

# JESUS MADE KNOWN

A five-day walk through Colossians 4 | The Orchard

Colossians 4 closes a letter written from prison, but its vision refuses to stay inside the cell. Paul moves from prayer to presence, from presence to conversation, and then to a page full of ordinary names. Jesus becomes known through people who remain awake to God and available to the person in front of them.

Each day should take about seven minutes. Open your Bible or Bible app and read the passages before the reflection. If Scripture is new to you, you are not behind. Read slowly. Notice one phrase that catches your attention, even if you do not yet know why.

**One word before you begin:** This is not a five-day technique for controlling spiritual outcomes. God opens doors, and God opens hearts. Our part is to pray, live wisely, speak graciously, and trust him with what happens next. You are not responsible for changing anyone. You are invited to become available to Jesus.

## MONDAY

### PRAY THE SECOND PRAYER

**Read Colossians 4:2–4**

**Also read Philippians 1:12–14**

*“And I want you to know, my dear brothers and sisters, that everything that has happened to me here has helped to spread the Good News.” —Philippians 1:12 (NLT)*

Most honest prayers inside pain begin the same way: God, change this. Heal the body. Repair the relationship. Open the door. Bring my child home. Scripture never shames us for asking. Paul wanted freedom, and Jesus himself asked the Father whether the cup of suffering could pass from him. Faith does not require us to pretend that pain feels good.

But from prison Paul asks for another kind of open door. He asks the church to pray that the message of Jesus will keep moving, even while he cannot. He does not stop asking God to work for him; he also asks God to work through him. That second prayer does not deny the first. It places our suffering inside a larger hope.

We often postpone purpose until conditions improve. When the diagnosis changes, when the conflict ends, when the schedule settles, then I will be useful. Paul refuses that delay. Philippians 1:12 is his testimony that imprisonment did not cancel his calling. The chains limited his movement, but they could not limit the reach of Jesus.

Name one circumstance you have been asking God to change. Keep asking. Then add the second prayer: Jesus, how do you want to form me and love someone through me here? Perhaps he will deepen your compassion, steady your courage, or place beside you someone who needs the hope you are learning to hold.

This does not mean calling evil good, remaining in danger, or refusing practical help. Seek the doctor, counselor, wise boundary, or protection you need. Trusting God to work within suffering is not the same as believing he enjoys it. It means pain does not receive the authority to declare your life useless.

**Your hardest circumstance may limit where you can go, but it cannot limit where Jesus can work.**

**Sit with this:** What situation have you treated as dead time until God changes it? What might the second prayer sound like there?

**Pray:** Jesus, you know what I want changed, and I bring that request honestly. Please help, heal, and open the door. But while I wait, do not let me miss you. Form me here. Love someone through me here. Make yourself known through me in this, today. Amen.

## **TUESDAY**

### **OPEN YOUR EYES BEFORE YOU OPEN YOUR MOUTH**

**Read Colossians 4:2–4**

**Also read Acts 16:13–15**

*“As she listened to us, the Lord opened her heart, and she accepted what Paul was saying.” — Acts 16:14 (NLT)*

Paul gives prayer three qualities: devoted, alert, and thankful. Devotion keeps us returning to God. Alertness keeps our eyes open to what he may be doing. Thanksgiving reminds us that grace is already present before we understand the whole situation. Together they produce attention without pressure.

Acts makes the division of responsibility beautifully clear. Paul spoke, Lydia listened, and the Lord opened her heart. Paul could not manufacture that opening. Neither can we. We can explain, invite, and love, but only God can awaken faith. That truth removes both pride when someone responds and shame when someone does not.

Alertness begins long before we mention Jesus. It notices the coworker who has become unusually quiet, the neighbor lingering at the mailbox, or the child who asks a question when we are ready for bed. We often imagine open doors as dramatic moments. Most arrive dressed like interruptions.

