

A Practical Study of COLOSSIANS

How Christians Grow

“Christ is All and in All”

Key verse 3:11b — *“Christ is all and in all.”*

Study Number Eleven – Christ in My Witness – Colossians 4:2-6

We can title this section:

Bearing Fruit and Making an Impact.

Raphael McManus has some of the most refreshing insights as to what the church should be and how it would meet needs. Listen to this story:

(The Barbarian Way: Soul Cravings by Erwin Raphael McManus)

But my favorite of all is the group designation for rhinos. You see, rhinos can run at thirty miles an hour, which is pretty fast when you consider how much weight they’re pulling. They’re actually faster than squirrels, which can run at up to twenty-six miles an hour. And even then, who’s going to live in dread of a charging squirrel? (Sorry—that was a bit off the point.) Running at thirty miles an hour is faster than a

used Pinto will go. Just one problem with this phenomenon. Rhinos can see only thirty feet in front of them. Can you imagine something that large moving in concert as a group, plowing ahead at thirty miles an hour with no idea what's at thirty-one feet? You would think that they would be far too timid to pick up full steam, that their inability to see far enough ahead would paralyze them to immobility. But with that horn pointing the way, rhinos run forward full steam ahead without apprehension, which leads us to their name.

Rhinos moving together at full speed are known as a crash. Even when they're just hanging around enjoying the watershed, they're called a crash because of their potential. You've got to love that. I think that's what we're supposed to be. That's what happens when we become barbarians and shake free of domestication and civility. The church becomes a crash. We become an unstoppable force. We don't have to pretend we know the future. Who cares that we can see only thirty feet ahead? Whatever's at thirty-one feet needs to care that we're coming and better get out of the way.

We need to move together as God's people, a barbarian tribe, and become the human version of the rhino crash. The future is uncertain, but we need to move toward it with confidence. There's a future to be created, a humanity to be liberated. We need to stop wasting our time and stop being afraid of what we cannot see and do not know. We need to move forward full force because of what we do know.

pp. 137-8

This sets the stage for the study. We sense in these five verses that Paul is really putting it all on the line of what he expects

of us as believers. He's never met these people, but he is strong in what he has to say in these verses. Prepare yourself for a good ride.

We're talking about Stages in Our Relationship to Christ. This study is called "Christ in My Witness"—chapter 4:2-6. Our key verse is verse 5.

We're going to learn in these five verses the ingredients for a good witness.

1. He is concerned enough to PRAY,
2. He is careful enough with his CONDUCT, and
3. He COMMUNICATES with COMPASSION.

Five verses—we're in the PRACTICAL SECTION of the epistle.

v. 2 Be busily engaged in prayer, being wide awake about it with thanksgiving;

“Be busily engaged in prayer, being wide awake about it with thanksgiving;”

There are actually FOUR SUBJECTS that he's going to address:

1. COMMUNION,

2. CONTACT,
3. CONCERN, and
4. COMMUNICATION of the message.

One of the things that happens when we get down to the last verse is we see the ultimate purpose for all he's writing.

That last phrase in the last verse—"to the end that you know how you ought to answer everyone"—is the subject of a good witness for Christ.

Now when it comes to PRAYER in verse 2 he tells us **THREE THINGS** about prayer:

1. "Be busily engaged in prayer,"

Number 2 is a WARNING.

2. "be wide awake about it" and
3. do it "with thanksgiving."

Psalm 105:4

Look to the Lord and his strength;
seek his face always.

Romans 12:12

rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer

Ephesians 6:18

With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,

1 Thessalonians 5:17

pray without ceasing,

There are **FOUR COMMANDS** here:

1. “Be busily engaged in prayer, being wide awake about it with thanksgiving;”

Communion with the Lord has to be open and clear.

We have to be submissive and obedient to be prayerful, to tell the Lord that we’re ready to do whatever He wants us to do. We want to be good servants.

