Walking With Wisdom

Ephesians 5:15-21

Objective: Encourage and enable each to walk more wisely through life.
Reading: Ephesians 5:15-21.
Introduction:

1. Have you ever done things you would now term as "unwise"? (politely stated).
2. We know there is a God. We know He will judge us all in the end. We know there are forces constantly at work to hinder our spiritual lives and lead us in ways we know are "unwise".
3. Would that someone, divinely inspired by God, would give us some clear and practical advice on how to avoid all those "unwise" things we might get caught up in because,

We need to walk wisely through this life. (HOW?)

So, okay, Paul - you are an Apostle, divinely inspired – what should we think of, what might we concentrate on so that *we might live our lives wisely*? In Ephesians 5:15 ff., the Apostle does just that. He relates to Christians several categorical *items to focus on if we are to walk wisely* through life.

The first thing the Apostle urges on Christians in an attempt to live wisely, involves

I. Making the most of your time.

Ephesians 5:16, ***"making the most of your time, because the days are evil."***

A. How much time do you have?
   1. Worst case scenario; – drop dead before you leave here. Accidents happen!
   2. Jesus tells of man who spent time so focused on prosperity in Luke 12:20-21 that he had to build bigger barns, ***"But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?' [21]"So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."***
   3. Best case; - hope for age 85. If this is true, I have already spent nearly ¾ of what I might have.
   4. Your *TIME* is a limited and valuable commodity. Invest it. Use it wisely.

B. How do we waste our time?
   1. This is Satan's desire; that we run out of time, that we get caught short. That we don't wake up until it is too late.
   2. ***"…because the days are evil."*** This is the influence of our generation.
      a. What influences your soul during your idle times?
      b. Television? Facebook? Hobbies? The music and songs you listen to?
      c. Are these good for your soul, or worse than a waste – destructive influences to your godliness?

C. What is best and wisest use of time?
   1. There are forces trying to distract you, lead you off, pre-occupy you so you will be corrupted by this generation, choked out by the cares and worries of life so you fail in bringing honor , glory, thanks and praise to the Creator.
   2. Walking wisely means we consciously spend what little time we have on things beneficial to our souls, on things heaven-bent, on things that nurture the Spirit of God in us.
   3. Do you let time drift, or do you wisely think about it with eternity in view?
   4. Your *TIME* is a limited and valuable commodity. Invest it. Use it wisely.

One of the best uses of time is working at …

II. Understanding the will of the Lord.

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

A. Meditating on His will.
   1. Why does He want me to honor the marriage bed & keep it holy? What are all the ramifications?
      a. For our health, for our spiritual health growth and well being. For relationships.
      b. For our children. For those around about us who witness our life in Christ.
   2. Purpose of parables and proverbs is to get people to *think more deeply* on spiritual concepts.
   3. Use memory verses, key, "hooks", so you can regurgitate and ruminate and digest and re-digest the bread of heaven all throughout the day.

4. How do you keep all those passwords organized? Try using Bible verses for passwords!

B. Seeking to know what your Creator wants of you is wise use of your time.
   1. In light of all that is really important, it is extremely unwise to not be concerned with God's will.
   2. Reading, asking, exploring. Seeking.
   3. One of the best ways to understand God's will is to try it and see! Do it and see how it works out!
      a. Try loving your enemy and see the results. Try praying for those who persecute you.
      b. When someone does something nasty, do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good – do something amazingly sweet in return.

Walking wisely through this life certainly entails a matter of priorities. Wisdom means keeping…

III. Spiritually focused. Ephesians 5:18, ***"And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,"***

A. "Dissipation" is foolish.
   1. Not a word we use much; it means wasteful expenditure. A loosing of what is important.
   2. What is wrong with being drunk? *It dissipates you*; that is, it squanders all your resources.
   3. It wastes whatever time, thought, effort you have available to do good and beneficial things.
   4. As a vapor "dissipates", so your life and resources dissipate.
   5. James 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."*** Booze simply speeds this up. You wake up and say "What happened?" Where did my money go? Where did my time go" Where did my effort and labor go? Where did my loved ones go? Where did my opportunities go? Where did my life go?"
   6. But it is not just booze. Or drugs. There are lots of things that are "dissipation". Might be wasting time on too much TV. Might be getting absorbed in a hobby or habit. Might be Facebook or politics or being a workaholic. What distracts you from the really important focus of life?

B. Focus where life is.
   1. Be filled with the spirit. This is where life really is. Entails an intentionality.
   2. This filling with the Spirit does not happen by itself. The Apostle has to remind Christians (repeatedly) Galatians 5:25, ***"If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit."***
   3. It involves a wise intentionality. Learning to focus on the unseen. Becoming aware of and engaging in Spiritual warfare. Asking WWJD. Listening to the convictions of your conscience rather than brushing it off. Maybe more time in prayer to help focus.

