

**COLOSSIANS: DISCERNING TRUE DOCTRINES**  
**"Part VII: Relating To The Lost To Communicate The Gospel"**  
**(Colossians 4:5-6)**

Introduction: (To show the need . . . )

Over the years, many times in my own walk with God and many times in conversations with believers, I have discovered an **inability** we believers have to knowing **how** to witness the gospel **effectively**.

For example, one day a believer who had failed in trying to persuade an unsaved friend of her need to be saved got this friend's permission to bring her to talk with me.

In the process of listening and watching the two relate to one another, I sensed that the unbeliever was **not** that opposed to the *Gospel*, but had a **deep FEAR** of being **hooked** into a *cult* if she were to "believe in Christ" as the Christian was impressing upon her to do.

The more this believer tried to persuade her unsaved friend, "I **care** about your **soul** -- you **need** to trust in Christ!" the harder this unbeliever resisted "praying the Sinner's Prayer"!

Knowing of what God commands us in relating to the unsaved in the passage we will study today in Colossians 4, I suggested that the unbeliever take home the tract we had to show her and decide **on her own** about receiving Christ. At this suggestion, the unbeliever was notably **RELIEVED!**

Later, this unbeliever accepted Christ from reading the tract we had given her, but **only** while she was alone in her apartment in a setting she felt she could clearly think and reflect on what the Scripture actually **said to her!**

The believer who witnessed in this situation then learned through this process that her well-intentioned efforts were **themselves** blocking the way for the unsaved friend to come to Christ!

**Though we need to pray for the discipling process, many times we Christians need God's "pointers" on actually relating with and even speaking to unbelievers so as to be an effective witness.**

(For this insight, we turn to the sermon "Need" section . . . )

***Need:*** "As we learned in the last sermon, an angelic conflict rages around my discipling efforts, so I need God's help via prayer to be effective. But, does God have **PRACTICAL** ideas on relating to the lost to go with prayer to aid in our explaining the gospel **TO** them?"

- I. **Having spoken about intercessory prayer for reaching the lost in Colossians 4:2-4, Paul gave some pointers in Colossians 4:5-6 on ACTIONS to go WITH intercession for SHARING the Gospel well.**
  - A. In Colossians 4:5, Paul spoke of those who "are without" (KJV), a reference clarified in the NIV as "outsiders", or pagans who were outside the Christian community, Ryrie St. Bib., KJV fn. Col. 4:5.
  - B. As for **relating to** these pagans, Paul asserted we "walk in wisdom", "redeem the time" and "season [our] speech with salt" so as to know **HOW** to answer unsaved people regarding the faith, Colossians 4:5-6.
  - C. Thus, Paul gave pointers a believer who is controlled by the Holy Spirit can **do to further** outreach effectiveness in conjunction with his **praying** for the **unsaved** in Colossians 4:5-6.
- II. **We observe in detail Paul's wording of each of these phrases in their cultural and theological settings to see how WE believers TODAY are to FUNCTION in RELATING to the unsaved so as to AUGMENT the ministry of outreach:**
  - A. **Step One** - We must **always** be **prepared** to witness, seeing ourselves as being "on call" around the clock for an opening to give a witness once the Lord provides it, Colossians 4:5.
    1. Paul's "redeeming the time" as a figure of speech meaning "make the most of every opportunity," (Bib. Know. Com ., N.T., p. 684).
    2. Similar to this idea is Paul's charge to Timothy to be "instant in season, out of season," (2 Tim. 4:2 KJV). One must see himself as being "on-call" for action at any time like a soldier (1 Tim. 1:18)!
    3. Accordingly, whether we **feel** good or not, or whether things **appear** timely or not for sharing the gospel, we must **always** be **ready** to witness as we **never know WHEN** a given party will be **open** for the Lord's truths due to the nature of the angelic conflict (Colossians 4:2-4) and what occurs in man's **heart!**
  - B. **Step Two** - We must be **considerate** of those outside of Christ so as not to **detract** from God's truths by **dissuading WORDS**, Col. 4:6a:
    1. Paul directs that the believer's words should always be given "in grace," a reference to reflecting God's unmerited favor to us, 4:6a.
    2. In the Colossian epistle's context, Paul earlier spelled out what he meant by gracious speech: Colossians 3:8-9 commands us to put off the use of "shameful or abrasive speech," *Ibid.*, p. 681.
    3. Thus, speaking in grace means a Christian must always **use words that are honorable and considerate of the feelings of others**, thereby **not creating undue alienation with the unsaved!**

