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The Greatest G.I.F.T. of All

Inside Out: Changed Lives, Change Lives, Week 5

In the Bible, the book of Colossians is a letter the Apostle Paul wrote to the Christians in the city of Colossae. In Colossians 4:5-6, Paul offers advice on how we should live our lives, especially in the way we talk and treat others. These verses say:

“Conduct yourself with wisdom in your interactions with outsiders (non-believers), make the most of each opportunity [treating it as something precious]. Let your speech at all times be gracious and pleasant, seasoned with salt, so that you will know how to answer each one [who questions you]” (Colossians 4:5-6 AMP).

These verses remind us to be kind, respectful, and thoughtful in how we live and speak, especially when we are around people who may not share our beliefs. Paul is teaching us to be good examples of God's love through actions and words. Let's take a closer look at what these verses mean and how we can apply them daily.

The first part of Colossians 4:5 says, ***“Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders.”*** “Outsiders” refers to people who do not believe in Jesus or may not be members of the church. Paul is reminding us that we should act carefully and thoughtfully when we are around people who may not know God. It's important to show respect, kindness, and love to everyone, no matter what their beliefs are.

Being wise in our actions means thinking before we do something. For example, when we're at work, school or with friends, we might face situations where we

have to make choices. Maybe someone is being unkind or saying something that isn't right. As Christians, we should respond ways that shows love, understanding, and respect, rather than getting upset or arguing. This can be hard sometimes, but it's important to remember that how we act can help others see God's love in us.

1. In sharing the greatest gift of all, know we are sharing God's love.

The next part of the verse says, *“Make the most of every opportunity.”* This means we should take advantage of every chance we get to do good and to share God's love with others. There are many moments in our daily lives where we can show kindness or help someone. Whether it's assisting a co-worker, a friend who is having a hard time, a classmate who is lonely, or a neighbor who needs help. We might not always realize it, but every little act of kindness can make a big difference in someone's life.

For example, if we see someone sitting alone at lunch, we can invite them to sit with us. If someone is struggling with their homework, we can offer to help them. These small acts of kindness can open doors for deeper conversations where we can share our faith and show God's love.

2. In sharing the greatest gift of all, it's important to interact with the unchurched.

In Colossians 4:6, Paul says, *“Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt.”* This means that the way we speak to others should be kind and full of love. "Grace" is a word that means kindness and forgiveness. When we speak to others, we should be careful not to say things that are mean or hurtful. Instead, our words should lift people up and help them feel valued.

The phrase “seasoned with salt” is a way of saying that our words should be interesting and thoughtful, just like how salt makes food taste better. This means we should speak in a way that brings joy, encouragement, and peace to the people around us. For example, if someone is feeling down or upset, instead of saying something negative, we can try to say something encouraging to make them feel better. Our words have the power to build people up, so we should use them wisely.

3. While sharing the greatest gift of all, flavor your words.

The last part of Colossians 4:6 says, “so that you may know how to answer everyone.” This teaches us that we should be prepared to speak kindly and wisely, especially when others ask us about our faith. Sometimes, people may want to know why we believe in Jesus or why we act the way we do. It’s important that we are ready to share our thoughts in a gentle and respectful way, not in a way that makes others feel judged or uncomfortable.

When we answer questions about our faith, we should remember that we are not trying to win an argument or show that we are better than others. Instead, we are sharing the good news of Jesus’ love in a way that is loving and respectful. This is why it’s important to think before we speak and be kind in our responses. Even when people disagree with us, we can still be polite and considerate in our words.

4. While sharing the greatest gift of all, be prepared to tell your story.

In summary, Colossians 4:5-6 teaches us important lessons about how to live and speak in a way that shows God's love. We should act wisely and respectfully toward everyone, especially people who may not know Jesus. We should make the most of every opportunity to do good and show kindness. Our conversations

should always be full of grace, and we should speak in a way that encourages others. Finally, we should be ready to share our faith with others in a loving and thoughtful way.

These verses remind us as Christians, we are called to be examples of God's love through our actions and words. Whether we are at work, school, at home, or out with friends, we can follow these teachings by being kind, respectful, and thoughtful in everything we do. By doing this, we can be a light to those around us and help others see the love of Jesus through us.

Discussion Questions for small groups

1. What does it mean to be "wise in the way you act toward outsiders?" Why is it important to live with integrity when interacting with non-believers daily?
2. How do you interpret the phrase "make the most of every opportunity?" What are practical ways to create opportunities in order to share faith and demonstrate kindness?
3. What does it mean for conversation to be "full of grace" and why is this important? What is the role of grace in communication? How is it powerful to build bridges in relationship?
4. What is the significance of the metaphor "seasoning our speech with salt?" How can our words be both tasteful and impactful in ways that honor God?
5. In what ways can we balance speaking the truth in love with being gracious especially when discussing sensitive topics? How can we keep our conversations Christ-centered?