

Compelled in the Witness of God

Colossians 4

Seldom, if ever, has there been assembled four greater talents on one track at the same time than Travis Padgett of Clemson, Rodney Martin of South Carolina, Darvis Patton of TCU, and Tyson Gay from Kentucky. Each had stellar credentials as world class runners and unique personalities which made them special in their own right. These were four of our country's best, hand-picked to represent the United States before the world in the 400 meter relay.

What made this moment even more extraordinary was the fact that these four men were not competing as rivals against each other as in past years. On this occasion they would be competing before millions as a team against the best in the 2008 World Olympic Games in Beijing, China.

At the sound of the starting gun, the runners exploded from their starting blocks. As the camera focused on the USA's Travis Padgett, you could see every fiber in his muscles as he strained to set the pace. By the third leg of the relay, there was no doubt that the gold medal was within the grasp of this team of hand-picked, gifted athletes. But then something went terribly wrong. The years of training, the preparation, and the dreams of each of these four athletes came to a cruel and abrupt halt leaving them with nothing. As Darvis Patton entered the passing zone in the lead, he was unable to pass the baton to the out-stretched hand of Tyson Gay, and the baton dropped on the rain-slicked track as the crowd gasped. It was over. This was the defining moment that separated failure and defeat from victory because the baton was not passed.

What an incredible illustration of the responsibility we have as Christians to pass the baton to those around us who are waiting and reaching. As people who have come to know Him, who were "chosen before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:3), how well do we realize the privilege of representing Him and passing on the reality of Jesus to those closest to us?

It's in this one act that we so often "drop the baton." We may feel confident in our knowledge of the *race*, in our experience of running the *race*, in our ability to run the *race* or our ability to teach others how we think they should run their race. But how effective are we in passing the baton of Christ's love, forgiveness, and salvation to the next potential runner?

There is little in this life that gives a greater thrill of victory than to share the person and reality of Christ with another person. There is no greater example than the Apostle Paul as we shall see in Colossians chapter 4.

LIFE RESPONSE:

1. This week **MEMORIZE** and **MEDITATE** on Colossians 4:2-3a, "*Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; praying at the same time for us as well, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ....*"
2. Read all four chapters of Colossians in one sitting. Think about the progression of the centrality of Christ—His place in your life, how you practice His presence in relationships, and those to whom you will pass the baton of His grace.
 - (a) How does this progression reveal itself in your life?
 - (b) What are areas you believe you should focus on and develop?
 - (c) To whom would you like to "speak the mystery of Christ"... share your faith in Christ?
3. If it is true that "nothing reveals who we are and what drives us more than our prayer life," what does it say about us as a church, Mini Church, Cell Group, Care Group, family, leaders, and you as an individual?
4. Most of us tend to compartmentalize our lives and find it difficult to demonstrate consistency in our faith "toward outsiders" (4:5) who observe us at any given moment. In what specific areas do you feel you need to grow in consistency (Col. 3)? How does our consistency relate to dropping the baton? What do you see as the responsibility of the church and its leadership to build toward consistency?

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Witness of God**
Colossians 4

“Perhaps nothing reveals more of who we are and what is important to us than our prayer life.”

Chapter 1 Confident “In” the WILL of God

“We ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.”

- The Will of God

The Person of Christ - - - - the He might come to have 1st place

Answers: Who is Jesus?

Chapter 2 Conviction “In” our WALK in God

“That you may Walk in a manner worthy of the Lord and please Him in all respects.”

- The Walk in God

The Position in Christ

Answers: What will I do with Jesus?

Chapter 3 Committed “In” the WORK of God

“Strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience.”

- The Work of God

The Practice of Christ

Answers: How will I live my life in Jesus?

Chapter 4 Compelled “In” the WITNESS of God

“... joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saint in light.”

- The Witness of God

The Proclamation of Christ

Answers: With whom will I share Jesus?

God’s Will:

“That we may speak forth the mystery of Christ.” Col. 4:3

My Witness:

Consistent _____

Clear _____

_____ Conduct

Compassionate _____