

Ephesians Chapter 5
Week 7, v. 15-17

Eph 5:15 Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise,

The word therefore in this verse comes from a different word origin than in verses 1 and 7. It can mean 'beware' or 'take heed'. Because there is the possibility of being influenced by those who walk in the dark, we need to be careful.

Careful, circumspectly (KJV) <akribos> exactly, diligently, perfectly

Walk <peripateo> can also be read how you live or what you are occupied with.

Eph 5:15 in the KJV says, "see then that ye walk circumspectly".

To be circumspect means to be prudent – taking into consideration all possible circumstances and consequences before acting. To be cautious, judicious, vigilant. The opposite of walking circumspectly is to walk recklessly.

What we see here is a warning. Why would Paul warn the Ephesians to walk carefully? How did he begin chapter 4 of Ephesians?

Eph 4:1 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,

Eph 5:15 (NIV) Be very careful, then, how you live--not as unwise but as wise,

What happens when we are not careful? Can you recall a specific time when you weren't careful? What was the consequence? To be careful means paying close attention to accuracy and detail. It means to be cautious, taking reasonable care to avoid risks.

We live in a sinful world, we are enticed by sin each day therefore we need to be mindful of every situation, keeping our eyes on God's will.

Do you go out of your way to guard against sin around you from seeping into your life? How? How can we encourage one another to live as light?

The world satisfies itself with foolish pleasures, pursuits and desires. What satisfies your life? What is your pleasure, what do you pursue, what do you desire?

To guard ourselves from sin is a continual process - we need to be on the alert at all times. Look again at Eph 5:10 which we studied a few weeks ago. **What does it say we are to be doing?**

Eph 5:10 trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

Eph 5:15 tells us not to walk as unwise men. The word unwise means fool.

A fool embraces evil; a wise man avoids evil.

What comes to mind when you think of the word fool?

Let's look at some of the characteristics of a foolish man according to what the Bible says:

Ps 14:1a The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God."

Pr 14:9a Fools mock at sin,

Prov 1:7b Fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Pr 18:2 A fool does not delight in understanding, But only in revealing his own mind.

Pr 10:23a Doing wickedness is like sport to a fool;

Pr 12:15a The way of a fool is right in his own eyes,

Prov 20:3b But any fool will quarrel.

How would you describe a person who is wise?

- someone who is able to make sensible decisions and judgments on the basis of personal knowledge and experience
- someone who is reasonable, showing good sense or judgment

The bible says a person who is wise fears the Lord.

Ps 111:10a The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;

Someone who is wise seeks the truth.

2Ti 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.

Col 3:1 If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

Look at the word circumspect again. It means to take into consideration all possible circumstances and consequences before acting. **What happens often when you act without thinking, or make decisions quickly without considering all the details? What steps can we take to make careful, wise decisions?**

Mt 10:16 Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: **be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.** KJV

1Co 14:20 Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be babes, but **in your thinking be mature.**

circumspect, from the Latin circirmspicio, signifies to look round about on all hands; to be every way watchful, wary, and cautious, in order to avoid danger, discern enemies before they come too nigh, and secure a man's interest by every possible and lawful means. However, the original word, akribwv, signifies correctly, accurately, consistently, or perfectly. Be ye, who have received the truth, **careful of your conduct; walk by the rule which God has given you**; do this as well **in little as in great matters**; exemplify your principles, which are holy and good, by a corresponding conduct; do not only profess, but **live the Gospel**. As you embrace all its promises, be careful also to embrace all its precepts; and behave yourselves so, that your enemies may never be able to say that ye are holy in your doctrines and profession, but irregular in your lives. (Adam Clarke's Commentary)

Remember again what Eph 5:10 says: **trying to learn** (KJV - proving) **what is pleasing to the Lord.**

"...it is impossible for a Christian to maintain a holy course of obedience to the commands of God, without great care and caution, heedfulness and circumspection; none can walk holily, that do not walk circumspectly and watchfully..." William Burkitt's Notes on the NT

Holiness requires obedience to the commands given to us in the bible. It requires careful consideration of how to live. Holiness demands that we give caution and thought to how we spend our time.

The next verse in this chapter addresses the way we spend our time.

Eph 5:16 making the most of your time, because the days are evil.

KJV - *Redeeming* the time

Redeeming <exagorazo> to buy up, i.e. ransom; figuratively, to rescue from loss (improve opportunity)

Time <kairos> an occasion, opportunity, season

Everyday we have opportunities to make decisions – either ones that will honor God or not honor God. Our salvation is a gift. Time is a gift to be used for the Giver. **Why do we need to be reminded that time is to be used wisely?**

The NIV translation says to make the most of every opportunity.

