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Paul wants believers to **know how to answer everyone**. He tells them to answer with speech which is gracious, wholesome, and appealing.  
p. 346

**Barker & Kohlenberger say:**

Like his Lord and also like James the brother of the Lord, Paul knew how important the way Christians speak is . . . Here he may well have had in mind the relation of the right kind of speech to witnessing. So their speech, he reminds the Colossians, must be always full of “grace” and “seasoned with salt.” “Grace” . . . a word that usually denotes divine favor, seems here to be used in the broader sense of “pleasantness,” “attractiveness,” “charm,” and “winsomeness.” These ideas are all implicit in the word.  
pp. 840-1

**Barker & Kohlenberger say:**

“Seasoned with salt” may mean that Christian conversation is to be marked by purity and wholesomeness. Some, however, understand “salt” in the sense of that which gives taste or flavor. Among the ancient Greeks “salt” could designate the wit that gives zest and liveliness to conversation. The remainder of v.6 tells why we should cultivate this kind of speech: “so that you will know how to answer everyone.” Conversation must be appropriate for each person to whom we speak.  
p. 841

Barton, Fackler, Taylor & Veerman say:

The believers were to be wise in how they acted (4:5), but their witness should be more than actions alone. The spoken word would be the communication method; therefore, they should be wise in how they spoke.

Speech that is *gracious* is kind and courteous. Speech that is *seasoned with salt* is interesting (as opposed to dull), invites interaction (as opposed to refusing to listen and discuss), adds “spice” to a discussion (by penetrating to deeper levels), and is pure and wholesome (as opposed to “filthy language,” 3:8).  
p. 229

Barton, Fackler, Taylor & Veerman say:

No Christian should have a dull, tiresome, know-it-all monologue of his faith. Instead, Christians, who have the most exciting news in the world to share, should be able to share that message with excitement, ability to invoke interest, an understanding of the basics, a willingness to listen and discuss, and a desire to answer everyone’s questions graciously.  
p. 229

Barton, Fackler, Taylor & Veerman say:

#### SALTY SPEECH

The way words are spoken is as important as the words themselves. When we tell others about Christ, we should always be gracious in what we say. No matter how much sense the message makes, we lose our effectiveness if we are not courteous. Just as we like to be respected, we must respect others if we want them to listen to what we have to say.  
p. 230

**Bruce says:**

Moreover, the conversation of Christians must not only be “opportune as regards the time; it must also be appropriate as regards the person.” The importance attached in the primitive church to the proper answering of questions about the faith is attested by various passages in the Gospels, as also by the exhortation in 1 Pet. 3:15, “Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence.”

p. 175

**Carson says:**

6. Consistency of life must be followed by the witness of the spoken word. It hardly seems adequate, in view of Paul’s high view of grace, to see here merely an allusion to a gracious or acceptable way of speaking. This is of course true, but there is much more in the phrase ‘in grace’ (*en charity*). *Grace* is, as it were, the element in which the believer moves. He speaks as one who has experienced, and indeed constantly experiences, the grace of God. This should influence the content of his words as he seeks to avoid what would be unworthy of the God who has saved him, and to impart continually that which will edify the hearer. It should beget a spirit of humility, for one who is himself a debtor to grace can scarcely be boastful before men. It should lead to a gracious approach, for an awareness of God’s merciful dealings with him should deliver him from a brusque or ungracious attitude to others.

p. 97

**Hendriksen says:**

Now in their conversations believers must be mindful not only of the particular occasion that evokes their remarks but also of the person addressed. Hence, the apostle continues: **so that you may know how to answer each individual.** In other words, they speak the right word at the right time to the right person. This reminds us of I Peter 3:15, “But in your hearts reverence Christ as Lord, always being ready to make a defense to anyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.” The Holy Spirit himself will help them to do this. Hence, they need not be frightened . . .

p. 184

**Henry says:**

Let all your discourse be as becomes Christians—savory, discreet, seasonable.” Though it be not always of grace, it must be always with grace. It must be in a Christian manner: *seasoned with salt*. Grace is the salt which seasons our discourse, makes it savory, and keeps it from corrupting. *That you may know how to answer every man.* We have need of a great deal of wisdom and grace to give proper answers to every man, particularly in answering the questions and objections of adversaries against our religion, giving the reasons of our faith.

p. 1874

**Ironside says:**

How much divine wisdom is needed, and how close must the servant keep to the Master Himself, in order that he may know how to answer every man.

p. 175

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

Even the smallest leaf of the believer should be full of the sap of the Holy Spirit (Jer. 17:7, 8). His conversation should be cheerful without levity, serious without gloom. Cf. Luke 4:22; John 7:46, as to Jesus' speech. **seasoned with salt**—i.e., the *savor* of fresh and lively spiritual wisdom and earnestness, excluding all “corrupt communication,” and also tasteless *insipidity* . . .  
p. 1327

Laurin says:

The Christian's talk and walk are important things that follow his prayers. They have their proportionate place and they are exceedingly vital. Because both its walk and talk are at such wide variance the church is an issue for men's discussion instead of a force for world influence. This disparagement is lamentable and tragic.  
p. 180

Lightfoot says:

. . . ‘Not only must your conversation be opportune as regards the time; it must also be appropriate as regards the person.’ The Apostle's precept was enforced by his own example . . .  
p. 233

Lovett says:

**PROVOCATIVE.** Paul is speaking of the skilled witness. The Greek says, “seasoned with salt,” a metaphor which indicates that the witness’ words should be palatable to the unsaved listener. As salt flavors food, so does effective technique make the Gospel arresting and fascinating to lost souls. In our day of “hit and run” living, we must learn the science of witnessing “with salt” when so many are Gospel-hardened. That Christian who makes witnessing his business, is wise indeed. Why? Because the only treasure awaiting any of us in heaven is that which we “lay up” for ourselves. Witnessing is the way we accumulate our wealth. Does any Christian honestly intend to arrive in heave—flat broke?  
p. 195

