

December 17, 2006 by Steve Brandon



Christian Conduct and Speech

Colossians 4:5-6

1. Walk With Wisdom (verse 5).

2. Talk With Taste (verse 6).

Let's begin by considering our text this morning.

Colossians 4:5-6

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.

These words address the most basic area of our Christian conduct: our actions and our speech. Verse 5 addresses our actions. Verse 6 addresses our speech. My message is appropriately entitled, "Christian Conduct and Speech." My first point is this:

1. Walk With Wisdom (verse 5).

The wording for my point comes from verse 5, where we read, "Conduct yourselves with wisdom." This word translated, "conduct yourselves" literally means, "to walk." The metaphor of "walking" is often used in the Bible to describe how we live. Several times already in this letter to the Colossians, Paul has used the phrase in this way. It comes up in chapter 1, verse 10, where Paul prayed that those in Colossae would "walk in a manner worthy of the Lord." He was simply praying that their actions--what they did-- would be consistent with the God they professed to follow. It comes in chapter 2, verse 6, "Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him." In other words, you have received Christ Jesus. So live your life being influenced by Him. Paul used it again in chapter 3, verse 7, where he talked about the sins in which those in Colossae engaged themselves before they trusted in Christ. He wrote, "in them you also once walked, when you were living in them." In other words, "You used to live your life in these sins." And here, a fourth time, Paul uses the term to describe how we live. We should "Walk With Wisdom" (verse 5).

Particularly, this verse is talking about walking wisely toward those who are "outside." In using this term, Paul is simply talking about those who are outside the Church -- those who aren't Christians (see 1 Cor. 5:12; 1 Thess. 4:12; 1 Tim. 3:7). It's not those who aren't in the physical building in the cold, because there are plenty of people who come into the walls of churches who are still on the outside, because they have never come to faith in Christ. When Paul uses this term to describe those who are "outside," he's talking about those who have never bowed the knee to King Jesus (Acts 17:7). He's talking about those who have never seen the glories of Christ. He's talking about those who have never seen their desperate need to be cleansed from their sins before a holy God. They have never seen fit to cry out to Jesus, who alone can save them from their sins. As a result, God has given them over to their sin (Romans 1:24, 26, 28). They walk in whatever way they want to go. "There is no fear of God before their eyes" (Romans 3:18). In this sense, they are "outside."

As we live each day in this world, we rub shoulders with these sorts of people every day. We rub shoulders with them in the marketplace. We rub shoulders with them in our neighborhoods. We rub shoulders with them in the workplace. In fact, the majority of the people you happen to encounter along the street and at the gas station and in the grocery store, are these types of people. They are those who are outside of the covenant and apart from Christ. The exhortation here in this verse is for exercising wisdom in dealing with these people. We need to "Walk With Wisdom" (verse 5).

We need wisdom from two perspectives. On the one hand, you need to have the wisdom to know how to keep away from the destructive influences of the world. On the other hand, you need to have the wisdom to know how to use your interactions with those in the world for opportunities to "let your light shine before men" (Matt. 5:16). In other words, we need the wisdom to be "in the world, but not of the world."

The Scriptures abound in speaking about the dangers of the influence of the world upon our souls. Time and time again, the LORD told Israel to stay away from the pagan influences of the other nations. It is well summarized in Leviticus 18:3-4, "You shall not do what is done in the land of Egypt where you lived, nor are you to do what is done in the land of Canaan where I am bringing you; you shall not walk in their statutes. You are to perform My judgments and keep My statutes, to live in accord with them; I am the LORD your God." (Leviticus 18:3-4). The Proverbs speak often of the dangers of the influence of those who don't fear the Lord. In no uncertain terms, the wise one is the one who stays away from those who have wicked, evil motive and desires. Consider the following verses:

Proverbs 1:10, 15 - "If sinners entice you, do not consent. Do not walk in the way with them. Keep your feet from their path."

Proverbs 4:14 - "Do not enter the path of the wicked. And do not proceed in the way of evil men."

Proverbs 22:24, 25 - "Do not associate with a man given to anger, or go with a hot-tempered man, or you will learn his ways and find a snare for yourself."

