

EPHESIANS 5:15-21

It is fitting that as Paul teaches truth to us, as he explains what it is like to be a child of the light, to be driven by a holy pursuit of God, that he would also give us practical advice about what that looks like. He has already told us many things to do and many things not to do, and he always points to our motives...WHY are we doing what we are doing? Why do we seek righteousness? Why must we discern?

Why is it hard?

It's hard because what was true of Paul, and Peter, and John, and every human that ever lived is also true of us...

1 Peter 2:11–12 (11) Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. (12) Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. (ESV)

... the passions of the flesh *wage war* against our souls.

War.

We are in a real battle, and our battle is not only against our own flesh. As we will see soon...

Ephesians 6:10–12 (10) Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. (11) Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. (12) For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. (ESV)

So, not only are we fighting against our own flesh and blood, we are also warring against the rulers, authorities, cosmic, and spiritual forces of evil.

Welcome to the real world!

So, in light of that, Paul calls us to walk in wisdom.

Let's see how wisdom will help us in our battle.

1. In verse 15, the first thing Paul calls us to do is to “look carefully”
 - a. Note that “look carefully” is followed by *then*, which is like a *therefore*. Given that, why do we *look carefully*?
 - b. What are we supposed to *look carefully* for?
 - c. What enables us to *look carefully*?
 - d. Paul tells us to *look carefully* as we do something. What are we doing as we *look carefully*?
2. We have seen the use of the word *walk* before in this letter and in other places in scripture.
 - a. What does Paul mean here when he says *walk*?
 - b. How are we to walk?
 - i. Matthew 11:16-19
 - ii. Psalm 37:30-31
 - iii. Psalm 104:24-26
 - iv. Psalm 111
 - v. Proverbs 1:1-7

- vi. Isaiah 29:13-14
 - vii. Acts 6:1-4
 - viii. 1 Corinthians 1:17
 - ix. 1 Corinthians 2:11-16
 - x. James 1:5-8
 - xi. Revelation 5:11-14
- c. What are some ways you can be wise as you walk?
3. Walking in wisdom then results in something, from verse 16, what is it to result in our lives?
- a. As you think about how you spend your day, what are some things about the time you spend that you'd like to change?
 - b. Do you feel like you make the most of the time you have?
 - c. Everyone needs downtime, but downtime is not wasted time if you do it for the right reason. What are some good reasons for "down time"? What are some bad reasons that are easy to justify?
 - d. What is the reason Paul gives for us to not waste our time?
 - i. Ecclesiastes 12:1
 - ii. Amos 5:10-13
 - iii. Galatians 1:3-5
 - iv. Proverbs 16:1-4
 - e. How have you witnessed the days being evil?
 - f. How can you make the best use of your time in these evil days?
4. In verse 17, after telling us to walk in wisdom, Paul tells us what we should not do. What is that?
- a. Read the following passages:
 - i. Psalm 14:1-3
 - ii. Romans 1:21
 - iii. 1 Corinthians 1:20-25
 - iv. Titus 3:3
 - v. 1 Peter 2:13-17
 - b. I'm sure you have said some foolish things, and I'm sure you know some foolish people. A good way to think about foolishness is by contrast – think of someone being *childish* and someone being *foolish*. Being *childish* is based in ignorance, being *foolish* is knowing better but doing it anyway. Give some examples of foolishness.
5. Also in verse 17, Paul tells us how to combat foolishness. What does he tell us to do?
- a. When you think of the will of the Lord, what do you think of?
 - b. Here are a few passages that show these different usages:
 - i. Psalm 115:2-3
 - ii. Isaiah 53:10
 - iii. Romans 12:1-2
 - iv. 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8
 - v. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-17
 - c. How is Paul using "the will of the Lord" in this context?
 - d. We see generally what the Lord's will for our lives is. Do you know what the Lord's will for you personally is? How can you find out if you don't know? How are you fulfilling it if you do know?
6. In verse 18, Paul gives a command that seems a little out of place here.
- a. What is the *do not* command?
 - b. Notice the comparison...what is alcohol sometimes called?

- c. What kind of behavior does that “spirit” result in? (try to use words we have heard in this section of Ephesians)
 - d. What *Spirit* are we to be filled with?
 - e. What kind of behavior does that *Spirit* result in?
 - i. 1 Corinthians 12:4-11
 - ii. 1 Corinthians 2:6-8
 - iii. Galatians 5:22-26
 - iv. Isaiah 11:1-2
7. In verse 19, Paul gives more encouragement for our behavior that we can do because we are filled with the Holy Spirit
- a. Do you sing? Are you embarrassed to sing? Did you know that singing is not just an act of worship, but it is also a way to encourage one another?
 - i. Acts 16:25
 - ii. 1 Corinthians 14:26
 - iii. Colossians 3:16
 - iv. James 5:13
 - v. Colossians 3:16-17
 - b. What emotion does singing in this way evoke in you?
8. In verse 20, Paul equates our singing with another response
- a. What is the posture of our heart supposed to be?
 - b. How often is it supposed to be that way?
 - c. Why?
 - i. 1 Corinthians 1:4
 - ii. 1 Corinthians 15:57
 - iii. Ephesians 4:32
 - d. To whom do we give thanks?
 - e. Through whom do we give thanks?
 - f. In whose power do we give thanks?
9. Finally, in verse 21, Paul gives another command
- a. What are we to do?
 - b. Why are we to do it?
 - i. Philippians 2:1-11

Paul has given us a number of powerful tools to fight the battle we are in, and here, right before he will give us instruction on the expectations of husbands and wives, he tells us to be wise, to seek wisdom, to be thankful, to submit to one another, to seek the will of God for our lives.

To shun foolishness and drunkenness.

To be filled with the Holy Spirit who grants wisdom!

The only way we can walk the path that God has set us on is by His power, and He gives us His Spirit to do so.

Are you relying on Him to walk beside you? To carry you when you can't walk? To live in victory?

Ask Him for wisdom.

He'll give it to you!