



DEEP DIVE

THE BOOK OF COLOSSIANS

Sunday September 27, 2026

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LESSON 4 • SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2026

A TRANSFORMED LIFE LIVING THE GOSPEL IN THE REAL WORLD

Colossians 4:1–18

KEY VERSE (Colossians 4:5–6)

KJV

5 Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.
6 Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

ESV

5 Walk in wisdom 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.

LESSON AIMS

As a result of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Understand how a transformed relationship with Christ affects the way we pray, speak, serve, relate to others, and represent Christ.
- Recognize that Christian transformation must become visible in ordinary life, especially in our relationships and interactions with people who do not know Christ.
- Identify practical opportunities to live wisely, speak graciously, serve faithfully, and make Christ known.

KEY TERMS

Continue – To remain steadfast, persistent, or devoted to something rather than giving up.

Watch – To remain spiritually alert, attentive, and awake rather than becoming careless or spiritually indifferent.

Redeeming the time – Making proper use of opportunities and circumstances, especially opportunities to live and communicate the gospel faithfully.

Grace – a gracious, attractive, and kind manner of speaking that reflects God's goodness

Seasoned with salt – Speech that is appropriate, wise, useful, and spiritually beneficial rather than careless, destructive, or empty.

Faithful – Dependable, trustworthy, and consistent in carrying out one's responsibilities before God.

Ministry – Service entrusted by God to a believer; something received from the Lord that should be carried out faithfully.

Introduction

There is a difference between knowing how a Christian should live and actually living that way. We can know that we should pray and still rarely pray. We can know that we should forgive and still carry bitterness. We can know that we should speak with grace and still use our words to hurt people. We can know that we should witness for Christ and still remain silent when God gives us an opportunity.

Colossians 3 showed us what a transformed life looks like on the inside and in our closest relationships. Paul talked about our identity in Christ, putting sin to death, putting on Christlike character, forgiving one another, loving one another, letting the peace of Christ rule, allowing the Word of Christ to dwell richly in us, and bringing Christ's lordship into our homes and responsibilities.

Now Paul takes those truths and carries them into the world. Colossians 4 answers the question: what does a person who belongs to Christ look like when they leave the church building? What does it look like when you are dealing with difficult people? What does it sound like when you are having a disagreement? Paul's answer is practical. A transformed life is a praying life, a witnessing life, a gracious life, a faithful life, and a serving life. Paul is showing us what the gospel looks like when it gets into everyday life.

Analysis of the Biblical Text

Christian Responsibility and Right Relationships (Colossians 4:1)

KJV Colossians 4:1	ESV Colossians 4:1
1 Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.	1 Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

In the previous chapter, Paul addressed servants and now he addresses masters. This is important because the gospel does not only transform the person who is under authority. It also transforms the person who has authority. Paul says, give unto your servants that which is just and equal. In other words, authority is not permission to abuse people or permission to become selfish. Position above others is not permission to forget that other people are made in the image of God. Paul gives the reason, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven, which means the person who has authority over someone else is still under authority. Every Christian has a Master in heaven. Sometimes we are so focused on whether people are respecting us that we forget that we are accountable to Christ. A transformed heart changes the way we use whatever authority God has given us.

A Transformed Life Is a Praying Life (Colossians 4:2)

KJV Colossians 4:2	ESV Colossians 4:2
2 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;	2 Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.

Paul now moves from relationships to prayer. He uses the word continue. Prayer is not supposed to be something we occasionally remember. Paul says continue meaning keep praying, remain devoted, do not give up, do not allow prayer to become merely something we do when everything else has failed. Prayer reveals our dependence upon God. We pray because we need Him. We pray because we recognize that God is sovereign and we are not. Then Paul says watch in the same because prayer and being spiritually alert go hand in hand. A believer who stops watching can become spiritually careless. Paul says stay awake. Pay attention in other words, watch what is happening in your own heart. Watch for temptation. Watch for people who need encouragement.

Prayer then must be coupled with thanksgiving. Paul does not tell us merely to pray about what is wrong. He tells us to pray with thanksgiving. This is consistent with Paul's admonition in Philippians 4:6. Thanksgiving has a tendency to change our perspective. It reminds us that even when circumstances are difficult, God remains good. Sometimes we come to God with a list of everything we want Him to change. Thanksgiving reminds us to pause and remember everything He has already done.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What does your prayer life reveal about what you actually believe about your dependence upon God?

