

Share The Gospel
 First Baptist Church Dandridge
 April-May 2024

Session Three: One Word, Many Doors

1. Everyday Ambassadors

“Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. 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—that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak. Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.” – Colossians 4:2-6

- a. **Door:** Paul is calling upon the church to “continue steadfastly in prayer,” which is always necessary for remaining faithful to Christ. It’s been said, “If the church is ever to get on its feet, it must first get on its knees.” But notice what Paul’s specific prayer request is for his ministry. “Pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word.” What does Paul mean by praying for a “door” to be opened for the “word?”
- b. **Content:** The apostle specifies his prayer need by saying, “that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ...that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.”
 - **Group Discussion:** What exactly does Paul mean by the “word” and “mystery of Christ?” What do these topics tell us about the content of our evangelistic efforts today?
- c. **Behavior:** Some might think that Paul’s words are only for full-time missionaries or pastors. But notice what he calls the church to do. *“Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer each person.”*
 - **Group Question:** Who are the “outsiders?” What does it mean to “walk in wisdom” and “let your speech be gracious, seasoned with salt?” What are these details really important when it comes to being an everyday ambassador?

2. Everyday Doors and Words

While we know that the Bible calls us to be “everyday ambassadors” for Christ, which requires us to have gospel conversations with people, sometimes walking through this door isn’t easy. God may open a door of opportunity for us, but walking through in the sense of how to begin a gospel conversation can be awkward and intimidating. As the writer notes, “We often feel a bit strange injecting the topic of Christianity into our everyday chat with friends” (46). Below are four ways to make the most of opportunities.

a. Keep Praying for Friends and Fields

We must pray each day for opportunities among the various “fields” (family, friends, work, school, activities, community, etc.). Our prayers should include asking God for natural ways to discuss spiritual matters, perhaps questions or concerns that would lead our conversations down that path. However, our ultimate prayer should be for God to open the hearts of unbelievers and give us the words needed.

b. Don’t Self-Censor: Talk About God

Believers are often guilty of censoring their speech concerning Christ, the gospel, and spiritual matters.

“When we are with our Christian friends, we often talk quite naturally about the parts of the Bible we’re reading, or what God is doing in our lives, or what happened at Bible study group last Wednesday. We discuss things we would like to pray for each other, and so on. Jesus is a normal part of our conversation, because he is the central person in our lives. But in our secular world, we often speak a different language – perhaps because of awkwardness, or fear, or simply because God doesn’t have prime place in our hearts and minds. We self-censor, we edit Christianity and Jesus and church out of our conversation.” (47-48).

However, when we self-censor, we close doors of opportunity that God has opened. We need to inject “God talk” back into our everyday conversation in a natural way.

Group Question: Discuss the following examples, and think of some other natural ways to inject Jesus and the gospel into our conversations.

- When someone asks us what we did on the week-end, instead of omitting any mention of church we can talk about the fascinating Bible talk we heard that raised an interesting issue.
- When we're talking about what we did last night, we can mention that we went to Bible study like we do every Tuesday night.
- When someone asks us about our plans for the future in some area, we can say that we are praying about it and that, God willing, we hope to do ... this or that.
- When someone shares a struggle or hardship in their life, we can offer to pray for them.

c. **Work as a Team**

We should never be an “everyday ambassador” alone, at least in the sense that we don’t include Jesus (Matt. 28:20). But it’s also helpful to work with others. Sometimes this means pointing people to trusted resources or video clips, or joining with another person to help someone understand the gospel (e.g., 50-in-50), or connecting them with another believer who has similar life-experiences.

d. **Be Patient and Remember the Bigger Picture**

There’s a misconception that “everyday ambassadors” win people to Jesus in one big dramatic conversation. However, in most cases, conversion is the result of many interactions and conversations over time. Effective evangelism is best done as “relational evangelism,” which refers to a long-term, relational approach, where gospel conversations take place over coffee, dinner with friends, attending church, discussing a book, etc. Such an approach requires time and patience, but it’s often the most effective way.