The instructions of the New Testament are similar as well. Ephesians 5:11, "Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness." Genuine religion is such that it keeps oneself "unstained by the world" (James 1:27).

Now, there are some who take these sorts of Scriptures and want to escape from the world altogether. They try to remove all worldly influences from them and from their family, by doing whatever it takes. Some move to the countryside. Some move to Montana. Some live in communes of like-minded people. Some pull their children out of the public schools. Some throw out their television sets. Some shop at only Christian stores. Some only involve themselves with Christian activities. In so doing, these people think themselves to be wise. And indeed, there is a degree of wisdom in this. I'm not saying that these things are wrong in and of themselves. Personally, we home school our children and are massively involved with Christian activities. But, there is an extreme that some seek for which, quite frankly, is impossible to achieve.

It's practically impossible to remove yourself from the worldly people of this world. The only way that we can keep ourselves from associating with the immoral people of this world is for us "to go out of the world" (1 Cor. 5:10). It just can't be done. Furthermore, in trying to do everything possible to escape, it distorts the call of God upon our lives. Jesus told us to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation" (Mar. 16:15). He doesn't call us to retreat into our own little Christian shells. Rather, God is calling us to be in the world, engaging the people in the world with the message of the cross of Christ.

To be sure, we aren't to be stained by the world. But, neither are we to seclude ourselves from the world, either. On one occasion, Paul wrote a letter to the church in Corinth. In that letter, he wrote to them, not to associate with immoral people. The Corinthians took this instruction and began to separate themselves from any immoral person. When Paul received word of what they had done, he wrote to them some clarifying remarks. He wrote,

1 Corinthians 5:9-11

I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world. But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler--not even to eat with such a one.

With these words, Paul was seeking to give them wisdom in how to act toward others, especially of those who are "outside" -- who don't know Christ. He told those in Corinth not to distance themselves from the "average" immoral person, who has no clue of the demands of Christ, nor makes any profession to be His follower. However, those who are professing to know Christ (but really don't as their actions are demonstrating), you are to stay away from these people. Notice that both of these people are "outside" the church. One of them professes to be a believer, but lives in sin, which is inconsistent with those who will enter the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9-11). The other makes no profession and enjoys his sin. Paul says that you can associate with the one who makes no profession. But, the one who makes a profession should be kept at arm's length until they repent. This is the sort of wisdom that Paul is calling us to seek in verse 5.

This was the life of Jesus. When it came to those who professed their religion strongly, but lived in their sin, Jesus distanced Himself from them. But, when it came to those who knew themselves to be sinners, He readily associated with them. Think about the harshest criticisms that came from the mouth of Jesus. Toward whom were they directed? They were directed toward those religious Pharisees, who professed to know God, and made themselves look all clean on the outside, though in actuality, they were "full of dead men's bones" on the inside (Matt. 23:27). When dealing with these outsiders, He rebuked them strongly, as did John the Baptist. When the Pharisees came for baptism, John rebuked them, calling them a "brood of vipers" and urged them to "bear fruits in keeping with repentance" (Luke 3:7, 8). And yet, with whom did Jesus associate? He associated with sinners. After Matthew was converted, he gathered together all of his fellow "tax collectors and sinners" (Mark 2:15) and invited Jesus to come and eat with them. Jesus gladly went to show His love toward those who were spiritually sick and needed a physician to heal their souls (Mark 2:17). To be sure, Jesus came with the healing balm of the gospel, and didn't participate with them in the unfruitful deeds of darkness. But, Jesus didn't run away and hide. In fact, so much was it his habit of being with them that He was called "a friend of sinners" (Luke 7:34).

I believe that Jesus was demonstrating the abundant wisdom that He had in dealing with "outsiders" (Col. 4:5). He rebuked the religious who were nothing more than empty professors, by telling them to repent of their ways (i.e. Matthew 23). But, with the wicked, He first loved them and demonstrated His care for them, calling them to repentance and faith in Him. In this way, Jesus was "walking with wisdom toward outsiders." I would encourage all of you to pray and seek the Lord's will in how you should be involved in the lives of unbelievers.

In the last half of verse 5, Paul writes, "making the most of the opportunity." Paul knew that our time here upon earth is short, especially with those outside the church. We need to "redeem the time" (as the King James Version says it).

I saw a great illustration of the shortness of the time this past week. My son, SR, recently turned 11 years old. He celebrated his birthday by inviting an old friend over to our house. His name is Noah. Noah lives in a northern suburb of Chicago, so doesn't get to see him very often. Due to the circumstances of the day, Yvonne and Noah's mother were going to meet at a halfway point early in the day, and then return later in the day. SR knew of the shortness of the time that he would get to play with his friend, and sought to savor all of it. We asked SR if he wanted to go out for lunch or dinner with his friend. After thinking about it for a bit, he decided that he didn't want to, because in a restaurant, you have to sit there and wait for your food to come. He didn't want to waste even a moment in playing with Noah. So, they decided on McDonalds as a place to eat. The service is fast and there is a play place at McDonalds that would be fun to do with Noah the instant they finished eating. Apparently, lunch went well. But, then, SR came to Yvonne and said, "Mom, let's go home, because Noah and I only have four more hours to play together!" SR understood the brevity of time that he would have with his friend. (That's not intended to give any offence to any of his friends here in this church. He gets to see all of you all the time. But, he only gets to see Noah a couple of times a year. And so, he "made the most of his opportunity").

If we only knew how short our time was with those outside the church, we might just be more diligent about using our opportunities for the Lord. Just think about how many opportunities you have with those who don't know Christ. Sometimes, the only time that you will ever see

them is in passing. Think about your neighbors. How many meaningful opportunities do you have to talk with your neighbors? I think about those around our house this past year. With one family, I probably spent about two hours this past year talking with them. With two other families, I probably spend about 30 minutes talking with them. With another family, probably 15 minutes. We'll probably have the same opportunities again this year. These are people who don't know Christ. We get 30 minutes each year to talk with them. We need to "make most of the opportunity."

I love those in the Bible who made the most of their opportunity. I think about Jesus with the woman at the well. He and His disciples had been journeying all day long. Jesus was "wearied from His journey" (John 4:6). So, He sat by the well, resting alone. Along came a woman. Though tired, Jesus made the most of the opportunity and engaged her in conversation. Eventually, Jesus was able to steer the conversation toward His identity as Messiah. She eventually believed and shared her testimony with many in her city (John 4:28-30), who came to believe as well (John 4:39-42).

Peter made the most of the opportunity, when a beggar was asking alms of him. Peter simply replied, "I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene--walk!" (Acts 3:6). He was healed on the spot in the name of Christ.

I think about Paul in his missionary journeys. He made the most of the opportunities set before him. As he traveled from city to city, it was often his custom to head straight to the synagogue (Acts 17:2). It was there that he would have the greatest opportunity to preach the gospel of Christ to the Jew first. When he attended his first service in Psidian Antioch, one of the officials said, "Brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say it" (Acts 13:15). Paul got up in the synagogue and preached Christ (Acts 13:16-41). Later, when he came to Philippi, we can only assume that there was no synagogue, for "on the Sabbath [he] ... went outside the gate to a riverside, where [he was] supposing that there would be a place of prayer" (Acts 16:13). He was looking for those in Philippi who feared the Lord. It was there that he found some women who had assembled (Acts 16:13). After sharing the gospel with them at least one of them, Lydia, was converted.

Paul soon found himself in prison. Rather than wallowing in self-pity, he "made the most of his opportunity" with those outside the church. He and his fellow prisoner, Silas, "were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them" (Acts 16:25). Now, as you think about this for a few moments, it is really quite astonishing. Here was Paul was in prison, along with other criminals all around him. Knowing the conditions of the prisons in those days, there was no reason to rejoice in his circumstances. And yet, he knew that the other prisoners certainly were in need of hearing a testimony of the Lord's goodness. Since it was midnight and dark in the prison, it was probably inappropriate for him to begin preaching to them. (Half of the prisoners were probably asleep). And so, ... what did Paul and Silas do? They began to pray and sing hymns of praise to God (Acts 16:25). This is "making the most of the opportunity" with those outside the church. Taking this opportunity led to an opportunity to preach to the Philippian jailor, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved."

