

# “The Great Commission Lifestyle” —Pt. 2

Colossians 4:2–6

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*Christ over All:  
Paul's Letter  
to the Colossians*



## COLOSSIANS 4:2–6

“Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with *an attitude of* thanksgiving; praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.

Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, *as though* seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.”

A Great Commission lifestyle requires:

- I. **A Prayerful Posture (vv. 2–4)**
- II. **A Worthy Walk (v. 5)**
- III. **A Suitable Speech (v. 6)**

## I. A Prayerful Posture (4:2–4)

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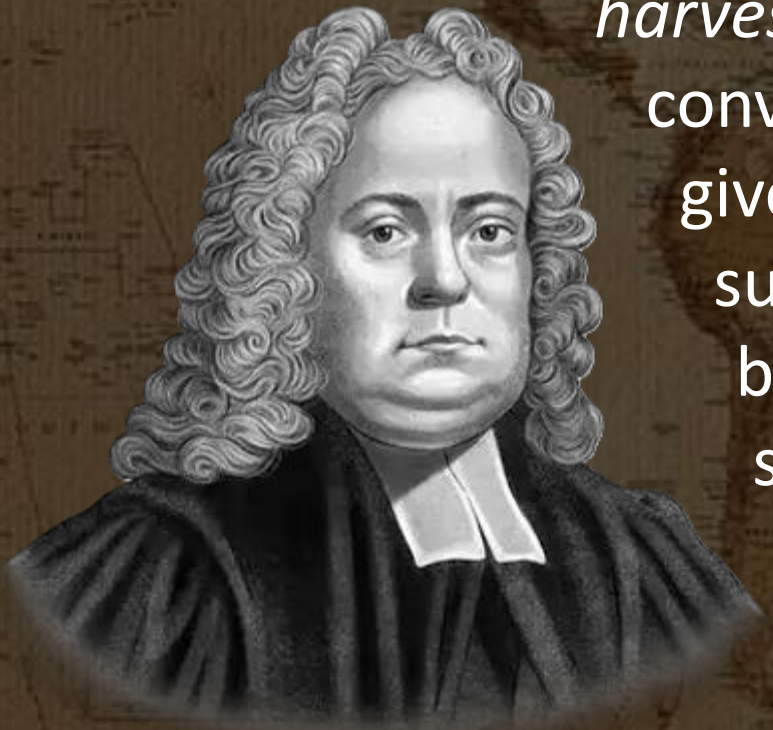
### A. Pray for the lost (v. 2).

“Devote yourselves to prayer,  
keeping alert in it with *an attitude of thanksgiving*”

### B. Pray for the evangelists (vv. 3–4).

“praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.”

“The melancholy aspect of the times and the deplorable state of precious souls, should much excite and quicken prayer. When things look discouraging, we should pray more, and then we should complain and fear less. . . . All that love Christ and souls, should show it by their earnest prayers to God, especially when *the harvest is plenteous, that he would send forth* more skillful, faithful, wise, and industrious *laborers into his harvest*; that he would raise up such as he will own in the conversion of sinners and the edification of saints; would give them a spirit for the work, call them to it, and succeed them in it. . . . It is a good sign God is about to bestow some special mercy upon a people, when he stirs up those that have an interest at the throne of grace, to pray for it.” —Matthew Henry



## II. A Worthy Walk (4:5)

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**“Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders,  
making the most of the opportunity.”**

- **“Conduct yourselves”** – literally, “Walk”; describes the *pattern by which one lives life*; Paul used this verb already in 1:9–10 and 2:6; one’s *walk* = one’s true reputation/witness.
- **“With wisdom”** – the *manner* of the walking; describes the skill of right living—the ability to *apply* truth *practically* (see Matt 10:16).
- **“Toward outsiders”** – unbelievers; those who have not yet been “rescued from the domain of darkness” (1:13), who are still “dead in their transgressions” (2:13), and who are not united with Christ.

“Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders,  
**making the most of the opportunity.**”

- “**Making the most of the opportunity**” – again, the *manner* of the walking; Paul uses the language of commerce: literally, “buying up the time”; figuratively, “snapping up each opportunity.”



- The *urgency* implied by Paul’s language points to an important *eschatological reality*: Time is short! The Lord is coming! (See “keeping alert” in v. 2; remember 3:4).
- **Ephesians 5:15–16** – “Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil.”

“There is a language in actions. And in some cases, the language of action is much more clear and convincing than words.”

—Jonathan Edwards

“The world takes its notions of God, most of all, from the people who say that they belong to God’s family. They read us a great deal more than they read the Bible. They see us; they only hear about Jesus Christ.”

—Alexander MacLaren

## YOUR WALK AND THE GREAT COMMISSION

- ✓ What unbelievers *see* from your life is of enormous importance. “The Christian is the worldling’s Bible, and sometimes that’s all they read.”
- ✓ Your lifestyle should be your method of *pre-evangelism*.
- ✓ Reject the temptation to live two different lives—one the life you live when Christians are watching, the other you live when in the world.
- ✓ Your life in the world requires vigilance—not only to live out the truth uncompromisingly, but to do so *for the benefit of* your opponent.
- ✓ If you are to be offensive, let that offense arise from your holiness, not your hypocrisy.

### III. A Suitable Speech (4:6)

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“Let **your speech** **always** be **with grace**, *as though* seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.”

- “**Your speech**” – your mode of communication, which in this context is considered with respect to *unbelievers*.
- “**Always**” – the *frequency* of this prescribed way of communicating to unbelievers.
- “**With grace**” – the *manner* of this communication; not a reference to the doctrine of grace *per se* (though undoubtedly it will be about “grace”), but to the “attractiveness” or “pleasantness” of the speech.

- **Proverbs 10:11** – “The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.”
- **Proverbs 12:18** – “There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.”
- **Proverbs 15:1** – “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh [‘painful’] word stirs up anger.”
- **Proverbs 16:24** – “Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.”



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**“Gentle in manner,  
powerful in substance.”**

“Let your speech always be with grace, *as though* **seasoned with salt**, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.”

- “Seasoned with salt” – a metaphor taken from the *culinary* world; for the sake of unbelievers, believers are to *season* their speech with *salt*.
  - The metaphor was used by the orators and philosophers of Paul’s day to speak of *wit* or *eloquence for the sake of eloquence*, but Paul is using it to speak of *purification/preservative*.
  - **Ephesians 4:29** – “. . . no unwholesome word . . .”
  - “Our speech should be useful, never trivial, helpful, never flippant, forceful, never feeble” (Thomas, *Studies in Colossians* 128).



“Let your speech always be with grace, *as though* seasoned with salt, so that you will know **how you should respond to each person.**”

- “**How you should respond**” – the result of consciously making speech gracious and appropriate; refers to the skill of effectively answering questions as necessary.
- “**To each person**” – the *scope*; this pattern of speech equips the believer with the ability to answer all who ask.
- **1 Peter 3:15** – “but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.”

## YOUR SPEECH AND THE GREAT COMMISSION

- ✓ Our speech is a common source of our stumbling, but we are responsible for every bit of the language we use. See Matthew 12:36–37; James 3:2.
- ✓ To speak *graciously* and *appropriately* requires a disciplined inner life, for the mouth is able only to speak what is consistent with the heart. See Matthew 12:34.
- ✓ Our speech is “always” to be *gracious* and *appropriate*—regardless of the stubbornness of the opponent or the foolishness of the question.
- ✓ We can typically know our speech is *gracious and appropriate* if it elicits good questions about the gospel.
- ✓ However, to speak *graciously* and *appropriately* never means compromising on the truth: “Do not lie” (Colossians 3:9).

**THE SUITABLE  
SPEECH (4:6)**

**THE WORTHY  
WALK (4:6)**

“Whatever you do in word or deed,  
do all in the name of the Lord Jesus,  
giving thanks through Him to God the Father.”

**—Colossians 3:17**