**Brought to Life; Brought Together**

**Walking Worthy: Walking in Wisdom**

**Ephesians 5:15-18**

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We are continuing our series in Ephesians, Brought to Life; Brought Together. As we have said, Ephesians can be divided into two sections, chapters one through three describe what *God has done in us* through Christ while chapters four through six call us to *live out what God has done in us*. Living out what God has done has been described in a number of ways, walking worthy, walking in love, walking in light, and now walking in wisdom. Before we read 5:15-18, I want you to see the structure of the passage. There are three sets of commands to live wisely, walk in wisdom. The first command is in v. 15-16, look carefully how you walk, *not* unwise *but* wise by making the best use of your time. The second is in v. 17, therefore do *not* be foolish *but* understand what the will of the Lord is. And the third is in v. 18 which we will look at next week, do *not* be drunk with wine *but* be filled with the Spirit. The passage is about Walking in Wisdom, simple but important as minefields are dangerous.

Big Idea: Walk wisely by leveraging your time, knowing God’s will, and being filled with the Spirit.

**Guard your Life (15)**

Paul encourages us to look carefully how we walk, which is a metaphor for how we live life (see also 2:1-2; 2:10; 4:1; 4:17; 5:2; 5:8; 5:15). Careful means to be watchful or on your guard so that you do not fall or have an accident. The word is used in Hebrews 3:12, *Take care*, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. You faith is to be taken seriously. And as we have seen, if you have genuine faith, there will be fruit, a life that gives evidence to faith. Paul knows we naturally drift from Christ so he challenges and warns us to be careful how we live.

Then he describes walking more specifically, *not* as unwise *but* as wise. Unwise means to be careless, foolish. The fool in the bible is someone who lives life apart from the reality of God and his moral law (see 4:17-19). Fools rejects the truth so they lack divine perspective of their life situations, and do not have the will to make right decisions. Wisdom in contrast is Spirit imparted knowledge of the truth, insight into your life situations, and Spirit empowered resolve to make right decisions. Wisdom is staying on the path so you do not step off onto the minefield. Are you being careful, guarding how you live so you don’t step off the path of wisdom into a minefield. Are you guarding your relationship with Jesus? Are you careful how you spend your money? Are you careful what you watch or read? This leads us to our second point, live wisely by leveraging your time.

**Leverage your Time (16)**

First, walking in wisdom by leveraging your time, that is, use time to your advantage which he describes as making the best use of your time. Now why does he bring up leveraging our time? Because we are to live in light of God’s eternal plan and purpose to unite all things under Christ’s Lordship (1:10). The reason he commands us to make the best use of our time is because the days are evil (6:13; Gal 1:14). We live in a fallen and evil age with a cosmic struggle between good and evil as Christ brings all things under his rule as Lord and King. We leverage time by taking it from the control of the present evil age and use it to glorify God (Ps 90:12; 39:45). Because the days are evil, walk wisely looking for ways to make the best use of your time. Then he describes walking in wisdom as knowing God’s will.

**Know God’s Will (17)**

We walk in wisdom by *not* being foolish *but* understanding what the will of the Lord is (17). Because the days are evil, *therefore* understand what the will of the Lord is. I think he is appealing to us renew our minds again. We have already seen that we know or discern and desire God’s will by renewing our minds (Eph 4:23-24; Rom 12:1-2). God’s will here is walking in wisdom, knowing how to walk wisely in evil days. Since God is the wisest person in existence, his word is the best and most reliable source of wisdom. We need to renew our minds to understand God and love and obey what he commands in Scripture. Without a renewed mind, our foolishness will distort his word or make excuses for disobeying it. So, one way to leverage our time is to renew our minds by reading, thinking about, studying and discussing God’s wise word. But here is a challenge, there are a multitude of times daily when the bible does not address particular situations. For instance, who you are to marry, if you should marry, or what car to drive or where to work or what clothes to wear, etc. Walking in wisdom is the ability know God’s will by applying the bible to new situations not specifically addressed in God’s word. We need a renewed mind that is so shaped by God’s word that we can see and assess situations with the mind of Christ and discern what God is calling us to do (Rom 12:1-2). But there is another challenge for us. Most of life is lived in the moment and our choices and actions are often spontaneous, the overflow of what’s in our hearts. We get angry, we are envious, we lie, we are bitter, we covet, we get defensive, the list goes on. You cannot just stop these sinful feelings or actions coming up, they happen so fast. These spontaneous, almost unconscious, sins are defeated by renewing our minds. As our minds are renewed, our patterns of thought change, God changes our desires and feelings so that those old sinful desires and emotions dissolve and the result is that our sinful actions go away so that we stay on the path of wisdom and do not step onto the minefield of foolishness. So walk in wisdom by leveraging your time, knowing God’s will. Eradicate foolishness in your life by renewing your mind.

**Life Group Questions:**

1. David has said that the six chapters can be divided into two sections. Explain those two sections in your own words. Why is understanding the order of these two sections so important to living the christian life?
2. What does it mean to look carefully how you walk or live? Why is this so important?
3. How does this point to the seriousness of the Christian life? Does your life reflect this kind of seriousness? Why is this a struggle for us?
4. What other metaphors besides the minefield can you think of to describe staying on the path of wisdom?
5. What are some time wasters in your life? Are these good or bad? Are they sinful? Why or why not?
6. How are we to understand the Lord’s will in this passage?
7. How do we determine God’s will when the bible does not address our specific situations?
8. How do we eradicate foolishness in our lives?
9. How is God speaking to you in this message?
10. How does this passage relate to you own discipleship?
11. How does this message help you in making disciples