Ga 6:10 So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

Have you ever let an opportunity slip by because of selfish reasons? Most of the time it is impossible to recreate the same situation and the opportunity is lost. Is there any guarantee that we will be here tomorrow, or even later today?

Jas 4:14 Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are [just] a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.

Making the most of our time is the opposite of wasting time. If we are not God-focused, we are self-focused. If we are not watching carefully we leave ourselves open to the temptations of sin and unprofitable waste of time. Wasting time means that we fail to use it wisely.

Walking wisely in verse 15, means we make good use of our time. **How can we improve our use of time in practical ways?**

- serving God through our relationships: family, church, work
- encouraging one another
- diligently working to provide for necessities and to give to others
- praying and reading God's word for the purpose of growing and doing His will

What things do we need to avoid to guard against wasting time?

- idleness, laziness
- unprofitable relationships and activities
- excess pursuit of worldly treasures

Col 4:5 Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity.

Instead of wasting time, we need to use it for God. Previously, we looked at multiple warnings to guard against the deeds of darkness, which lead us to waste our time in sinfulness. Rather, there are things we can do to occupy our time that are truly valuable. We are to shine as God's children in a fallen world, using every opportunity to bring Him glory and honor.

1Pe 4:1-2 Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, **arm yourselves also with the same purpose**, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, **so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.**

How highly do we value the time God has given us? The answer lies in the use of it. "idleness, excess of sleep, inordinate adorning of the body, immoderate recreations, vain company, an excess of worldly business, all these are robbers of our time, and time must be rescued out of their hands" William Burkitt's Notes on the NT

Do you plan your days so that your time is used profitably or do you drift along with no apparent direction? What happens if I get in the car without the foresight of a plan or directions? Many times, God will alter our plans to His liking, but we will not get anywhere if we don't start somewhere.

Walking wisely also means we need to understand what the will of the Lord is.

Eph 5:17 **So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.**

How do we go about understanding something? The word understanding here is not only assenting to information but also acting on it.

First, we need to appreciate and recognize its value. Then, we need to get familiar with it. Understanding God's will for us takes time and effort so that we know how to honor Him. God's will is revealed in His word. Barnes Commentary says, "Show true wisdom by endeavoring to understand what the will of the Lord is, and then doing it".

Wisdom is more than just knowing facts, it is applying those facts to specific circumstances. It's asking ourselves, what is the direction I need to take according to God's word?

Ro 12:2 **And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.**

Jas 4:17 **Therefore, to one who knows [the] right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin.**

Lu 12:47 "And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, shall receive many lashes,

What is God's will for us?

Joh 4:34 Jesus *said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work.

Throughout the four gospels, Jesus repeatedly claims that He was sent to do the will of His Father in heaven. God's will for us in Jesus' example is obedience to Him.

1Jo 2:15 Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

1Th 4:3-4 For **this is the will of God, your sanctification**; [that is,] that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,

1Th 5:18 in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

1Pe 2:15 For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.

The bible is our instruction book. "The Christian can walk carefully and accurately because he knows what God wants him to do. Like the builder following the blueprint, he accomplishes what the architect planned." Wiersbe

Paul says we are to walk in wisdom (v.15)

- 1) by making the most of our time (v.16),
- 2) by understanding what the will of the Lord is (v.17), and
- 3) by being filled with the Spirit (v.18), which we will begin our study with next week.

This week: Read Ephesians 5. Consider the questions below and use the "Apply It" bookmark and your journal notes to guide you. Ask God to show you His will for your personal application. You may want to record additional insights in your journal. We will use these questions as a quick review next week. Review **memory** verses **Eph 5:1-2** in the NAS version and if you are trying the memory challenge, review Eph 5:15-17 and add Eph 5:18 to your memory verses.

Eph 5:15 says we are to be careful how we walk. Are you seeking wisdom to make careful choices rather than careless ones? Read 2Ti 2:15 and Col 3:1.

What particular things do you struggle with in your desire to walk in wisdom? Take time to look up some verses that you can have at hand to help you when you are weak. It might be a good idea to write them down and have them easily accessible.

Wise men walk according to God's word; fools walk according to their own way. Who has been guiding your walk this week?

Reflect sincerely on how you spend the time in your days. Are you mindful of making the most of every opportunity? What things fight for your time or even steal your time away? Are you willing to adjust the way you spend your time if needed?

There are things we can do with our time that are valuable. What can you specifically do this week to encourage someone in their walk?

God wants us to understand Him and do His will. First, we have to know His will then, we need to act on what we know. What is your plan to know God more? How highly do you value God's word? How does this show in your life?