

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

How to Enhance Your Christian Witness

Colossians 4:2-6

1 How do you enhance your Christian witness?

Most of us are kind of shy about sharing our faith. We can talk about just about everything else except what is the most important.

Years ago there was a Christian conference on evangelism in the city where I was a pastor. Bill Bright, the founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, was to be the speaker. I believe he was the most successful personal evangelist at that time and was interested in gleaning everything I could from him.

The day arrived for the conference but only a dozen of us pastors showed up! Rather than cancel the event, Dr. Bright came anyway. He sat us around a circle and allowed us to pick his brain. It ended up being the perfect venue for learning from this gifted man.

He shared with us the key he believed made sharing the gospel message as a way of life successful. In essence he said that the duty of a Christian was to concentrate on his spiritual growth and his personal

relationship to the Lord. Christian service would, then, come as a by-product! 2

So, how can you focus in on your Christian development so that your witness as a way of life could be a successful by-product? 3

Colossians, chapter 4, verses 2 through 6 tells us.

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone. 4

The first focus is . . .

I. By Continuing in Prayer - v2-4

By continuing in prayer. 5

Your prayers need to be persistent. Lord Jesus told the story about a helpless widow who requested a just decision from a judge against her adversary. The judge could care less about her and her dilemma but took the time to settle her case because she kept bugging him about it. He just wanted to get her out of his hair! ¹ 6

¹ Luke 18:1-8 - Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' "For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!' " And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you; he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

In verse 1 the phrase **devote yourselves** ² in the original language means “to continue exercising strength in this area”. “To make it a habit.” First Thessalonians, chapter 5, verses 17 and 18 support this idea by saying, **pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.** ⁷

You are to be faithful in prayer according to Romans, chapter 12, verse 12, **Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.** ⁸ In fact, First Samuel, chapter 12, verse 23 says that failing to pray is sin! **As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by failing to pray for you.** ⁹

So how is it to be done? ¹⁰ Verse 2 tells us it’s by **being watchful and thankful. Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.** ³ Philippians, chapter 4, verse 8 adds that **it’s not being anxious.** ⁴ ¹¹ Verse 12 in our scripture today even says that

² προσκατερέω.

³ Colossians 4:2.

⁴ Philippians 4:6 - Do not be anxious about anything.

Epaphras wrestled in prayer ⁵ much like Jacob wrestled for his petition! ⁶ ₁₂

What do you pray for? ¹³

In verse 3 the apostle prayed that the mystery of Christ might reach receptive hearts. **And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.** ⁷ ₁₄

This mystery is the gospel of Christ. **Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past . . .**

⁸ ₁₅ Part of that mystery is the potential for our resurrection. **I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed.** ⁹ ₁₆ Another part is that

⁵ Colossians 4:12 - Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured.

⁶ Genesis 32:24-32.

⁷ Colossians 4:3.

⁸ Romans 16:25.

⁹ I Corinthians 15:51.

non-Jews (Gentiles) are included in all this! This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. ¹⁰ ₁₇

Another thing that the apostle wants you to pray for, in verse 4, is that your preacher would be able to communicate the word of God clearly! **Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.** ¹⁸

The second focus for your spiritual development is . . .

II. By Conducting Yourself Wisely - v5

By conducting yourself wisely. Your conduct is the only Bible some people will ever read! ¹⁹

How do you conduct yourself wisely before unbelievers? ²⁰

The answer is not to just avoid them. You can **associate with unbelievers without necessarily condoning what they do.** ²¹

¹⁰ Ephesians 3:6.

Concentrate on growing in Christ. Allow the fruit of the Holy Spirit to shine in your life before them. ²²

Don't be ashamed to **exhibit in your life all the biblical principles you have learned so far.** Show the Lord Jesus in your life in everything that you do. Not everyone is capable of being a teacher; but everyone is capable of developing a Christ-like spirit! ²³

Concentrate on being a Christ-like example every opportunity you have. Verse 5 says **make the most of every opportunity.** ¹¹ In the original language this phrase literally means “purchase the time”. It's related to the term “market”.

In our busy lives taking time to be with people is very hard to do. But do it!

A parallel scripture to this one is Ephesians, chapter 5, verses 15 and 16, **Be very careful, then, how you live — not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.** ²⁴

¹¹ τὸν καιρὸν ἐξαγοραζόμενοι.

The final focus for your spiritual development from this passage is . . .

III. By Conversing with Grace - v6

By conversing with grace. ²⁵

So, how do you speak graciously? ²⁶

First of all the Lord said to **reframe from oaths** to enforce a promise. **Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.** ¹² ₂₇

Second, **reframe from careless, useless words.** Lord Jesus continued, **But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken.** ¹³ ₂₈

Third, **reframe from using more words than necessary.** **When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise.** ¹⁴ ₂₉

¹² Matthew 5:37.

¹³ Matthew 12:36.

¹⁴ Proverbs 10:19.

Fourth, weigh your answers before you speak them. The heart of the righteous weighs its answers, but the mouth of the wicked gushes evil. ¹⁵ ₃₀

Fifth, use words that build up, not words that tear down. Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. ¹⁶ ₃₁

Sixth, be slow to speak in anger. Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry. ¹⁷ ₃₂

Seventh, let your words be genuine and truthful. For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. ¹⁸
And, again, Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. ¹⁹ ₃₃

¹⁵ Proverbs 15:28.

¹⁶ Ephesians 4:29.

¹⁷ James 1:19.

¹⁸ Matthew 12:34.

¹⁹ Ephesians 4:25.

Finally, verse 6 ²⁰ emphasizes, **season your words with salt**. Putting salt on popcorn makes it tastier! ³⁴

A gracious answer enhances your testimony. ³⁵

It does so **by turning away anger**. ²¹ ³⁶ First Peter, chapter 3, verses 15 and 16, puts it this way, **Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander**. ³⁷

It does so **by promoting instruction**. The wise in heart are called discerning, and pleasant words promote instruction. ²² ³⁸

It also does so **by becoming influential**. Proverbs, chapter 22, verse 11, **He who loves a pure heart and**

²⁰ Colossians 4:6 - Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

²¹ Proverbs 15:1 - A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

²² Proverbs 16:21.

whose speech is gracious will have the king for his friend. 39

So, when you are shy about sharing your faith verbally, concentrate on developing your Christian character and your personal relationship with Lord Jesus.

Beef up your prayer life, be conscious of your behavior before others and always season your conversation with grace.

Eventually your witness will bubble over from your committed life!

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