

Minister & Ministering Roles

Colossians 1:23b-29

I. Introduction: Things Not to Say to Your Minister

1. Thank you, Pastor! *Your exhortations were on the mark today.*
Your teaching has been pretty flat, so it's good to finally have you back;

I think you got most of it right...I would have said _____;

That sermon was so impactful, I just wish I could have kept my eyes open;

If I had known you were going to be so good today, I would have invited my neighbor;

Did you know there are 263 ceiling tiles in the sanctuary?; and

What exactly do you do outside of Sunday and Wednesday?

2. In our passage, Paul shifts from focusing on Christ to his role as a Minister or Pastor. *As such, he offers great lessons for the ministers & pastors of today, along with many lessons for every Christ follower as each believer is called to use God's personal gifts in ministering to His body* AND in our part as ministers in reconciling the lost to the Lord. **1 Peter 4:10-11** says it this way:

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As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. ¹¹ If anyone speaks, *let him speak* as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, *let him do it* as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever.
Amen.

– 1 Peter 4:10-11

3. Paul offers several important considerations helping us understand, relate to, and support the God-ordained role of minister or pastor today. *Since the pastor is an integral part of the body of Christ and because* his role is often viewed with a distorted cultural view, I think it healthy for us to examine, reflect, and respond to Paul's words here. *Additionally, while not his focal point, we will continue to note believers roles as ministers within the day-to-day life of being the Church.*

Colossians 1:23b-29

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I. Colossians 1:23b: Ministers Preach the Gospel

1. The word Paul uses for “minister” means to be “an agent or intermediary”¹ for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. *It means that, as ministers or pastors, we model and speak the truth of Jesus Christ found in the Scriptures.* Furthermore, as **2 Cor 5:18-20** says, every child of God is Jesus’ ambassador in the ministry of reconciliation.
2. Here in the latter part of v23, we see Ministers have a duty to preach or “make known” the Gospel to everyone under heaven. *For those burdened with a desire to get the grammar absolutely perfect, I want you to know that the tense of “was preached” is a aorist passive participle* that, according to Missionary-turned-translator Gordon Olson² says correctly translated would have been an ingressive aorist. *This means that Paul was emphasizing the beginning of this action that would continue;* and we know it will continue until Jesus comes to take His church.
3. Over the years, God has seen fit to raise up pastors throughout the world and to give many means of proclaiming His word; examples include radio, television, and now social media and podcasts. *Here at CCA, we are blessed to have vibrant local outreach initiatives, support missionaries and parachurch ministries, along with having an online presence sharing His word*

¹ BDAG

² C Gordon Olson, The Resurrection New Testament: An Enhanced Translation, p 254

locally and to many across the globe. Even as we thank Jesus for this, we are reminded that Aiken county has tens of thousands of unchurched and church hurt...so the work of the local church, including us, is NOT yet complete.

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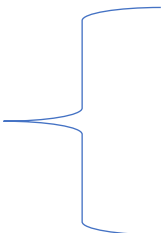
II. Colossians 1:24: Ministers Rejoice in Hardship

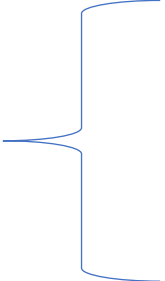
1. Please don't take that as this Minister cavalierly saying "bring on those hardships". Rather, it is a reflection of an understanding that God will use these hardships for His glory and that somehow, somehow He will use them to (1) bring some to a saving knowledge of Jesus, (2) make children of God more like Him, and (3) to bring the body to the fullness of maturity in Him.

A. Let's consider the first two under the header of the work Jesus does through a Minister's suffering for individual saints with the third one being the work Jesus does through a Ministers suffering for the benefit of the body of Christ.

2. Despite our desires for comfort...despite our relative wealth, security, and great provision...despite our best efforts to minimize or even avoid suffering, it remains a central part of our lives. In what is a foreign concept to our hearts, Paul addresses this head-on by saying a minister of the Gospel is to "rejoice" in his suffering.

A. Let's first start with a brief statement of what Paul is NOT saying. He is **NOT** considering the host of "transactional" things that may bring a brief period of emotion laden joy (aka, happiness) or man-glory in our relationships, work, accomplishments, activities, comfortabilities, or even serving others less fortunate. For unless done unto God, these are perishing worldly joys fueling our self-focus and pride.

