

FIVE-DAY DEVOTIONAL

The Church Turned Outward

A Week in Colossians 4:5–6

*“Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time.
Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt,
so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.”*
Colossians 4:5–6 (ESV)

Day 1 - Walking Wisely Before a Watching World

Scripture Reading

Colossians 4:5, Proverbs 1:7, Ephesians 5:15–17, James 1:5, Matthew 5:16

Devotional

Paul begins with a simple command: “Walk in wisdom toward outsiders.” The word walk refers to the overall pattern of a person's life. It is not about isolated moments but about the daily rhythms that make up who we are.

When Paul speaks of wisdom, he is not talking about worldly cleverness or the ability to navigate difficult situations. In Colossians, wisdom is rooted in Christ Himself. Earlier in the letter, Paul reminded believers that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are found in Christ. To walk wisely, then, is to live under the lordship of Jesus in the ordinary places of life.

That means wisdom is not reserved for major decisions. It shows up in how we speak to a cashier, respond to criticism, treat coworkers, love our spouse, raise our children, and interact with neighbors. Biblical wisdom is simply theology put into practice.

Notice that Paul specifically mentions “outsiders.” He assumes Christians live among unbelievers. The church is distinct from the world, but it is not withdrawn from it. God has intentionally placed us in neighborhoods, workplaces, schools, and communities filled with people who need Christ.

Every day, people are forming conclusions about Jesus based on those who claim to follow Him. That reality should humble us, but it should also encourage us. God delights to use ordinary believers living ordinary lives to display the beauty of Christ.

The goal is not perfection. The goal is faithfulness. When we respond differently than the world around us, when we demonstrate humility, patience, forgiveness, and integrity, we make Christ visible.

The watching world may not agree with everything we believe, but they should see evidence that Jesus truly changes people.

Reflection Questions

1. Where has God placed unbelievers in my everyday life?
2. What areas of my daily conduct best reflect Christ?
3. Where do I need greater wisdom in representing Him?

Practical Application

Ask God to help you identify one specific relationship where you can intentionally live out your faith this week.

Prayer

Father, thank You for placing me where I am. Help me walk wisely before those who do not yet know Christ. Let my conduct reflect the reality of the gospel and point others toward Jesus. Give me wisdom for the ordinary moments of life and help me represent You well. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 2 - Redeeming the Opportunities God Gives

Scripture Reading

Colossians 4:5, Ephesians 5:15–16, Psalm 90:12, Galatians 6:10, Acts 17:26–27

Devotional

Paul continues by saying, “making the best use of the time.” The phrase literally means to buy up or seize an opportunity. It carries the idea of recognizing something valuable and not letting it slip away.

Most of us think of opportunities as big moments. We imagine dramatic conversations, major life events, or unexpected openings for ministry. Yet the opportunities Paul has in mind are often much smaller. They are found in ordinary conversations, everyday relationships, and seemingly routine interactions.

The reality is that opportunities do not stay open forever. Neighbors move away. Coworkers change jobs. Children grow up. Seasons of life come and go. The person who is receptive today may not be receptive tomorrow.

That is why Paul calls us to intentional living. He is not telling us to fill every minute with activity. He is calling us to recognize that God is always at work through His providence. Every conversation matters. Every relationship matters.

Sometimes God creates opportunities through joy. Sometimes He creates them through hardship. A medical diagnosis, a loss, a family crisis, or a difficult season often causes people to ask questions they would not otherwise consider.

Too often we assume there will always be another opportunity. Paul reminds us that faithful Christians learn to recognize the moments God places before them and respond with wisdom.

You do not have to manufacture opportunities. God is already arranging them. Your responsibility is simply to pay attention.

The people in your life are not there by accident. God has sovereignly placed you where you live, work, worship, and serve. He intends to use those relationships for His purposes.

Reflection Questions

1. What opportunities has God already placed in front of me?
2. Have I been attentive or distracted in my relationships?
3. What conversation have I been postponing that needs to happen?

Practical Application

Make a list of three unbelievers you regularly interact with. Pray specifically for opportunities to encourage them and speak about Christ.

Prayer

Father, thank You for Your sovereign care over every detail of life. Help me recognize the opportunities You place before me. Keep me from wasting moments that could be used for Your glory. Give me eyes to see where You are already at work and courage to respond faithfully. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 3 - Speech Shaped by Grace

Scripture Reading

Colossians 4:6, Luke 4:22, Ephesians 4:29, Proverbs 15:1, Titus 2:11–12

Devotional

Paul says, “Let your speech always be gracious.” That is a remarkably high standard.

Notice he does not simply say our speech should occasionally be gracious. He says it should always be gracious. The grace we have received from God is meant to shape the way we speak to others.

This is consistent with everything Paul has already taught in Colossians. Grace changes the heart. Grace changes relationships. Grace changes families. Grace changes workplaces. Eventually, grace changes our words.

Gracious speech does not mean weak speech. It does not mean avoiding difficult conversations. Jesus Himself spoke with perfect grace while confronting sin, exposing hypocrisy, and calling people to repentance.

