

Lesson Sixteen
Colossians 4:6-18
Witnesses for Jesus

The success of any ministry rests not only with the leader, but also with those he relies upon as co-laborers. Those who come alongside the leader make great leaders even more effective as a result. In order to illustrate this point, Paul provides us with snapshots of men who were an important part of his ministry. With their faithful support he was able to accomplish more than if he were alone. When each part of the body of Christ fulfills their God-given role, those that are alienated from God can be reached to a greater degree. Yet, it is only when we realize that time is in short supply that we can truly grasp the urgency behind Paul's final words in this epistle. Unless we personally seize each day, the possibility of using today for eternity will pass us by. May each of us firmly take hold of the completeness that we possess in Christ while using every opportunity to touch a lost and dying world.

Day One — Through our Speech
Read Colossians 4:6

1. It is not enough to simply walk wisely before unbelievers, we must also speak wisely. What should characterize our speech according to verse 6?

2. With grace on our lips we will be faithful witnesses and not judges. Describe a conversation that exhibits gracious speech.

3. What do you learn about God's ideal for conversations from the following verses?

Proverbs 31:26

Ephesians 4:15a

Ephesians 4:29, 31

4. We are to make wholesome speech a habit even in the midst of trying circumstances. Difficulties in life should never be an excuse to let our tongues run amok, but unfortunately, they often do. What do you believe might be key to successfully holding them in check?

Day Two – Through our Conversations

Read Colossians 4:6

1. Salt has been used down through the centuries as both a preservative and a seasoning. Why do you think that Paul used this analogy in regard to our speech?

2. At various times in our life, there are occasions to share with others about our faith. It is important for us to know how to say the right thing in the right manner. Summarize what this means after reading 1 Peter 3:15.

a. Do you feel you have answers to defend your faith? Why or why not?

Note: www.AlwaysBeReady.com is a great resource to prepare you to defend your faith.

3. Why does Luke 12:11-12 say that you can have confidence in talking to people about Jesus?

4. What one thing can you apply from day one and two that will improve your communication with others? Journal your thoughts along with a prayer to the Lord.

"The character of a man is known from his conversation." Menander

Day Three — Through being a Godly Example

Read Colossians 4:7-18

1. Paul closes his letter to the Colossians with a warm and personal note. His reflection on the blessings of specific saints is a reminder that our faith is not lived out in the abstract thinking of philosophers, but in the very real lives of believers who have been transformed by the power of the gospel. These faithful ones are our example of Christianity in action. How are these men described in verses 7-14?

2. In what ways did these men minister to Paul and others in the church?

Tychicus (vs. 7b-8):

Onesimus (vs. 10b):

Aristarchus and Justus (vs. 11c):

Epaphras (vs. 12b):

Luke (vs. 14):

Nymphas (vs. 15):

3. Carefully reread verses 7-15 and meditate on how each of these men is commended. Which of these co-laborer's lives exemplifies what you most desire to be like? Why?

a. In 2 Timothy 4:10 there is an unsettling side note regarding the ministry of Demas. What do you learn?

b. What does his example say to you personally?

c. What contrast do you see with Luke and Mark according to verse 11?

4. The faithful ministers mentioned by Paul shared his burdens in ministry. He could not have accomplished all that he did without the assistance of his friends. In what ways can you be a source of comfort and encouragement to those who serve the body of Christ?

5. Ministry to God's people is not always an easy task, therefore, in Colossians 4:17, Paul encourages Archippus regarding his ministry. What did he say to him?

a. If Paul were to say directly to you "fulfill your ministry" what would that mean?

6. Paul also gave a similar charge to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:2-5. How did Paul exhort him?

7. Serving with Paul was not easy. It involved a lot of hardship and few rewards as we see Paul asking the saints to remember his chains. Those prison chains were evidence of his obedience to the Lord and his willingness to pay any price so that others could hear the gospel. How far are you willing to go in your service to the Lord? Journal your thoughts below.

Paul's method of ending his letters was to always remind the reader of God's grace. His final words, *grace be with you*, perfectly sum up the message of the book of Colossians: salvation is by grace through faith in the all-sufficient Christ. The combination of this reference and his signature let readers know that the letter was authentic. As we look back over the verses contained in Colossians, we too can discern that it is authentic simply because every word points to the absolute supremacy of Jesus Christ. He alone is sufficient! He alone is God!

Day Four – Colossians in Review

1. What would you say is the main theme of the book of Colossians?

2. The emphasis of chapter 1-2 is Christ. What one significant truth did you learn about Him and His nature from these chapters?

Chapter 1:

Chapter 2:

3. How has your view of Jesus been affected by the study of Colossians?

4. According to the following verses, what is your position in Christ?

Colossians 2:10a

Colossians 3:1a

Colossians 3:3

a. How does this knowledge personally affect the way you view your own life in Christ?

5. What warnings does Paul give us regarding some of the perils to our Christian faith in chapter 2? (See vs. 4, 8, 16-19)

a. How can verses 2-3 and 6-7 keep you from falling into the various perils to your faith that Paul points out?

6. The Christian life and all that it entails is the focus of chapters 3-4. In what ways did the Lord speak to you regarding your behavior in these areas?

Sexuality:

Speech:

As the elect of God:

In your relationships with family:

At work:

Prayer:

Ministry:

7. What should your mindset be as you follow God's will in your actions?

Colossians 3:2

Colossians 3:17

Colossians 3:23-24

8. The subject of thankfulness is mentioned five times throughout the book of Colossians. Why do you think it is addressed so many times?

9. Compare the way that Paul begins and ends his letter in Colossians 1:2 and Colossians 4:18. What is significant about this?

10. What one truth from the study of Colossians has had the greatest impact upon your thinking?

a. How will you apply it to your life?

After studying this remarkable letter, we now understand that in Jesus Christ we have all that we ever need or want, but we must remember that unless we make practical use of Bible doctrine our study will have been in vain. We do not grow by merely adding knowledge, but by personally appropriating it and aligning our lives with the truth. The Lord has given us everything for the life that He wants us to live. What an encouragement this must have been to the believers who first read this letter! What an encouragement this should be to us today! May we live to daily glorify Him who loved us and died for us.

*“Lord Jesus, make Thyself to me,
A living bright reality,
More present to faith’s vision keen,
Than outward object seen,
More dear, more intimately nigh,
Than e’en the sweetest tie.”
J.B French*

