

“Walk in Wisdom”

September 1, 2024

Ephesians 5:15-20

I. Introduction

Before the internet and YouTube were items, people still had questions about how to do things. So, we had things called books that did just that. Many of you may remember the series of books of “How to ... for Dummies” which had detailed step-by-step instructions and even diagrams to guide people. I suspect that if one were to look, there is probably a book of “How to use YouTube for Dummies” available in bookstores and the internet. (I looked, they are available, but we can’t use the word “dummies” anymore.)

When Paul wrote Ephesians, Christianity had been around for about 30 years. For most Christians in Ephesus and throughout the world, they were the first generation of Christians ever. So, much of the New Testament, including Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, could be called “How to Be a Christian for Dummies.” As you remember, the first 3 chapters of Ephesians was the theory or theology of Christianity. The last 3 chapters are applications or the “how to” part; that’s why the **first verse of chapter 4** begins with **“I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.”**

In chapter 5 Paul got a little more specific about how to walk or live as a Christian, he wrote, **“Be imitators of God as dearly loved children.”** Using some of God’s attributes, Paul wrote that children of God should walk in love, and light. Today he added that God’s children should walk in wisdom. He gave three principles with details as he wrote “How to walk in wisdom.” First, one must Walk Carefully.

II. How to Walk in Wisdom

A. Walk Carefully

1. Believers need to be wise not foolish He wrote to walk **“not as unwise but as wise,”** i.e., to walk carefully, believers need to be wise not foolish. There are many ways one can be foolish. One way is not believing God completely. On the road to Emmaus, Jesus told the two depressed disciples in **Luke 24:25**, **“How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken!”** By not accepting some part of God’s Word, one is walking foolishly. A believer also walks foolishly when he is disobedient. In

Galatians 3:1,3 Paul wrote, “You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. ... Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh?” The Galatians had accepted the human idea that one had to earn his salvation rather than through faith alone. A third way to be foolish is to put one’s heart on the wrong things; **1 Timothy 6:9** says, “Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.” Foolishly, things replace God as number ONE in a believer’s life. As **Romans 16:19** says, Christians must “be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil.” Be wise, not foolish.

2. One’s time on this earth is limited. Paul then wrote to walk carefully because one’s time on this earth is limited. **Turn to Psa. 39:4-5.** In **Psalm 90:5** Moses wrote, “The length of our days is seventy years-- or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away.” Now I realize that for some of you younger people, 70 or 80 years sounds like a long, long time. I can remember when I thought anyone over 40 was ancient. But no longer—40 years was a while ago! As the saying goes, “*time is relative.*” For children waiting for Christmas, the 4 weeks of Advent seem to be an eternity. But for parents trying to get everything ready, those same four weeks seem to fly by.

In **verse 12 of Psalm 90** Moses prayed, “Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.” Linda’s and my financial planner has planned on my living until I am 86 years old. That means I have less than 3285 days left to live. But actually, neither my financial advisor nor my doctor can guarantee how many more days I will live **James 4:14** says, “Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.” Our time on this earth is limited and since it is limited, like rare jewels, our time is valuable, we need to walk carefully. Because of this time limit, walking carefully means believers need to plan their days.

3. Believers need to plan their days. A foolish man doesn’t make plans; instead, he allows himself to be blown around by everything and anything that comes his way. A wise man makes plans and prepares for the future and then isn’t driven by any unexpected happenstance. **Proverbs 24:27** says, “Finish your

outdoor work and get your fields ready; after that, build your house.” If one is going to walk carefully, he needs to plan his days. When a man builds a house, he first draws up plans, so he knows what he is doing. Yet, how many Christians plan their days so that they use their opportunities wisely? As James wrote, we cannot know what a day may bring, but it is also true that a planned life can better deal with unexpected events and can best use the time one does have.

B. Make the most of every opportunity. After writing to walk carefully, Paul wrote that to walk in wisdom one must make “the most of every opportunity.” Not only because of the shortness of time, but “because the days are evil.” This is the 2nd principle: Make the most of every opportunity.

Satan is a robber and a thief and one of the things he tries to rob from us is our time because time is a very precious commodity. But it isn’t only sin that makes demands on our time or wastes our time. Sometimes good things can make inappropriate demands on our time. Turn to Luke 10:38-42. Martha wasn’t doing something sinful by preparing a meal in the kitchen. The problem was that she was so preoccupied with what she was doing, that she didn’t have time for God who was right there in her living room.

In our busy, hurried society, we pack as much into life as we can. We get so caught up in the here and now that we, like Martha, fail to deal with the eternal—we don’t take time to be with God through studying His Word or in prayer, let alone doing what He wants. This is why Paul wrote in Galatians 6:9-10: “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.”

There are so many demands on our time, so many good things that need to be done. But there are only 8760 hours in a year. We need to choose wisely. We need to walk carefully. We need to make the most of every opportunity. And to do that, Paul wrote that to walk in wisdom, believers need to...

