

WORDS TO LIVE BY

TEXT: COLOSSIANS 4:2-6

What is the Christian life all about? What does it mean to have a real experience with Christ? How can a person know that he/she is on the right track?

■ William M. Woodfin explains that, “The proof of Christianity is not a book but a life. The power of Christianity is not a creed but a Christian character; and wherever you see life that has been transformed by the grace of God, you see a witness to the resurrection of Jesus.” (Rowell, 19)

The Christian life is an unusual one at times -- unorthodox by this world's standards. ■ It's said that “Jesus promised his disciples three things: that they would be entirely fearless, absurdly happy, and that they would get into trouble.” --W. Russell Maltby (Rowell, 23)

Perhaps Paul wrote these final words of advice because he knew there is the constant pressure from the world to return to a more conventional lifestyle that is in line with its standards. In other words, sometimes it's tough to be different in this world.

But once again Paul seeks to put the Colossian church, and us, back on the straight and narrow with a few concluding *admonitions*.

- I. Continue in Prayer (v.2).
- II. Seek God's Will (v.3).
- III. Walk in Wisdom (v.5).
- IV. Speak with Grace (v.6).

I. CONTINUE IN PRAYER (v. 2).

A. “Earnestly” speaks of the intensity of our prayer.

B. “Vigilant” speaks of the attitude of our prayer.

II. SEEK GOD'S WILL (v. 3-4).

A. God's all encompassing will is to see the furtherance of the gospel.

...that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ...."

B. Look farther into the will of God than just what one should do, buy or be.

III. WALK IN WISDOM (v. 5).

A. Use wisdom in dealing with non-Christians.

■ Vance Havner tells the following story, "An evangelist friend of mine was converted in a rescue mission. The superintendent of that mission kept him as an assistant for a year before he let him go out preaching. He explained, 'I wanted him to get established and I didn't want him to know too many Christians!'" (Pepper, 75-6)

It's not that most Christians are hypocrites, it's that many lack wisdom in their behavior.

B. Make the most of your witnessing opportunities by using your life to support your words.

■ Someone wrote:

A CHRISTIAN IS
A MIND -- through which Christ THINKS.
A VOICE -- through which Christ SPEAKS.
A HEART through which Christ LOVES.
A HAND through which Christ HELPS.

(DeJong, 80)

IV. SPEAK WITH GRACE (v. 6).

- A. Speak with kindness. (*With grace*)

- B. Speak with purity. (*Seasoned with salt*)

- C. Speak with sound judgment. (*That you may know how you ought to answer*)

CONCLUSION

Continue in prayer, seek God's will, walk in wisdom, and speak with grace. These are all **admonitions** that require a great deal of effort on our part. Living out our faith doesn't just happen because we are born again. If a person really wants to experience his/her faith he/she should get involved in it.

■ It is possible to stand high in religious circles and not get out of kindergarten in the school of Christ; it is possible to hold postgraduate degrees in theology and never make third grade at the feet of the Master. Growing in knowledge is not necessarily growing in grace. One may associate with the Savior, as Phillip did, and still hear him say, 'Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known...?'" (Vance Havner, *Pepper*, 44)

References

- DeJong, Benjamin R. (Ed.). (1976). *The Speaker's Quotebook*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- Havner, Vance (1966). *Pepper 'n' Salt*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- Rowell, Edward K. (Ed.). (1996). *Quotes and Idea Starters*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.