

THE BELIEVER IS TO WALK CAREFULLY AND STRICTLY EPHESIANS 05: 15–21

Introduction

How the believer walks day by day throughout life is crucial to the cause of Christ and to the welfare of society. He either contributes to the building up of society or to the tearing down of society. He either carries the message of life to the world or he carries the message of silence and death. For this reason, it is important that the believer walk carefully and strictly throughout life.

- I. By looking around and watching every step (v. 15).
- II. By redeeming the time (v. 16).
- III. By understanding the Lord's will (v. 17).
- IV. By rejecting drunkenness (v. 18).
- V. By being filled with the Spirit (vv. 18-21).

I. *Ephesians 05:15 The Believer's Life*

Walk carefully and strictly by looking around and watching every step. Life is a walk, a path that we trod every day. When we arise in the morning, we begin to walk about. God expects us to walk very carefully (akribos), that is, carefully and accurately — exactly as we should. Note: there are two kinds of persons who walk throughout life.

1. There is the unwise person: this simply means the person who is unthinking, thoughtless, careless, uncaring and worldly minded.

The unwise is the person who gives little thought about where he should go and where he should not go. He just arises in the morning and goes to work or about his daily routine with little thought about God and about what happens beyond this life. If he makes a mistake here and there, it does not matter that much, not to him. Making mistakes is just the way of all human life.

He thinks that he will be acceptable to whatever God there is, if he just lives a life..

- that is fairly decent, honourable and useful
- that pays its dues to God here and there

The unwise person is not concerned about watching every step and being alert to every temptation and pitfall in life. He could care less about struggling and being exact and strict in life. Living a careful, accurate, strict, disciplined, controlled life is not that important to him.

2. There is the wise person: the thinking, thoughtful, careful, caring, spiritually minded person. This is the person on mission. He knows God personally and he knows that he
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is on earth to live a righteous and godly life and to bear testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, when he arises in the morning and goes to work or about his daily affairs, he walks in the presence and praise of God. His thoughts are upon God all day long. Mistakes matter to him. It all matters — the daily reports and talk about man's...

- sin
- cursing
- off95-coloured jokes
- obesity
- murder
- divorce
- immorality
- suffering
- drunkenness
- drugs
- war
- selfishness
- hunger
- shame
- power struggle
- neglect
- evil
- hate

The wise man is not only concerned about every step of life, but he struggles to watch every step — to make sure that he walks throughout life exact, strict, disciplined and controlled. He knows that the only answer to the evil and problems of life is Jesus Christ and His righteousness.

Gal 5:16 So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

Eph 4:1 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

Eph 5:15 Be very careful, then, how you live — not as unwise but as wise.

Col 2:6 So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him.

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

1 John 2:6 Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

II. *Ephesians 05:16 Redeeming Time*

Walk carefully and strictly by redeeming the time. The idea is not to buy time. Time is the gift of God; a man has time. What he is to do is to use his time to buy things of value. He is to redeem time, to turn his time in, for things of value. This means two things.

1. A person is to use his time wisely; he is not to waste time. Time is a gift of God. A man does not have to redeem or *buy* time; he already has time. When he is born into the world, he is born into time. Time exists — it is here with or without us. We do not have to do a single thing to redeem it. What we have to do is to use time — use it wisely — use it to do the best that we can.

Thought 1. The choice is ours. We can sit and waste away hours and engage in activity and conversation that is of little, if any, value or worth; or we can use time wisely, keeping our thoughts and hands busy...

- in our profession and work, contributing to the good of society.

- in our worship, and service for Christ — all day long — joining with others of God’s church in witnessing and ministering to the lost and needful of our communities and cities.
 - in meeting the needs of a world reeling under the weight of desperate masses gripped in suffering, sin and death.
2. A person is to use his time by making the most of the opportunities that arise throughout the day. This, too, is what redeeming the time means. The believer is to redeem the opportunities...
- to live righteously and godly.
 - to witness and share Christ.
 - to be diligent on the job.
 - to set an example of commitment and discipline with work, at home and at play.
 - to be faithful to God and family.
 - to speak up for Christ and righteousness.
 - To pray instead of allowing time to be wasted.

(If a believer commits himself to pray as Christ and Paul prayed, he will find that he has no time to waste.)

Note why we are to redeem the time: because the days are evil. This refers to all the evil that confronts the believer as he walks day by day — so much evil that he must stay alert to keep from falling and failing. He must be alert to live righteously and to bear testimony to Christ. The evil can range from mild temptations over to persecutions, from small money problems to a world economic collapse, from a minor family argument to war. The evil of the world is ever before us — small and great. The task of the believer is to redeem the time — to make the most use of what time he has. The opportunity will soon pass because the days are evil.

