

Living with Gospel Intentionality

Gospel-Centered Living #1 - Pastor Gary Combs - March 9, 2025 - Colossians 4:2-6

IT'S TIME UPDATE: Good morning church! I'd like to begin with an update on our It's Time commitments and first gifts from last Sunday. If you remember, last Sunday we reported that we exceeded our goal of \$1.5 million, reporting \$1,561,020 in commitments. But after collecting additional commitments and receiving our first gifts towards our commitments we're amazed and thankful to God to report to you that we now have...

FAITH COMMITMENTS: \$1,635,220

FIRST GIFTS: \$57,684.23

INTRO: The first goal of our It's Time generosity initiative is to strengthen our community engagement, to saturate our city and our region with the gospel. With this in mind, we're beginning a 2-message series today entitled, "Gospel Centered Living." In today's message, we'll see in God's Word how we are to live out our day to day lives with Gospel intentionality, making the ordinary, extraordinary! As authors Chester and Timmis write:

ILL: "We need Christian communities who saturate ordinary life with the gospel. The communities to which we introduce people must be communities in which "God-talk" is normal. This means talking about what we are reading in the Bible, praying together whenever we share needs, delighting together in the gospel, and sharing our spiritual struggles, not only with Christians but with unbelievers. We want our life together to be gospel-saturated. We want to live and talk the gospel as part of our shared life." - Tim Chester and Steve Timmis, *Total Church: A Radical Reshaping around Gospel and Community*.

Need: Do you delight in sharing what you're reading in the Bible or praying about, even your spiritual struggles, not only with believers but unbelievers? Or do you sometimes feel a disconnect between your personal spiritual life and your public life? Do you feel like there is a version of you that goes to church and community group, and then another version of you that goes to work or school or to the grocery store? What would it look like to be more consistent, being your true self everywhere you go?

Trans: What if every day you could be more intentional about making your spiritual life and your public life one and the same? Wouldn't that make every day more of an adventure?

BODY: In the apostle Paul's letter to the Colossians, he told them that their ordinary, day-to-day lives could be radically used for God by living with gospel intentionality. We can live our daily lives with gospel intentionality. How can we live our lives with gospel intentionality? The text gives us **three ways** to live our lives with Gospel intentionality.

Read text: Colossians 4:2-6 (ESV) ² Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. 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 ⁴ that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak. 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.

HOW TO LIVE WITH GOSPEL INTENTIONALITY:

1. Prayer.

EXP: (2-4) Notice Paul's instruction to "continue steadfastly in prayer" (2) and also his request to "pray" (3) for his mission team as they witness ("declare") the gospel to others.

"Steadfast Prayer" (2) (προσκαρτερέω, *proskarteréō* - present active imperative). Continue in prayer, persevere in prayer, be steadfast in it. Pray without ceasing as 1 Thessalonians puts it.

"Watchful Prayer" (2) - Literally, "staying awake, watching." To be alert, vigilant.

"Thanksgiving" (2) (εὐχαριστία, *eucharistia*) - gratitude, thanksgiving. Rather than complaining about his situation in prison, Paul asks for "thankful" prayers, focusing on the opportunity for gospel sharing.

"Open...door" (3) - A metaphor Paul often used to describe gospel receptivity.

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“To declare... **mystery of Christ**” - “Declare” to preach, to make known with sure confidence. “Mystery” - not in the usual sense, but as a secret revealed. People can’t know the gospel without a preacher.

ARG: Stay alert in prayer ...

Ephesians 6:18-19 (NLT) Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere. And pray for me, too. Ask God to give me the right words so I can boldly explain God’s mysterious plan that the Good News is for Jews and Gentiles alike.

Lifestyle of care and share ...

1 Timothy 2:1-4 (ESV) First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

“If each believer would pray for the lost, and watch for God’s open doors of opportunity for witness, we would win more people to the Savior.” - Warren Wiersbe

ILL: Paul and the Philippian jailer. (Acts 16:25-34) Paul had this experience on his second missionary journey in the year 51 AD. He writes to the Colossians from a Roman prison in 61 AD following his third missionary journey. So Paul was very aware that God could open doors even in his imprisonment.

