

Live Right

Bible verses - Colossians 4.5-6

"Be wise in the way you act towards outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."

Colossians 4.5-6

Bible Verses - 1 Peter 3.15-16

"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander."

1 Peter 3.15-16

Have you ever thought about the fact that you are the 'Jesus' that your mates know? If you say you're a Christian, people watch you and what they think about Jesus will be influenced by who you are. As a Christian, you are a Christ-follower, an example of Jesus. How you behave, what you do and who you are will impact what other people think about Jesus.

The translation of the Bible here says 'outsiders' but just means people who don't know God. It's really good advice to be wise how you act around people who don't know God (to be honest, it should be the same whoever you are around!) Our words and our actions affect others.

When the Bible says **'be wise in the way you act'**, what does this mean?

The Bible says in James 1 that if we don't have wisdom, we can get it by asking God. So if you feel you need some wisdom, go to God and ask him for wisdom. He is always ready to help and be generous. So if you're thinking, "how can I be wise in the way I act?" you can go to God and look at the example of Jesus and others in the Bible.

Thinking about the life of Jesus, how did he act towards people?

The Bible also encourages us to make the most of every opportunity. In 1 Peter 3 the Bible encourages us to **'always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope you have.'**

To make the most of every opportunity to speak to people about God and live right, it's a good idea to think about the kinds of things you would say. One way to do this is to think about what God has done in your life. Why not think about how you would summarise some things God has done in your life or your family's life. Or think about how God came into your life. Try and write a summary of the God story of your life...

Let's think about our words



Your words are incredibly important! God thinks they are, so we should too! The Bible verses from 1 Peter and Colossians encourage us to be careful with our words. God wants to help us to say good things, helpful things and words that line up with what God says and thinks.

What promise does God give us if we are able to say right things?

Your words can affect people in a good way or bad way. Just think now about some of the things you say when you are at home or around people like your family or whoever looks after you. We can actually choose to react in good ways and say good things. Sometimes it's better not to speak than be negative or critical or nasty.

One of the key words used in 1 Peter is '**hope**'. The good news about Jesus is a message about hope. We are called by God to bring hope because that is what he brings to us. Hope of good things – hope of heaven. As God puts hope in our hearts we can give hope to others.

What things are there about your faith that bring hope to you and how can you share this hope with others?

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In [1 Corinthians 13](#), the Bible us we can do all kinds of things but that love should be at the heart. We love God and we love people. When we aren't loving, the Bible calls this as being like a 'clanging cymbal'. This means a loud and annoying noise. If as Christians we go round telling people what to do, expecting people who don't know God to obey religious rules and giving them the impression that we're better than them (even if we do this with a good motive), the noise that people hear is a clanging gong. They don't hear what you have to say if you don't really love them. We do tell people about how God has worked in our life but we do this out of love. You know the people in your world that genuinely love you. You respect them more.

When we speak generally or about God things, the Bible tells us to do so with respect and gentleness.



There was a preacher in a street in the UK who was always shouting about the good news of Jesus in a busy street. He felt that he was being faithful to God, but the local people and traders said he was disrupting trade. He wouldn't change. To the people was like a clanging cymbal.

We must always be careful that in our passion to talk about God that we don't act in a way that actually puts people off God!

So how can you speak with gentleness and respect?

At a conference about youth work (not a Christian conference), the question was asked, "what qualities should we show as youth workers with young people." One answer I gave was that we should have integrity. I said, "there's no point saying to young people they shouldn't get drunk on a Friday night if they see us and we're drunk on a Friday night. They won't respect us if we do things that we tell them not to." Nobody had thought about that before – but it is really important to have integrity as Christians.

Integrity means you are who you say you are – in public and in private. Another way of saying this is that we should have a clear conscience. If we say something about how God wants us to be and to live, we should not secretly be doing the opposite! If people find out it won't help – we'll also be lying – plus we should live a life that pleases God.

So is there any sin (wrong things) in your life that you need to say sorry to God for – and ask him to help you change to be different? Let's do that now and ask for God's forgiveness and help.

How can we keep a clear conscience so that people know we are who we say we are?



One time, I cooked a pasta meal and it wasn't very tasty. So I added in some salt, some pepper and even a clove of garlic to help the meal be more tasty and it was!

One thing that salt does is to preserve food for longer. Salt also gives flavour to food. In Colossians, Paul talks about letting our conversation be 'seasoned with salt'. One way this happens is that we add flavour to conversation, we always stay fresh and give life to people around us.

I did some youth work training once. One person there was cynical and slightly bitter. Whatever I said, he already 'knew it' and didn't want to hear it. To be honest, I wondered why he was there and whether he even liked young people!

This is not an example of conversation seasoned with salt !!

**So how do we have conversation that is 'seasoned with salt' ?
Say or write some of your ideas...**


