

a. **Paul was writing from prison.**

- 1) He was in bonds because of his preaching.
- 2) Paul did not enjoy being in prison any more than you, or I would enjoy it. It was a burden. It was unpleasant. It was lonely.
- 3) There are many Christians today who are persecuted for their faith in Christ. Communists, Muslims, and some other religious groups torture, imprison, and even kill Christians today.
- 4) Some missionaries endure hardships among hostile or violent people. They are isolated from family and friends. They are exposed to sickness and disease.

b. **Persecuted Christians need our compassionate prayer.**

- 1) Paul commanded that they remember his bonds. The word “**remember**” means to call to mind, to think of, to feel for a person, or to make mention of.
- 2) One of the ways we can do this is to pray for them. It is easy to forget to pray for those who are enduring difficult times, but this we MUST do. (Hebrews 13:3) “**Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.**”
- 3) Another way to remember them is to write to them. Our missionaries have email. It is not difficult or costly to write to them. When you write, be sure to tell them who you are and where you go to church. Tell them news about our church. Tell them about your family. Mention their specific requests that you have been praying for. This will encourage them. DO NOT send large attachments if you are not sure that they have cheap and fast Internet.

Conclusion: In the closing verses of this book, God has given us three oft neglected duties. 1) We must not neglect the reading of God’s Word. 2) We must not neglect to encourage our pastor. 3) We must not neglect to pray for the persecuted. These are not optional hobbies; they are essential duties. They are duties that you can fulfil. Will you do it?

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Three Oft Neglected Duties

26 November 2023 PM – Text: Colossians 4:15-18 – Topic: Christian life

Introduction: Presently, I am in the midst of a project that I have neglected for years. We have wanted to replace the old carpet in our spare bedroom with a floating floor. I recently got enough free flooring to do the job from someone who was removing it from their home. It is a good feeling to get at this neglected duty.

If we are not careful, we will also neglect important duties in our spiritual lives. This evening, our text encourages us to do three oft neglected duties.

Transition: As Paul closed the letter to the Colossian church, he noted three oft neglected duties that they (and we) must not neglect.

1. **We must not neglect the reading of God’s Word**

Read Colossians 4:15-16.

a. **The Bible is God’s mind revealed to us.**

- 1) The average Christian in the first century did not have his own copy of even one book of the Bible. Thus, Paul urged the public reading of the Scriptures. Christians listened eagerly to the scripture readings. They memorised large portions of it. They studied it with a passion. The Bible was very precious to those early Christians.
- 2) Today we live in a privileged age. Each of us owns one or more copies of the entire Bible. It is available in Bible study software, enabling us to read, cross-reference, research, and carefully study every verse. We can read it on our phones. We can listen to it being read. We have the tools to know the mind of God as revealed in the Bible better than any people since Creation.

b. **We have a duty to read God’s Word.**

- 1) Paul assumed that the Colossian church leaders would read this epistle to their congregation.
- 2) He also commanded them to share it with the church at Laodicea. He also wrote a letter to the Laodicean church which was not accepted as scripture that he wanted them to read.
- 3) The Bible is God’s mind concerning everything we need to

know. To read it is a privilege and a duty!

- 4) Yet with all these great privileges, many Christians neglect the Bible. Oh, they may know some Bible facts, but they know little of the Bible itself because they do not passionately read and study it.

- 5) **"My Old Bible"** — Edmund Phillifant

Though the cover is worn,
And the pages are torn,
And though places bear traces of tears,
Yet more precious than gold
Is this Book worn and old,
That can shatter and scatter my fears.
This old Book is my guide,
'Tis a friend by my side,
It will lighten and brighten my way;
And each promise I find
Soothes and gladdens the mind,
As I read it and heed it each day.
To this Book I will cling,
Of its worth I will sing,
Though great losses and crosses be mine;
For I cannot despair,
Though surrounded by care,
While possessing this blessing Divine.

- 6) If you do not read the Bible daily, begin today!

2. We must not neglect to encourage our Pastor.

Read Colossians 4:17.

a. Pastors have great responsibilities.

- 1) Archippus is only mentioned here and in Philemon 1:2 where Paul calls him a fellow soldier. Many believe that he was a pastor of the Colossian church.
- 2) He had received his ministry in the Lord. In his communion with the Lord, God had given him a ministry. Preachers are humans. They can get discouraged. When the work gets difficult, when people oppose, when attendance is down, when Christians do not appear to be growing, preachers need to be reminded that God called

them to the work and that God will sustain them.

- 3) God wanted him to fulfil his ministry. The word **"fulfil"** means to fill up, to furnish liberally, to make to abound, or to complete. The pastor does this by fervently praying, faithfully studying the Word, clearly expounding the word, sharing the Gospel, mentoring believers, counselling the struggling, and comforting the broken-hearted.
- 4) In Peter's first letter, God tells preachers to: (1 Peter 5:2-3) **"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock."**

b. Archippus, their pastor, needed to be encouraged.

- 1) The congregation was to encourage him to **take heed** to that ministry. In other words, he was to take a good look at his ministry. He was to stay focussed. He must keep his focus on the Lord, and not on frustrating circumstances. He must keep preaching the Word!
- 2) Similarly, Paul commanded the Thessalonian believers to esteem their spiritual leaders. **"And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves."** (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13)
- 3) How can Christians encourage their pastor?
 - a) Fervently pray for him daily.
 - b) Let him know when a sermon speaks to your heart.
 - c) Apply what he preaches to your life so that he can see spiritual growth in your life.
 - d) Share encouraging verses with him that you find in your personal Bible study.
 - e) Spend time with him as a friend.
 - f) Get involved and help him in the ministry.
 - g) Stand with him when oppositions arise.

3. We must not neglect to pray for the persecuted.

Read Colossians 4:18.