Knowing Him
Lessons from Paul’s Life and Ministry
Lesson 21
Colossians 4

Ordinary People–Extraordinary Service

Is it possible for a Christian navigating through a world filled with all manner of enticements, deceptions, and substitutions to live an undiluted, uncorrupted life before God? Yes! It isn’t a matter of God accomplishing His will by using exceptional people, but of ordinary people taking deliberate steps in obedience to Him. Paul wants every believer to know the God we serve and to serve the God we know.

Read Colossians 4:1–18.

Paul’s encouragement in this chapter has to do with basically three things: (1) being watchful in prayer, (2) walking in wisdom, and (3) using words of grace, so that you know how to answer every man, woman, and child He brings across your path. Imagine what a difference you can make for the kingdom of God by giving heed to these three priorities. Please share your thoughts.

1. What is the nature of Paul’s three-fold appeal for prayer in the following? Why is each one so vitally important? v. 2
   a. earnest – (See also Romans 12:12 and Acts 1:14.)

   b. watchful – (See Matthew 26:41; 1 Thessalonians 5:6; and 1 Peter 5:8.)
c. thankful – (See Ephesians 5:20 and Colossians 2:7.)

2. Even though Paul is in chains, his focus in prayer is on others. What are his specific requests?
   a. v. 3 –
   b. v. 4 –

The fact that Paul is in prison physically does not prevent him from proclaiming Christ to all who would listen. The Word of God is not bound by the things of this world!

3. If believers are to be effective in using every opportunity to get the message of the gospel across, what does Paul say they must do? v. 5

4. What does Paul insist must accompany a wise walk; for what reason? v. 6

There’s an old saying that “you can draw a lot more people with honey than you can with vinegar.” That being true, how careful we, as Christ’s representatives, must be to make sure we are drawing people to Christ rather than driving them away.

In Paul’s time, salt was used for two main purposes: as a preservative to keep food from spoiling and as a flavorful additive.

Think about it . . . in order for your words to be flavorful and salty, what would your speech need to consist of? Cite a couple of examples.

5. Personal: Reflect back on some of your conversations this past week. How flavorful has your talk been lately? Please explain.
Memory verse:
“Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.” Colossians 4:6

Viewpoint

Learn to view your circumstances through the lens of God’s truth rather than looking at God’s truth through the eyes of your circumstances. Practice this with the In focus word search below and then with the Up close & personal look to follow.

In focus: Write a definition for the following words, using the resources you have on hand (i.e., additional Bible translations, dictionary, Bible dictionary, concordance, etc.).

door (4:3)

manifest (4:4)

Up close & personal: How aware are you of the open door opportunities the Lord gives you to speak about Him? Pray that God would give you an increased sensitivity to the leading of His Spirit in this area and then walk through the next open door.

Witness with Your Life!

Reread Colossians 4:7–18.

Verses 7–18 should be read and examined closely from the perspective of being much more than a list of Paul’s co-workers and friends. They are real individuals—ordinary in themselves—but whose lives and ministries became extraordinary because of their God!

Look closer. As you look closely, make note of what made each of them important to Paul, and also what you can learn personally from their example. (Use you cyclopedic index or concordance to add additional information, noting any cross references.)
- vv. 7-8: Tychicus
- v. 9: Onesimus
- v. 10: Aristarchus
- v. 10: Mark
- v. 11: Jesus Justus
- vv. 12–13: Epaphras
- v. 14: Luke
- v. 14: Demas
- v. 15: Nympha
- vv. 16–17: Archippus

Paul’s consuming passion was to communicate the message of Jesus Christ. He was careful to fulfill the ministry he had received from the Lord. Where has God entrusted you to get out the message of His Son? How are you doing?

“The most important question is not how much work is being done but how much Jesus is doing through you. Look up; God’s ceiling is unlimited.” Corrie Ten Boom
A Clear Perspective

“. . . It pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me . . .” Galatians 1:15-16a

As God writes your story, use this page to let Him highlight and clarify what He revealed to you this week. Revisit the points that stood out to you and note your findings below.

1. As you studied God’s Word this week, how did your viewpoint change?

2. What word of truth came into sharper focus for you?

3. In what way have you grown closer to the Lord?

4. What relevance is there between this week’s memory verse and your daily life?

Memory Verse: Write out this week’s verse from memory.