

“Walk Wisely”
Ephesians 5:15-17
Dr. Cliff McManis
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In Ephesians 5:15-17 Paul exhorts Christians to walk in wisdom. One’s “walk” is one’s lifestyle or habit of daily living. He already reminded us to walk in unity (4:1), to walk in holiness (4:17), to walk in love (5:2), and to walk in light (5:8). To successfully walk in wisdom, consider the three following priorities:

1. The prerequisite for walking wisely—critical thinking
“be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise”
(5:15) [NASB]
“be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise” [NIV]
“see then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise” [NKJV]
“look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise” [ESV]

2. The priority for walking wisely—redeeming the time
“making the most of your time because the days are evil”
(5:16) [NASB]
“making the most of every opportunity” [NIV]
“making the best use of the time” [ESV]
“redeeming the time” [KJV]
“taking advantage of every opportunity” [NET]

3. The purpose for walking wisely—Christ-centered motives
“do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is” (5:17) [NASB]

Digging Deeper:

5:15—“be” [NASB]; the first word in this verse is actually the verb *blepete* [βλεπετε] from the root *blepo* [βλεπω] (present tense, active voice, indicative) and means “to look, to see, be perceptive or attentive to”; so the NKJV and the ESV give a better translation here than the NASB; “be” comes from the verb *eimi* [ειμι] not *blepo*.

“carefully”—adverb modifying the verb “to walk,” *acribōs* [ακριβως] where we get the English “acrobat”; it means “carefully, exacting” like the gold medalist acrobat on the high beam...every little step and move matters...so it is in the Christian life...watch out for the satanic minefield.

“walk” [NASB]; **“live”** [NIV]—*peripateite* [περιπατειτε]...main verb, “to walk about; to conduct one’s life; habits of living”; present active indicative; the present tense points to the ongoing, continual action; Paul uses the word “walk” 4 times in this section of Scripture (4:17; 5:2; 5:8) emphasizing that God cares how we live our daily lives...obedience matters.

“wise”—this is how we are to walk carefully; from *sophoi* [σοφοι] from *sophia* where we get *philo* + *sophy*...*philo* is “love,” *sophy* is “wisdom”; *sophia* (also used in 1:8, 17 & 3:10) means true insight into known facts—the highest level is spiritual wisdom and that must be given by God (Proverbs 1:7).

5:16—“**making the most**” [NASB]; “**redeeming**” [KJV]; *exagorazomenoi* (present middle participle; the middle voice emphasizes the subject acts for itself, so it is “redeem the time *for yourself*”) [εξαγοραζομενοι] from *ex* + *agorazo*, “out of the marketplace”; “*agora*” is the marketplace or the public square...where a bunch of people were... ‘agoraphobia’ is the fear of people or the public; in Greece the marketplace was where slaves were bought and sold—‘*ex*’ means ‘out of,’ so our word here means to be ‘bought back from the marketplace’; redeemed, rescued and owned, purchased back, salvaged; Christians need to live life “buying up the time, using every moment, capitalizing on every opportunity, living a principled and prioritized life”...in the words of John Piper’s book... *Don’t Waste Your Life!* (cf. Colossians 4:5).

“time” [NASB]; **“opportunity”** [NIV]—*kairon*, from *kairos* meaning “time, the brevity of life, opportunity, occasion; a season”; another NT word for “time” is *chronos*, “a duration of clock time” (Acts 27:9).

“the days”—this refers to the present evil age; this period will last until Christ comes to rule and redeem earth beginning with the earthly millennium (cf. 1 Corinthians 7:31; Acts 1:6-7; Revelation 19:11-20:6; Zechariah 14:1-11; Daniel 7:13-14; Matthew 24:29 ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-12).

5:17—“**be**”; this verb should say “become” from *ginomai* not “be” which is the verb *eimi*; “become” indicates the possibility of entering into the condition of becoming foolish...Christians

are susceptible to becoming foolish in daily living by having a lack of discernment.

“foolish” [NASB]; **“unwise”** [KJV]—the word here for “unwise” is *aphrones*, whereas in 5:15 it was *asophoi*; *aphrones* is used 11 times in the NT and means “foolish, careless conduct” with the emphasis on practical wisdom and “understanding” applied to living; *sophia* is wisdom, emphasizes true “insight” into what is reality, the actual state of things.

“understand”—*suniete*, present active imperative from *sunieimi*; this verb is used 26 times in the NT and means “to perceive, understand, comprehend” with an emphasis on deliberate utilization of the rational faculties—Christianity is not mindless, illogical religious mysticism—it’s actually the most logical faith of all, for it is based on God’s mind which is infinite, all-knowing, perfectly consistent, orderly and the basis of all logic; Christians are obligated to be critical, thinking, discerning practitioners of the faith—Christianity is a religion of the mind—Jesus said, “love the Lord your God with all your...mind.”

“the will of God”—God’s will can be known with certainty; what God wants, expects, requires, says is objectively perceivable unlike what postmodern Christianity (emerging churchism) tries to tell us; they say “certainty is overrated” (Brian McLaren)—God has revealed everything He wants us to know in the person of Christ and in the Bible.