

## WHAT CAN I DO TO PROMOTE THE GOSPEL? [Colossians 4:2-6](#)

Most of us struggle to faithfully pray and witness. My purpose today is to encourage you.

I want to talk to you today about what you and I can do to promote the gospel. **We can promote the gospel through our prayers, our lives, and our words.**

### How should I pray?

A friend of mine took his small son with him to town one day to run some errands. When lunch time arrived, the two of them went to a familiar diner for a sandwich. The father sat down on one of the stools at the counter and lifted the boy up to the seat beside him. They ordered lunch, and when the waiter brought the food, the father said, "Son, we'll just have a silent prayer." Dad got through praying first and waited for the boy to finish his prayer, but he just sat with his head bowed for an unusually long time. When he finally looked up, his father asked him, "What in the world were you praying about all that time?" With the innocence and honesty of a child, he replied, "How do I know? It was a silent prayer."

**How should I pray?** Pray **PERSISTENTLY** - *"Devote yourselves to prayer"* (v. 2). Paul is talking about unrelenting persistence. Persistent prayer is difficult.

*"They all joined together constantly in prayer"* ([Acts 1:14](#)).

*"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer"* ([Acts 2:42](#)).

S. D. Gordon wrote, *"The greatest thing anyone can do for God and man is pray. It is not the only thing, but it is the chief things. The great people of earth are the people who pray. I do not mean those who talk about prayer; nor those who say they believe in prayer; nor yet those who can explain about prayer; but I mean those people who take time to pray"*.

Old hymn: *"And Satan trembles when he sees; The weakest saint upon his knees."*

**2. Pray ALERTLY** - *"Being watchful"* (v. 2; "keeping alert" NASB). Paul is probably talking about prayer as weapon against temptation. Publicly falling into sin destroys our ability to effectively witness.

*"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour"* ([1 Peter 5:8](#)).

Example: Peter - "Then [Jesus] returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. 'Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?' he asked Peter. 'Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak'" (Matt. 26:40-41). Earlier that night, Peter had said, "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will" (v. 33). Peter was overconfident. He considered himself to be the most faithful follower of Christ. But Jesus told him, "I tell you the truth...this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times" (v. 34).

How many times have you heard the excuse "I don't want to have anything to do with the church because there are so many hypocrites in it"?

**3. Pray for OPPORTUNITIES** "And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains" (v. 3).

Be prepared for God to answer in unexpected ways. If we were in prison like Paul, we would probably ask people to pray for our freedom. But Paul requested that the Colossians pray for open doors (opportunities) to share the gospel. And God opened doors while he was in prison.

Also, while Paul was in prison, he was able to write Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.

We should pray that God would give us and others opportunities to share the gospel with others. (Of course, we need to take **advantage** of our opportunities.)

**4. Pray for CLARITY** “Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should” (v. 4). Boldness is needed for clarity. There is always the temptation to water down the “bad news” side of the gospel.

The Roman’s Road to Salvation:

- (1) Every person is a sinner ([Romans 6:23](#)).
- (2) God’s penalty for sin is spiritual death ([Romans 6:23](#)).
- (3) In His great love, God has made provision for the salvation of all ([Romans 5:8](#)).
- (4) Each person must put his or her trust in God’s Son, Jesus Christ ([Romans 10:9-10, 13](#)).

**How should I live?** *Hebrews 13:8 - "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever."*

**Our world is experiencing the fastest pace of change that has ever been seen. If you buy an expensive computer today, 6 months from now it will only be an average system and one year from now it will be obsolete. Electronic mail allows us to send a letter across the Atlantic Ocean in less than one second. Headline News service on television brings us the latest news every half hour.**

**In a world that is always changing, it is nice to have an anchor that does not change. When we come to the Lord Jesus Christ, we never have to worry that He will change. What He expects of us today is what He will expect of us tomorrow.**

**1. Live WISELY** “*Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders*” (v. 5). “**Outsiders**” are unsaved people. Don’t give credibility to the world’s stereotype of a Christian.

*“Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us”* ([1 Peter 2:12](#)). The Greek word translated “see” refers to a **careful watching**, over a period of time.

Sometimes those who want to lead others to Christ become the biggest obstacle to their salvation.

Remember that people are watching you. Don’t give people an excuse to reject the gospel. When we pray, God will give us open doors. Let’s not shut doors by our behavior.

**2. Live with a sense of URGENCY** “*Make the most of every opportunity*” (v. 5). The KJV says, “redeeming the time.” In other words, “buy up the time.” It’s like taking advantage of a great bargain. We must capitalize on every chance and use every moment to the full. The time and opportunities are **not** unlimited.

Former U.S. president Jimmy Carter, in his autobiography *Why Not the Best?*, shares that every year his church, Plains Baptist Church, held revival meetings. In preparation for the week, the leaders of the congregation would venture into the community inviting non-churched members to the services. As a deacon, Carter always participated in this exercise.

One day Carter was asked to speak at a church in Preston, Georgia. The topic he was assigned was “Christian Witnessing.” He decided he would make a great impression upon the audience by sharing with them how many home visits he made for God. He figured in the fourteen years he had conducted 140 visits.

He began to reflect on the 1966 governor’s election. As he campaigned for the state’s highest office, he spent sixteen to eighteen hours a day trying to reach as many voters as possible. At the conclusion of the campaign, Carter calculated that he met more than 300,000 people... the truth became evident. Carter wrote in his

autobiography, “The comparison struck me—300,000 visits for myself in three months and 140 visits for God in fourteen years!”

How should I speak?

Aesop once said “Clothes may disguise a fool, but his words will give him away.”

1. Speak **GRACIOUSLY** *“Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt”* (v. 6). To be *“full of grace”* basically means to be pleasant. Before we can make disciples, we need to **make friends** and **build rapport**. Remember that we are to be witnesses, not judges or prosecuting attorneys! Concerning Jesus, [Luke 4:22](#) says, *“All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips.”* [Ephesians 4:15](#) talks about *“speaking the truth in love.”*

On the other hand, we can go to the opposite extreme by trying to be so gracious that we never share the gospel with others. Some Christians have become so hypersensitive about offending non-Christians that they never present them with God’s truth clearly and directly. Many people never darken the door of a church because they have never been invited in. We are not showing compassion or love if we choose to keep meekly silent and never share the truth about Christ with those who need desperately to hear it.

2. Speak **INTELLIGENTLY** *“So that you may know how to answer everyone”* (v. 6). We need to have their answers ready for those who challenge or are curious about their faith. **Common questions:**

- How can a loving God allow evil and suffering to exist??
- How could a loving God torture people in hell?
- Isn’t it offensive to claim that Jesus is the only way to heaven?
- How can you be sure that you can trust the Bible?

It’s sad when people who have been Christians for years cannot give anything more than a pat answer to these kinds of questions. Howard Hendricks once said, “In the midst of a generation screaming for answers, Christians are stuttering.”

“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander” ([1 Peter 3:15-16](#)).

Paul Little, in his book *How to Give Away Your Faith*, defines witnessing as “that deep-seated conviction that the greatest favor I can do for others is to introduce them to Jesus Christ.”