“Be busily engaged in prayer.”

Does that come across as someone that doesn’t pray?

This guy that has written this letter under divine inspiration

talks over and over again about his prayer life.

Earlier in chapter 1 he said:

Colossians 1:3

We are giving thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying for you at all times,

He's in prison and these are people that he's never met. Because of the witness of Epaphras the pastor, he has included this church and their needs on his prayer list.

Colossians 1:9

Because of this, we also from the day we heard it are not ceasing in your behalf praying and asking (with petitions and definite requests), in order that you might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

Even though he doesn't know them, he's praying that God's will be accomplished in their lives and that prayer is not an option to him—it's a requirement.

Here's a great statement:

“And help us this and every day to live more nearly as we pray.”

Is Jesus an example of this?

Jesus, when he found the disciples asleep, said:

Matthew 26:41

Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

John says in:

1 John 5:14

And this is the confidence that we have in Him that if we ask anything according to His will, He is hearing us.

Dr. Pentecost in his book *Design for Discipleship* said:

(Design for Discipleship by J. Dwight Pentecost)

A child of God is dependent on God. He looks to the hand of his Master for a signal to tell him when to move and when to stay. He is called back to the Master's side by a word or the sound of a note on the shepherd's pipe. ...

p. 80

Lord, teach us how to be involved in depending upon You.

Prayer is a vital part of answering that.

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Dr. Howard Hendricks tells the story of one night leading an old gentleman to the Lord. And he wanted to expose him to some other Christians and so he took him to a prayer meeting. And he was very, very upset about it. He said “I can’t pray like those other guys do.” And Hendricks just said to him, he said “Well, just say what’s on your heart.” And so he began to pray

“Lord, this is Jim. I’m the one that met You last Thursday night. I hope You will forgive me ‘cause I can’t say it the way these guys can. Maybe if I know You as long as they do, I’ll do a better job; but I would like You to know from the bottom of my heart I really do love You. Thanks, Lord. Amen.”
(source unknown)

The reality of things like that is it makes us realize the pomp and circumstance that accompanies many of our formalities of prayer.

Paul says “Be busily engaged...”

That means DAILY. It’s the first thing that happens in the morning. That’s tough to take but your Father is waiting to hear from you before He gives you the gift of the day.

“Be busily engaged in prayer,”

Why? Why is it that prayer is so vital? COMMUNICATION.

It’s the same thing in MARRIAGE.

Communication, communication, communication.

My thoughts are not His thoughts. His ways are higher than my ways. And His thoughts are higher than my thoughts. (ref. Isaiah 55:8-9) So we get our course directed.

Because we spend time with Him we develop a concern for those who are lost. That's the major part of this study.

John 16:24

Hitherto have you asked nothing in my name: ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full.

1 Peter 5:7

casting all your care upon Him, because He cares for you.

Philippians 4:6-7

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God...

There are **TWO THINGS** to say about our **PRAYERS**:

1. “be wide awake about it...”

“wide awake about it” reminds us of the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus left the other disciples outside and just

took Peter, James and John with Him. No sooner did He get started in His prayer time He found that they were already sound asleep.

Matthew 26:40

And he comes to the disciples, and finds them asleep, and said to Peter, What, can't you watch me with me one hour?

You're saying "One hour! Man 10 minutes is about all I can take!"

How unprepared we are for life's greatest moments because we've slept instead of praying.

It is through times of prayer that we're burdened for those around us that don't know Christ. We're sensitized as a result of praying to be constructively involved in their lives in helping to meet their needs.

2. our prayers are to be offered "with thanksgiving."

We can't be thankful in our prayer time without trusting, knowing that He hears and He's going to be involved. We can say thank you ahead of time. That's an expression of trust and faith.

Corrie Ten Boom said:

(Galatians-Colossians, Holman New Testament Commentary:

Volume 8 by Max Anders. Holman)

“The most important question is not how much work is being done but how much Jesus is doing through you. Look up; God’s ceiling is unlimited. Learn to look on Jesus, and more and more you will find that Jesus is directing your wandering look toward the Holy Spirit.”

