

Ephesians – Week 14 – Walk in Wisdom – Bible Study Helps

Title: Walk in Wisdom

Sermon Summary:

This sermon from Ephesians 5:15-21 challenges Christians to live intentionally wise lives that visibly contrast with the darkness of the world. The sermon emphasizes that believers must walk circumspectly—carefully and vigilantly—redeeming the time because the days are evil. The core message centers on being filled with the Holy Spirit rather than being controlled by worldly influences. A Spirit-filled life is evidenced by three visible characteristics: having songs of worship in one's heart, maintaining a thankful attitude in all circumstances, and humbly submitting to one another in the fear of God. The sermon stresses that walking wisely means fearing the Lord, departing from evil, and understanding God's will through obedience to His Word. Christians are called to make the most of every opportunity, avoiding foolish living and instead pursuing spiritual maturity that brings glory to God.

Key Points:

- Christians must walk circumspectly (cautiously and vigilantly), not as fools but as wise, being aware of both dangers and opportunities
- Redeeming the time is essential because days are evil, time is limited, and opportunities disappear quickly
- Understanding what the will of the Lord is includes fearing the Lord and departing from evil, which demonstrates true wisdom
- The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; wise living means applying biblical knowledge, not just possessing head knowledge
- Many things can intoxicate and control believers beyond alcohol—including anger, bitterness, sports, politics, entertainment, and social media
- Being filled with the Spirit means the Holy Spirit gets more of us through surrender and obedience, not that we get more of the Spirit
- Three visible evidences of a Spirit-filled life: worshipful speech and songs in the heart, thankfulness in all circumstances, and humble submission to one another
- A Spirit-filled believer makes a positive difference in every environment—home, church, school, and workplace
- Wasting time through endless entertainment, drama, laziness, or bitterness is foolish living
- The Christian life should be intentional, not accidental or passive

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Scripture Reference:

- Ephesians 5:1-21 (primary focus on verses 15-21)
- Proverbs 14:7, 15:20, 21:20, 29:11
- James 3:13-18, 4:13-17
- Job 28:28
- Jeremiah 4:22
- Romans 8:28
- Colossians 4:5
- 1 Corinthians 6:12

Stories:

- The children's song "The Wise Man Built His House Upon the Rock" used as an illustration of wise versus foolish living
- Personal testimony about a man who claimed God was calling him to be a preacher but refused to submit to the authority of the word of God, demonstrating foolish living controlled by wrong spirits rather than the Holy Spirit
- The expired coupon analogy—feeling urgency about an expired coupon helps us to consider our urgency about redeeming the limited time we have in life
- Reference to the 2020 pandemic as an example of how quickly everything can change and why we must redeem the time
- A conversation related to how Christians should be noticeably different in workplace environments

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Discipleship Questions

How can we practically examine our lives to determine whether we are walking as wise people or as fools according to Ephesians 5:15-17?

In what ways might Christians be 'sober' from alcohol yet still be intoxicated or controlled by other things like anger, entertainment, or career ambition?

What does it mean to 'redeem the time' in your current season of life, and what specific opportunities or dangers should you be watching for circumspectly?

How does the fear of the Lord produce both wisdom and understanding, and what does it look like to depart from evil in practical everyday decisions?

What are the visible evidences in your own life that demonstrate whether you are filled with the Spirit or controlled by the flesh?

Why do you think God contrasts being drunk with wine with being filled with the Spirit in Ephesians 5:18, and what does this teach us about control and surrender?

How can we cultivate a heart that genuinely sings to the Lord and gives thanks in all circumstances, even when facing difficulties and disappointments?

What does it mean to submit to one another in the fear of God, and how does this Spirit-filled humility differ from worldly attitudes toward authority and service?

In what ways might we be wasting time through drama, bitterness, or endless entertainment rather than investing in eternal purposes like witnessing and serving others?

How does understanding that our time is limited and that the days are evil change the way we prioritize our relationships, ministries, and daily activities?

Small Group Guide: Walk in Wisdom

Ephesians 5:15-21

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker

Icebreaker Question: Share about a time when you made a foolish decision and later wished you had been wiser. What did you learn from that experience?

