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“Watch Your Walk, Train Your Talk”

Colossians 4:5–6

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A Christian's conduct and speech have a direct impact on non-believers who are watching and listening. How well do we reflect Christ? How much does our witness draw people to Jesus? In this study, we read Paul's closing remarks to the church in Colosse that challenge us to properly witness to non-believers.

1. **Colossians 4:5–6, 17–18** – “[5] Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. [6] Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one. . . . [16] Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea. [17] And say to Archippus, ‘Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it.’ [18] This salutation by my own hand—Paul. Remember my chains. Grace be with you. Amen.”
2. Context
 - a. The epistle from Laodicea
 - i. We do not have Paul's epistle to the Laodiceans.
 - b. “Remember my chains” (verse 18)
 - i. Paul reminded the Colossians that he was imprisoned in Rome.
 1. He was under house arrest while waiting for a trial.
 2. His only crime was preaching Jesus as Lord instead of Caesar.
 - ii. Because of his chains, Paul had never met the Christians at Colosse, but he had heard of them from their pastor, Epaphras.
 1. Colosse was in modern-day Turkey.
 - c. Epaphras
 - i. Epaphras was mentioned twice in Colossians (in chapters 1 and 4).
 - ii. Epaphras was the one who brought Paul a letter about issues in the church for which Epaphras wanted Paul's advice.
 - iii. He was not the one to deliver the letter to the Colossians.
 1. In another letter from prison, Paul called Epaphras “my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus,” so Epaphras ended up in prison with Paul (**Philemon 1:23**).
 2. He may have voluntarily stayed in prison to minister to Paul, or he may have been arrested.
 - d. Tychicus
 - i. Tychicus was the one who would deliver the message to Paul (**Colossians 4:7**).

3. Outsiders

- a. Paul referred to non-believers as *“those who are outside”* (**Colossians 4:5**).
- b. Jesus used the same phrasing in a **Mark 4** parable.
 - i. A parable is a short story that illustrates a deeper moral or spiritual truth.
 - ii. The outsiders were unable and unwilling to understand Jesus' words.
 1. **Mark 4:11** – Jesus said to His disciples, *“To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables.”*
 2. **DISCUSS**: Is your mind open to the truth? When was a time that God opened your eyes to understand His Word?
- c. Those who do not know Jesus are outside the family of faith.
 - i. It is important for us to understand who is on the inside and who is on the outside.
 1. The purpose of this understanding is not to pride ourselves on our piety.
 2. The purpose of this understanding is to see whom we are to minister to and call to join the family of God.
 3. **DISCUSS**: Does your life reflect God's heart for outsiders? How can you reach out to the lost this week?
 - ii. The parable of the great banquet
 1. In the parable, a rich man invited many to come to the banquet.
 2. But because they rejected his invitation and made excuses, the rich master sent his servants to compel outsiders to attend.
 3. **Luke 14:23** – *“The master said to the servant, ‘Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.’”*
 4. In this parable, the master represents Jesus, and the servant represents Christians.
 5. As His servants, our responsibility is to compel outsiders to come to Christ.

4. A Christian's role and responsibility

- a. **Colossians 4:5–6** – *“[5] Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. [6] Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.”*
- b. As a Christian, your role and responsibility is to:
 - i. Watch your walk (verse 5).
 - ii. Train your talk (verse 6).

5. Watch your walk.

a. The Greek word for “walk” is **peripateō**.

i. Be careful how you live. You may be the only Bible someone reads.

1. **DISCUSS**: How do you conduct yourself before unbelievers? What are people reading when they see your life?
2. Your life will either be a steppingstone or a stumbling block to others coming to know Christ.

b. God frequently tells Christians to walk worthy of His calling.

- i. **Colossians 1:10** – “**Walk worthy** of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.”
- ii. **Ephesians 4:1-2** – “[1] I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to **walk worthy** of the calling with which you were called, [2] with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love.”
- iii. **1 Thessalonians 2:11-12** – “[11] You know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, [12] that you would **walk worthy** of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.”
- iv. **Romans 13:13-14** – “[13] Let us **walk properly**, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. [14] But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.”
- v. **Ephesians 5:8-10** – “[8] You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. **Walk as children of light** [9] (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), [10] finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.”
- vi. **1 Thessalonians 4:10b-12** – “[10] We urge you, brethren . . . [11] that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, [12] that you may **walk properly** toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing.”
- vii. **DISCUSS**: What does it mean to walk worthy of God? In what ways can you better honor the Lord with your life?

c. Live so the world sees Jesus in you.

- i. We should live for the glory and honor of God.
- ii. We should be aware that the world is watching us as Believers.
 1. If the world does not see Jesus in us, they have no incentive to seek Jesus.
 2. **DISCUSS**: How are you living a life set apart rather than living like the world? How has that drawn others’ attention to Christ in you?

iii. A holy life is a non-verbal witness.

1. **Matthew 5:16** – *“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”*

6. Train your talk.

a. The verbal witness

- i. **Colossians 4:6** – *“Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.”*

1. The phrase implies that people should notice our godly conduct and ask about our faith.
2. **DISCUSS:** When has your godly conduct led to others asking questions? How can you use these moments to point people to Jesus’ transforming work?

b. Lead with grace.

- i. **1 Peter 3:15** – *“In your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. 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.”* (1984 NIV)

1. Present the Gospel with gentleness and respect because people walk around with condemnation already.

- ii. **Psalms 103:8** – *“The LORD is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.”*

c. Tell the truth.

- i. Paul charged Believers to ensure their speech be “seasoned with salt” (**Colossians 4:6**).

1. Like salt, truth preserves.

- ii. Share the true Gospel, which calls all sinners to trust in the Savior.

1. None of us can save ourselves, no matter how many good deeds we do to try to compensate for our sins.
2. The scientific term for this self-interested charity is called “moralistic therapeutic deism.”
3. But Jesus did not come to make good people better. He came to make sinners forgiven and broken people whole.

d. In our culture, Christians do not usually struggle to rightly balance grace and truth while witnessing to the lost.

e. In our culture, Christians often struggle to witness to the lost at all.

- i. We must be tuned in to God so we may notice when He sets up a divine appointment for us to minister to a lost person.

- ii. We must not be afraid to speak about Jesus.

1. Satan will use any method he can to keep us quiet, including telling us we are not qualified to share the Gospel.

2. But God is not looking for able people, but willing people.
 3. Remember that the only reason you belong to the family of God now is because someone shared the Gospel with you. Be that person to somebody else.
 4. **DISCUSS**: Who has God surrounded you with in your everyday life? How can you share Jesus with them?
- iii. We must accept that not everyone will respond the same way to the Gospel.
1. Sometimes, our role is simply to plant a seed and let God give the increase when the time comes (**1 Corinthians 3:6**).
- iv. We must redeem the time.
1. **Colossians 4:5** – *“Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time.”*
 2. Everyone has the same 24-hour days. Use them wisely.
 3. **DISCUSS**: How is God teaching you to redeem the time? What does that mean in practice (**Ephesians 5:16**)?
 4. C.T. Studd was an early 1900s British missionary to China, and in a poem wrote, “Only one life, ’twill soon be past, only what’s done for Christ will last.”

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James Version (NKJV).