

Further Bible Study Questions

- A) The bible makes clear that our greatest efforts at reaching out to the “outsider” are in vain if we do not love one another within the church FIRST. It’s almost as if the love of Jesus Christ between His followers has an authenticating effect on the message of Jesus Christ from the Bible (cf. John 13:34-35). Often though, this essential “core quality” of church gets set aside, and followers of Christ spend a great deal of time complaining about others or complaining generally about Christ’s church. Ephesians 4:29 clears the air on this issue by calling on all of us to only speak words which “build up” (for others and about His church). What can you do, in an intentional manner, to build up another follower of Jesus Christ or build up His church in this next week? How can you respond when someone else comes to you with a word of discontent or hostility about someone else and/or the church?
- B) Sometimes, being involved in church can be such a consuming experience, we lose touch with those who are “outside” the church. We can be so busy fulfilling the many options of an exciting church, that we have little or no time for developing relationships with anyone who is “outside” our own church. But if the church loses its contact with the outside world, IF YOU LOSE YOUR CONTACT WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD, then what? What can you do to strategically engage your “outside” world? Do you need to adjust your schedule, re-prioritize some optional activities, or re-think your involvement in something which is taking your time away from “keeping the main thing the main thing?”
- C) Every follower of Christ is responsible to be reaching at least one “outsider” in Jesus’ name. We are simply extending the fame of Jesus to those who do not know of Him. Who is your “one?” Who is the (at least) one person in your life with whom you are cultivating a meaningful relationship for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. How can you strategically reach out to them this week? What can you do to extend the fame of Jesus to them in some meaningful manner? How can you “go” to an “outsider” in Jesus’ name this week?

Life Savers

Long Beach Alliance Church • November 11th, 2007 • Pastor Chris Lankford

**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.
~COLOSSIANS 4:5-6 (NASB)**

1) Keeping The Main Thing The Main Thing

- A) The Apostle Paul’s letter to the Colossians comes down to a sharp focus on reaching the world with the Great News about Jesus Christ (Colossians 4:2-4). Paul asks the Colossians to devote themselves to prayer about:
- i) **The spread of the Gospel** through “open doors” which only God could provide.
 - ii) **The spread of the Gospel**, despite obstacles, like Paul’s imprisonment (cf. 4:18).
 - iii) **The spread of the Gospel**, clearly presented.
- B) Paul, who is imprisoned, probably in Rome (cf. Colossians 4:3, 8, 18), shifts the attention from the distant mission field to the local mission field (4:5). The personal conduct of the followers of Christ impacts the Gospel message!

- C) The personal conduct of a follower of Christ has been in view through the latter part of Colossians (3:10-17), even extending to family relationships (3:18-4:1).

- D) This is the **FIRST CALL** of Christian conduct, to love one another (John 13:34-35). "Outsiders"* are watching the church and asking the question, "What do they have which I would ever need or want" (1st John 4:7-12)?

- E) The question Scripture asks is, "**Is Christ sufficient to do these things?**" Can I love others within the church **FIRST**, and then (from this foundation) reach out **SECONDLY** to those "outside" of the church?

2) Extending The Fame Of Jesus' Name

- A) By definition, "outsiders" are not a part of those who are following Jesus Christ. They are outside the church. In order to reach those outside the church, the Bible clearly states that we must "go" (Matthew 28:19-20) to the outsider.

- B) Each of us are to "go" and reach outsiders. We do not wait for the outsider to come through the doors of the church. This is **NEVER** the biblical model. The church exists to equip the follower of Jesus to reach the outsider (2nd Timothy 3:16-4:5).

* The expression "outsiders" corresponds to the rabbinic "ha-hisonim," "those who are outside," that is, either heretics or "the people of the land"; (cf. 2 Macc 1:16; Thucyd. 5, 14, 3, and note StrB 3,362, Behm, TDNT 2, 575, 576, and BAG, 279). "Outsiders" carries a semi-technical meaning and refers to non-Christians generally, especially pagans (1 Cor 5:12, 31; 1 Thess 4:12; cf 1 Tim 3:7; II Clem 13:1). Elsewhere in the exhortatory material of the NT the reaction of non-Christians to the behavior of believers plays a significant role: (a) the latter are to live in such a way that God's name is not dishonored, and (b) no occasion of stumbling should be given which would prevent men and women being saved (see 1 Cor 10:32, 33; Phil 2:14, 15; Col 4:5; 1 Thess 4:11, 12; 1 Tim 3:7; 6:1; Tit 2:8; 1 Pet 2:15; 3:1, 16; cf van Unnik, *Judentum*, 221-34). (*Colossians and Philemon*, by Peter T. O'Brien, pg. 241, from *The Word Biblical Commentary Series, Volume 44.*)

- C) This isn't to say that church should purposely attempt to alienate an "outsider" guest, but it is to say that the focus of worship, giving, teaching, preaching, and prayer within the church are to equip the believer.

- D) Another way of articulating this philosophy of ministry is to say that our church is "believer-centered and seeker-sensitive." Inverting these two destroys the biblical model for both the church and the believer's role to the "outsider."

- E) Some practical applications of this philosophy are:
 - i) The church needs to train people on the "how to's" of reaching outsiders. This is a primary goal of personal growth (sanctification), and of equipping (training).
 - ii) Reaching outsiders is the responsibility of every follower of Jesus Christ. We must "go" to them.
 - iii) Bringing friends to church is good, but should only be to assist (not replace) our personal evangelistic efforts.
 - iv) The church should have a solid and clear training program for those who are being evangelized. The church is to "mature" followers of Christ (Hebrews 5:12-14).

- D) The role of the church, to summarize, is to teach and train the believer about Jesus and the role of the follower of Christ is to take His name and extend its fame to the "outsider."

3) Engaging The Worldwide Mission Of The Gospel

- A) If we are to "make the most of the opportunity" (Colossians 4:5), we must be "going" and making opportunities. This is not "accidental evangelism," but "intentional evangelism." Who will you be intentional with (strategic) this week?