

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, Dec. 12, 2010

Passage: Col. 4:5-6

Memory Passage: Phil. 4:6-7

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Col. 4:5-6.** What are the first 4 things you notice in these two verses (you should be looking at things like: To whom is Paul speaking? How do these verses connect with what has preceded? With what follows? Are there any commands? What results/purposes are mentioned? How are the clauses put together? Are some clauses subordinate to others? Do any other texts jump to mind as I read? Etc.)?

(b) What is the main theme of these 2 verses? Now write down any questions you have of the text.

(c) Browse Colossians and find the other times Paul uses the terms “wisdom” and “walk” (he uses “walk” twice and “wisdom” 5 times) and write down what you have already learned. Now compare and contrast what Paul has already taught us about wisdom & our walks with what he says in 3:5.

(d) *Family:* Prior to the lesson, gather together 6-10 figurines (toy soldiers, small plastic animals, etc.), as well as two bowls, one clear glass and the other solid color (that can't be seen through). Ask your family to recall what they have learned about our “walk” as we have studied Colossians. If necessary, have individuals read aloud Col. 1:9-10 & 2:6-7 for a reminder. Now take half of the figurines and place them together and place the solid color bowl upside-down over them. Place the other figurines outside the bowl, and begin a discussion about whether the figurines on the outside can see what those on the inside are doing (get creative with the discussion, asking “why not?” kinds of questions). Then remove the non-see-through bowl and replace it with the clear glass bowl and ask everyone the same questions. **Read John 17:12-18** and use the bowls as an object lesson to describe how believers are to live in the midst of non-believers (“outsiders”) in the world.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Col. 4:4-6.** To whom is Paul referring when he speaks of “outsiders” (see 1 Cor. 5:12-13, 1 Thess. 4:12 & 1 Tim. 3:7 for help)? How are you to “walk in wisdom” toward those outside the church (non-believers)?

(b) Many Christians believe or act as if they should be separate from non-believers and only have relationships with those who profess to be Christians, but Paul presupposes in the verse that we will walk with non-believers. Is your life structured so that you have relationships with non-believers? How could you be more intentional in developing relationships with non-believers? What things must you consider as you think through this?

(c) Write down the names of those people with whom you have relationships (by relationship I mean someone with whom you spend enough time to press your life into theirs). Now add to this list those with whom you might begin to pursue a deeper relationship. In v. 5 Paul says that we are to walk with them, “making the best use of the time.” What does this mean? How does it guide you in thinking through the relationships you have with the people on the list you just made? Do you think Paul is writing with a sense of urgency? Why or why not?

(d) *Family:* Begin by describing a situation in which your family needed to accomplish several tasks before you can do something fun. Make the story concrete, with real tasks (dishes to be done, rooms to be cleaned, homework to be finished, etc.) and a real outing (something that your family would look forward to doing and motivate them to accomplish the tasks). Tell them that all the work needs to be done in 1 hour (or whatever amount of time would be appropriate for your story) and ask them how they would organize themselves to accomplish the work. After they plan, try to switch their plans around in ways that would make them less efficient and not accomplish their task, and continue asking them why your ideas are not sound. Then **Read Col. 4:4-6** and discuss what Paul means by “making the best use of the time” as we walk with outsiders.

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Col 4:5-6.** In v. 6 Paul says we must “let (our) speech be gracious.” What does he mean (i.e. is gracious the style or content of our speech)? He further says our speech should be “seasoned with salt.” What does this mean, and does this remind you of any other passages of Scripture?

(b) **Read Matt. 5:13, Mark 9:50 & Luke 14:34-35.** How do these verses help us understand Col. 4:6?

(c) What constitutes “gracious” speech? What constitutes speech “seasoned with salt?” In what ways is your speech toward outsiders gracious & seasoned with salt? In what ways might you improve your graciousness and saltiness?

(d) *Family:* Prepare food that will taste different when salted, like tomatoes, corn on the cob, raw potatoes, French fries, etc. Have a tasting contest (maybe blindfolded?) to see if everyone can tell the difference between the salted food and non-salted.

Then lead in a discussion of how the food tasted different, trying to get everyone to use various adjectives to describe the differences. Then **Read Col. 4:6** and teach what it means to have our speech seasoned with salt using the same adjectives.

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Col. 4:5-6.** According to v. 6, what is the result Paul expects when we interact with non-believers using gracious, salt-seasoned speech? How can our speech lead us to know how to answer someone?

(b) In these verses, Paul expects us to be in conversations with non-believers. He also expects our conversations to lead to specific questions asked by specific people (“each person”). How do you see this working out in your daily life? What kinds of specific questions does Paul expect us to know how to answer?

(c) **Read Acts 8:26-40** and explain how Paul’s principle worked in the life of Phillip.

(d) *Family:* Have two people in your family act out the events found in Acts 8:26-40. Make sure you speak to them in advance of your family time and give them time to prepare, and give them some help if they need it. After they act out the story, read Col 4:6 and explain Paul’s principle found in Colossians and then how it worked out in Phillip’s life. Then begin a discussion concerning how this principle might work out in the lives of your family. You might need to guide them with specific situations that you think about in advance (an encounter in a grocery store, or at the park, or at soccer practice, or at a home-school meeting, in their school classroom or playground, etc.)

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read 1 Pet. 3:13-16.** We looked at these verses last week in relation to Paul’s prayer for a door to be opened for him to “declare the mystery of Christ.” What is the connection between these verses and Col. 3:5-6? How does what you wrote down last week help you to be prepared for answering the questions of non-believers that come up as a result of your speech?

(b) The defense you are to be ready at all times to make concerns, “the reason for the hope that is in you.” To what is Paul referring? What is your hope, and how do you give a defense of it when people ask? Also, what will make people ask?

(c) In Col. 4:6 Paul says our speech should be gracious, seasoned with salt, and Peter tells here in vs. 15-16 that we should make our defense with gentleness & respect, having a good conscience. How do these requirements work together? What does it look like to be salty and gentle at the same time? What must our attitude be toward other people if we are to retain this type of witness?

(d) *Family:* **Read 1 Peter 3:15-16.** Teach your family how to carry out these verses by using an example from your own life. Tell them what it was like to witness to a person by giving a defense for the hope that is in you. Explain both the joys and fears involved and help them to understand the nuts & bolts of witnessing their faith to others.

DAY 6 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Col. 4:5-6.** Think of the last two times you shared the gospel with someone. How long ago were these two encounters? Do you think that you have been “making the best use of the time?” Spend some time in prayer right now asking God to make you a bolder witness, and to show you daily how you might make better use of the time you have with non-believers.

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A Missional Life