- => The opportunity to witness will pass.
- => The opportunity to show diligence will pass.
- => The opportunity to speak up will pass.
- => The opportunity to love will pass.
- => The opportunity to minister will pass.
- => The opportunity to work hard will pass.
- => The opportunity to pray will pass.
- => The opportunity to give will pass.

Thought 1. How many of us waste time? So much time is wasted by so many...

- by not really being efficient
- by watching television
- by lack of diligence at work
- by unprofitable activity on weekends
- by what we read
- in restaurants
- in the evenings at home

Each of us needs to take a moment and think through where we waste so much time and correct it. More than ever we need to give ourselves to make a significant contribution to our work and society, to our church and community, to living righteously and godly, to witnessing and helping a world of people who are discouraged and lonely, hungry and cold, hurting and suffering, needy and helpless — all lost in sin — all without the knowledge of Christ and of eternal life. The call of the hour is to redeem the time, to make the most of every opportunity.

1 Cor 7:29-31 What I mean, brothers, is that the time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they had none; those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away.

2 Cor 10:5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Phil 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.

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

Col 4:5 Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders: make the most of every opportunity.

Psa 90:12 Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

Eccl 12:1 Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, “I find no pleasure in them.”

III. Ephesians 05:17 Understand the Will of Jesus Christ

Walk carefully and strictly by understanding the Lord’s will. Note how both the foolish man and the wise man are defined in this verse.

=> The foolish man is a man who does not understand the will of the Lord.

=> The wise man is a man who does understand the will of the Lord.

The word *understand* (suniemi) means to grasp, perceive, see with the mind and comprehend. As stated in the previous verse, the days are evil — full of all sorts of evil.

The believer must understand what God's will is in order to conquer the evil. If he does not, then he is as a fool and acting unwisely. How can a person know what the will of the Lord is?

⇒ By knowing the Word of God — by knowing it so well that he can apply it to the situations that confront him every day.

John 8:31-32 *To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*

John 17:17 *"Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth."*

2 Tim 2:15 *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.*

1 Pet 1:22 *Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.*

Psa 40:8 *"I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart."*

Psa 119:9 *How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word.*

Psa 119:11 *I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.*

⇒ By being sensitive to the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

John 14:26 *"But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."*

John 16:7-8 *"But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counsellor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment."*

John 16:13-14 *"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you."*

Rom 8:4-5 *In order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit. Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.*

Rom 8:13-14 *For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.*

Psa 143:10 *Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground.*

IV. Ephesians 05:18 Drunkenness

Walk carefully and strictly by not becoming drunk with wine. Drunkenness means to be intoxicated with drink or drugs (see Lk. 21:34; Rom. 13:13; Gal. 5:21; see Prov. 20:1; Isa. 28:7; Ezk. 23:32; 39:19). The word “debauchery” is excessive behaviour. The Greek means...

- the dissipation and wasting away of the body
- uncontrolled behaviour
- rioting, wild and outrageous behaviour and conduct

Drunkenness is an act of the flesh (sinful nature) and it often leads to other acts of the flesh or sinful nature: partying, loose behaviour, immodest clothing, exposure of the body, sexual thoughts, immorality, wicked or evil and unjust behaviour or violence and physical abuse, notions of grandeur, strength or power. The Bible says several things about drunkenness.

1. Drunkenness excludes a person from the kingdom of God.

1 Cor 6:10 Nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

Gal 5:21 And envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

2. Drunkenness leads to other forms of misbehaviour and sin.

Luke 15:13 “Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living.”

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

3. Drunkenness makes it impossible to grasp the fleeting opportunities of time.

Eph 5:16-18 Making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the spirit.

V. Ephesians 05:18–21 Infilling of the Holy Spirit

Walk carefully and strictly by being filled with the Spirit. This command is in the present tense which means that the believer is to be constantly filled with the Spirit; he is to keep on being filled. The Holy Spirit is to infill the believer continuously (Eph. 5:18; see Acts 2:4; 4:29-31). The Spirit’s filling is the personal manifestation of Christ to the believer who walks obediently day by day (Jn. 14:21). It is a consciousness of His presence, of His leadership — moment by moment. This consciousness is the believer’s privilege. But the Spirit’s filling is not an automatic experience. The responsibility of being filled with the Spirit rests upon the shoulders of the believer. He is filled only as he walks obediently to Christ (see Acts 2:1-4).

In understanding the infilling of the Spirit, it is helpful to review what the Lord had to say about the manifestations or disclosures of the Spirit in the Gospel of John.

John 14:21-22 “Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.” Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, “But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?”

