



First Baptist Cumming, GA

Who's Your One • Engaging My Neighbor: Everyday Opportunities to Share •
Colossians 4:2-6 • 08/11/2019

Main Point

A maturing follower of Jesus will faithfully pray and intentionally look for opportunities to share Christ with others.

Introduction

[As your group time begins, pass out the one page participant's guide. Then CHOOSE ONE of the following two ways to introduce the topic of discussion.]

1) QUESTION:

Find a partner and describe the most unusual or unexpected situation in which you had a conversation about Jesus. Who initiated the conversation? Why was it so unexpected?

2) ACTIVITY:

Put people in small groups. Task them with finding ten things they all have in common (outside of being a human being)

We have a God-given mission to share Jesus with the world, and it brings us JOY to take part in God's unfodling rescue mission. So far, we've begun praying for the unbelievers in our lives and we've gotten honest about things that prevent us from sharing Christ.

Ask if someone can share about a conversation or circumstance this week that seemed to answer the prayers we've been praying. [Be patient: If nobody shares, be ready to share about your own progress this week. Consider asking someone specific to share in advance if you are aware of a story or breakthrough... Be sure to share these encouraging stories with your pastors too!]

This week, we'll be encouraged again with some practical ways we can connect with our ONE - as well as other people around us. This week is all about pinpointing the opportunities and people that are right in front of us...people God has put on our path for a purpose. Let's watch and take some notes on this very helpful video featuring 3 of our pastors...

Watch

[Have everyone watch and take notes on the session 3 video featuring FBC pastors Scott Carpenter, Cole Wilkins, and Michael O'Neal... And yes, there were hysterical bloopers and outtakes.]

Discuss

[There should be much worth discussing from the video. Allow people to briefly process their reactions together in groups of 3-4, then allow them share the highlights with the large group using the following questions.]

What specific scriptures do you recall from the video? Did any others come to your mind?

What did you hear that was...

- Encouraging?
- Challenging?
- Shocking?
- Convicting?
- Helpful?

What was your primary takeaway from the video?

As helpful and practical as that was, for the moment, let's turn to yet another scripture that can help us...

Discover

Have a volunteer read [Colossians 4:2-6](#).

2 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. 3 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. 4 Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. 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.

[In this section, simply pick 2 or 3 of the most fitting questions below to ask your group]:

- How might persistent prayer help us stay sharp, alert, and ready to share our faith?
- What was the goal of Paul's life (v. 3)? At what cost?
- While we want to prioritize getting the gospel to people, why is it also important not to treat someone like a "project"? Is it a struggle to name a lost person you genuinely care about?

[A vibrant prayer life keeps us tuned to God and how He is at work around us, even how He wants to use us. Paul asked believers to pray for him, to petition God to give him an opportunity to preach the message—the good news of salvation in Christ. Paul wanted to continue to proclaim the mystery of the Messiah. Although Paul may have had in mind opportunities to tell the good news in prison, most likely he meant his release from prison so that he could resume spreading the gospel. This was the commission or mandate Christ had given him; in this sense, Paul was required to speak. People can tell if you care about them. They will want to know how much you care before they care how much you know. Win the right to be heard by genuinely caring about them - whether they come to faith or not.]

- Why must we be wise and careful but opportunistic in our relationships with outsiders?
- What are some examples of ways you can "talk gracefully, using language 'seasoned with salt.'"

- **In which situations is it easiest for you to talk gracefully, using language seasoned with salt? In which situations is it most challenging?**

[Believers in Colossae would encounter people of various types whose responses and questions would differ. Christians were to be prepared to fit their words to each person who asked about Christ and various elements of the gospel. Because we belong to Christ, we are to exercise wisdom in how we behave. We must know what Christ expects of us, and our conduct must reflect our determination to live according to His standards. A Christian lifestyle offers a strong witness in our “anything goes” culture.]

- **In your interactions with people, would others describe you as a helpful BRIDGE or a troublesome BARRIER to people coming to know Jesus?**
- **Are there any difficult people in your life? People you don't like or enjoy being around? How might regularly praying for those people change the way you approach your relationship with them? Have you ever considered that the most difficult people in your life may be precisely the people for whom God wants you most burdened to pray and share? [Think about Jonah for example!]**
- **What description would you use to characterize your awareness of God at work around you? What are some ways that awareness shapes your intentionality with others?**
- **How does knowing that God orchestrates our conversations about Jesus inform the way you view your relationships and everyday encounters? Why?**
- **Why do you believe the time is now for believers to rise to the challenge and be bold in taking opportunities for the advancement of the gospel of Jesus Christ?**

Application

FOR EVERYONE: Think carefully about your weekly routine. From Monday through Sunday where and when are you around people who don't know Jesus? Where are you consistently around lost people? Write your answers down. Are there places you need to go more often? What names and opportunities emerge?