Being alert also means listening without steering every conversation toward a prepared answer. A person is not a doorway to use. They are someone God loves. Ask a sincere question. Remember their answer. Leave enough silence for the real story to surface. Sometimes the most spiritual thing we can do is stop rehearsing what we will say next.

Choose one routine place today—the office, school pickup, the gym, a waiting room, or your own kitchen. Before you enter, ask God to open your eyes. Put the phone away for a few minutes. Do not force a spiritual conversation. Simply become interruptible, and trust God with whether the door opens today or much later.

Thanksgiving matters because alertness without gratitude can become anxiety. We start scanning every interaction, afraid we will miss God's plan. A thankful heart remembers that God is already at work and that his work does not depend on our perfect awareness. We pay attention from trust, not panic.

**You do not have to create the moment. You only have to be awake when God gives it.**

**Sit with this:** Who have you been near without truly noticing? What would loving attention look like the next time you see them?

**Pray:** Father, make me devoted, alert, and thankful. Free me from trying to control another person's response. Open my eyes to the people you love, my ears to what they are really saying, and my schedule to the interruptions you may be using. Amen.

## **WEDNESDAY**

### **LIVE CLOSE ENOUGH FOR THE LIGHT TO BE SEEN**

**Read Colossians 4:5**

**Also read Matthew 5:14–16 and 1 Thessalonians 4:9–12**

*“Let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.”  
—Matthew 5:16 (NLT)*

Paul says to live wisely among people who do not yet believe. Among is an important word. Not above them. Not against them. Among them. Light cannot help a room from a safe distance. Jesus shared tables, roads, grief, questions, and ordinary days with people religious communities often avoided.

Living wisely is larger than avoiding obvious sin. Wisdom asks what love requires in this particular moment. It considers timing, tone, trust, and the effect our choices have on another person. First Thessalonians describes a quiet, responsible life that earns the respect of people outside the church. Some of our brightest witness will look remarkably ordinary.

The people nearest us do not only hear what we claim. They watch how we treat someone who cannot help us, how we handle money, how we speak when angry, and what happens when we are wrong. A public faith with a private exemption will eventually make Jesus harder to see.

But visibility does not require perfection. Repentance is also light. A clear “I was wrong” reveals a kingdom where pride does not have to win. Repairing what we damaged shows that grace is more valuable than image. Hypocrisy is not simply failing to live perfectly; it is pretending we never need the mercy we proclaim.

Picture one ordinary place where your life will be observed today. Do not carry the crushing burden of representing Jesus flawlessly. Instead, become available: honest when truth costs you, patient when hurry takes over, courageous when silence would hide your faith, and quick to apologize when you fail.

If your world has become insulated, do not turn a stranger into a ministry project. Begin more simply. Learn a neighbor's name. Stay for the conversation after practice. Share a meal without an agenda. Genuine presence creates the kind of trust in which honest questions can eventually live.

**Light cannot help a room it refuses to enter.**

**Sit with this:** Are you living among people who believe differently from you? What conclusion might your ordinary conduct be teaching them about Jesus?

**Pray:** Jesus, you entered our world and came near. Keep me from hiding inside comfortable circles. Let your light reach my work, table, neighborhood, and closest relationships. Make me honest, wise, and quick to repent so that my life points beyond me to you. Amen.

## **THURSDAY**

### **ANSWER THE PERSON NOT JUST THE QUESTION**

**Read Colossians 4:6**

**Also read 1 Peter 3:15–16 and James 1:19**

*“And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it.” —1 Peter 3:15 (NLT)*

Grace-seasoned speech is not a memorized presentation. Seasoning must fit the food in front of you. In the same way, a loving answer pays attention to the person receiving it. Paul does not tell us to have one response for every question. He says to know how to respond to each person.

A question often carries more than words. “How can you believe in God?” may be holding, “Where was God when my father left?” “The church is full of hypocrites” may be carrying the memory of someone trusted who caused harm. If we answer only the sentence, we can offer correct information and completely miss the human heart.

