

The MYSTERY
Hidden for Ages
Is Now REVEALED
A Study of the Book of Colossians

LESSON 23

This Week's Passage:
Colossians 4:5-9

New International Version (NIV)

⁵ Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. ⁶ Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

⁷ Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. ⁸ I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts. ⁹ He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here.

Memory Verse: Colossians 4:5

⁵ Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.

Day One: Read Colossians 4.

In Colossians 4:2-6, Paul shifts his focus from "relationships within the Christian community...[to his own] evangelistic work and the community's relationships with non-Christians."¹

1. "Outsiders" (v. 5) is not a term we commonly use in the church today. Who do you think Paul had in mind when he used that term?

2. The first thing Paul exhorts the believers to do is to "be wise" (v. 5a) in the way they act toward "outsiders." Why would godly wisdom be especially needful in these relationships?

John Piper says, "Wisdom is knowing what to do for the glory of God.... It's knowing how to become all things to all men without compromising holiness and truth. It is creativity and tact and thoughtfulness. It's having a feeling for the moment and having an eye for what people need and want."²

Day Two: Read Colossians 4:5-6.

3. The way we interact with "outsiders" is important. What are some reasons why? (You may wish to consider Mt. 5:14-16 and Eph. 5:15-16.)

4. What might it look like to act unwisely toward “outsiders”?

What might cause us to act unwisely toward “outsiders”?

5. Recall your journey to faith.
 - a. How did the wise actions of other believers impact your journey of faith?

 - b. How can their example help you to act in wisdom toward “outsiders”?

Day Three: Read Colossians 4:5-6.

6. What does Paul encourage the Colossian believers to do in verse 5b?

7. God provides each of us with unique opportunities to interact with “outsiders,” and Paul here encourages us to take advantage of them. Find comfort in knowing that the Lord will provide both opportunities and words to speak.
 - a. How are we able to make the most of these opportunities? (vv. 2-3)

 - b. What challenges do you face as you seek to live this way?

Day Four: Read Colossians 4:5-6.

8. Paul now exhorts the Colossians to “let [their] conversations be always full of grace” (v. 6).
 - a. How would you describe speech that is full of grace? Consider both content and tone. (📖* Eph. 4:29)

 - b. Why is it important that our speech be full of grace?

 - c. In what kinds of situations do you have difficulty speaking graciously?

9. Paul’s exhortation applies “not only in proclaiming the message of salvation but also in discussing the weather.”³ Why does it matter how believers talk about the weather or any other topic that seems trivial?

Day Five: Read Colossians 4:5-9.

10. How does the image of salt as a seasoning for conversation help you understand the impact your speech should have on others?

11. Share with one another how you came to understand the gospel. As you listen to one another, take time to marvel at God’s control and creativity in bringing the same message of salvation to each person in a unique way.

**“Salt is the difference
between eating in
Technicolor and eating
in black and white.”**

~ Jay Rayner, restaurant
critic and novelist

We never see Jesus using the same words or approach in presenting the good news. Pray that God would enable you to see the opportunities he brings and to be sensitive to what the Holy Spirit would have you say or do.

In his letter Paul has poured out his heart for the Colossians. He is passionate in his desire that the Colossians grow in their knowledge and enjoyment of the riches available to them in Christ. Now that his letter is complete, he entrusts its delivery to two men.

12. Paul describes Tychicus as “a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord” (v. 7) What two “jobs” does Paul give to him? (v. 8)

13. Onesimus was a runaway slave who came to faith through Paul’s ministry. He is now described by Paul as “our faithful and dear brother” (v. 9). What will he and Tychicus do when they get to Colossae?

Read Philemon
(a tiny book
between Titus and
Hebrews) to learn
about Onesimus’s
history and
conversion.

14. Tychicus and Onesimus were Paul’s brothers, fellow servants, and friends. Take a moment to thank God for fellow servants God has brought into your life and ask him to give you a heart for both believers and unbelievers.



Reminder: Remember to read the entire book of Colossians this week.

*The  symbol indicates verses for further study.

¹ Douglas J. Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 318.

² Sam Storms, *The Hope of Glory: 100 Daily Meditations on Colossians* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2007), 330.

³ William Hendriksen, *Philippians, Colossians and Philemon* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985), 183.