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- i. As for what he is saying: Biblical joy is more than a feeling...it is knowing that God is sovereign AND in turn, we are worthless outside of Christ...a joy found in trusting that He is for you...a joy built upon His great promises that He is making us holy as He is holy with our suffering



being one of His primary tools toward this end...a joy filled with contentment and peace in knowing our circumstances don't define us...a joy found in the transforming love and hope only He can offer. Worldly joy has me (with all my limitations) at the throne of my life while Biblical joy has Jesus rightly on that throne.

- ii. In our passage today, Paul is speaking about the role of Minister/Pastor with Apostolic authority. As an under-shepherd, the Minister carries a great spiritual burden for both the one and the body of Christ. What's more, they and their families are often the point of attack for Satan and his minions because a Pastoral failure almost always does great damage in the body of Christ AND to the name of Christ in that community.

I am reminded of the high turnover of pastors under the enormous strain and unmet expectations, the aging of America's pastors, and the cost to pastoral families along with the sadness, depression, resentment, and so much more that is in broad evidence amongst the pastoral ranks in America.

As I consider these realities, I also consider Paul's words here of "according to the stewardship from God". Because ministry is hard our joy is fully dependent upon our relationship with Him, so the enduring Minister is one that prays, meditates, fasts, and otherwise seeks Jesus throughout each day.

- B. In **Hebrews 12**, we read that Jesus Himself modeled suffering in enduring the cross of Calvary for the joy that was set before Him. He repeatedly sought quiet time with the Father. He defeated death through His suffering for our sins and in that same verse we are clearly presented with His promise as the author of our faith that He will also be the finisher of our faith.

C. In **Acts 9:15-16**, as God directed Ananias to minister to His newly converted disciple Paul, we read Jesus saying: “Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear my name...(jump ahead to v16)...For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake.”

Most people love their idea of heaven and they even love His blessings on this side of heaven. But to receive the gift of eternal life from Jesus means to receive Him, including the suffering that comes with ones relationship with Him...yet, in what can be hard to accept, this suffering is actually a great blessing. Paul says it this way in **Philippians 3:10-11**:

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“that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, ¹¹ if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.”
– Philippians 3:10-11

This is what victory looks like! Surrender, obedience, suffering... according to His calling on your/my life.

D. In the opening lines of James, we read “count it all joy when you fall into various trials”. James goes on to speak of the great character development God does in His children through these trials AND that His faithfulness in the trials will serve to build our faith further.

E. In **Matthew 5:10**, we learn that “blessed are those that are persecuted for righteousness sake.” John speaks of this blessing as being an assurance of our salvation in **John 15:18**: “If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you”. In **Romans 8:17-18**, Paul also points us to the reality that in Christ we are saved AND in Christ we will suffer AND in Christ we have the promise of a future reward...

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...if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together.¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. - Romans 8:17–18

3. In the second half of v24, Paul turns His attention onto a minister's suffering for the body of Christ as his 3rd consideration.

A. This part of the verse launches with the difficult words that Paul's sufferings will "fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ". Since Jesus is fully God, holy, good, and perfect in every way, the obvious question is how Christ could be lacking in anything. The short story is that He isn't!

- i. A little bit longer explanation is well framed in Paul's words here and in his other letters, all making clear his belief that Jesus' death on the cross dealt with sin once and for all. What Paul is conveying is the outworking of Christ having died, risen to new life, and having defeated death, now sitting at the right hand of the Father. Note that Paul uses two distinctly different words...suffering (misfortune) for Paul and afflictions (in context, the tribulations solely belonging to the Messiah) for Jesus.

Think of it this way, Christ was afflicted FOR our sins, but now He suffers (as the head of the body, through the suffering of His children) IN the Church growing to spiritual maturity. Correspondingly, Paul is NOT afflicted FOR our sins, but as representing Christ fully as ambassador & Minister, Paul will suffer IN the body growing to spiritual maturity.

- ii. This is, in fact, a central part of Jesus plan. He sent the Spirit to indwell us, built his church, and gives us church leadership to equip the saints for the work of the ministry in edifying the body and fulfilling the great commission.
- iii. Another thought offered by some is that Paul's words reference the Jewish eschatological understanding of Messianic woes. The basic idea being that the Messiah will not come until certain troubles come upon the Jews. We see this thought carried into the NT in that the Christ

will not return a second time until the suffering of the Church is filled up.³

B. The Lord uses the trials of His Ministers to encourage, edify, comfort, and mature the body of Christ. *As we have noted previously, many verses promise the persecution of Saints AND the hope of the Gospel.* When the Church sees their God-anointed leadership living out the Gospel despite their suffering, its members:

- i. ...are encouraged to endure in their own trials. *Importantly, this is NOT some blind endurance representing hopelessness, but an endurance functioning in the strength of the Lord founded upon His promises;*
- ii. ...witness how their minister walks in peace, joy, comfort, contentment, and hope. *This is amplified further when the body of Christ also walks in the hope of the Lord as the body ministers one to the other;*
- iii. ...are reminded that Christ is for each child of God and that He uses all things, including our suffering for His glory and to help you mature spiritually; and finally
- iv. ...victory is not found in the circumstances of this life, but in the person of Jesus Christ – including, as is found in **Philippians 1:29** and elsewhere, as Ministers and saints suffer for His namesake. *And, in this, as Paul stated in our passage today and as Luke recorded in **Acts 5:41**, we may know that trials are actually a cause for rejoicing.*

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III. Colossians 1:25-27: Ministers are Stewards for the Saints & the Church

4. In his 4th consideration, Paul speaks directly of a Ministers charge to steward the word of God and the mystery of God.

³ N. T. Wright, *Colossians and Philemon: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 12, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 91–92.

A. First up is as a steward of God's word, the minister is to...

- i. "Fulfill the word of God". The NASB translation of Colossians 1:25 offers great clarity of just what Paul had in mind here:

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NASB Of *this church* I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, that I might fully carry out the *preaching of the word of God*,
- Colossians 1:25

- ii. Stewards are to use the gifts of God to fully preach the Word to every generation of the lost and dying world. For you see, the Church is God's plan for sharing the Good news to the ends of the world. God gives us missionaries, church planters, us, and today, we have a truly remarkable opportunity to share Jesus through social media and other technology platforms.

Given this, it is right for us to ask two questions. (1) How am I doing in being a steward of God's word and closely related (2) How are we, His church doing in this stewardship?

B. Second, and very much linked to the first, we are stewards of what was once a mystery. I believe there are two elements to Paul's mystery in view here in vs26-27. First, while the OT makes clear there was to come a Christ, it was only in the NT that we come to know the Messiah is Jesus. Likewise, while the OT makes clear that salvation will be for the Gentiles (e.g., Is 49:6) as well as for God's chosen people, the Jews, it's in the life and death of Jesus that we come to understand how, including the unfolding of the Church.

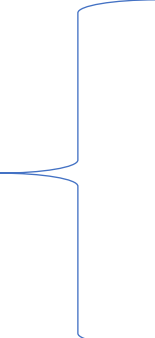
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IV. Colossians 1:28: Knowing and Living God's Wisdom

- 5. Paul's fifth consideration is that God's minister warns and teaches all of mankind, meaning to both the lost and the saved.

- A. One day, God's church will be the bride of Christ at the marriage supper of the Lamb (Re 19:7-9). *In preparation for this great celebration, it is the job of the minister to do his God-given part in maturing the Church through the gifts of the Spirit given him (Col 1:28; Eph 4:11-13).*

This, as Paul says, is done through preaching as we read in v23 along with warning, and teaching in Godly wisdom. **2 Timothy 3:16** tells us *"God's word is sufficient for teaching, reproofing, correction, and training in righteousness"*. And **Hebrews 4:12** says *"For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart"*. *Under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, a Minister draws God's wisdom from the living water of Scripture in doing his part to mature the body of Christ.*



A Minister is NOT to teach according to mankind's wisdom. *We are NOT to teach on our hobby-horse.* // Instead, the Minister is to stand on God's word and NOT be blown to-and-fro by the latest cultural fads or government demands. *We are to instruct people about God's character, nature, and will.* We are to call and equip the body of Christ into the fulness of Biblical manhood and womanhood, including (together) being the Church. *This requires that we teach all of God's counsel...every book, chapter, and verse...that the Saint may know and live in the riches of God's glory Paul notes in v27.*

- B. Next, we see Ministers are accountable to God.

For those seeking to be Pastors, teachers, and church leaders, there is a old quote that is helpful to keep front of mind: *"If you can do anything else, do so"*. **6** This is not simply because the work is demanding and difficult, but, in what is Paul's 6th consideration, *because these leaders are accountable to God for the job of leading you toward Biblical maturity.*

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- i. **James 3:1** says: “My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.” Likewise, **Hebrews 13:17** says: “Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you”

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This is NOT to say that any of our maturing in Christ is NOT of Christ. No, it is that Christ has given each of us, including Pastors, gifts to use as His ambassadors that we may bear His fruit for His glory. To rob one another of the use of God’s gifts is to rob God our being obedient to His will.