Note that the Holy Spirit is the very *special manifestation* of Christ within the believer. Apparently, this refers to very special manifestations of the Lord to the heart of the believer, those very special times when there is a deep consciousness of love between the Lord and His dear follower (see Jn. 14:21). This is bound to be what Christ means, for He has already spoken about His personal presence within the believer (Jn. 14:18-20). When believers go through terrible trials and severe crises, God knows and He loves and cares; so He moves to meet the need of His dear children. He moves within the believer’s heart, manifesting His presence and giving a deep sense of His love and care, helping and giving confidence, forgiveness and assurance — giving whatever the believer needs. The depth of the experience and the intensity of *the special manifestation* depends upon the need of the believer. God knows and loves His dear child perfectly, so He gives whatever experience and depth of emotion are needed to meet the need of His child. We must always remember that God loves each one of us so much He will do whatever is needed...

- to lift us up
- to strengthen us
- to conform us to the image of His dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ

Note that the *special manifestations* of the Lord’s presence are given only to the believer who does two things.

=> The believer who receives the commandments of Christ. To have the commandments of Christ means that the believer has searched the commandments of Jesus Christ. He has them in his heart, knows them and has made them his own (Jn. 14:21-22 above; see Psa. 119:11).

=> The believer who keeps the commandments of Jesus.

The believer who does these two things shows that he truly loves the Lord Jesus. And it is he who loves and obeys the Lord Jesus who receives the very special manifestations and infilling of the Holy Spirit.

Note an important fact: the special manifestation is questioned. Judas asked the question for the first time, but the special manifestation of Christ’s presence has been questioned and doubted by thousands ever since. Judas was thinking like all men think — in terms of a physical manifestation, a visible appearance.

The word *show* (phanerooo; emphanizo) means unveiling or revelation. It suggests that a new thing has come to light; that something never known by man before is made known. Some mystery has now been revealed. It is something that cannot be discovered by man's reason or wisdom. It is a mystery that is hidden from man and beyond his grasp. In Jn. 14:21-22 it means that Jesus' presence is revealed (brought to light), illuminated, manifested and quickened in the life of the believer. It means that He *shows* Himself to His disciples in a very special way. He discloses His person, His nature, His goodness. He illuminates Himself *within* their hearts and lives. He gives a very special consciousness within their souls. (See Jn. 14:21-22; Acts 2:1-4.)

John 7:38-39 *“Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.” By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.*

Acts 2:4 *All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*

Acts 13:52 *And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.*

Acts 4:31 *After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.*

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

Now, note the three traits of a Spirit-filled person.

1. A Spirit-filled person has a singing spirit. This is in contrast to the drunken person. The mention of singing is the picture of joy and happiness. The worldly person often seeks joy and happiness in drink and partying. This is not to be the case with the true believer. He is to seek his joy and happiness by being filled with the Spirit of God and by singing to himself. Note a crucial point: singing to oneself helps a person to experience the fullness of the Spirit. What do we sing? God tells us:
 - => *Psalms*: the psalms of the Old Testament. We need to learn them — yes, by memory — so that we can sing them. Think how victoriously we could walk through life if we knew the Psalms.
 - => *Hymns*: the great hymns of the church. Again we must learn them.
 - => *Spiritual Songs*: F.F. Bruce suggests that these may refer to songs being made up by the person as he walks along singing praise to the Lord throughout the day (*The Epistle to the Ephesians*, p. 111). We have all experienced walking along making melody in our hearts to the Lord; therefore, his suggestion makes sense.
 - => It is certainly a good practice.

1 Cor 14:15 *So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind.*

Eph 5:19 *Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord.*

James 5:13 *Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise.*

Psa 81:1 *Sing for joy to God our strength; shout aloud to the God of Jacob!*

Psa 95:1 *Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.*

2. A Spirit-filled person has a thankful spirit. Note the words “always” and “for everything.” Our lives are in God’s hands. He guides and directs us through everything. Therefore, we can thank Him for everything — no matter what the things are. He controls all. Giving thanks as we walk along throughout the day — always giving thanks — helps us to experience the fullness of God’s Spirit.

Phil 4:6 *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.*

Col 3:17 *And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

1 Th 5:18 *Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.*

1 Chr 16:8 *Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done.*

3. A Spirit-filled person has a submissive and respectful spirit. A Spirit-filled person does not have a spirit of criticism, dissension, envy, divisiveness or selfishness. He has a spirit of submissiveness. The same is true of churches: a Spirit-filled church has a body of people who are submissive — going out of their way to minister and serve each other. There is no dissension or divisiveness, no envy or selfishness among its people. In the fear of God, they submit to each other before they break the fullness of God’s Spirit.

Mat 18:4 *“Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”*

Rom 12:3 *For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.*

1 Cor 16:16 *To submit to such as these and to everyone who joins in the work, and labours at it.*

Phil 2:3-4 *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.*

Heb 13:17 *Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.*

1 Pet 5:5 *Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” ■*