

# *Three Keys for Sharing Christ with Others: Leader's Guide*

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Goal: To be aware of some key components of effective disciple-making and begin to develop our own plan for using those "keys."

## **Introduction**

This Walther quote is marvelous, and pretty self-explanatory. The study sheet gives the context of the quote. The point here is to encourage the students to reflect on the calling each of us has to "bear the welfare of his neighbor's soul in his heart and do his part..."

## **I. First key: Engaging the world, not catering to it**

1 Corinthians 9:19-23 shows us the all-consuming passion of the great Apostle to be God's servant in reaching others. It is good for the students to wrestle with the challenge of a passion like that.

It is helpful to take the time to actually pull out of the text the groups Paul mentions.

- v. 20 "Jews" -- Paul had a passion to connect with his fellow Israelites.
- v. 20 "those under the law" -- Most likely thinking here of the party of the Pharisees. Paul knew well their life under the law. He himself had been a scrupulous Pharisee under the law.
- v. 21 "those not having the law" -- The Gentiles. The New Testament tells of the struggle the young Christian church had determining the role of Mosaic law in the lives of believers. Paul saw it mostly as a mission issue. (cf. Gal. 2:11-21, Acts 15)
- v. 22 "the weak" -- Most likely young Christians who struggled in their conscience with not obeying the Mosaic law or not seeing the freedom that was in Christ. (cf. Col. 2:16-23)
- v. 22 "all men" -- Paul's passion to reach others knew no boundaries.

Who are those groups in our experience today?

The conversation here could go a bit off course. The point is not to sit in judgment on others, but to keep the focus on our concern for engaging these folks in Gospel conversation.

"Those under the law" might be lapsed Christians who believe they have done something so terrible God could never forgive them.

"Those not having the law" might be those many folks who believe anything goes, there are no absolutes, no one can tell anyone else what is wrong with them. The spirit of our times seems to flow this direction. There are many who have succumbed to these lies.

"The weak" are those on the opposite extreme who believe the Christian life is all about living by rules and regulations.

"All men" is pretty self-explanatory. It is not our job to write off anyone God has put into our lives.

What Paul meant by these comments is that the mission of connecting with others became foremost for him.

**The key point: Paul did not cater to his world, but he worked hard to engage it.**

Continued on page 2

## II. Second key: Sharing Jesus and Prayer

Colossians 4:2-6 is a delightful and practical set of instructions for sharing Christ with others. Note Paul opens with a word encouraging us to be devoted to prayer.

Notice the practical progression in these prayers.

First we pray that God may open a door for the Word. If He does, what is our fear? That we won't know what to say. Thus,

The second prayer, that we may not talk about ourselves, but proclaim the mystery of Christ. But if we try to do that, what is our fear? That we may not do it correctly! Thus

The third prayer, that we may proclaim it clearly. Paul teaches how to pray through our fears and teaches us to trust God to guide and lead us.

In verses 5-6 Paul continues with practical instruction for sharing Christ.

"Be wise in the way we act toward outsiders" is good advice. It would be good for the folks to discuss what some "unwise" actions are.

"Make the most of every opportunity" is a challenge. Note it does **not** say "make the opportunity." We are to let God the Holy Spirit lead. We have prayed for God to open the door for the message, now we trust Him to do so. We don't take a battering ram and break down the door.

"Let your conversation always be full of grace" means keep the focus on the Gospel, the Good News of what God has done for us in Jesus.

"Seasoned with salt." There are a number of ways to understand this. Some think of it as the law. Possibly. Another way to look at it is to see a reference to salt as a preservative. Our goal is to preserve the conversation. Keep the door open so you can pick it up again, go back to that topic. Don't create tension or animosity that closes the chances to continue to share. Season it with salt.

"Know how to answer everyone" is quite a challenge. Again, here it is important to note what is **not** being said. It does **not** say, "Know every answer." No one does. "How to answer" is different. Sometimes the best answer is "I don't know. Let me think about that and let's talk about this again."

## III. Third key: Using these truths in my life

In this final section, perhaps it would be best for students to talk these steps through with a couple others in the class and then report to the whole group what they might do as a result of this study. A key aspect is that they actually name an unchurched friend or relative. Encourage them to make practical plans for each step.

### Conclusion

Again, encourage them to share a practical step they will take.

January 2007. Rev. Kosberg serves as Regional Mission Facilitator for the Pacific Southwest District of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. He and his wife Jan live in Phoenix. Accompanying Participant's Guide is also available from the Center for U.S. Missions.