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V. **Colossians 1:29**: **Laboring in God’s Power, Striving for His Will**

- (7) We wrap up with Paul’s 7th and final consideration. Because ministry is demanding spiritually, physically, and emotionally, it is impossible to be a faithful and effective minister of God apart from your own faithful, dedicated, and loyal hard work.

Yet, unless the Minister is about Jesus’ work, in Jesus strength, for Jesus’ Glory, he labors in vain.

VI. **Closing: The Minister’s Role Includes**

Ministers preach the word	Ministers minister with joy
Ministers do so, in part, through suffering	Ministers are stewards of God’s word
Ministers teach and deliver warnings	Ministers bring believers into maturity
Ministers minister in God’s power	

May we all purpose to know and fill our God-anointed roles in His body that together, we may be the Church. Amen? Amen.

Colossians 1:23b-29

Minister & Ministering Roles

I. Introduction: Things Not to Your Minister

- Seven considerations helping us understand the role of Minister

Additional Scripture References: 1Pe 4:10-11

II. Colossians 1:23b: Ministers Preach the Gospel

- Minister is “an agent or intermediary” for the Gospel.

Additional Scripture References: 2 Co 5:18-20;

III. Colossians 1:24: Ministers Rejoice in Hardship

- Both a Ministers role and ministering are hard and fully dependent on the Lord.
- The church and its members benefit in many ways in witnessing the suffering of their pastors.

Additional Scripture References: He 12; Acts 9:15-16; Phil 3:10-11; Mt 5:10-11; Jn 15:18; Ro 8:17-18; Phil 1:29; Acts 5:41

IV. Colossians 1:25-27: Ministers are Stewards for the Saints & the Church

- Stewardship of the Word and of the Mystery of God

Additional Scripture References: Col 1:25 NASB

V. Colossians 1:28: Laboring in God’s Power, Striving for His Will

VI. Closing: The Minister’s Role Includes

5-Day Devotional Colossians 1:23b-29 Minister & Ministering Roles

Day 1: Minister's Call to Preach

Reading: Col 1:23-29, 2 Cor 5:18-20

Devotional: As we begin this journey, let's reflect on the high calling of sharing the Gospel. Paul reminds us that we are all ministers of reconciliation, ambassadors for Christ. Whether you're a pastor or not, God has given you a unique platform to share His love.

Today, consider how you can be an "agent or intermediary" for the Gospel in your daily life. How can your words and actions reflect Christ's message of hope and salvation? Remember, the Good News isn't just for a select few—it's for "everyone under heaven." Pray for opportunities to share God's love today, and for the courage to seize them when they arise.

Day 2: Finding Joy in Hardship

Reading: Ja 1:2-4, Rom 5:3-5

Devotional: The idea of rejoicing in suffering often seems counterintuitive, yet it's a recurring theme in Scripture. Paul speaks of rejoicing in his hardships, not because the pain itself is good, but because of what God accomplishes through it.

Today, reflect on a current challenge in your life. How might God be using this difficulty to shape your character or deepen your faith? Remember, biblical joy isn't based on circumstances, but on the unchanging reality of God's love and sovereignty. Ask God to help you see your trials through His eyes, trusting that He is working all things for your good and His glory.

Day 3: Christ in You, the Hope of Glory

Reading: Col 1:26-27, Eph 3:4-19

Devotional: Paul speaks of a great mystery now revealed: "Christ in you, the hope of glory." This indwelling presence of Christ is the source of our transformation and our hope for the future.

Take some time today to meditate on this profound truth. What does it mean for your daily life that Christ lives in you? How does this reality change your perspective on your struggles, your relationships, and your purpose? Ask the Holy Spirit to make you more aware of Christ's presence within you, and to help you live in light of this glorious truth.

Day 4: Growing in Spiritual Maturity**Reading: Eph 4:11-6, 2 Pet 3:18**

Devotional: God's desire for every believer is spiritual maturity—to grow into the "measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." This growth doesn't happen overnight; it's a lifelong process that involves teaching, correction, and perseverance.

Today, honestly assess your spiritual life. In what areas have you seen growth? Where do you still need to mature? Remember, God is patient and committed to this process in your life. Ask Him to show you the next step in your spiritual journey, and for the grace to take that step.

Day 5: Laboring with God's Strength**Reading: Col 1:29, Phil 2:12-13**

Devotional: As we conclude our week, let's focus on the beautiful paradox Paul presents: we are called to "labor," yet it is God's power that works mightily within us. This balance of human effort and divine empowerment is key to effective ministry and Christian living.