When he moved on to Athens, he was talking to whoever would listen. He was talking to those in the synagogue, and to those in the market place (Acts 17:17). Eventually, he had an opportunity to speak in the Areopagus, with the scholars of the day. He preached Christ to them. When the book of Acts ends, we find him under house arrest in Rome, "welcoming all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered" (Acts 28:30-31).

So, how can you "make most of the opportunity"? Again, like last week, I want to be real practical here. I want to give you some ideas of what you can do to help stir your thinking in these things.

1. Advertise Your Faith.

I'm not talking here about marketing gimmicks or being obnoxious. There are ways that you can make your faith known to others in an unwise way that would turn people away from the Lord. By suggesting that you advertise your faith, I'm simply talking about arranging the affairs of your life with Christian symbols and objects that make a statement about your faith in Christ. Perhaps it's a Christian fish symbol on the back of your car. Perhaps it's a Christian bumper sticker. Perhaps it's a ring that you wear that has a cross on it.

Perhaps it's a t-shirt that contains a Christian message. One of the favorite shirts that I have has big cross going down the middle of shirt, with a fence at the bottom of the cross. Then, there is a Scripture passage written on the shirt from Matthew 6:24, "No one can serve two masters. You cannot serve both GOD and worldly riches." Thank with big bold letters, is asks the question: Which side of the fence are you on? I have coached my kids' soccer teams a few times. I remember wearing this shirt often in our practices. We had a team picture with players and coaches. This is the shirt that I chose to wear on that occasion. I was simply trying to use every opportunity for people to know where my allegiance lies in an effort to promote discussion.

Perhaps it's a mug that you use at work. When I was in the corporate world, I had a job where it was favorably looked upon if you had your own personal mug at work that you would use to drink your tea or your coffee. It was sort of in the spirit of preserving the environment of all of the Styrofoam cups that are often thrown away. So, I brought a mug to work that had the names of Jesus scattered all around the mug. Perhaps it's other things to place upon your desk at work. I know of a man who used to have a picture of a graveyard on his desk at work. The whole point of it was to jolt people into asking why he had a picture of a graveyard on his desk. He was able then to quickly transition to the gospel, by saying that the picture constantly reminds him of the brevity of life and where his body will be in a few short years. But, he had a hope that went beyond the grave and was willing to speak with others about it.

When I worked in a public environment, I often had a small plastic baby on my desk that represented the size of a pre-born fetus at 11-12 weeks. It's about 2½ inches long. When people asked about it, I was able to tell them of how this is the size of a baby at the end of the first trimester, when many children are aborted. "It reminds me to pray for the Lord to stop abortion in our land" was my common reply.

Perhaps it's Scripture passage that you have on your computer at work. Your screensaver or your background make great places to advertise your faith. Perhaps it's the choice of radio stations you listen to at work. If your job is such that you can listen to the radio all day, you can work hard to choose the radio station to be a Christian radio station to promote discussion over the right things.

It's Christmas time. If you are in the habit of sending out Christmas cards, this is a great time to "make the most of the opportunity" by communicating spiritual truth on the cards that you send into the homes of your friend, especially those who don't know Christ. If you send out any sort of letter, you can fill it with words that help to focus people on the reason for the Christmas season: the incarnation of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. You can sprinkle your letter with Bible verses. You can write of why Christ came. He came to die and so save His people from their sins.

So, advertise your faith. Before we go on, let me warn you, if you use any of these things, be careful. Don't put a Christian fish symbol on the back of your car if you are planning on speeding down the highway or cutting people off. Such actions will only bring reproach upon the name of Christ. If you are going to wear a shirt with a Christian message on it, make sure that your actions and your speech are consistent with the message on your shirt. If you are making a statement at work, then make sure that you are walking in a manner worthy of the Lord (Col. 1:10). If you make bold statements in your Christmas card, be sure to live a life of integrity at your next family reunion, where you will see many of the people who received your card and letter.