Corrie Ten Boom

p. 342

What she’s saying in essence is get focused in your time of prayer.

This piece of poetry was in one of the commentaries:

(Colossians: Where Life is Established by Dr. Roy L. Laurin)

“I met God in the morning,
When the day was at its best.
And His presence came like sunshine,
Like a glory in my breast.
All day long, this Presence lingered,
All day long, He stayed with me,
And we sailed in perfect calmness
O’er a very troubled sea.
So I think I know the secret
Learned from many a troubled way:
You must seek Him in the morning
If you want Him through the day.”

pp. 175

(Voices from the Past: Puritan Devotional Readings edited by Richard Rushing)

How often do we come to him with a selfish aim, as if we would draw God into our own designs and purposes! None are so unfit to glorify God, and so unwelcome to him, as those that are so wedded and vehemently addicted to their own honour and esteem in the world.

p. 19

Oswald Chambers said:

(My Utmost For His Highest by Oswald Chambers)

Worship and intercession must go together; one is impossible without the other. Intercession means raising ourselves up to the point of getting the mind of Christ regarding the person for whom we are praying ... Instead of worshiping God, we recite speeches to God about how prayer is supposed to work. Are we worshiping God or disputing Him when we say, “But God, I just don’t see how you are going to do this”? This is a sure sign that we are not worshiping. When we lose sight of God, we become hard and dogmatic. We throw our petitions at His throne and dictate to Him what we want Him to do. We don’t worship God, nor do we seek to conform our minds to the mind of Christ. And if we are hard toward God, we will become hard toward other people.

(March 30)

The Greatest Gift is a collection devoted to prayer and several different prayer authors write it. David Jeremiah always manages to say it well.

(The Greatest Gift: A Collection Devoted to Prayer by Bruce Wilkinson, Oliver North, Ruth Myers, Shirley Dobson, Otis Ledbetter, Ron Mehl, David Jeremiah, and Greg Laurie)

Several years ago when I preached about prayer in Matthew 7, our church's superbly creative drama team came up with a great way to set our minds on what Jesus is saying in that passage.

Here's what we saw and heard that Sunday:

On the stage is a sort of vestibule outlined with filing cabinets. A couple is entering the vestibule, and a man is waiting there for them. From their conversation, we learn that this is the threshold of heaven, and the apostle Peter himself is inviting the couple in.

After a brief discussion, the man asks Peter, "What are all these filing cabinets for?"

Peter explains that inside the filing drawers are inventories of all the unclaimed gifts God was prepared to give His children, yet they failed to request them from Him. "One of these cabinets has a drawer marked for you," Peter says. "And in it are all the things God wanted to give you that you never asked for."

I'll never forget that! If there were a drawer like that in heaven for you and me, how full would it be? Some of us may be shocked in eternity to realize the potential ministry impact we could have had, and the true blessings we could have

known, if we'd only just asked God for them.
pp. 125-6

John 16:24

Until you have asked nothing in My name; ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full.

David Jeremiah was stricken with cancer and had a stem cell transplant. He said he learned some lessons in the hospital about praying:

(The Greatest Gift: A Collection Devoted to Prayer by Bruce Wilkinson, Oliver North, Ruth Myers, Shirley Dobson, Otis Ledbetter, Ron Mehl, David Jeremiah, and Greg Laurie)

One day I finally recognized with particular clarity why it was so hard for me to pray, and that day I wrote this down in my Bible: "Prayer is my Declaration of Dependence." For a go-getter, type A, driven person like me, prayer is difficult because it flies in the face of our frantic efforts to prove that we're self-sufficient, independent, and strong. With prayer I have to admit I'm spiritually impotent.