Notice how Peter begins: worship Christ as Lord of your life. Our answer starts with surrender before it becomes speech. If fear rules us, we may hide. If insecurity rules us, we may argue to prove ourselves. When Jesus rules us, we can tell the truth without treating the other person as an enemy. Peter explicitly joins courage with gentleness and respect.

Listening is not compromise. James tells us to be quick to listen and slow to speak because love wants to understand before it replies. You are allowed to say, “I do not know.” You can ask for time, return to the conversation, or say, “I cannot answer everything, but I can tell you why Jesus has become my hope.”

Practice one grace-seasoned conversation today. Ask two sincere questions before offering your response. Listen for the story beneath the statement. Then, if the door opens, speak in the first person. Do not begin with everything they must believe. Begin honestly with what Jesus has done for you.

Grace does not require vagueness. Jesus was full of both grace and truth. We can name what is true, explain the cross, and speak about repentance without contempt. A gentle answer is not a weaker answer. It is truth delivered by someone who remembers how patiently Jesus has dealt with them.

**Truth does not become clearer when love disappears from our voice.**

**Sit with this:** When faith comes up, are you more tempted to hide, perform, or win? What would courage joined with gentleness look like?

**Pray:** Lord Jesus, rule my heart before you use my words. Teach me to hear the person beneath the question. Give me courage to name my hope, humility to admit what I do not know, and grace that makes the truth sound like you. Amen.

## **FRIDAY**

### **YOUR NAME BELONGS IN THE STORY**

**Read Colossians 4:7–18**

**Also read 1 Corinthians 12:12–27**

*“All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it.” —1 Corinthians 12:27 (NLT)*

The closing names in Colossians can look like housekeeping after the important theology. But the names are theology. The message reached Colossae through a web of relationships: someone carried the letter, someone prayed, someone opened a home, someone encouraged the church, and someone had an assignment still to finish.

Tychicus carried news and encouragement. Onesimus returned not merely with a past, but as a faithful and beloved brother. Epaphras wrestled in prayer. Nympha opened her home to a church. Archippus was told to complete the ministry the Lord had given him. Jesus was not making himself known through Paul alone.

The body of Christ does not need every person to make Jesus visible in the same way. It needs every person to become available. Comparison tells us that another person's gift makes ours unnecessary. Paul says the opposite: all of us together are Christ's body, and each of us is a part. No one can do everyone's part, but everyone can offer their own.

Do not overlook what is already in your hands. You may have a table that can become a place of belonging, a phone that can carry encouragement, a skill that can serve someone, a workplace where integrity is rare, or one name you can keep bringing before God. The kingdom often travels through things too ordinary to feel important.

Some of the most influential work in Colossians 4 was invisible. Epaphras prayed earnestly for people who could not see him doing it. Hidden does not mean small. Your persistent prayer may be part of the road God uses to bring strength, clarity, or faith into another person's life.

If you are still exploring Christianity, notice the kind of community this list describes. The church is not an audience gathered around one impressive person. It is a family of imperfect people whom Jesus gives a new identity and a meaningful place. His grace does not merely forgive a past; it brings us into a people and gives our ordinary lives purpose.

Choose one faithful act before today ends. Encourage someone whose service is unseen. Invite someone to your table. Finish the responsibility you have delayed. Pray earnestly for one name. Tell one person what Jesus has done for you. You do not need a larger platform. You need to offer the place and life you already have.

**Jesus becomes known when ordinary people stop waiting to feel important and offer what is already in their hands.**

**Sit with this:** Which name in Paul's closing list feels most like your present assignment? What ordinary resource or relationship is Jesus asking you to offer?

**Pray:** Jesus, thank you that your work is larger than any one person and that no faithful part is small. Show me what you have already placed in my hands. Make me willing to pray, welcome, encourage, finish, speak, and serve. Make yourself known through your whole church—and through my ordinary life. Amen.

*Jesus above all. Jesus, period. Jesus made visible. Jesus made known.*