IF YOU DON'T KNOW YOUR "ONE": Look back at the people on your "Circles of Life" list from Week 1. Have you determined your "ONE" yet? Ask God to show you who it is by the end of the week.

IF YOU ALREADY KNOW YOUR "ONE": This week pray consistently and fervently, for God to help you build a stronger relationship with your "ONE". Consider inviting them over to your home, meeting them for coffee, or giving them a phone call.

Closing

We've been placed in our circles of influence for a reason. God wants to use YOU to help OTHERS know Him. Building relationships is the first step in building bridges to the Gospel. We can't share with people we haven't engaged. The more we commit to praying for God to open doors, the more we'll be trained and ready for opportunities to address others' spiritual needs and questions. Paul's evangelistic training regimen included constantly thinking about how we relate to the people around us. We're looking for any opportunity to share our

faith intelligibly, having lived with humility and integrity. As a church, we will accomplish the mission of God when the love of Christ so fully engulfs our hearts that sharing the gospel and loving others as Christ loved us become the natural expressions of our relationship with God. Let's prioritize it.

Pray

Close your group time in prayer. If time permits, divide up into small groups of 2-4 people. Spend a few minutes sharing about the lost people who you currently have relationships with. Pray for each of these people by name, and pray for the opportunity to develop these relationships further. Ask God to continue helping us overcome our fears of sharing the gospel. Ask God to help each person determine their ONE this week and begin building gospel bridges.

Further Resources:

Participants Guide

Looking for natural ways to integrate others into your life? Consider Jeff Vandersteldt's works: [Saturate](#) (Book & Field Guide) and [Making Space](#) (Video Based Bible Study). Available here on Smallgroup.com.

Feeling challenged to share the gospel and build relationships within today's world? Consider JD Greear's study [The Gospel Above All](#). Available here on Smallgroup.com.

Commentary

Colossians 4:2-6

Paul ended his epistle as he opened it, urging his readers to prayer. The structure of these verses resembles the opening prayers of the epistles. The only direct statement in these verses is, "Devote yourselves to prayer." The command to pray concerned general watchfulness and Paul's ministry. Paul hoped for an open door to be faithful to his calling and for clarity in communicating the message. In other epistles, Paul said, "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17) or its equivalent. The same general tone occurs here. The specific word translated "devote yourselves" means "to persist in." Though the word is different, the meaning is the same. Prayer was to characterize the Colossian church.

Paul requested that they pray for an open door for the gospel (4:3). Paul always sought ways to communicate the gospel. In these verses, Paul disclosed the reason for his success in witness as well as the reason he hoped to

speak. His success was because he looked to the Lord to supply the wisdom for the opportunity. They were to pray that he would find an open door. The apostle lived for such opportunities that were often the redeeming virtues of his circumstances. He knew, however, that God provided these doors of ministry.

Paul asked for ability to walk through such doors as would open. Consistently in Colossians, the term “manifest” refers to revealing what is hidden (3:4). Paul looked for new situations in which he could make the gospel known. On the one hand, Paul did not pray specifically for a “preaching point,” as though that were the only approved means of spreading the gospel. On the other hand, v. 3 makes clear that Paul thought it imperative to speak the word. He hoped, therefore, for an oral ministry. He hoped further that he would do justice to the nature of the gospel so that the witness would be clear.

Having discussed a door of opportunity in ministry, Paul turned his thoughts to wise conduct. The verb used, which is translated “be wise in the way you act,” occurs frequently to identify proper conduct. Generally, translators use some form of the word “walk.” Wisdom provides a proper environment for the Christian’s walk. The theme of wisdom occurs frequently in this epistle, and that probably reflects a major concern of the false teachers as well. Literally, Paul said, “In wisdom be walking.” Thus godly wisdom encompasses the life, as well as the words. At the beginning of the epistle, Paul prayed for the Colossians to know wisdom; here he prayed for them to live it. The phrase “making the most” comes from a verb meaning “to buy up,” as if finding a bargain. Here it conveys the idea of making the most of one’s time spent with unbelievers.

Wisdom was necessary because of their Christian testimony. The “ones outside” needed examples of God’s wisdom. Paul’s concern was the non-Christians’ response to the gospel and the attitude of Christians toward them. Divine wisdom results in a positive witness.