

Philemon 1:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers,

Analysis

I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers—εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου (eucharistō tō theō mou, I thank my God) πάντοτε μνησάν σου ποιούμενος (pantote mneian sou poioumenos, always making remembrance of you) ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν μου (epi tōn proseuchōn mou, in my prayers). Paul's thanksgiving follows Pauline pattern (Romans 1:8, 1 Corinthians 1:4, Philippians 1:3, Colossians 1:3, 1 Thessalonians 1:2), here preparing for appeal. πάντοτε (pantote, always) indicates habitual, not sporadic prayer.

Paul's intercessory ministry demonstrates pastoral care: imprisoned, he prays for others. The thanksgiving establishes positive rapport before the difficult request (v. 8-20). Ancient rhetoric called this captatio benevolentiae (capturing goodwill). But Paul's gratitude is genuine, not manipulative—he thanks God for Philemon's character (v. 5-7) as evidence of grace.

Historical Context

Paul's prison ministry included constant prayer (Ephesians 1:16, Philippians 1:3-4, Colossians 1:9, 2 Timothy 1:3). Despite physical constraints, he exercised spiritual ministry. Roman house arrest (Acts 28:30) allowed visitors and correspondence, enabling Paul's continued apostolic work through letters and prayer. His thanksgiving tradition rooted in Jewish berakhot (blessings) but Christianized through Christ's mediation.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. Do you maintain consistent, specific intercessory prayer for believers you know, or is prayer sporadic and vague?
2. How does Paul's example of praying "always" for others challenge your prayer life's frequency and focus?
3. What prevents you from consistent prayer—busyness, unbelief, self-sufficiency—and how can you overcome these barriers?

Interlinear Text

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|----------------|-------|------------|-----------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| Εὐχαριστῶ | τῷ | Θεῷ | μου | πάντοτε | μνείαν | σου |
| I thank | G3588 | God | my | always | mention | of thee |
| G2168 | | G2316 | G3450 | G3842 | G3417 | G4675 |

| | | | | |
|---------------|-----------|-------|----------------|-----------|
| ποιούμενος | ἐπὶ | τῶν | προσευχῶν | μου |
| making | in | G3588 | prayers | my |
| G4160 | G1909 | | G4335 | G3450 |

Additional Cross-References

Romans 1:8 (References God): First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.

Colossians 1:3 (Prayer): We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,

Ephesians 1:16 (Kingdom): Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

1 Thessalonians 1:2 (Kingdom): We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;

2 Thessalonians 1:3 (References God): We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;

2 Timothy 1:3 (Prayer): I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;

Philippians 1:3 (References God): I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,