Truth – Colossians 2:6-8; 3:15-16

We should be thankful for the truth that has made us free (John 8:30-32; 17:6-8,13-20). It is a precious, powerful resource for our lives and for our souls. It establishes who we are, not just what we do. There are powerful forces trying to distract us and seduce us from our connection to God's Spirit through His Word (II Corinthians 11:1-3,13-15; I Timothy 4:1-7; I John 2:18-28; 4:1-6). Devotion to God's Word is more than an academic pursuit. We need to experience God's Word, not just learn it. With gratitude, we should guard our souls from the interference and distractions of Satan and the world.

See Psalm 75:1 (cp. Romans 10:8); 97:12; 119:62,164; Ephesians 5:18-20.

Be Thankful & Watchful for the Work of the Gospel Ministry and its Ministers – Colossians 4:2-4, 7-18

The call to God's family and Christ's kingdom is not about mere survival and then going to heaven. We are called to service (II Corinthians 5:14-20; Galatians 5:13-14; II Timothy 2:1-10). Soldiers, teammates, fellow-workers, all must learn to depend on each other; to support each other; and to work in harmony. We should be grateful to God that we can be a part of the work of the gospel. We should thank God for the partnership that we can have with others in this great work. This should produce loving / prayerful concern, cooperation, and involvement with each other's lives and work.

See Philippians 1:3-5; 4:1-3, 14-23; Romans 1:7-16; Ephesians 6:18-20; I Thessalonians 1:1-10; II Thessalonians 3:1-2; Hebrews 13:1-3.

Note also the length of the Scriptures devoted to communicating love and concern for one another in the various churches (**Colossians 4:7-8**; Romans 16:1-16,21-24; I Corinthians 16:1-24; II Timothy 4:9-22; Titus 3:12-15).