Conduct Yourselves Wisely 7.12.09

5 Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. 6 Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person. Colossians 4:5-6 ESV

Overview of the Text:

Paul gives two commands to encourage and direct and the Mission of the Colossian Christians in sharing the Gospel in their city. The first deals with how they should live before others who have not embraced their message and the second with how they speak about the message itself.

"Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, making the best use of the time." Lit. "walk in wisdom." Avoid any unnecessary offense in preaching the Gospel. Embrace a way of living that dispels misconceptions and attracts people to the Faith.

Am I an "insider" or "outsider" in regard to Christianity?

Am I "conducting myself wisely toward outsiders" with any sense of Gospel urgency?

Practical Steps in the Right Direction:

1. Truly believe that there are outsiders in your life God has called you to reach.
    a. …*outsiders:* Not everyone is on their way to heaven. In fact, most people aren't. And there is plenty of confusion about it.
    b. …*in your life:* Spheres of Influence—God has providentially and strategically placed you where you are to share the Good News.
    c. …*you to reach*: Remember Rom. 10:14 *"how can they hear without…"*
2. Confront and repent of your idols that are preventing this from happening.
    a. Selfishness, Comfort/Laziness, Fear of Man.
3. Begin doing what you do (the ordinary things of life) with a sense of "Gospel intentionality" and Gospel urgency.
    a. Home: Become a "Gospel Greenhouse." Continually 'evangelize' one another, especially your children who aren't yet Believers.
    b. Work: Get to know your coworkers and enter their lives.
    c. Neighborhood: Look for ways to connect with your neighbors.
    d. School: Look for ways to get involved with other parents, etc.
    e. Family Activities: *"Part of the reason we are here is to build relationships so that we might share Jesus with people."*
    f. More ideas to come in our MISSION class beginning this fall.

"Let your speech always be gracious" lit. "full of grace," having a sense of attractiveness, pleasantness, winsomeness or charm.

"seasoned with salt" Could speak of wholesomeness, but more likely, that it has some 'flavor' or 'life' to it. Our presentations should never be boring.

Could these words be used to describe how I speak about matters of faith?

"so that you may know how you ought to answer each person." He assumes that they are already in the city sharing. He assumes specific questions about matters of faith will arise.

Am I living a life that raises questions about what I believe? If not, what needs to change?

Practical Steps in the Right Direction:

1. Get out there! *How many unbelievers do I actually have Gospel relationships with?*
2. Know what you believe.
    a. You don't have to be a Bible scholar. Be strong on the basics.
    b. Start by telling your own story of how God has changed you.
3. Think before you speak.
    a. Listen to their specific questions & what is behind them (v.6).
        i. Answer the questions they actually ask.
            1. Sometimes we can be paralyzed by possibilities and not reality.
        ii. Look for the 'hurt' and take Jesus there.
4. When you speak, speak about Life with *life* (v.6).
5. Don't be afraid to say "I don't know" or "Let me get back to you on that."
    a. This shows honesty, authenticity and intellectual integrity.
    b. Involve your community in the process.

Applying the Gospel:

1. Pattern: The Ultimate Insider never faltered in His communication with outsiders. His entire ministry was devoted to doing what this Text calls us to.
2. Payment: Jesus died for our missed opportunities and our improper speech.
3. Power: Jesus, through His Spirit empowers us to walk wisely and speak wisely as we seek to communicate his Message.

What is God calling you to change in regard to what you have heard today?

Are you looking to Jesus as your Perfect Pattern, Payment and Power for those changes?

Works Consulted: *Expositor's Commentary, NIV Application Commentary, Life Application Bible, MacArthur Study Bible, ESV Study Bible*