Key Scripture

"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil." - Ephesians 5:15-16

Main Points Summary

1. Walking Circumspectly (vv. 15-17)

- Christians must live intentionally wise lives, not foolishly
- We must be vigilant, watching for both dangers and opportunities
- Redeeming the time means making the most of every opportunity because time is limited

2. Walking Spirit-Filled (v. 18)

- Christians must obey the Lord to live a Spirit-filled and Spirit-led life
- Being filled with the Spirit means He gets more of us (not us getting more of Him)
- We must avoid being controlled by anything other than the Holy Spirit

3. Visible Evidence of Spirit-Filled Living (vv. 19-21)

- Songs in your heart to the Lord (psalms, hymns, spiritual songs)
 - Thankfulness in all circumstances
 - Humble submission to one another in the fear of God
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Discussion Questions

Understanding the Passage

1. **What does it mean to walk "circumspectly"?** How does this differ from just trying to avoid sin?
2. **The sermon contrasted the "foolish man" with the "wise man" using several Proverbs passages.** What are the key differences between these two types of people?
3. **Why do you think God places "be not drunk with wine" right before "be filled with the Spirit"?** What is the connection between these two commands?

Personal Reflection

4. **The sermon listed many things that can "intoxicate" us besides alcohol** (anger, sports, politics, entertainment, social media, etc.). Which of these do you struggle with most? How does it affect your spiritual life?
5. **"Redeeming the time" means treating time as a precious, limited resource.** Where do you tend to waste time most? What would it look like to redeem that time for God's glory?
6. **Review the three evidences of Spirit-filled living:**
 - Do you have a song in your heart for the Lord?
 - Are you genuinely thankful in all circumstances?
 - Do you humbly submit to others?

Which of these three comes most naturally to you? Which is most challenging?

Going Deeper

7. **The sermon stated: "When your life gets squeezed, what comes out?"** Think about a recent stressful situation. What came out of you—praise and gratitude, or complaining and anger? What does this reveal?
8. **Read James 3:13-18.** How does this passage help us understand what true wisdom looks like in practical, everyday situations?
9. **The Bible says that "a wise man will hear and will increase learning" (Proverbs 1:5).** How open are you to receiving correction or counsel? What makes it difficult to receive rebuke with a good attitude?

Application

10. **What specific area of your life needs to come under the control of the Holy Spirit this week?** What practical steps can you take to surrender that area?
 11. **The sermon emphasized that "the days are evil" and opportunities disappear quickly.** Is there someone you need to witness to or serve before the opportunity passes? What's holding you back?
 12. **How can we as a group help each other "walk circumspectly" and live Spirit-filled lives?** What accountability might we need?
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Key Takeaways

- ✓ **Wisdom is not just knowledge—it's living what you know according to God's Word**
 - ✓ **Time is a stewardship from God that must be redeemed, not wasted**
 - ✓ **Being Spirit-filled means surrendering control of your life to God, not gaining more of the Spirit**
 - ✓ **A Spirit-filled life has visible evidence: worship, gratitude, and humility**
 - ✓ **Everyone is controlled by something—the question is what (or Who) controls you?**
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Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge:

Choose ONE of the following to focus on this week:

Option 1: Redeem Your Time

- Track how you spend your time for 3 days
- Identify one time-waster to eliminate or reduce
- Replace it with Bible reading, prayer, or serving others

Option 2: Spirit-Filled Evidence

- Each morning, ask God to fill you with His Spirit
- Practice singing to the Lord (even if just in your heart)
- Keep a gratitude journal—write down 3 things you're thankful for each day
- Look for one opportunity daily to serve someone else with humility

Option 3: Wise Living Audit

- Read one chapter of Proverbs each day (corresponding to the date)
 - Write down one piece of wisdom each day and apply it
 - Ask a trusted Christian friend to give you honest feedback about your life
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Prayer Focus

Ephesians – Week 14 – Walk in Wisdom – Bible Study Helps

Pray together as a group:

- For wisdom to walk circumspectly in a foolish world
 - For the Holy Spirit to fill and control every area of our lives
 - For hearts of gratitude even in difficult circumstances
 - For humility to serve one another
 - For boldness to witness to the lost while there's still time
 - For specific needs and struggles shared during discussion
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Memory Verse