C. Results in a joy-filled heart.
   1. What are people like when filled with joy? They tend to sing.
   2. When life is properly focused, we can become so full of joy and gratitude we can't contain it.
   3. Life focused on knowing the Lord and the joy of His love can make your heart just burst into song.
   4. When *"my cup runneth over",* it praises God and spreads joy, love, confidence and encouragement to others. It bubbles over ***"speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;"***
   5. Cf. joy reflected in David's song when Israel succeeds in getting the ark of God set up again in its place; 1 Chronicles 16:31-34, ***" Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; And let them say among the nations, "The LORD reigns." [32]Let the sea roar, and all it contains; Let the field exult, and all that is in it. [33]Then the trees of the forest will sing for joy before the LORD; For He is coming to judge the earth. [34]O give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting."***

Therein lies the very next though of the Apostle as well, that of thankfulness. Wisdom before God, wisdom in spiritual things, wisdom through life entails…

IV. Living with thanksgiving. Ephesians 5:20, ***"always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;"***

A. This attitude is vital to "righteousness".
   1. Romans 1:21, ***"For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened."***

2. 1 Thessalonians 5:18, ***"in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."***
3. Hebrews 13:15, ***"Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name."***
4. Sometimes people assume they have "entitlements". They live as though they have a "right" to all kinds of niceties and luxuries. This leads to arrogance and to anger when we don't have all we feel we should be given.
5. Humility appreciates whatever it is given. It is wise to live with a thankful heart.

B. Learn to thank God for everything.
1. Know that He has your good at heart.
2. Even the very difficult things are for your spiritual growth and character.
3. Learn to count it all joy when you encounter diverse tribulations" – God is working out something very good for you or for somebody you love.
4. God knows exactly what you need for your own spiritual well-being. God has it all under control.
5. Really shouldn't have to be reminded to be thankful – knowing truth, reality we ought to naturally be filled with thankfulness.

Then, perhaps the hardest one for us, walking wisely involves a matter of

V. Being in subject to one another.

Ephesians 5:21, ***"and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ."***

A. What does this mean?
1. I am concerned about other people's needs – over and above my own!
2. Means I become more Christ-like – and ***"have this attitude which was also in Christ Jesus [6]who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, [7]but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant,"*** (Philippians 2:5-7) submitted to God's desire and, subjecting Himself to our needs, gave His life that we might live!
3. I am my brother's keeper. Out of live for God and my neighbor, I ought to do whatever it takes for them to be reconciled to God in Christ.
4. Primary place such subjection ought to show up in in marriage relationship. Out of love for God, I ought love my neighbor, even my enemy, but If I can ever walk in the image of Christ in regard to them, shouldn't it be easiest to start with my spouse whom I love most normally and naturally?

B. Here is where love is manifested.
1. Here is where God is imitated most clearly and glorified – in our looking out for others! Showing them the love of God!
2. Here is where we learn the nature of love! Here is where we grow in grace and knowledge.
3. Here is where we become bigger souled people ourselves.

So What?

We may live in the most comfortable nation and the most comfortable time era that there has ever been – from a physical standpoint. But we do live in difficult times spiritually speaking. So many forces to lead us off course of true spiritual lives that are pleasing to our maker. Remember the vital importance of what we have in Christ! We have every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ! Therefore, *be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise*.

Closing Prayer:

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Reading: Ephesians 5:15-21.

We need to walk wisely through this life.

Items to focus on if we are to walk wisely

I. Making the most of your time. (Ephesians 5:16)

A. How much time do you have?
Luke 12:20-21

B. How do we waste our time?

C. What is best and wisest use of time?

II. Understanding the will of the Lord. (Ephesians 5:17)

A. Meditating on His will.

B. Seeking to know what your Creator wants of you is wise use of your time.

III. Spiritually focused. (Ephesians 5:18)

A. "Dissipation" is foolish.
James 4:14

B. Focus where life is.
Galatians 5:25

C. Results in a joy-filled heart.
1 Chronicles 16:31-34

IV. Living with thanksgiving. (Ephesians 5:20)

A. This attitude is vital to "righteousness".
Romans 1:21 1 Thessalonians 5:18 Hebrews 13:15

B. Learn to thank God for everything.

V. Being in subject to one another. (Ephesians 5:21)

A. What does this mean?
Philippians 2:5-7

B. Here is where love is manifested.

So What?

Be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise.