

# PathLights

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet  
and a light to my path"  
Psalm 119:104*

September 16, 2018

## With Wisdom Toward Outsiders

by Frank Himmel

Paul encouraged the Colossians, "Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity" (Colossians 4:5).

There are two obvious reasons why Christians would want to live this way. One is to minimize persecution. There is a natural conflict between good and evil, between truth and error, and those who follow those two courses. "Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Timothy 3:12). But that does not mean we must go out of our way to invite problems. "If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men" (Romans 12:18).

The other and more important consideration is that wise conduct toward outsiders is the way to win them to Christ. Is this not the opportunity Paul is speaking of? Our religion is more often judged on what we practice than what we preach. Many who would not come hear the gospel will carefully watch it in action. "Let your light shine before men, in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

How do we carry out this instruction to conduct ourselves with wisdom toward outsiders?

To begin with, show some interest in outsiders. It is true that bad company corrupts good morals (1 Corinthians 15:33); that calls for caution on our part. But it is also a fact that Christ's kingdom is like leaven (Matthew 13:33). How can we influence others if we have no contact with them? How can we appeal to them if we are completely wrapped up in our own worlds, with too little time or interest to even notice their problems or to be of help? ▶

You're invited to a series of Bible lessons by

**Russ Bowman**

from Beaumont, Texas

**September 16-19**

**FOLLOWING JESUS**

*"Seek First the Kingdom of God"*

*"Sacrificial Instruction"*

*"Resist the Devil"*

*"Will He Find Faith?"*

*"Except God Be with Him"*



Sunday, 9:30 & 11:00 a.m.

Monday - Wednesday, 7:00 p.m.

The next verse suggests another area that deserves careful attention: our speech. “Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.” Will harsh, vindictive, “holier than thou” tones give the impression that we have the mind of Christ? Will rough language, off-color jokes, half-truths, flattery, gossip, or backbiting convince another that we are new creatures? Will airing the church’s dirty laundry or our pet peeves persuade others to come worship with us?

When we attempt to teach someone the truth, there is no point in trying to correct every error in thinking or terminology the first time. Be patient. Establish some common ground. Start with the basics.

To the extent we can, we need to learn to respect the customs of outsiders. Paul said he became as a Jew, as one under law, as one without law, or as weak, depending on whom he was trying to teach. “I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some” (1 Corinthians 9:22b; see also 10:32–11:1).

The way we do business ought to be included in this discussion. The man who spends all his time making money does not look like one whose treasures are in heaven. The one who lies and cheats bears more resemblance to Judas than to Jesus. Can you talk to a man about his soul after you have made an unjust attack on his wallet?

Work is a related factor. “Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and



*I shall pass through this world but once. Any good, therefore, that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any fellow being, let me do it now. Let me not defer it or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.*

work with your hands, just as we commanded you, so that you will behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need” (1 Thessalonians 4:11-12).

One more area to consider is how we react to others or in the presence of others. “Never pay back evil for evil to anyone” (Romans 12:17a). A temper tantrum is a sign we are walking by the flesh, not the Spirit (Galatians 5:19-23). So is worry. Jesus’ disciples have a calm, patient, relentless trust in our heavenly Father.

Solomon said, “He who is wise wins souls” (Proverbs 11:30). That does not just mean it is wise to win souls, though clearly it is. It is the wise man, the one who conducts himself with wisdom toward outsiders, who will win them. ■

### Service Leaders for the Week

	Sunday	Wednesday
GREETER	Bruce Williams	Adam Gibson
SONG LEADER	Carlos Garcia	Sam Walters
OPENING PRAYER	Steven Turner	
LORD’S SUPPER		
BREAD	Bruce Hollander	
CUP	Kerry Gray	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	David Gray	
SERMON/INVITATION	Russ Bowman	Russ Bowman
CLOSING PRAYER	Josh Baucom	Brian Wilson