2. Decorate Your Home.

When people walk into your home, it's very helpful if they can see and feel that your home is dedicated to the Lord. A few years ago, we were moving out of our house. At one point, our realtor was showing a man through our house. I didn't know this man, but my brother-in-law did. This man later spoke with my brother-in-law and asked him, "Is your brother-in-law religious?" He has simply been in our home and couldn't help but to notice the Christian decorations in our home. My wife is skilled at calligraphy and we have many Scripture passages all over our walls. I have repeatedly told her that I would love to have our home filled with her calligraphy of Scripture passages all around. I brought one of those that hang in our home. It's a small little frame with Joshua 24:15 written on it. It simply says, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (We have given copies of this away as house-welcoming gifts. I know that there are several homes in this congregation that have this calligraphy in your home. That's a good thing.)

I remember being in a home that was literally covered on every wall with Bible verses written in calligraphy. It's not because the owners were skilled in calligraphy or had a friend to help. Rather, they purchased a nice book with pages and pages of full-color calligraphy verses. They took scissors out and cut up the book, and framed a bunch of the pages. You can do this as well relatively cheaply.

Perhaps you want to post a plaque near your kitchen sink with the famous words, "Only one life, 'twill soon be past. Only what's done for Christ will last." As it's there before you all the time, it will remind you of your eternal purpose. It will also spread a message to those in your home who happen to stand at your kitchen sink.

At Rock Valley Bible Church, we have provided pictures of the church on the back table. These are good to have on display in your home someplace. As you look at the faces, it is a reminder to pray. But, it's also a conversation starter, that you can "make the most of the opportunity" when "outsiders" come into your home.

3. Create Your Opportunities.

In verse 5, Paul tells us the "make the most of the opportunity." Rather than passively waiting for opportunities to come your way, how about actively creating your opportunities? In other words, think through ways in which you can force yourself to interact with non Christians. Coach a soccer team. Play in a community orchestra. Get involved in a chess club. Join a quilting guild. Invite international students into your home and share the love of Christ with them. Organize a block party with those on your street this summer, that you might have opportunity to know them and speak with them. Write a personalized gospel tract to hand out in appropriate situations.

I know one business man in our congregation who is working on a brochure that he might hand out to his customers with the message of the gospel contained in it. I'm very encouraged by this opportunity that he's creating for himself. Volunteer at the Rockford Rescue Mission. (That will force you to deal with "outsiders.") Run for a political office. Submit press releases to the newspaper. Invite your neighbors over for dinner. Take Christmas cookies over to your neighbors.

Ask your coworkers some leading questions. When I was in the work force, one of my favorite questions that I used to ask people at work was about their weekend. I would ask them, "How was your weekend?" Then, they would proceed to tell me everything about their weekend. Often, the question would return to me, "How was your weekend?" That's a wide open door for you to explain what took place on the weekend. You could easily say something like this, "I spent most of my day on Saturday repairing some things around the house that needed fixing. Sunday, I went to church with my family. I love going to church. The music is very honoring to the Lord. I tell you, we have the greatest preacher at our church. He loves the Lord, expositions the word, loves all of us. This Sunday, his message was about the ways in which Christians should behave, what they should do, and what they should say. It was powerful. He simply opens up the Bible to us. Perhaps you would like to join me one of these Sundays."

In these ways, you will be prepared to (1) Walk With Wisdom (verse 5). This morning, I have given you but a few ways. These are but a few ways in which you can be strategic in "making the most of the opportunity" with the gospel of Christ. I'm sure that if we had some more time and had the opportunity, we could have an open forum to hear from you all of some of the ways in which you seek to redeem the time with outsiders. But, we must move on to our second point this morning, which is, ...

2. Talk With Taste (verse 6).

I get this from verse 6, which reads, "Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person." Peter's counsel to the scattered, persecuted believers was to "be ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, ... with gentleness and reverence" (1 Peter 3:15). If you are actively advertising your faith, decorating your home, creating your opportunities, then you may well get some questions from people. You need to be ready with a

response that you will give them. Think through your response when people ask you about the picture of the graveyard on your desk. Think through your response when people comment about the picture of the church on your refrigerator. Think through your response when people comment about the t-shirt that you are wearing. Think through the questions that you might ask people.