C. Understand the Lord’s will. Looking at the results of sin that are all around—both locally and nationally, and at the unending needs for evangelism and service to others in Christ’s name, it is easy to feel

overwhelmed. One can be tempted to either give up and withdraw or become so involved that nothing is completed, and he becomes burnt out and discouraged. Trying to run ahead of God only puts one further behind in His work.

A foolish believer tries to function apart from God's will. Wise believers understand the Lord's will. This is the 3rd principle. "Understanding the Lord's will" means to study God's Word and listen to the Holy Spirit to discover and then to do the will of God. God has a plan for each individual Christian—that's what Paul meant in Ephesians 2:10 where he wrote, "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." As His child, God has a purpose for your life, and you should discover that purpose and then guide your life accordingly.

Although His plans and directions for each individual believer are not found in Scripture, the general principles for understanding them are. God doesn't promise to show us His will through visions, strange coincidences, or miracles. He doesn't play a divine guessing game with us, seeing if we can somehow stumble onto His will like a small child finding an egg at an Easter egg hunt. But we can discover the will of God as He transforms our minds. Romans 12:2 says, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-- his good, pleasing, and perfect will." This transformation by the Holy Spirit is the result of the Word of God, of prayer, of meditation, and of worship.

God gave each person a mind and He expects you to use yours. This means that learning His will involves studying His Word, gathering facts, examining them, weighing them, and praying for His wisdom—James 1:5 says, "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him." Verse 22 adds, "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." God doesn't want one to simply know His will; He wants His children to understand His will and then do it.

God's first and primary will for every person is that he be saved and brought into the family and kingdom of God. 1 Peter 3:9 says, "He, i.e. God, is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but

everyone to come to repentance.” Paul also wrote that God’s will is that believers are to “be filled with the Spirit.” This applies to all Christians not just to a select few. The verb in Ephesians 5:18 really should be translated “keep being filled,” i.e. “keep being filled with the Spirit.” Christians should allow the Holy Spirit to fill them continually and not just on special occasions. To be filled with the Spirit means to be constantly directed by the Spirit in our minds and emotions and will. When that happens, Paul wrote that we will “speak to each other with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music in your hearts to the Lord. Always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father.”

III. Conclusion

In our so-called age of wisdom, we’re overloaded with many things. *We are overloaded with commitments.* Sometimes we feel like we will meet ourselves going or coming. *We are overloaded with possessions.* Our closets are full, and our garages are overflowing. Many have gone into debt to pay for those things they “*simply must have.*” *We are overloaded in the area of work.* We get up early, fight traffic, and experience difficult working conditions because we have to if we are going to pay for all those possessions we’ve accumulated. *We are overloaded with information.* With the internet and smartphones, iPads, and tablets, we are connected to an information superhighway that uses up our time and bombards us with an overabundance of information.

All these things (and many of them are good things) make demands on our time. We need to walk carefully—our days are numbered. We need to make the most of the opportunities that God sends our way—we must not waste or misuse valuable time—time that we can never get back. We need to understand God’s will—God’s good and acceptable and perfect will for our lives so that the time and opportunities we have will be used in the best way possible. 1 Corinthians 10:31 says, “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” This is walking wisely. How about you—are you walking wisely?

Communion Devotion – September 2024

Matthew 26:17-20, 26-30

As the disciples reclined at the Passover meal we call the Last Supper, they had just finished 3 years of intense on-the-job training. During those years, Jesus had taught and modelled to them a different way of life. As Paul wrote later in Ephesians, Jesus had taught them and, as He had just washed their feet, had demonstrated to them to walk in love. In the Sermon on the Mount in [Matthew 5:14-16](#), He taught them to walk in light when He said, “[You are the light of the world. Let your light shine before men.](#)” In [Matthew 10:16](#) He told them, “[Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: therefore, be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.](#)” They were to walk in wisdom. Jesus’ expectations for His disciples today haven’t changed. With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we are to walk in love and light and wisdom.

The Lord’s Table is set aside for believers to take time to remember what Jesus did for each one of us. As [Phil. 2:8](#) says, “[He humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!](#)” Jesus’ death on that cross freed those who believe in Him from the power and dominion of sin. As we go through life here on earth, we can have “[the peace of God, which passeth all understanding](#)” ([Phil. 4:7](#)), as well as the peace for the future that when it comes time for us to leave this earth, we will be in heaven with the God who loved us so much that He died for us. These are all things for which we need to say, “Thank you.”

But the Lord’s Table is also a time for every Christian to examine himself—herself. How about your Christian walk? Do you walk in love—sacrificial love? As the song says, “*Do people know you are a Christian by your love?*” Do you walk in light? Paraphrasing [Matt. 5:16](#), “*Does your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven?*” Do you walk in wisdom? Are you careful where you go and what you see? When you stand before your heavenly Father, will He say, “[Well done, my good and faithful servant?](#)” ([Matt. 25:21](#))

As the music plays, take time to thank God for all He has done and will do for you in your life. And then, thinking of His love, look at your heart, your life, your walk, do they demonstrate your love for Him?