Reflect on your own life and service. Are you trying to do everything in your own strength, or have you become passive, expecting God to do it all? Ask God to help you find the right balance—working diligently while relying fully on His power. As you go about your day, practice acknowledging your dependence on God's strength in every task, big or small.

Small Group Study Guide

Colossians 1:23b-29

Minister & Ministering Roles

Opening Prayer: Pray that the Lord would guide your conversation, and open your hearts to learn.

Key Takeaways: Query the group for takeaways first...you may stay with one or more of those.

1. Ministers are called to preach the Gospel to everyone
2. Rejoicing in hardship is a crucial aspect of ministry.
3. Ministers are stewards of God's Word and the mystery of Christ.
4. Teaching and warning with God's wisdom is essential for spiritual maturity.
5. Ministry requires laboring in God's power and striving for His will.

Discussion Questions: Did the Holy Spirit prompt any questions with you? Start with those.

1. What misconceptions about the role of ministers/pastors have you encountered? How does this sermon challenge those views?
2. The sermon mentions that all Christians are called to be ministers of the Gospel. How do you see this playing out in your own life?
3. Paul talks about rejoicing in suffering. How can we cultivate this mindset in our daily lives? Share an experience where you've seen God use hardship for good.
4. How does understanding that ministers (and all Christians) are "stewards" of God's Word change our approach to studying and sharing Scripture?
5. The sermon emphasizes the importance of teaching "all of God's counsel." Why is it crucial to study the entire Bible, not just our favorite parts?
6. How can we support and encourage our church leaders, knowing they face a "stricter judgment" (James 3:1)?
7. What does it mean to labor in God's power rather than our own strength? How can we practice this in our various ministries and daily lives?

Practical Applications: Query the group for applications first...you may explore one or more of those.

1. This week, identify one area of hardship in your life and intentionally look for ways God might be using it for good. Journal your thoughts and share with the group next time.
2. Choose a book of the Bible you're less familiar with and commit to studying it over the next month. Consider how it contributes to "all of God's counsel."
3. Write a note of encouragement to a minister or church leader, acknowledging their role and the challenges they face.
4. Reflect on your own "ministry" (whether formal or informal). How can you more intentionally rely on God's power in your service?
5. Practice sharing the Gospel with a friend in the group. Give each other feedback on clarity and biblical accuracy.

Closing Prayer: Thank God for the role of ministers and the calling all believers have to share the Gospel. Ask for His strength to rejoice in hardships and to labor effectively in His power.

Discussion Questions

Colossians 1:23b-29

Minister & Ministering Roles

1. How does Paul's perspective on rejoicing in suffering challenge our modern views of comfort and happiness? What might it look like to cultivate this kind of joy in our own lives?
2. In what ways can a minister's personal trials and hardships serve to strengthen and mature the church body? Can you think of an example from your own experience?
3. How does the concept of being a 'steward' of God's word and mysteries shape our understanding of pastoral roles and responsibilities? What implications does this have for lay members of the church?
4. Paul speaks of 'filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions.' How do you interpret this challenging statement, and what does it suggest about our role in continuing Christ's work?
5. How might the minister's dual role of warning and teaching manifest in today's church context? What are the potential challenges and benefits of balancing these responsibilities?
6. In light of Paul's emphasis on presenting everyone 'mature in Christ,' how can we assess spiritual maturity in ourselves and others? What are some indicators of growth towards this goal?
7. How does the idea of ministers laboring with God's power, yet still striving with their own effort, inform our understanding of the interplay between divine empowerment and human responsibility in ministry?
8. Paul mentions the 'mystery' that was hidden and is now revealed. How does this concept of progressive revelation shape our understanding of God's plan throughout history?
9. Given the high standards and accountability for ministers described in this passage, how should congregations support and encourage their spiritual leaders?
10. How does Paul's description of the minister's role challenge or affirm your current view of pastoral ministry? What aspects of this role might be surprising or uncomfortable for some people?

Dinner Conversation Starters

Colossians 1:23b-29

Minister & Ministering Roles

1. The Role of a Minister

The sermon discusses what it means to be a minister of the Gospel. How do we see ourselves as 'ministers' in our daily lives, even if we're not serving in a formal church role? What are some ways we can live out this calling within our family or community?

2. Finding Joy in Hardship

The sermon mentions how Paul found joy in suffering for Christ. Can you think of a challenging time in your life that led to personal growth or a deepened faith? How can we support each other during such times?

