

4. *“I thank my God always, making mention of you in my prayers,”*

The word translated “I thank” (*ευχαριστω*) means to *have good grace*, to be *grateful*, and to *express appreciation* to God. Everything that a believer *is* and *does* that is good or right is the *work of God* and thanks and gratitude should be expressed to God for it. The present tense suggests that Paul was continuously thanking God for what He had done in Philemon’s life. This is emphasized further through the use of the adverb “always” (*παντοτε*) which literally means *all the time*. Paul was incessantly telling his *personal God*, to whom he refers as “my God,” how much he appreciated what He was doing for his good friend Philemon.

This verse makes it clear that Paul prayed for *specific individuals*. He tells Philemon that he personally mentions his name every time he prays. Likewise, Jesus prayed for Peter’s faith (Luke 22:32). Since the word translated “prayers” (*προσευχων*) is in the *plural*, Paul is saying that when he has a *time of prayer*, which could be once or several times a day, he thanks God for what He has *already done* through Philemon and he prays that in the future he *might do that which is right*.

5. *“hearing of your love and the faithfulness which you have toward the Lord Jesus and unto all the saints,”*

Paul speaks here of having *heard* that Philemon was exercising two important Christian characteristics. According to Colossians 1:8, Paul had obviously learned about Philemon through *Epaphras*. He was from Colossae, Philemon’s home town, and was not with Paul in Rome (Col. 4:12). Paul refers to him as “a faithful minister of Christ on behalf of” them and as his “beloved fellow slave” (Col.