Pray for Open Doors (Colossians 4:3)

KJV Colossians 4:3	ESV Colossians 4:3
3 Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:	3 At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison—

Paul is in prison, suffering, and restricted yet what does he ask the church to pray for? An open door to speak about the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul's circumstances did not cancel his mission. Sometimes we pray Lord, get me out of this situation and there is nothing wrong with asking God for deliverance. But perhaps there are moments when we should also pray, Lord, while I am in this situation, show me how You can use me.

The prison became an opportunity and Paul's limitation did not limit God.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Where are you asking God only to change your circumstances when He may also be giving you an opportunity to represent Christ within those circumstances?

Speak Clearly About Christ (Colossians 4:4)

KJV Colossians 4:4	ESV Colossians 4:4
4 That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.	4 that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.

Paul wants to make the mystery of Christ manifest, which is to make it clear, understandable, and visible. He wants people to hear the gospel. This reminds us that witnessing is not simply about having an opportunity. Sometimes God gives us the opportunity, but we are not prepared to speak. Paul wanted to know how he ought to speak. We should never assume that because we know the gospel, we automatically know how to communicate it appropriately in every situation. There is a difference between winning an argument and making Christ known. We need truth. We need wisdom. We need courage. We need grace. And most importantly we need complete and total dependence upon God. A transformed life does not merely possess the gospel but it looks for opportunities to communicate it.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

How can you take an opportunity this week to tell somebody about Christ?

A Transformed Life Walks Wisely (Colossians 4:5)

KJV Colossians 4:5	ESV Colossians 4:5
5 Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.	5 Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time.

Now Paul says again as he has said throughout this letter walk. He is talking about the way we live. Our relationship with God should be visible in what we say and in how we walk. Our lifestyle communicates something. Paul specifically says toward them that are without. In other words, unbelievers are watching. That does not mean we should become obsessed with people's opinions. It means that our conduct matters. The way we handle pressure matters. The way we speak about people matters. The way we behave when nobody from church is around matters.

Then he says redeeming the time. The idea is to make the most of the opportunity. Opportunities do not always remain open forever. The conversation you have today may not happen tomorrow. The person sitting next to you today may be gone tomorrow. A transformed life learns to recognize spiritual opportunities in ordinary moments.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

If someone who did not know Christ watched your life for one week, what would your conduct communicate about the Christ you claim to follow?

A Transformed Life Speaks With Grace (Colossians 4:6)

KJV Colossians 4:6	ESV Colossians 4:6
6 Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.	6 Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

Paul does not simply say watch what you say. He says let your speech be always with grace. Always. Not only when we are calm or when we are talking to people we like. Not only in church or when people agree with us. Always. Grace should characterize our speech. That does not mean we never speak hard truths. Jesus spoke truth. Grace means that truth is communicated with the character of Christ.

Paul then adds a caveat, seasoned with salt. Salt makes a difference. Our words should be useful, thoughtful, appropriate, meaningful, not destructive or careless. And this principle applies everywhere: at home at work, at church, in text messages, on social media, etc. It is easy to sound like a believer when everything is going our way. The real test comes when they don't. A transformed heart produces transformed speech. Sometimes the greatest evidence that God is changing us is not that we suddenly know more Bible verses. It is that we don't say what we used to say. We have learned to speak truth without abandoning grace.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Does your speech make it easier or harder for people to see the character of Christ?

Faithfulness Matters (Colossians 4:7)

KJV Colossians 4:7	ESV Colossians 4:7
7 All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellowservant in the Lord:	7 Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord.

Tychicus is one of those people we can easily read past. But notice the words Paul uses to describe him: beloved, faithful, minister, fellow-servant. The kingdom of God is full of people whose names may not be famous but whose lives were faithful. Some people preach, some teach, some sing, some serve as an usher, some pray for people who will never know they are praying. But faithfulness matters no matter what capacity.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

If someone described your Christian life using one word, would faithful honestly fit?

Encouragement Through Christian Relationships (Colossians 4:8)

KJV Colossians 4:8	ESV Colossians 4:8
8 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts;	8 I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts,

Tychicus was carrying encouragement. Sometimes ministry is simply showing up for somebody. Sometimes people don't need another lecture, they need someone who will sit with them. Someone who will listen, pray for, encourage them, and remind them God has not forgotten them. A transformed life becomes a source of encouragement rather than discouragement. There are already enough people tearing others down. The church should be filled with people who strengthen one another.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

When people leave a conversation with you, do they generally feel more discouraged or more encouraged?

