

Making the Most of My Life

My Life--part 6

March 24, 2013

Eph. 5:15-21



TheBlackHole.wmv

(Bonus: check out this video on the power of greed, which we looked at last week!)

DAY 1

Last week Paul contrasted living in the light and living in darkness. If you are a Christian, you ARE light. LIVE as light!!! We don't dabble in darkness.

Here's our passage for the week:

Ephesians 5:15 Be very careful, then, how you live--not as unwise but as wise,¹⁶ making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.¹⁸ Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.¹⁹ Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord,²⁰ always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.²¹ Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

1. Our title for the week is, "Making the Most of Your Life," which comes from 5:16. What comes to your mind about making of the most of *your* life?

2. How does Paul tell us to live in 5:15?

3. Why do you think he starts off with the warning to "Be very careful?" (5:15) What is it about us that necessitates that warning?

4. The phrase "be careful" is one Greek word, "Akribos." It is the English word for "acrobat." The word means, "accurately" or "exactly" *and* completeness. Paul's idea is *not* perfection. If you've seen acrobats perform at a circus or gymnasts in the Olympics, what strikes you about "acrobats?"

5. In the Greek language, this word (akribos) was used as living in strict conformity to a standard or norm. The idea for us as Christians would be detailed and full obedience to God's Word. The opposite would be to live "carelessly" or "approximately" in regards to the bible.

6. What strikes you about you? Are you closer to an "acrobat," "popcorn vendor" or "clown" in your obedience and living wisely?

DAY 2

Ephesians 5:15 Be very careful, then, how you live--not as unwise but as wise,¹⁶ making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

1. Yesterday we looked at being "very careful" about how you live, with the detail and precision of an acrobat hurtling through the air looking to grab the trapeze. "Almost" getting the trapeze isn't good enough!

2. Today we look at living with wisdom, not foolishly.

"Wisdom" is the ability to choose the best goal, the best method, the best way. It is the ability to navigate both toward the right long-range target and on a day-to-day basis.

a. Who is someone you know that you consider wise? _____

b. What is it about that person that exhibits wisdom?

3. Paul says not to be "unwise." Whereas the wise person lives by what's *expected*, the unwise person lives by what's *appealing*. What strikes you about this difference between living wisely and unwisely?

4. Jesus said that over and over again you'll come to a fork in the road. You can go one of two directions.

Matthew 7:13 "Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. ¹⁴ For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few."

a. What does Jesus say about the road with the wide gate? (Look for four items).

b. What does Jesus say about the road with the narrow gate? (Look for four items).

5. The unwise person sees the narrow gate road looks fraught with annoying troubles. "Look, it's all uphill. I see potholes. It's dark. It's no fun; nobody else is going that way; why should I?"

* Is this how you evaluate your options?

6. The wise person sees the wide gate and knows it is more "appealing," but also says, "I know that would be easier, but I can see where that one goes. As to the narrow road, I know that will be tough, but I also know where 'real life' is. I'm not going by my feelings or what I'd prefer. I take the narrow path."

* Is this how you evaluate your options?

7. Finish today with prayer, especially praying the essence of question #6.

DAY 3

Ephesians 5:16 ... making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

1. "Making the most" is one Greek word, "redeeming." To redeem means to buy back. The idea is taking the opportunities you get and fully exploiting them.

2. What opportunities can you see God has sent your way? This will include people, events, experiences, resources, teachers, service opportunities, etc.

3. Which of your God-sent opportunities did you:
 - a. Redeem?

 - b. Dabble with?

 - c. Squander?

4. Paul give us a reason to redeem our opportunities: "because the days are evil." What do you think he means?

5. The days *are* "evil" in the following senses:
 - a. Opportunities to do good are fleeting.
 - b. Opportunities to do wrong are always around you.
 - c. Our sin nature is all too eager to let genuine opportunities pass if they involve being inconvenienced or if we have to sacrifice or humble ourselves.

6. Which of the above items in question 5 is true of you?

7. Note the examples below. Are any of them current opportunities?
 - a. You attend a church for years but rarely attend a bible study. "I'm tired. I don't feel like going." You let the opportunity pass you by.
 - b. You attend a life group but don't really invest yourself in the group. You let the opportunity pass you by.
 - c. "I know I should go to church, but I've had a hard week. I need a little TV to comfort me." You let the opportunity pass you by.

8. Are any of these familiar to you? Or another? Jot it down.

DAY 4

1. Yesterday, Paul exhorted us to redeem the opportunities. What we sort of expect is, "God will send the opportunity when I'm fully refreshed or when it's most convenient. When the birds are singing and I'm on top of the world spiritually, then I'll see the opportunity and rise to meet it." But, often opportunities come when you're tired or when you're discouraged. God sends some opportunities when you're mad at God!

2. If you miss the opportunities, the wrong response is to fall into a heap on the ground and go down in a blaze of passive glory! "I can't believe I have been such a moron. Wha, wha, wha." Stop moping. Get up! There's another one coming. Get up and grab it!

Ephesians 5:17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

3. "Foolish" - This word is different from "unwise" in 5:15. It means to live slovenly; to live aimlessly. What is contrasted with this in 5:17?

4. How do you find out God's will?

- **Get in the bible.**

2 Tim. 3:16 All scripture is inspired and is profitable for teaching, reproof, correction and for training in righteousness.

- **Get godly advice**

Prov. 12:15 The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to advice...

3. Live intentionally under God's control.

Eph. 5:18 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.

a. To be filled with the Holy Spirit means to be under His control.

b. To illustrate what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit, Paul offers this contrast--being drunk!

When someone is drunk with wine they are under its control! The inference is when we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we are under His control.

c. Are you under the Holy Spirit's control? It starts with simply yielding to God, letting Him have control of you.

4. Finish with prayer, committing yourself to live today under God's control.

DAY 5

Eph. 5:18 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. ¹⁹ Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, ²⁰ always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²¹ Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

How do you know you are filled with the Holy Spirit?

Different Christian groups have different answers for this. Some say spiritual gifts, some say its feeling close to God, or warm, spiritual feelings. Paul mentions four indicators:

1) Your interactions with people.

Eph. 5:19a Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.

Paul is not suggesting we go around as if we're in a "musical." What he is describing is interactions that reflect our worship of God, the joy of the Lord, being a blessing to others, etc.

* How would you describe the style of your interactions with people?

2) A disposition of devotion.

Eph. 5:19b Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord...

* How evident is this in your life? In your attitude?

3) Handling circumstances

Eph. 5:20 ... always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

* What is your normal response to "bad news?" How evident is a spirit of gratitude in your life?

4) Submit to one another

Eph. 5:21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

* How willing are you to listen to opinions with which you differ? Are you willing to defer, willing to adjust, be inconvenienced, etc.?

There are some Christians who are convinced they are filled with the Holy Spirit, but they have a rebellious and independent spirit. This is the "just Jesus and me" group. "Who are you to tell me what to do?" is their attitude.

Summary for the week: (1) My Life (2) Live "exactly." (3) Seize opportunities (4) Submit to Him.

Are you fulfilled? I won't be completely fulfilled until heaven, and neither will you. But God can fill us "enough" that we still seek Him as necessary, and still walk by faith, not by sight or feelings.