

[COLOSIAINS 4:2-6]

/Relating to God & outsiders

[Introduction]

We are all involved in relationships; we can't avoid it. We have relationships with work colleagues, classmates, flatmates, people in our halls of residence, with our friends, wives, husbands, kids, parents, etc.

In Colossians 4:2-6 Paul is talking about relationships; how we relate to people.

And he's talking about two types of relationship:

1. How we relate to God
2. How we relate to outsiders

[1] How to relate to God (v2-4)

We relate to God with prayer.
So how should we pray?

[i] With devotion (v2a)
Being devoted to prayer means keeping at it and not giving up, rather like an athlete training.
How do you pray?
Keep at it; be earnest and unwearied and steadfast in your prayer life.

[ii] With watchfulness (v2b)
Paul wants us to give our full and undivided attention to prayer.
Do you pray like this?
Or are you narcoleptic in your prayer life?
Paul wants us to be awake and alert to needs, dangers, blessings, etc., and to pray in response to them.

[iii] With thankfulness (v2c)
How can we get the energy to pray with devotion and watchfulness?
By being thankful.
Being thankful for what the gospel has made us, and praying our thanks to God energises us to be devoted and watchful.
So remember all God has done for you... and what He has made you.
That will fill you with glee and joy, and then you won't be able to help yourself feeling thankful.

[iv] With open door-ness (v3)
In v3, Paul says "pray that God may open a door for our message."
A door is a way to enter.
Paul wants the gospel to enter lives and situations.
So when we pray for people involved in evangelism, let's pray that God may open doors for the gospel, so that it gets under people's skins, and into their hearts & lives.

[2] How to relate to outsiders (v5-6)

An 'outsider' is someone who is outside the kingdom of God, i.e. someone who is not a Christian.
Are you outside or inside God's kingdom?
Being outside is serious because it means being outside of heaven forever after you die.
Paul tells Christians how to relate to non-Christians. He says:

[i] Be wise in the way you act towards outsiders (v5a)
Being wise is applying what God says to the many and varied situations of life.
This is important because outsiders read our lives like a book – and that tells them about Christianity.
Being wise means demonstrating that the truth of the bible is real and wonderful and powerful.
So be wise! Read and absorb what God says, and do it!

[ii] Make the most of every opportunity (v5b)
Paul wants us to pounce on every opportunity we have to share the gospel.
Like a bargain hunter pouncing on a bargain, Christians are to pounce on opportunities to share the gospel... because the gospel is magnificent and it is what outsiders need!

[iii] Let your conversation be filled with grace (v6a)
When talking to outsiders, our conversation is to be filled with grace.
That is, it is to be truthful and loving and from a heart that has been touched by God's grace. It is to be favouring to the undeserving.

[iv] Let salt season your conversation (v6b)
In relation to food salt has two main functions:
a. It prevents corruption.
Therefore our conversation is to not be rotten and putrid, but pure and clean.
b. It makes food tasty and interesting.
The gospel is so wonderful that our conversation about it is to be such that it 'brings out the flavour' of the gospel and 'makes it tasty' and shows people how (spiritually) good it is.

When we converse like this, our conversation style alone will make a spiritual impact on outsiders.