John Piper calls prayer "the antidote for the disease of self-confidence." He then goes on to point out a telling difference between Uncle Sam and Jesus Christ: "Uncle Sam won't enlist you in his service unless you are healthy, and Jesus won't enlist you unless you are sick." It's just as Jesus said: "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but

sinner, to repentance” ...

Piper then notes that “Christianity is fundamentally convalescence (‘Pray without ceasing’ = Keep buzzing the nurse).”

pp. 28-29

We’ve learned three things in that verse:

1. “Be busily engaged in prayer,”
2. “being side awake about it” and
3. then be praying “with thanksgiving” or a grateful heart.

He’s going to say more about prayer in verse 3.

v. 3 praying at the same time also for us, that God would open for us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, because of which I also have been bound;

“praying at the same time also for us, that God would open for us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, because of which I also have been bound;”

Let’s put the four together when it comes to prayer:

1. “Be busily engaged” in it,
2. be “wide awake about it,”

3. be praying “with thanksgiving.”

4. Would you remember me? Would you pray “also for us.” Not just him singularly, but for us—all the people on my staff and the people who are working in these various fields of service.

Pray for us. What is his prayer request?

“That God would get me out of this stinking prison! I’m just hung up here and I can’t have any ministry at all and it’s just terrible and I just want you to pray. Intercede for me 24 hours a day so I can get out of here.”

That’s the way we pray isn’t it?

Remember he’s a prisoner and his concerns are not primary. It’s the Lord’s concern and it’s while he’s in prison that God wants to use him in the lives of people. So what does he say?

“Pray at the same time for us, that God would open for us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ.”

“the mystery of Christ” is the Gospel, Christ is in you, the hope of glory, is all that means, and that the door would be open for the Word.

Do you think that God answered that prayer? If you’ll remember, Onesimus was a runaway slave from the Lycus

Valley. He ended up in Rome in a prison cell right next to Paul. Paul led him to Christ and he was in the audience while this letter's being read.

He's comes to know Christ, he goes back with the little book of Philemon to give to his master. He's there with the church listening to this letter that has been written. So yes, the Lord did answer his prayer.

In another experience in prison he said the whole Praetorian Guard was impacted. In this prison, just before his death, he was chained to one of the soldiers for 24 hours a day. We can imagine him sharing Christ with these guys. He had a captive audience, literally. They thought they were captivating him but that wasn't the case.

So the Lord does open a door for the Word.

Do you pray that way? That God would open a door for you to share the Word?

“I have been bound” for this he says. That's the reason that he is in prison.

Gromacki in his commentary said this:

(Stand Perfect in Wisdom: An Exposition of Colossians & Philemon by Dr. Robert Gromacki)

The spiritual depth of Paul can be seen here in the fact that

he desired an opportunity for witness rather than a release from his imprisonment. He was more concerned for others than [he was] for himself.

p. 156

Charles Haddon Spurgeon said:

(Exploring the Mind & Heart of the Prince of Preachers: Five-thousand illustrations under one-thousand topical headings from the works of C. H. Spurgeon by C. H. Spurgeon)

We believe that God sends all pestilences, let them come how they may, and that he sends them with a purpose, let them be removed in whatever way they may; and we conceive that it is our business as ministers of God, to call the people's attention to God in the disease, and teach them the lesson which God would have them learn. 705.446

p. M-543

So much of our praying is struggling against what God has allowed rather than peacefully accepting it and saying: "Speak Lord for your servant is listening and eager to obey!"

Do you agree with that?

Oftentimes we get our mind made up as to what the answer is and we're just asking Him to bless our plans. It's going to come by slowing down. The struggle is going to depart because it's no longer a conflict of our flesh with His will when we're ready to be obedient.

Listen to Ruth Paxson:

(Life on the Highest Plane: A Study of the Spiritual Nature and Needs of Man by Ruth Paxson)

Is the spiritual presence of the living Lord such an intense reality to you? Are you occupied with Christ? Are you satisfied in Christ? Can you say from your heart,

“Thou, O Christ, art all I want;
More than all in Thee I find”?