"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." - Ephesians 5:15-17

Before Next Week

- Read Ephesians 5:22-33 in preparation for the next study
 - Share with the group how you applied this week's lesson
 - Continue praying for one another's specific prayer requests
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Leader's Notes

- Be prepared to share your own struggles with time management and Spirit-filled living
- Create a safe environment where people can be honest about their failures
- Emphasize God's grace and the possibility of change through the Holy Spirit
- If someone shares about serious sin or addiction issues, offer to connect them with pastoral care
- Keep the discussion focused on practical application, not just theological debate

5-Day Devotional: Walking in Wisdom and Spirit-Filled Living

Day 1: The Wise Builder

Reading: Matthew 7:24-27; Proverbs 14:7-8

Devotional: Every day we face a choice: will we build our lives on the solid rock of God's Word or the shifting sand of worldly wisdom? True wisdom isn't merely head knowledge—it's living what we know. The foolish man in Jesus' parable didn't necessarily lack information; he lacked application. When storms come to your life, what foundation will hold you steady? A Spirit-filled believer doesn't just hear God's Word on Sunday; they apply it on Monday morning when the alarm goes off, Tuesday afternoon when conflict arises, and Friday evening when temptation calls. Today, examine one area where you know what God says but haven't been doing it. Choose wisdom—build on the Rock.

Day 2: Redeeming the Time

Reading: Ephesians 5:15-17; James 4:13-17

Devotional: Life is a vapor, appearing for a moment then vanishing. We don't know what tomorrow holds, yet we often live as though we have unlimited time. The days are evil—not just morally corrupt, but dangerous because opportunities disappear quickly. Like an expiring coupon, our time to impact eternity has a deadline. Are you wasting precious hours on entertainment, scrolling, or drama while souls around you perish? A wise Christian walks circumspectly—carefully looking all around for both dangers to avoid and opportunities to seize. Today is the day to witness to that neighbor, reconcile that relationship, or invest in your family's spiritual growth. Don't wait for a more convenient season. Redeem this day for God's glory.

Day 3: Filled with the Spirit

Reading: Ephesians 5:18-21; Galatians 5:16-25

Devotional: What controls you? Everyone is under some influence—the question is which one. God commands us to be filled with the Spirit, not to get more of Him (we receive all of Him at salvation), but to give Him more of us. Being Spirit-filled means surrendering every area of life to God's control—your thoughts, words, schedule, and reactions. When life squeezes you through trials, what comes out? Complaints or gratitude? Anger or grace? The evidence of Spirit-filled living isn't mystical experiences but practical fruit: a song in your heart, thankfulness in all circumstances, and humble submission to others. Today, ask God to fill you afresh. Empty yourself of selfish ambition, bitterness, and distractions. Yield completely to His control.

Day 4: Songs in the Darkness

Reading: Psalm 42:1-11; Acts 16:16-34

Devotional: Paul and Silas sang hymns at midnight in a prison cell, their backs bleeding from beatings. This wasn't manufactured emotion or denial of reality—it was Spirit-filled worship that transcended circumstances. A believer filled with God's Spirit has a song in their heart even when life feels like a dungeon. This melody isn't dependent on comfort or convenience; it flows from knowing who God is and what He's done. When was the last time you sang to the Lord, not just in church but in your car, your kitchen, your heart? If you find yourself songless, you may be running on empty spiritually. The remedy isn't trying harder to be happy—it's returning to the source of joy, allowing God's truth to fill your mind and His Spirit to overflow in praise.

Day 5: Humble Servants

Reading: Philippians 2:1-11; 1 Peter 5:5-7

Devotional: "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God"—this is the capstone evidence of Spirit-filled living. In a world screaming about rights and self-assertion, God calls His children to radical humility. This doesn't mean being a doormat; it means having the mindset of Christ, who being God, humbled Himself to serve and save us. When you esteem others better than yourself, when you genuinely say "you first" and mean it, when you serve without seeking recognition—this reveals the Holy Spirit's control. Pride says, "I deserve better." The flesh says, "What about me?" But the Spirit produces God-fearing humility that gladly serves, joyfully submits, and lovingly considers others. Today, look for one opportunity to put someone else first, not out of obligation, but in the fear and love of God.