The Gospel Changes How We See People (Colossians 4:9)

KJV Colossians 4:9	ESV Colossians 4:9
9 With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things which are done here.	9 and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you of everything that has taken place here.

Onesimus is especially significant because of the broader New Testament context. Paul calls him a faithful and beloved brother. The gospel changes how people are viewed. Onesimus was not simply a slave. He was a brother. The gospel does not erase every earthly distinction or circumstance overnight, but it introduces a new identity that becomes more fundamental than the categories people use to divide one another. In Christ, people are not merely useful or useless. The gospel teaches us to see people through the lens of Christ.

Christian Ministry Includes Restoration (Colossians 4:10)

KJV Colossians 4:10	ESV Colossians 4:10
10 Aristarchus my fellow prisoner saluteth you, and Mark, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;)	10 Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and Mark the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have received instructions—if he comes to you, welcome him),

Mark is especially interesting because Acts 15 records a serious disagreement involving Mark and Paul although we don't know what it is. Yet here Paul tells the Colossians to receive him. We do not know what happened between them but we can clearly see something important and that is a person's past failure does not necessarily determine their future usefulness. There can be restoration and growth. Sometimes we permanently define people by the worst thing they have done. But God can write another chapter. That does not mean consequences do not matter or that trust is automatically restored without evidence. It means someone's failure does not have to be the final chapter. Mark became useful. And this should challenge somebody who has written another person off.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Are you allowing someone's past to keep you from seeing what God may be doing in their present?

Faithful Servants (Colossians 4:11)

KJV Colossians 4:11	ESV Colossians 4:11
11 And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellow workers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.	11 and Jesus who is called Justus. These are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me.

Paul mentions people who worked alongside him because Christianity was never intended to be a one-person ministry. The kingdom of God is bigger than one personality. Paul needed people. You need people. The church needs people. We are called to work together. Sometimes our greatest ministry is helping someone else fulfill theirs. There is no insignificant role when it is offered to God.

A Man Who Prayed (Colossians 4:12)

KJV Colossians 4:12	ESV Colossians 4:12
12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.	12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.

This may be one of the most powerful verses in the chapter. Paul describes prayer as a fervent labor. Prayer is work. There is spiritual labor that nobody sees. Epaphras may not have been standing behind a pulpit when he prayed. But God heard him as he was laboring for people through prayer. Take note of what he prayed. He prayed that they would stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. In other words he prayed for their spiritual maturity. That is a different kind of prayer. Sometimes our prayers are centered almost entirely around circumstances. Epaphras reminds us to pray for character. Pray that people will become everything God intends them to become. You may not be able to change somebody, but you can pray. You may not be able to fix their situation, but you can pray. Some of the most important ministry you will ever do may happen when nobody knows you are doing it.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Who are you laboring for in prayer right now, not merely asking God to change their circumstances, but asking God to mature them spiritually?

A Faithful Minister (Colossians 4:13)

KJV Colossians 4:13	ESV Colossians 4:13
13 For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.	13 For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis.

Epaphras cared for and loved people. There is a danger in Christian service of doing the right things with the wrong heart. We can serve without loving. Epaphras reminds us that ministry should come from love.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Do you serve people because you genuinely love them, or have some areas of Christian service become merely routine?

Faithful Friends (Colossians 4:14)

KJV Colossians 4:14	ESV Colossians 4:14
14 Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.	14 Luke the beloved physician greets you, as does Demas.

Luke is described affectionately. Demas is simply mentioned here. This is another reminder that Paul's ministry was relational. Christian ministry is never merely about tasks; it is about people. Then Demas gives us a sobering reminder when we read the New Testament as a whole. At this point in Colossians, Paul simply mentions him. Later, in 2 Timothy, Paul writes that Demas had forsaken him because he loved the present world. We should not read that later development backward into Colossians as though Paul already knew what would happen. But the later passage does give us a warning that being around Christian ministry is not the same thing as persevering in Christ. Being around church does not automatically mean our hearts are right with God. We must continue. We must remain. We must guard our hearts.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Are you depending on your proximity to Christian things, or are you personally walking faithfully with Christ?

Christian Hospitality (Colossians 4:15)

KJV Colossians 4:15	ESV Colossians 4:15
15 Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.	15 Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house.