To have Christ abiding in us in all His fullness, is to have every need supplied, every desire fulfilled, every hunger satisfied, every thirst quenched. It is to have our whole life perpetually refreshed and replete in Him. Such a realization of His abiding presence in its fullness is one of the rich rewards of a Spirit-filled life.

p. 316

Paul really knows what he's talking about. This comes across a little bit out of date and a little bit weird. But look how contemporary it is.

David Platt wrote a book called *Radical*. He went to Asia and had a life-changing experience and came back and it affected his church. Listen to this:

(Radical: Taking Back Your Faith From the American Dream

by David Platt)

We were settling for a Christianity that revolves around catering to ourselves when the central message of Christianity is actually about abandoning ourselves.

p. 7

Thus began a process in which, over the next ten days, for eight to twelve hours a day, we would gather to study God's Word. They were hungry.

p. 24

Here comes the PURPOSE:

v. 4 in order that I may make it plain as I ought to speak.

“in order that I may make it plain as I ought to speak.”

Why do we pray like we pray? The PURPOSE of its right here

“in order that I might make it plain as I ought to speak.”

Paul says pray for me that I personally “may make it [clear] as I ought to speak.”

Not only open the door for us, but when the door swings open, then help me to buy up the opportunity that I can “make it plain” and speak “as I ought to speak.”

(Exploring the Mind & Heart of the Prince of Preachers: Five-thousand illustrations under one-thousand topical headings from the works of C. H. Spurgeon by C. H. Spurgeon)

Happy is our condition when the glory of God fills both heart and tongue! Oh, to swim in a sea of gratitude, to feel waves of praise breaking over one's joyful head, and then to dive into the ocean of adoration, and lose one's self in the ever-blessed God! 1828.133

p. 267

You can tell Charles Haddon Spurgeon had a depth to him that affected his ministry.

v. 5 In wisdom be ordering your behavior towards those outside, buying up for yourselves the time (making the most of the time).

“In wisdom be ordering your behavior towards those outside, buying up for yourselves the time (or making the most of the time).”

Now he comes to the KEY VERSE to the study.

Why do we do all this other stuff? Why do we pray? Why do we spend quality time? It's for God to read our hearts and our passions and our desires so that we reach out and get intimately involved in people who are lost and dying without the Savior.

It's the passion of Christ living through us.

So COMMUNION with our Lord, we are preparing “the mystery of Christ”—the message—so we can be effective “towards those [who are] outside.”

Our KEY THOUGHT should be:

1. be CONCERNED for those,
2. make CONTACT with them, and
3. COMMUNICATE with them.

Christ in My Witness:

BEARING FRUIT and
MULTIPLYING IMPACT.

You might be saying you don't know very much. The Lord said He would provide the wisdom:

James 1:5

If you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that gives to all men liberally...

James 3:17

But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, and without hypocrisy.

The big question that you have is how do you build a bridge to someone that's not a believer?

There are lots of people who just say “Well, hand them a tract tell them to read it, and to pray the prayer at the end of it.” That's the way a lot of people talk about evangelism.

YoungLife has a different concept of evangelism. First of all they have a CONCERN. They pray for the high school. They pray for the students they're going to meet. They pray for the club they're going to lead—for the ones that are going to come to know Christ. They pray believing with great energy.

Then they start doing CONTACT WORK. Contact work means that they go on the campus, they go to football practice, they go to the school play, they get permission to be in the cafeteria. All just to laugh and have fun, drink a Coke or just have a real good time. Not dealing at all with spiritual things.

In contact work you are letting your life bear witness. At this point you're not ready to share. After the contact work, then comes the deepening of a relationship. That relationship is one of TRUST.

Then they want to know what makes you love them so much. Why you're so interested in them. Why you care.

