

**SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS**  
**Commentary by Michael Sigler**  
**February 24, 2013**

**The Great Rhythm of the Christian Life**

Read Colossians 4:2-6

**Key verse: “See to it that you complete the ministry that you received in the Lord” (Colossians 4:17).**

Breathe in, breathe out. Take in, give out.

This is the great rhythm of the Christian life. It is the key to victory and fruitfulness. Don't forget to breathe!

In my own walk with Christ, I was blessed to learn the importance of this rhythm at an early and impressionable age. During my teen years, a powerful youth revival transformed the United Methodist Church where I was a member. Jesus touched our church and youth group—and my own life—in amazing ways. As we experienced the fire of revival, revival spread to many others in our town and beyond. It was an amazing time, and here's one thing we learned through experience:

We learned that to sustain and preserve the new life we had received, we had to be intentional about nurturing our interior lives through prayer, devotional practices, worship, fellowship. *And* we had to be intentional about giving out in evangelism and service. Otherwise, the fires of love for Christ that were burning in our hearts would start to burn low.

So, when we felt the need to nurture our interior lives, we would often call a Christian friend and say, “Come pray with me. We need to pray!” Then we would immediately gather at the church, or at someone's home, and pray fervently with and for each other. At other times, we would sense that we were taking in spiritually but not adequately giving out. So, someone would say, “Let's go witness. We need to witness!” Then we would drive to the local gathering place for teens in our town and look for an immediate opportunity to tell someone about Jesus.

Oh, we made lots of youthful mistakes, but we learned a truth that is unchanging: Breathe in, breathe out. Take in, give out. This is the great rhythm of the Christian life and the key to victory and fruitfulness.

Interestingly, this great rhythm can be seen in the exhortations given in Colossians 4:2-6. Verses 2-4 say, in effect, “Come pray with me. We need to pray!” Verses 5-6 say, in effect, “Let's go witness. We need to witness!”

Specifically, in verses 2-4 the Apostle Paul asks for prayers that God would open doors for sharing the Gospel and that God would help Paul be effective in communicating the Gospel. His challenge to the Christ followers in Colossae is, “Keep on praying”! (v. 2)

In an area of Africa where the Christian faith was spreading and growing, new believers were zealous about their daily devotional time. They would find their own spot within the wild thickets, where they would go daily to commune with God. Over time, those prayer locations became well-worn, and paths to and from those spots were created. In this way, it became obvious whether a particular believer was staying up-to-date in his or her devotional practice.

If a brother or sister in Christ was not keeping up his or her prayer life, others could not help but notice. Then they would gently and lovingly remind the neglectful person, “The grass grows on your path.”

Don’t forget to breathe.

Verses 5-6 deal with breathing *out*. Specifically, they remind believers to “make the most” of every opportunity to lead others to Christ—by how we act toward them and how we speak with them.

“Our whole life,” said Evelyn Underhill, “is to be poised on a certain glad expectancy of God; taking each moment, choice and opportunity as material placed in our hand by the Creator whose whole intricate and mysterious process moves toward the triumph of Charity [holy love], and who has given each living spirit a tiny part in this vast work of transformation.”

Breathe in, breathe out. Take in, give out. This is the great rhythm of the Christian life. It is the key to victory and fruitfulness.

So, don’t forget to breathe!

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