APP: You might pray: “Lord, I’m available to talk about you with anyone you bring my way today.” Right now, write down a list of names of people that you’re praying for salvation for them. Fill out one of our It’s Time impact cards and drop it in the prayer container down front to show that you’re agreeing with God that you will be watching and praying for them with gospel intentionality.

2. Care.

EXP: (5) The second way we can live with gospel intentionality is to “walk in wisdom toward outsiders” (5). In other words, to care about how our way of life affects them spiritually.

“**Walk**” (5) (περιπατέω, *peripatéō*) - Imperative verb for “walk,” but in Hebrew “to walk” meant the way you live, the way you conduct yourself. Paul is saying live wisely, go through life with wisdom.

“**Wisdom**” (5) (σοφία, *sophía*) - This word is wrought with much meaning, like knowledge, intelligence, skill in managing affairs, devout and proper. We must walk or live with skill and with proper care.

“**Outsiders**” (5) - Those that are outside, without. Paul is referring to those “without” the Gospel. The lost.

“**Best use...time**” (5) (ἐξαγοράζω, *exagorázō*) - Lit., to redeem the time or buy back the time. Paul is saying that Gospel living redeems our days, it causes the mundane to become important.

ARG: Being filled with the Spirit, under His influence, enables us to “walk,” to live wisely before the lost.

Ephesians 5:15-18 (ESV) Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit.

Remember the “Go therefore” command of the Great Commission?

Matthew 28:19 (ESV) Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

The word “Go” literally means “as you’re going.” Do it as you go. You’re already going somewhere... to school, to work, to the store... make disciples as you go. How? It starts with intentionality, “walk in wisdom,” going out with a wise and caring watchfulness.

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ILL: Think about the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). The priest and the Levite passed by the wounded man, perhaps too busy with their religious duties to stop. But the Samaritan saw, cared, and acted. He interrupted his own journey to help someone in need. Caring for others often means seeing beyond our schedules and recognizing divine appointments.

APP: Who in your daily routine might need a listening ear, an act of kindness, or just to know they are seen? Living with gospel intentionality means slowing down to care for those around us. Have you heard the saying, “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”? How can you develop relationships that show you care? Think about those names that you wrote down, how could you show them that you care, so that they want to hear the gospel from you?

3. Share.

EXP: (6) ⁶ Look at v.6. There are **three descriptions of speech** in view (Dr. Chris Castaldo calls this: “Share, Share, Share,” saying there are three levels of conversation with an unbeliever.):

1) **“Gracious speech”** (6) (χάρις, *charis*) - Speech that is both filled with God’s grace and “charming” (Melick, NAC, p.324). Attractive, edifying speech that is pleasant to the hearer. Remember the word “grace” means “unmerited favor.” This is speech that is generous and giving.

2) **“Salt-seasoned speech”** (6) (ἅλατι ἡρτυμένος, *halati ertumenos*) - This is the proverbial use of salt as a flavoring (“seasoning”) agent. Tasty speech. Seasoned with spiritual and biblical language.

3) **“How to answer speech”** - Remember how Paul asked the Colossians to pray: “That God might **open to us a door for the word**, to **declare** the mystery of **Christ**... ⁴ that I may make it **clear**, which is how I ought to speak.” This is instructional on “how you ought to answer.” We must be “clear.”

ARG: **Gracious speech:**

Ephesians 4:29 (ESV) Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

Salt-seasoned speech:

Matthew 5:13-16 (ESV) You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

ILL: Have you ever had a bucket of movie theater popcorn without salt? It tastes bland and unappealing. But when seasoned with salt, it enhances the flavor and makes you want more. Our speech should be “seasoned with salt,” full of grace, wisdom, and truth—making the gospel attractive.

APP: How can we bring out the “flavor” of the gospel in your everyday interactions? By gracious, seasoned, and clear speech that points to Jesus. Are you sharing the gospel as Jesus has commanded?

CONCLUSION: Prayer, care, and share, share, share. Living our ordinary lives with gospel focus, with gospel intentionality will change the ordinary into extraordinary living for us and for those we encounter.

Will you live with Gospel intentionality by: (1) praying for gospel opportunities, (2) caring for others, and (3) sharing the gospel in an attractive and gracious way?

Let’s Pray.