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So much of our evangelism today fails because we're not building bridges. We're not making time to take people to lunch or we're not sharing with the people who need us the most.

Every time we make contact it's a **DIVINE APPOINTMENT**—another opportunity to talk. We are able to eventually find out where they stand in their relationship with Christ.

So what do you do? You **PRAY**, you walk “in wisdom...towards those without”—that's your **CONTACT WORK**.

You're **WISE AS A SERVANT** and
HARMLESS AS A DOVE.

Then the opportunity will come. Somebody's going to say “Boy, what makes you tick? You always smile all the time. You're so happy. What is it about you?” That opens the door.

That is:

1 Peter 3:15

Set apart Christ as Lord in your hearts and be ready always to give an answer to every person who asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.

Christ said:

John 12:32

...If I be lifted up, I will draw all men to me.

Larry Richards wrote a book called *A New Face for the Church*. This speaks to the plight of many people who become believers:

Recently, I spoke at a conference on the role of the laymen in evangelism. One bubbly woman afterwards said, “You know, I have been a Christian for three years and I just now realized I don’t know any non-Christians anymore.” Another young woman wistfully commented after hearing of the enthusiastic young witness that I had mentioned earlier, “I was just like that when I was first saved.”

What happens to so many zealous converts who also were once just like that? They become involved in the church. They serve, but they trade away something distinctively Christian in the process of fitting in.

(source unknown)

We trade meetings and relationships with our brothers and sisters in Christ rather than focusing on the outside.

Listen to Jesus. He never lost this:

Matthew 9:36-38

But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with

compassion because they fainted and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into the harvest.

Are you reading what he's saying here? We'll possibly have to change our schedules a little.

“buying up for yourselves the time (or making the most of your time).”

If there's ever a verse that we should pay attention to it's this one.

We get hardened. We get into our own thing and we fail in our witness for Him.

John 9:4

I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: for the night is coming, when no man can work.

He told the disciples when they came back from the Samaritan grocery store, after his conversation with the woman at the well:

John 4:35-36

Don't tell me there are four months and then comes the harvest. Behold I say unto you, lift up your eyes, and look on

the fields; they are white already to harvest. And he that reaps receives his wages, and gathers fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.

So GOVERNED BY WISDOM we want to make it plain. But in the process, we also want to make the best use of our time.

Here's something from *Voices of the Past*:

(Voices from the Past: Puritan Devotional Readings edited by Richard Rushing)

**Making the best use of the time,
because the days are evil.**
Ephesians 5:16

Time is man's opportunity to accomplish the work for which he is living. He who makes best use of the time considers what he parts with of lesser value than what is gained. It is God that calls you to labour; will you stand by or be doing other things while he expects duty from you? Moses must go to Pharaoh when God bids him, Jonah must go to Nineveh, and Abraham must sacrifice his son when God bids him. And will you go about your fleshly pleasures when God commands you to his service? Heaven and hell are the outcome of our warfare. Have we time to spare in the midst of such a fight? The loss of time is no small part of the enemy's victory. Can we play and loiter away our time with so much serious work to do? We must arise and stir up our soul as if a

bear were at our back, or our house were burning. Consider in review how profitable redeeming the time has been in time past. How cheerfully would we redeem the time when heaven, communion with God along the way, a life of holy strength and comfort, and a death full of joy and hope are to be gained!

...

RICHARD BAXTER, *A Christian Directory*, I:230-234
p. 298

Here comes Scupoli, a Catholic monk from the 15th century:

(The Spiritual Combat by Lorenzo Scupoli)

Remember every day, that He Who gives you the morning does not promise the evening, and when He gives you the evening, does not promise the next morning.

Spend, then, every moment of the passing hour in a way which is pleasing to God, as if it were your last, and so much the more carefully, seeing that for every moment you must give the strictest account.

p. 40

“Live each day as though it were your last and one of these days you’ll be right!”

