

How We Treat People - Colossians 4:5-6 - September 15th, 2019

- I want to talk with you today about how it is that we as God's people treat other people, especially those who are not believers.
- This because, the Apostle Paul here in these two verses emphasizes the paramount importance of how we act toward others.
- What follows are a series of questions that I think every one of us would do well to answer, concerning this important matter.

Question #1 – Am I wise in the way I interact with those who are not Christians? (Verse 5a)

5a Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders;

- The Apostle Paul begins with the exhortation to be wise in the way we behave and act towards those who are not Christians.
- The reason being is that the world is watching our lives as Christians and asking two questions "is it real, and does it work?"

2 Corinthians 3:2 - You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone.

Question #2 – Do I make the most of every opportunity and redeem the time? (Verse 5b)

5b ...make the most of every opportunity.

- What Paul is saying here is that we are to take advantage of every opportunity we have because time as short as it is valuable.
- It's my belief that God will set up divine appointments for us and give us the opportunity to recognize it and seize the moment.
- I'll take it a step further and apply this to prayer in the sense that it's one of the most valuable ways we can redeem the time.

By way of an example, one commentator noted that according to a study, "the average American spends six months of their life waiting at red lights. People say, "I just don't have time to pray"—but what if they decided that at every red light they would pray."

Ephesians 5:15–17 - 15 Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

Question #3 – Do I err on the side of an abundance of grace? (Verse 6a)

6a Let your conversation be always full of grace,

- One of the things I'm learning in my walk with the Lord is it's not so much what I say or do, it's more about how I say it or do it.
- In other words, I can say or do the right thing but with the wrong heart or the wrong tone, and in so doing lack any love or grace.

Question #4 – Do my conversations bring comfort and encouragement? (Verse 6b)

6b ...seasoned with salt,

- In order for us to better understand what it is that Paul is saying here, we need to know how important salt was in that culture.
- In the days before refrigeration, salt was used to preserve. In addition to preserving, salt adds flavor, creates thirst and heals.
- To me, what Paul is saying here is that our conversations with people should have the same affect that salt has in these ways.

Question #5 – Am I able to give an answer of the hope I have? (Verse 6c)

6c ...so that you may know how to answer everyone.

- If you were to ask me what I thought was one of the main reasons we as Christians fail, I would say it's in this particular area.
- Simply put, many are ill prepared to give an answer to people as to why we believe what we believe when we're asked about it.
- Sadly, this is do in large part to the wholesale Biblical illiteracy on the part of Christians and even more sadly, some pastors.

1 Peter 3:15–16 - 15 But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. 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, 16 keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.