Now, there is a bit of difficulty in understanding exactly what Paul means when he uses this metaphor of "salt." There are some who understand how salt makes our food taste better and makes us thirsty. Those who take this slant would believe that our speech needs to make God attractive and savory. Our talk should be such that it makes people "thirsty" for God. There are others who look upon the primary use of salt in the ancient world as a preservative. In the ancient world, they didn't have refrigeration or freezers. Rather, they mixed their meat with salt. And so, some say that our speech needs to act like a preserving agent and ought to help prevent corruption. There are others who see that salt has its effect on whatever it touches. It makes food spicy. It stings when rubbed into our eyes or into a wound. Therefore, our speech needs to be such that it creates an effect in the life of other people.

You can argue until you are blue in the face exactly what Paul had in mind here when he spoke about our speech being salty. We can never know for sure. However, it's not too difficult to have a good general idea of what he's communicating. Whenever you are in doubt of the meaning of a phrase or of a word, look to the context of the passage. In our context this morning, Paul is simply saying that our salty speech is speech that is appropriate for whatever situation we find ourselves in. You can see this with the last half of verse 6, which is giving the purpose of the first half. We are to have gracious, salty speech, "so that you will know how you should respond to each person." In other words, our speech is to have the characteristic about it that it always responds appropriately to each and every person with whom we interact.

I've sought to characterize this thought using the word, "taste." (2) Talk With Taste (verse 6). The English word "taste" has a manifold range of meanings. On the one hand, it can describe the effects of creating a more savory meal. On the other hand, it can describe the appropriate word for the occasion. It describes the appropriate tact that a person might have in what they say. In this way, this word can pull in all of the suggested interpretations for salty speech. Tasteful speech describes, savory, preservative speech that makes its effect upon people. The command that comes to us this morning is simply this: **our speech must always be in good taste.** It must always be appropriate for the occasion. We must know how to "respond to each person."

I remember an encounter that I had with a worker at a store. This guy works in the checkout line at a store that I have gone to on a number of occasions. I remember on one occasion in the summer time entering the store with my shirt with a big cross on it that asks the question, "Which side of the fence are you on?" When the guy checked me out and handed me my receipt, he said some words that were very appropriate in commending my shirt. He quoted some Scripture and basically pronounced a blessing upon me. I put that in the back of my mind, encouraged that this man is a believer in Christ. I remember a few months later I came into the store and came through his same checkout line. This time, I didn't have my t-shirt on. I'm sure that he didn't remember me, as he deals with so many people over the course of his days and months. And he made a very inappropriate comment, filled with sexual innuendos and implications. The man lost all credibility in my mind. I'm thinking, "How can the same mouth speak forth some wonderful words of blessing on one occasion, while on another occasion speak forth some highly corruptible words?" He failed in "responding appropriately to each person." His words changed, according to the need of the moment. And yet, this is the battle with the tongue that we all face. We read, ...

James 3:8-10

No one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way.

I know the tension of worshiping the Lord one minute, and speaking poorly of another individual the next minute. And as we deal with outsiders, there is so much at stake. The glory of Jesus Christ is at stake. As we stumble in our words, those "outsiders" with whom we have "opportunity" soon look upon our words and our life with contempt. Why should they listen to us, when they hear us badmouth the boss, grumble at the weather, complain to the store manager, or speak forth words that are unwholesome? Why should they listen to us? This is the point of verse 6. In all of your efforts to "make the most of the opportunity," work hard to see to it that your speech is consistent in your response to each and every person you encounter.

There is really only one way to have such salty speech. The key is found in verse 6. Our speech must "always be with grace." The key to responding appropriately to everybody who sees our life, isn't to have some great wit about us that always has the instant answer to all of life's most difficult questions that those outside the church always like to ask. It isn't to have the savvy to deal with everybody like a type "a" car-salesman-type might deal with people. Rather, the solution is really easier than you think. We simply need to have speech that is saturated with grace. Our speech should be kind and caring and edifying and thoughtful and considerate and sensitive and helpful and beneficial and encouraging. In no ways should our speech be hurtful and insensitive and unloving and inappropriate and annoying and irritating and unhelpful and corrupt and unwholesome. Our speech should always be with grace.

This verse reminds me of a great passage that talks about our words. Ephesians 4:29, "Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear." There is no room for degrading, corrupting, and hurtful words to come from our hearts. God is calling us to speak only those words that will edify others, according to the need of the moment. May He strengthen us to do so.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on December 17, 2006 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rvbc.cc.