MacArthur says:

Consistency of life must be followed by consistency of speech. Paul is not speaking here of preaching the gospel, but general conversation.  
p. 187

MacArthur says:

*with grace.* To speak what is spiritual, wholesome, fitting, kind, sensitive, purposeful, complimentary, gentle, truthful, loving, and thoughtful . . . *seasoned with salt.* Just as salt not only flavors, but prevents corruption, the Christian’s speech should act not only as a blessing to others, but as a purifying influence within the decaying society of the world.  
p. 1745

O’Brien says:

They are recipients of God’s grace: let that grace be evident in the words they speak. Their conversation ought not to be dull or insipid; instead, they ought to choose the right word as they respond to each non-Christian who asks them questions about either their beliefs or behavior.  
p. 244

Patrick & Lowth say:

. . . *With grace.*] i.e. “With sweetness and courteousness,” saith Theodoret, “that it may be acceptable to the hearers;” . . . “that it may render you gracious to and favoured by them;” so Theophylact. “Seasoned with salt;” salt is the symbol of wisdom, and in this sense the word is used . . .  
p. 794

Phillips says:

The vast majority of people around us are lost. They might be kind, thoughtful people and they might be religious, friendly people, but they need Christ. Our conversation should get them asking questions, and when they do, we need to know how to answer them. For this we need the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. Some people are looking for an argument, some are looking for answers to heart needs, some are idly curious, and some are victims of wrong teaching. The Holy Spirit knows the hearts of all and what passage of Scripture should be used. So we are to be ready.  
p. 208

Pickell says:

The Colossians were charged to watch their conduct and live in the wisdom which results from an intimate communion with Christ. This would, in turn, yield the virtues, and cut away the vices enumerated by Paul earlier in the letter. In addition they were not to be idle, but rather, to make the most of their time. God gives opportunities for witness, but they must be used. If not seized upon, they are lost forever. The Christian is to speak plainly, pleasantly, and understandably to the unbeliever. No pious pomposity for him! No common cliches! No dull droning! In short, he must maintain contact with unbelievers and through experience learn how to answer whatever questions may be posed. Above all, he must himself ring true, for the gospel will be judged mainly by what he is rather than what he says.  
p. 65

Radmacher, Allen & House say:

**4:6 Let your speech always be with grace:** Christ was full of grace and truth (John 1:14). Christians are to be gracious, pleasant, attractive, winsome, and courteous. **seasoned with salt:** Not insipid, not flat, not dull, not tasteless. Christians are to have an edge of liveliness, and to be marked by purity, wholesomeness, and hallowed pungency. **that you may know . . . answer each one:** In order that we can adapt the message to the situation and speak appropriately to each and every person.  
pp. 1568-9

Robertson says:

Grace and salt (wit, sense) make an ideal combination. Every teacher will sympathize with Paul's desire "that ye know how ye must answer each one" . . .  
p. 510

Robertson says:

Alexander Maclaren said: "It is better for most of us to fish with the rod than with the net, to angle for single souls, rather than to try and enclose a multitude at once. Preaching to a congregation has its own place and value; but private and personal talk, honestly and wisely done, will effect more than the most eloquent preaching." And Alexander Maclaren was one of the greatest preachers of all time.  
p. 132

**Simpson & Bruce say:**

The grace and wisdom that Paul desires for his own utterance he enjoins upon his readers too. They never know when they may be called upon to give an answer in regard to their faith, whether in private conversation or more publicly. If they practise grace of speech, it will not desert them when they find themselves suddenly confronted by the necessity of defending their Christian belief. Nor will their speech be acceptable if it is insipid. Those who are the salt of the earth may reasonably be expected to have some savour about their language.

p. 299

**Sturz says:**

*That you may know how each must answer the other.* The purpose of the gracefulness and seasoning is to uplift our conversation and make it becoming. He says “answer,” referring to our response to the questions and problems of life and salvation. We must not only believe, but know “what” we believe and how to put that knowledge into pleasing and winning words. Not just the clergy but all His children must be ready to give an answer for the hope that lies within them (I Peter 3:15).

p. 117

**Trentham says:**

Fill up each hour with what will last;  
Buy up the moments as they go;  
The life above, when this is past,  
Is the ripe fruit of life below.

HORATIUS BONAR

Every Christian must live existentially by laying hold on every favorable opportunity to demonstrate the grace of God in his conduct.

p. 165



















I would like to conclude with a song sung by the Florida Boys on their album “Saved By Grace”:

### **Broken Vessels**

Nancy Click Banfield  
Centergy Music / BMI

One day throughout the marketplace  
A potter searched and roamed.  
He was looking for a vessel  
To purchase for his own.  
There were many brought  
Before him there all shining bright and new.  
But he shook his head and told them no  
These vessels will not do.

### **Chorus**

Bring me broken vessels  
Shattered pieces made of clay.  
Bring me broken vessels  
Ones the world has thrown away.  
I will take them in my able hand  
And make them over new.  
Just bring me broken vessels  
And see what I can do.

I was so lost and scarred by sin  
Until I realized  
Unless I sought the Master’s touch  
My soul would not survive.  
So I brought my vessel as it was  
And gave the Lord control.  
Now by grace I’m bound for heaven  
And my vessel overflows.

### **Chorus**

I will take them in my able hand  
And make them over new.  
Just bring me broken vessels  
And see what I can do.  
(Track #5)