- C. Step Three - **Though not being unduly inconsiderate**, the believer must **yet reflect** the **righteous, penetrating TRUTH**, Colossians 4:6b:
1. Paul's call for Christians to have their speech "seasoned with salt" (KJV) focuses on the quality of salt to add **flavor** to what is eaten!
  2. As such, salt conveys a **message**, meaning one's speech is to supply **actual TRUTH!** (Ibid., Bible Knowledge Com., N.T., p. 684)
  3. Thus, **though** the believer is to be **kind** in speaking, he must not do so at the price of backing away from the **truth**, but considerably share even **painful realities** with the lost so that they may come to faith in Christ by dealing with **sin**, cf. Acts 17:30.
- III. **Having functioned this way, Paul declares we will know HOW** (pos in the Greek New Testament, UBS Greek New Testament, p. 702) **it is necessary to answer EVERYONE, Colossians 4:6c.**

Application: *For effectiveness in witnessing the Gospel, we must (1) FIRST believe on Christ to be saved ourselves, and indwelt by the Holy Spirit for witnessing effectiveness, John 3:16; Rom. 8:9b; Acts 1:8. (2) THEN, we believers must be controlled by the Holy Spirit through (a) confession of sins we have committed following faith in Christ (1 Jn. 1:9) and (b) reliance upon the Holy Spirit for effective behavior control, Galatians 5:16-23. (3) FOLLOWING these positionings, we must (a) PRAY as we learned in the last sermon for clearance from angelic conflict obstructions to the discipling effort (Col. 4:2-4). (b) Then, in practical terms, God urges us ((a)) to view ourselves as ALWAYS being "on call" with the gospel, ((b)) then to witness with CONSIDERATE words while ((c)) NOT diluting the TRUTH so others can believe for salvation!*

Lesson: *God wants us believers to ACT well in the Spirit's power to be used as instruments of discipling others. This ACTION includes (a) viewing ourselves as being ALWAYS "on call" with the gospel, (b) as being CONSIDERATE in what WORDS we use with the lost (c) while NOT MUFFLING the TRUTH when it comes time to speak it to them!*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . . )

A past President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson, wrote an article in the February 1916 issue of the Moody Monthly magazine. It was reprinted in the special Moody Bible Institute Centennial issue of that magazine (p. 74).

In it, President Wilson reported on this witnessing encounter he had with Dwight L. Moody, the evangelist and founder of Moody Bible Institute:

**"I was sitting in a barber shop chair when I became aware that a personality had entered the room. A man had quietly come in upon the same errand as myself and sat in the chair next to me. Every word he uttered, though not in the least didactic (preachy), showed a personal and vital interest in the man who was serving him. And before I got through, I was aware that I had attended an evangelistic service. Mr. Moody was in the next chair.**

**I purposely lingered after he left and noted the singular effect his visit had upon the barbers in that shop. They talked in undertones. They did not know his name, but they knew that something had elevated their thought. And I felt that I left that place as I should have left a place of worship."**

way Dwight L. Moody *interacted* with an unsaved barber while only having his **hair cut** in a city barber shop the **presence** of the *indwelling Holy Spirit*. Dwight Moody functioned the right **way** while getting his **hair cut**, and so he was useful in witnessing not only to the barbers in the shop, but also to the President of the United States!

When we seek to disciple by prayer, and follow it up with a (a) sense of *always* being "on call" with the gospel, (a) with an attitude of kindness toward the unsaved and (c) yet with a commitment **to the gospel's truth in the process, we can also be God's effective tools in making disciples of others for Christ!**