The early church often gathered in homes. That means someone's home became a place where people could worship, fellowship, learn, pray, and grow. Hospitality can become ministry. Your house can become ministry. Your table can become ministry. We sometimes imagine ministry as something that happens on a platform. But sometimes ministry happens around a kitchen table or in a living room, or over coffee. The question we ought to ask is how can I use what God has already placed in my hands for His glory?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What has God placed in your hands that could become a place of ministry for someone else?

The Word Must Be Read (Colossians 4:16)

KJV Colossians 4:16	ESV Colossians 4:16
16 And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.	16 And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea.

Notice that the Word was meant to be read. The Word was to be heard by the church because the Christian life is built around God's truth. The purpose of Scripture is not simply that we possess information. We are not collecting Bible facts, but we are being formed by God's Word. The Word must move from our eyes to our minds, from our minds to our hearts, and from our hearts into our lives. Information becomes transformation when we obey what God has revealed.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Do you merely hear the Word, or do you allow the Word to examine and reshape you?

Fulfill Your Ministry (Colossians 4:17)

KJV Colossians 4:17	ESV Colossians 4:17
17 And say to Archippus, take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.	17 And say to Archippus, "See that you fulfill the ministry that you have received in the Lord."

This verse is short, but it carries with it a lot of weight. Take heed, pay attention, be careful, do not become careless with what God has entrusted to you. Paul does not describe ministry as merely something Archippus invented for himself. It was something he received and that was entrusted. Paul's admonishment is finish it, carry it through. Starting is easier than finishing. It is easy to become excited at the beginning. It is harder when the work becomes routine. It is easy to serve when people appreciate you. It is harder when nobody notices. But Paul says to fulfill it. Don't compare your ministry with somebody else's. Don't measure your faithfulness by somebody else's visibility. God has entrusted something to you and you must be faithful with what He gave you.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What has God entrusted to you that you must stop neglecting?

Finish With Grace (Colossians 4:18)

KJV Colossians 4:18	ESV Colossians 4:18
18 The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen.	18 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

Paul ends with remember my bonds. His chains were real and gospel ministry had cost him something. This reminds us that the Christian life is not always comfortable. Faithfulness can cost us. Obedience can cost us. Standing for Christ can cost us. Serving others can cost us. But Paul does not end with despair. He ends with grace be with you.

That is fitting because the Christian life does not begin with our strength. It begins with God's grace. We need grace!

Your Life

Colossians 4 brings the gospel into ordinary life. It asks us to examine ourselves. Am I praying? Am I watching? Am I thankful? Am I looking for opportunities? Am I speaking graciously? Am I faithful? Am I encouraging others? Am I serving? Am I fulfilling what God has entrusted to me? Transformation does not mean we are perfect. Transformation means Christ is increasingly changing the way we think, speak, respond, serve, and live. So perhaps the challenge for this week is very simple. Choose one area.

If your prayer life needs attention, pray. If your speech needs transformation, surrender your words to Christ. If you have an opportunity to witness, step through the door. If someone needs encouragement, encourage them. If you have neglected a responsibility, take it seriously. The goal is not simply to leave saying that was a good lesson. The goal is to leave saying, Lord, what do You want to change in me?

Your World!

Colossians 4 reminds us that Christianity does not stop when Sunday School ends. The Christian life goes with us everywhere we go from here. The world needs Christians whose lives make the gospel visible. The church's witness is not limited to what happens inside the church building. We are Christ's representatives 24/7 in all that we do.

A Closing Thought

Colossians began by showing us the supremacy of Christ. Christ is above all. Christ is the Creator. Christ is the Head of the church. Christ is sufficient. Then Paul showed us what happens when a person truly belongs to Christ. We seek things above. We put sin to death. We put off the old life. We put on the new life. We forgive. We love. We let the peace of Christ rule. We let the Word of Christ dwell richly in us. We bring Christ into our homes, our work, our relationships, and our responsibilities. And now, in Colossians 4, Paul tells us to pray, to look for open doors to share the gospel and to make Christ known, to walk and speak wisely, to be an encouragement to others, all the while we mature in Christ.

CLOSING PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

Make us people who pray faithfully, walk wisely, and speak with grace. Open doors for us to share Christ and give us courage to walk through them. Let our lives speak of Jesus before our mouths ever do.

Help us to be faithful with the people, opportunities, and responsibilities You have entrusted to us. When we are distracted, bring us back to You. When we are discouraged, strengthen us. When we fail, remind us of Your grace.

**In His name we pray,
Amen.**