3. Stewardship of God's Word

Paul talks about being stewards of God's word. What does being a steward mean to you? How can our family take part in sharing and living out the Gospel?

4. Learning from Suffering

Suffering is discussed as a tool for spiritual maturity. How do you think difficult experiences can strengthen our relationship with God? Can we identify a family goal to help navigate these challenges together?

5. Accountability and Leadership

The sermon highlights the accountability of church leaders. In what ways can we hold each other accountable to grow in our faith while ensuring that we do so with love and grace? How can we encourage one another to take on leadership roles in our church or community?

Family Conversation Guide for Children & Early Teens

Colossians 1:23b-29

Minister & Ministering Roles

AGES 5-7: SIMPLIFYING THE MESSAGE APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Sharing the Good News**: Imagine sharing your favorite toy or game with a friend who's sad.

Discussion Question: How can sharing something you love with others make them happy, just like sharing Jesus makes people feel loved?

2. **Finding Joy in Challenges**: When learning something new feels hard, like riding a bike.

Discussion Question: How can you find joy in learning something new, even when it's difficult? What can you remind yourself about how God helps us grow?

3. **Listening and Obeying**: Honoring authority is important. God has placed your parents over you to teach you and love you and guide you through life.

Discussion Question: Why is it important to listen to authority figures like your parents, and to listen to what they say?

AGES 8-12: BUILDING UNDERSTANDING APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Being a Good Friend**: Think of including someone who's left out at school or in a game.

Discussion Question: How can being kind to someone who is left out show them God's love? Why is it important to make everyone feel included?

2. **Handling Tough Situations**: Imagine dealing with a disagreement with a friend.

Discussion Question: How can you use your words respectfully to solve disagreements? What would Jesus want you to do to be peacemakers in friendships?

3. **Positive Online Behavior**: When playing online games or scrolling through posts keep in mind how you can represent Jesus.

Discussion Question: How can you be a good example of God's love when playing games or chatting online? What should you do if you see someone being unkind?

AGES 11-15: DEEPENING THE CONNECTION APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Standing Firm in Your Faith**: When friends question your beliefs or make jokes about them.

Discussion Question: How can you confidently share your beliefs with friends? What are some kind ways to respond when others don't understand your faith?

2. **Finding Joy in Disappointments**: Facing disappointment or failure, like not making a team or getting a desired grade.

Discussion Question: How can you find joy and hope in these situations? Can you think of a time when a disappointment turned out to be an opportunity for growth?

Tips for Parents

- Be patient and listen: Give your child time to think and respond.
- Relate to everyday life: Use real-life examples and stories familiar to your child to make abstract concepts more tangible.
- Encourage questions: Let your son or daughter know it's okay to ask questions, even if things don't make sense right away.
- Share personal insights: Tell a personal story about a time you experienced these themes, adapting as needed for age appropriateness.

Family Conversation Guide for Gen Z

Colossians 1:23b-29

Minister & Ministering Roles

1. Inclusive Leadership

Biblical Principle: Reflect Christ-like inclusivity by welcoming everyone (James 2:1-4).

Scenario: When forming study groups or teams, actively include those who might be left out.

Action Step: Treat everyone with equal respect, showing no favoritism.

2. Standing for Justice

Biblical Principle: Defend the oppressed and stand for justice (Isaiah 1:17).

Scenario: If someone is being bullied or unfairly treated, speak up respectfully.

Action Step: Advocate for kindness and fairness, drawing inspiration from Jesus as a peacemaker.

3. Standing for Truth and Justice

Application: Emulate Jesus by standing up for what is right, even in challenging situations, whether that's addressing unfair treatment or advocating for a worthy cause.

Scenario: If you witness bullying or injustice at school, think of practical steps you can take to support those affected, such as speaking to a teacher or offering friendship to the victim.

Discussion Question: What steps can you take to address injustice in your school or community in a way that reflects Jesus' teachings?

4. Authentic Vulnerability

Biblical Principle: Confess and support each other (James 5:16).

Scenario: Build deeper friendships through honesty about struggles and successes.

Action Step: Create safe spaces for sharing and praying for one another.

5. Conflict Resolution

Biblical Principle: Approach disagreements seeking peace (Matthew 18:15-17).

Scenario: When conflict arises, address issues directly and with compassion.

Action Step: Be the first to congratulate and support friends, recognizing their talents and gifts.

These points aim to empower Gen Z to live out their faith genuinely and courageously in various aspects of their daily lives, reflecting Biblical integrity, compassion, and steadfastness.