Living Under the Influence  
Ephesians 5:15-20

Objective: Inspire each to conduct their lives in a manner that maximizes their witness to God.
Reading: Ephesians 5:15-20.
Memory: Ephesians 5:15: “Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise…”

Introduction:
1. I saw a lady driving; slow, hesitant, lost! Another driving; fast, aggressive, didn’t care about others. One; foolishly, I hope I drive; “wisely”. You can tell a great deal about folks by the way they drive;
2. How do you “drive” your life? What does it reveal about you? Like you know where you are going? Like you are lost? Like nothing matters? Do you conduct your life foolishly or “wisely”?

We need to conduct ourselves “wisely”.  (HOW?)
In Ephesians 5:15-20, Paul is stressing just this point to the Christians at Ephesus. Because of who we are and what we are, because we realize what God has done for us in Christ, and because folks are watching us and are influenced by us, we need to live “wisely” Here the Apostle tells some ways to live “wisely” to demonstrate our belief and commitment to God and to bring Him glory!

One of the things indicative that we are driving our lives “wisely” is whether or not we are…

I. Making the most of your time.
A. Because time can not be bought back.
   1. “Buying up the opportunities” is the literal translation.
   2. You can return and get a garage sale item sometimes; can not do this with time.
   3. Once opportunity is gone, it is gone.
   4. “Un-wise” would mean a foolish waste of our valuable time.
   5. “Wise” is to “seize the day”! Make the most of every opportunity.
B. Because the days are evil:
   1. Obvious if one just looks around you at store adds; TV, magazines, radio, conduct of peers.
   2. Souls are being lost! Swept away by evil influences. Time is running out for them.
   3. Time is running out for you too! Where do you stand in regard to eternity?
   4. Sometimes I think the terminally ill have an advantage; They know life is short. We forget.
C. Wisely spend your time and your energy in worthwhile things.
   1. NOT 40 years of apathy, negligent ignorance of God.
      a. Telling, re-telling raunchy jokes, garbage TV, porno magazines,
   2. RATHER, Dwell on things above:
      a. Colossians 3:1-2: “Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”
      b. Philippians 4:8; “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”
      c. Bible discussion and study. Helping, caring, teaching.
      d. What did you do last Saturday? Sat in a bar, told jokes, shot some pool, got drunk, watched some TV show that was not really good.
D. It is wise to grab the opportunities.
   1. Like applying for a job while the job is still open.
   2. Talk with people about spiritual things. Teach souls, to encourage children, to honor God.
   3. Talk to children NOW while they will still listen and ask questions; someday it will be too late!
   4. Improve yourself NOW. Get your walk with God right while you still can!
   5. Show love, patience, kindness, etc. Be concerned with family. Sitting on porch with wife, pitching ball, coloring with child; All these are important acts of love and all require time.
Another thing that shows we are driving our lives “wisely” is whether or not we are…

II. Understand what the Lord’s will is.
   A. You can’t drive well if you don’t know how.
      1. Need to know how to operate the vehicle. Is it standard or automatic? Where are headlights etc.
      2. Need to know the rules of the road.
      3. Need to know where you are going.
   B. You can understand God’s Will.
      1. You should not be stumbling around blindly because you have the Bible – God’s Word.
      2. It makes us adequate! 
         2 Timothy 3:16, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”
      3. Some of it is difficult to understand, but we can know what is important.
         a. How does a seed grow? Technically or practically speaking?
         b. How does electricity work? Scientifically speaking or practically speaking?
   C. To understand, we must study.
      1. Does no good to have a driver’s manual under your pillow – need to know what is in it!
      2. Approach your study or Bible with a love for truth. 
         2 Thessalonians 2:10b: “…They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.”
      3. Approach your study or Bible with a willingness to correct self.
      4. As we study and practice, the understanding will come. Promise!
         a. James 1:5, “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.”
         b. Matthew 7:7-8, “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.”

Another item that reveals who we are and what we are about, is a matter of

III. Being filled with the Holy Spirit.
   A. Are you under the Influence?
      1. A part of Holy Spirit is God’s decision, but much of it is also your decision!
      2. In 1 Thessalonians 5:19, they are told, “Do not put out the Spirit’s fire…”
      3. Here in, Ephesians 5:18. We are told to; “…be filled with the Spirit.” We have some choice.
      4. Spirit filling, like Pie filling. Full of it! The more the better!
      5. Let them see you “driving” your life under the influence of the Holy Spirit!
   B. Let the fullness of the Holy Spirit be your preoccupation.
      1. A mark of the Holy Spirit is vocal expression; as verse 19.
      2. A mark of the Holy Spirit is thankfulness to God. Ephesians 5:4, “Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.”
      3. A mark of the Holy Spirit is; inspiring, teaching and admonishing others. Colossians 3:16, “And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.”
      4. When do folks learn, function, perform best? Around grumpy complainers and scowls, or around one who sings and says kind, encouraging words?
      5. A mark of the Holy Spirit is serving others. You can choose to set your heart on this.
   C. Be concerned with doing what the Spirit of Christ would be doing.
      1. The Spirit God planted within us enables us to do this. 2 Timothy 1:7: “For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.”
      2. The Spirit that was in Christ Himself was concerned with demonstrating to people what He was about in conducting His life; John 14:31. “…but the world must learn that I love the Father
and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me.”

3. This is the attitude and spirit we are taught to have. Philippians 2:3-5. “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:..."

So What?

Take a moment to find your car keys and hold them up. Who would you loan them to? It would depend on their conduct, wouldn’t it! Think about your conduct; your use of your time, your following of God’s will, your walk in the Spirit. Are you conducting yourself in a manner worthy of God and Christ? Does your conduct sincerely demonstrate your belief in God and reveal a thankful heart?

Whenever you see your car keys, you might ask yourself; “Am I conducting myself in such a way that Christ would give me His keys?”
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~ some ways to live “wisely” to demonstrate our belief and commitment to God.

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B. Because the days are evil:
C. Wisely spend your time and your energy in worthwhile things.
   Colossians 3:1-2   Philippians 4:8
D. It is wise to grab the opportunities.

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B. You can understand God’s Will.  2 Timothy 3:16
C. To understand, we must study.
   2 Thessalonians 2:10b   James 1:5   Matthew 7:7-8

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   1 Thessalonians 5:19   Ephesians 5:16
B. Let the fullness of the Holy Spirit be your preoccupation.
   verse 19   Ephesians 5:4   Colossians 3:16
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