

FOR CLARKSVILLE

FOR CLARKSVILLE, PART 3: NEIGHBORING

Every relational connection in our life is built on conversations. The deeper the conversation, the deeper the relationship. In Colossians, Paul suggested that we leverage this approach beyond our marriage, friendships, and parenting, by bringing this principle into our interactions with everyone—including those who don't believe what we believe. This is how Christians can *be wise in the way you act toward outsiders*.

BIG IDEA: You don't start by saying anything. You start by doing something.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

When we share our beliefs or ideas with others, our conversations can quickly become confrontational. Jesus often talked with people he had little in common with, yet somehow he was able to find common ground in order to make a difference. People genuinely liked him and wanted to hear more of what he had to say. We too can have those kinds of conversations and earn that kind of influence if we choose to make a *difference* instead of a *point*.

CONVERSATIONS

1. Share a time when someone used the power of conversation to influence you in a positive way.
2. How is having a conversation with someone different than talking with him or her?
3. We struggle to have conversations with those we wish to influence most. Is this true in your life? Who can you begin to have a conversation with (co-workers, family members, etc.)?
4. In Colossians 4:5-6, Paul writes:

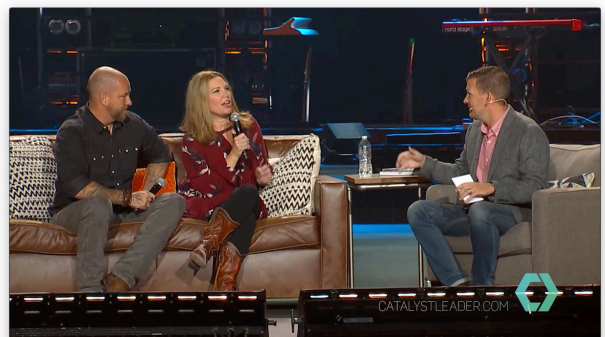
Make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt.

Colossians 4:5-6

5. What do you think he means by full of grace? Why do you think Paul used the phrase seasoned with salt?
6. How would you define "grace"? Why might it be a confusing concept in today's culture?
7. What are some of the most powerful images of grace that you've experienced in your life?
8. What happens when conversations have too much salt and not enough grace? Is there such a thing as "too much grace"?
9. Why is it wiser to lead with grace than with salt?
10. What are some current areas of life where you could show more grace?

MOVING FORWARD

As a small group, watch *Neighboring* with Brian & Jen Hatmaker (www.vimeo.com/257965834)



DIGGING DEEPER

1. Have you ever felt like an outsider? What was your experience like?

Examples:

- a. New workplace
 - b. New school
 - c. New to a team
2. How did people treat you during your “outsider experience”? What is one thing you wish someone had said to you or done for you during that time?
 3. In the context of *church* and *Christians*, who are the outsiders?
 4. How do Christians in the church often treat outsiders?
 5. Read Luke 19: 5–6 and then answer the question that follows. When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.” So [Zacchaeus] came down at once and welcomed [Jesus] gladly. What can we learn from Jesus about how to approach people with whom we disagree?
 6. In the message, Chris said that “conversations create connections” and talks about the opposite being true as well. Can you think of a time in your life when a conversation created a connection or when judgment may have caused a separation?



7. Think of someone in your life who has different opinions and beliefs than you. Listed below are practical ways to create connections with people. This week, choose one way to be intentional about breaking the ice.
 - Listen first.
 - Ask a question before stating your opinion.
 - Find a way to serve him or her.
 - Make the first move (phone call, text, email).
 - Find something you have in common.
 - Offer a compliment.

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Challenge: “Get to know your *neighbors*.
You can’t *love* who you don’t *know*.”

Before you can talk about Jesus. Before you can tell them that God loves them, you need to get to know them and let them know that you love them. Because *you don’t start by saying anything. You start by doing something*. Invite someone over to your house for dinner. Invite them out for coffee. Call them and get your kids together for a play date. And when you get together? Don’t feel the pressure yet of bring up God and the church. Just have a conversation. And my second challenge is this: Don’t be *weird*.

CHANGING YOUR MIND

Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone. Colossians 4:6