(source unknown)

Here are a couple of statements from Spurgeon:

(Exploring the Mind & Heart of the Prince of Preachers: Five-

thousand illustrations under one-thousand topical headings from the works of C. H. Spurgeon by C. H. Spurgeon)

He who never seeks the conversion of another is in imminent danger of being damned himself. 1282.141
p. 455

In other words, if you don't have a heart at all for the lost and dying after coming to know Christ, he questions whether or not you know Christ.

(Exploring the Mind & Heart of the Prince of Preachers: Five-thousand illustrations under one-thousand topical headings from the works of C. H. Spurgeon by C. H. Spurgeon)

Do you want to go to heaven alone? I fear you will never go there. Have you no wish for others to be saved? Then you are not saved yourself. Be sure of that. 2019.222
p. 455

It's not an option. It's a life trait of a believer to be concerned for others.

We've talked about COMMUNION, CONTACT, and CONCERN TO COMMUNICATE. The answer to all that comes in our last verse:.

v. 6 Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, to the end that you know how you ought to answer everyone.

“Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt,”—the ultimate purpose—“to the end that you know how you ought to answer everyone.”

The fourth and final COMMAND:

“Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt,”

Command #1: “Be busily engaged in prayer”—verse 2.

Command #2: “In wisdom be ordering your behavior towards those outside.” — verse 5

Command #3: “buying up for yourselves the time.” — verse 5

Command #4: “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt” —verse 6

Set apart Christ as Lord and be ready always to give an answer to every man who would ask you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.

What does it mean “speech be gracious and seasoned with salt”?

Have within it those things in your private and public conversations that are going to make people think, not that you're being obnoxious but maybe it's a verse of Scripture.

Both our PUBLIC and PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS—notice “always” is the word.

“Let your speech ALWAYS with grace, seasoned with salt,”

It’s SPEECH seasoned with “grace” and “seasoned with salt.”

Do you remember that verse in the beatitudes in Matthew 5?

Matthew 5:13

You are the salt of the earth: but if the salt has lost its savour wherewith shall it be salted? It is there good for thing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under the foot of men.

Ephesians 4:29

Don’t use bad language. Say only what is good and helpful to those you are talking to...

“that you might know how to answer everyone.”

You find many of the prophets are scared to speak the message that God gave them.

Psalms 81:10

...open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.

Exodus 4—“Moses said [I-I-I-I-I-] stutter and I’m slow of speech.”

The Lord just says: “God and I will be with your mouth.

Psalm 19:14

Let the words of your mouth, and the meditations of your heart be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength and my redeemer.

That meditation focuses on the mind.

Let the words of my mouth and the thoughts of my mind go together. The struggle to be a Christian and to live the Christian life is the MIND.

“As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.” (ref. Proverbs 23:7)

There they are together—Psalm 19:14.

The ultimate purpose is “to the end that you ought to know how to answer everyone.”

Proverbs 11:30

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise.

George Bernard Shaw was an agnostic until the day he died,

but he made some great statements as a philosopher. He said:

The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.

—George Bernard Shaw, Irish literary critic, playwright, and essayist (1856-1950)

*Source unknown; submitted by Kevin Miller, executive vice president,
Christianity Today International.*

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That's a great statement for marriage because we think we have communicated with each other and we've just been passing in the night.

Listen to what Joni Eareckson Tada says about her witness:

(A Place of Healing: Wrestling with the Mysteries of Suffering, Pain, and God's Sovereignty by Joni Eareckson Tada)

As I have stated in the pages of this book, so many have tried to get me to say that my accident forty-three years ago was never part of God's plan. That my paralysis was never His intention. That quadriplegia was never necessary. That chronic pain didn't have to be. That suffering was never part of His plan. That the many tears and groans and struggles and sleepless nights were needless and a waste of my energy and my life.

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I know differently.

It was all planned long ago, and God brought it about in His perfect faithfulness. And because He allowed it and permitted it, because He has walked with me through every moment of it, His plan has been marvelous for Joni Eareckson Tada.

