

LET YOUR CONVERSATION BE ALWAYS FULL OF GRACE

By Dr. Albert Wu
Visiting professor

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

(Colossians 4:6)

Colossians was written when Paul received news (probably from Epaphras) about some heresies starting to take root in Colossae. That false teaching was the beginning of what later became Gnosticism. Therefore, Paul's letter to the Colossians intended: 1) to emphasize the deity and supremacy of Christ in the face of the Colossian heresy; 2) to encourage the Colossian believers to stand firm in their original faith; and 3) to lead and motivate them to spiritual maturity. For example, Paul reminded them to continue to live in Him, rooted and built up in Him, to be strengthened in the faith as they were taught, and to be always overflowing with thankfulness (2:5-8).

It's common for Paul's epistles to have the first part dealing with doctrine and the second part about living out the truth/doctrine, and so it is the same for his Epistle to the Colossians. The doctrinal part is found in the first two chapters with the main theme developed in the second chapter. He warns them against being drawn away from Him in whom dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead, and who was the head of all spiritual powers (2:9-10). Given that Christ is the head of the body of which they are its members, if they are truly united to him, what else did they need?

The practical part of the Epistle (chapters 3-4) enforces various duties naturally flowing from the doctrines he expounded. They are ex-

horted to mind things that are above (3:1-4), to mortify every evil principle of their nature, and to put on the new man (3:5-14). Many special duties of the Christian life are also insisted upon as the fitting evidence of the Christian character.

There is also a remarkable resemblance between this Epistle and that written to the Ephesians if we compare the many practicalities exhorted, such as, "redeeming the time" (cf. Eph. 5:16 & Col.4:5).

In Colossians 4, the last chapter, Paul wrote about how a disciple of Jesus should behave or conduct himself in a heathen, gentile, or non-believing world, especially when his very dear faith in Christ is under challenge.

Let us focus on 4:6: "Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone." While the aim of this statement is placed in the latter part, that "you may know how to answer everyone," let's pay attention to the first part: "let your conversation be always full of grace."

What is "conversation full of grace"? And how would and should it be like?

Conversation full of GRACE

What is grace first of all? Well, it is something good done or given to someone who does not deserve it; in other words, it is unmerited favor. So, what would "conversation full of GRACE" be like then?

The Chinese Union Version uses the translation 帶著和氣 ("speak with

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Graduates - Testimonies

JOANNE KANG ARNAEZ

When I entered BSOP in 2009, my heart was filled with anxiety and fear. Will I be able to cope with studies in the seminary? Did God really call me or is it just my personal desire? After three years, I have learned so many lessons. The first lesson is that in all circumstances, I must RELY only on God and not on our own ability. I thank the Lord for bringing good and trustworthy friends and teachers who helped me, encouraged me, and comforted me.

The second lesson that I learned is to LOVE my brothers and sisters in the Lord, not only because we are one family in BSOP but we are also God's sons and daughters. It is not easy to love our brothers and sisters in the LORD with their different background, culture, and personalities. I thought I was already spiritually matured but found out otherwise.

The LORD allowed me

to experience a particular situation that led to my third lesson — HUMILITY. I learned to forgive and to focus on the Lord's forgiveness.

The final lesson I learned is to have FAITH in the Lord. My best friend told me that "the Almighty God he served is also the same Almighty God I serve. If the God he serves is able to use him, God is able to use me, too." Looking back, I began to ask myself: How big is my faith in the LORD that He is able to do great and mighty things in my life? Can He use me mightily for His glory? Not if I only rely on my own knowledge and strength. The story in Matthew 14 shows Peter boldly taking that step of faith to walk on water. I will step out by faith through God's grace. May Christ be seen in me and may there be less of me.



NANCY JI

Three years ago, a little girl came into BSOP with great ambition, thinking confidently that studying in the Seminary wouldn't be any problem. However, now that little girl (me!) has to admit that it was only by God's grace that she (I) passed through these meaningful and fruitful three years.

Since coming to BSOP, I have experienced God's great power and protection. In my personal life, God has shown great love and mercy toward me. Before, I didn't know how a sermon is prepared. After three years, I now know how to do biblical exegesis and preach in a Christ-centered way, at the same time considering original language and background. I learned how to do church ministry and counseling. What's more, I have gained much knowledge on spiritual formation, Christian education, church history and biblical geography, which can help me understand the Bible better and build a deeper relationship with God.

Another precious thing is the transformation that God has done in me for the past three years. I have learned to love and forgive with Jesus' love. God also enabled me to help in a new church where I obtained some skill and ability in order to do future fulltime ministry.

When I look back, I see God's grace throughout this wonderful journey. Praise God! I want to thank those who have supported me physically, financially and spiritually. May God remember you in eternity. To God be ALL the glory!



Republic of the Philippines
PUBLISHING PHYSICAL CORPORATION
Special Circular Program
Learning Materials
1000 Manila

Postal No. PM-07-UP-34-APC
Date Created: 11-1-02

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The undersigned, JOAN KANG, all-owning when/when
comprised/holder of BSOP/CP (Title of Publication) CP/CP
Chapter of BSOP/CP (Organization to which printed in) CP/CP
Editorial or publication status is CP/CP (Type of publication) CP/CP (Date of publication)
I am hereby duly sworn to in accordance with law, under penalty that following
statement of ownership, management, circulation, etc., which is required by Act 2198 as amended by
Circulation Act 311.

ADDRESS

Editor: Prof. Juan Lopez
Managing Editor: Prof. Juan Lopez
Business Manager: Prof. Juan Lopez
Printer: Philippine Seminary of the Philippines
Publisher: Philippine Seminary of the Philippines
Printer: Philippine Seminary of the Philippines
Office of Publication: 2nd & 12th Street, Corner, Tondo, Manila, Metro Manila, Quezon City

If publication is owned by a corporation, stockholders owning one percent or more of the amount of stock
is CP/CP

Stockholders, partners or other security holders owning one percent or more of the amount of stock
is CP/CP

In case of daily publication, average number of copies printed and classified of each issue during the preceding
month of CP/CP

1. Sent to paid subscribers	<u>CP/CP</u>
Sent to others than paid subscribers	<u>CP/CP</u>
Total	<u>CP/CP</u>

In case of publication other than daily, total number of copies printed and classified in the last issue dated _____

1. Sent to paid subscribers	<u>CP/CP</u>
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