Gracious speech is speech that reflects the character of Christ. It is kind rather than cruel. Patient rather than harsh. Thoughtful rather than reckless. It seeks the good of others rather than simply winning arguments.

In a world fueled by outrage and hostility, gracious speech stands out. Social media often rewards sarcasm, anger, and ridicule. Many conversations become contests rather than opportunities to serve people.

Followers of Christ are called to something better.

The gospel reminds us that God did not deal harshly with us. While we were sinners, He extended grace. He pursued us, forgave us, and welcomed us through Christ.

When that reality settles into our hearts, it begins to affect our mouths.

Our speech becomes an opportunity to display the grace we ourselves have received.

Reflection Questions

1. What does my speech reveal about the condition of my heart?
2. Are my words marked by grace or irritation?
3. How can I better reflect Christ in difficult conversations?

Practical Application

Pay attention to your speech today. Before responding in conversation, pause briefly and ask whether your words reflect the grace of Christ.

Prayer

Father, thank You for the grace You have shown me in Christ. Forgive me for the careless, impatient, and selfish words I often speak. Fill my heart with gratitude so that my speech reflects Your kindness and truth. Help me honor You with every conversation. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 4 - Truth Seasoned with Salt

Scripture Reading

Colossians 4:6, Matthew 5:13, John 1:14, Ephesians 4:15, Proverbs 25:11

Devotional

Paul adds another phrase: “seasoned with salt.”

Salt preserves. Salt flavors. Salt keeps something from becoming bland and ineffective. Paul's point is that gracious speech must also contain substance.

Some Christians are known for truth without grace. Others are known for grace without truth. Paul refuses to separate the two.

Truth without grace often feels like a hammer. It may be correct, but it drives people away. Grace without truth may feel pleasant, but it leaves people unchanged.

Jesus perfectly embodied both. John describes Him as being “full of grace and truth.” He could speak tenderly to broken sinners while boldly confronting unbelief and rebellion. He never compromised truth, yet He never wielded it carelessly.

That is the model Paul places before us.

Many believers struggle with one side or the other. Some enjoy correcting people but rarely demonstrate gentleness. Others are so concerned about being liked that they never say anything meaningful about Christ.

Salted speech does both. It is gracious enough to be heard and truthful enough to matter.

People do not need our opinions nearly as much as they need God's truth. Yet the way we communicate that truth matters greatly.

The goal is not simply to speak. The goal is to help people hear.

When grace governs our hearts and truth governs our message, our speech becomes a powerful instrument in God's hands.

Reflection Questions

1. Am I more prone toward truth without grace or grace without truth?
2. How did Jesus model the balance I need?
3. Are my conversations helping people move toward Christ?

Practical Application

Think of one difficult conversation you may need to have. Pray specifically for both grace and truth before entering it.

Prayer

Father, help me speak like Your Son. Keep me from harshness and keep me from compromise. Give me courage to speak truth and compassion to speak it well. May my words be useful, loving, and faithful to the gospel. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 5 - Ready to Give an Answer

Scripture Reading

Colossians 4:6, 1 Peter 3:15, Romans 10:9–17, Luke 6:45, 2 Timothy 4:2

Devotional

Paul concludes by saying that believers should know “how you ought to answer each person.”

Eventually, faithful living and gracious speech create opportunities for conversation. People notice something different. Questions arise. Doors open.

When those moments come, Christians must be prepared to speak.

Notice that Paul says “each person.” Not everyone needs the same answer. The proud person needs a different approach than the broken person. The skeptic needs a different conversation than the suffering person.

Wisdom helps us understand where people are and how the gospel addresses their specific situation.

At the same time, every answer ultimately points to the same Savior.

The heart of the Christian message is not self-improvement or religious performance. It is Jesus Christ.

He is the Son of God who entered our world, lived a perfectly righteous life, died on the cross for sinners, rose from the dead, and now offers forgiveness and eternal life to all who repent and believe.

That message is what people need most.

Paul's command assumes that believers actually know the gospel well enough to explain it. We cannot share what we do not understand. That is why Scripture, prayer, worship, and participation in the local church matter so much. God uses those ordinary means to strengthen our faith and prepare us for ministry.

The goal is not becoming a professional apologist. The goal is becoming a faithful witness.

God uses ordinary Christians who know and love Christ to point others toward Him.

Reflection Questions

1. Could I clearly explain the gospel to someone today?
2. What keeps me from speaking about Christ more often?

3. How can I better prepare myself for gospel conversations?

Practical Application

Practice explaining the gospel in two or three minutes. Focus on who Jesus is, what He has done, and how people should respond.

Prayer

Father, thank You for saving me through the gospel of Jesus Christ. Help me know that gospel deeply and speak it clearly. Give me wisdom to answer people well, courage to speak when opportunities arise, and love for those who do not yet know You. Use my life and my words to point others to Christ. In Jesus' name, Amen.