And let me add this. I mean these words as much as I have ever meant any words:

I am content.

p. 197

She has such a contentment to be the witness that the Lord wants her to be.

Here are the last words of Jesus:

Acts 1:8

But you shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and you shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, all Judaea, and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

We should say with Isaiah: “Here am I, Lord, send me.”

There are thirteen lessons that summarize the passage.

LESSON #1: A good witness is (1) concerned enough to pray; (2) careful with his conduct; and (3) communicates with compassion.

LESSON #2: Paul is a great example of a person who prays. In Colossians 1:3 he says: “[I am] giving thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying for you at all times” (DAV).

LESSON #3: To be “busily engaged in prayer” means that we work at it. It is a top priority. We give it our best shot.

LESSON #4: In the little snippets of Christ’s words from the cross, out of the seven sayings three of them are prayers to the Father: (1) “Father, forgive them for they don’t know what they are doing.” (4) “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (7) “Father, into your hands I am commending my spirit.”

LESSON #5: 1 Thessalonians 5:17: “Pray without ceasing” (NASB).

LESSON #6: How unprepared we are for life’s great moments simply because we have slept instead of praying.

LESSON #7: Paul is asking the Colossians to pray for open doors of opportunity for ministry.

LESSON #8: Paul is praying for clarity in his communication to folks who need to know the Savior.

LESSON #9: It is Paul’s hope that as they pray for him he will be able to make plain the message to those who need to hear

about the Lord Jesus.

LESSON #10: “Lead me to some soul today. Oh teach me, Lord, just what to say. Friends of mine are lost in sin, and cannot find their way. Few there are who seem to care and few there are who pray. Melt my heart and fill my life, give me one soul today.” (Will Houghton)

LESSON #11: Paul says two things about our speech here: (1) “with grace” and (2) that it is “seasoned with salt” (verse 6).

LESSON #12: The end result of this instruction is seen in that last phrase in verse 6: “You know how you ought to answer everyone.”

LESSON #13: Jesus’ last words before He ascended into glory are recorded in Acts 1:8: “but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth” (NASB).

Here are some great lyrics to a song that speaks to how the Lord can use us:

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.
(Track #5)

Lord, we would come with the passion of our hearts being that
You would find in us vessels that are broken and ready to be
useful in Your service. Lord, we know there are those who
have already expressed faith in You and received You as
Savior but some of us certainly have to bow in conviction as
Your Word before us is about the passion we ought to have,
the concern we ought to have for people who don't know You.
We pray that You will stir up our pot and that You will turn
up the heat, that we will be those who'll be effective witnesses.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

A Practical Study of EPHESIANS

HEAVEN'S PLAN for Life on Earth

“What It’s Like Living According to God’s Plan”

Key verse 3:11b — “*Christ is all and in all.*”

STUDY NUMBER ELEVEN – CHRIST IN MY WITNESS – COLOSSIANS 4:2-6

KEY VERSE 4:5

v. 2 Be busily engaged in prayer, being wide awake about it with thanksgiving;

v. 3 praying at the same time also for us, that God would open for us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, because of which I also have been bound;

v. 4 in order that I may make it plain as I ought to speak.

v. 5 In wisdom be ordering your behavior towards those outside, buying up for yourselves the time (making the most of the time).

v. 6 Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, to the end that you know how you ought to answer everyone.

NOTES

QUESTIONS:

1. Read Colossians 4:2-6 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. What are we commanded to do in verse 2?

3. How are we supposed to go about praying in verse 2?

4. What is Paul's prayer request in verse 3?

5. Why does he ask them to pray for him in verse 4?

6. What are we commanded to do in verse 5?

7. How is it possible to order our “behavior towards those outside” in such a way that would be pleasing to the Lord?

8. How is it possible for one’s speech to be “seasoned with salt?”

9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

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