

This is a Great Mystery

A Study of Ephesians

Week 23 – Ephesians 5:15 - 5:20

Prayer – Lord Jesus, help us to walk in your truth day after day, so that our lives would not wander away from you, but would be drawn closer to you by your powerful promises and unchanging love. Amen.

Introduction – Give me three things that we talked about last week and what you learned (or why it matters to know) about each thing.

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Note for today – All of the verbs in this section are in the present tense. Keep that in mind for each of these verses: all of these actions are to be continuous in the life of a Christian.

Ephesians 5:15-16 – Βλέπετε οὖν ἀκριβῶς πῶς περιπατεῖτε μὴ ὡς ἄσοφοι ἀλλ' ὡς σοφοί,

Consider carefully, therefore, how you are walking—not as unwise, but as wise...

1. Βλέπετε (consider) – This word has a vast array of meanings; but they all center on looking at something. Depending on the context, the intensity of the looking is either intensified or taken down a notch. So, this could mean anything from “being able to see” to “observing” to “examining” to “paying attention” to “be aware of something.” What pictures come to mind when God’s Word says to do this?
 - a. What tools do we use to help us carry out the task of considering how we are walking (the picture for how we live our lives)?
 - b. What is the goal for the manner in which we walk (look at the last word of v. 15)?
 - c. What does it mean to walk that way? Let’s look at a few passages from the book of Proverbs, which is really a practical instruction manual for life on earth.
 - i. Proverbs 11:30 –
 - ii. Proverbs 14:16 –
 - iii. Proverbs 16:23 –
 - iv. Proverbs 19:20 –
 - v. Proverbs 29:11 –

- d. Notice, too, that we do this ἀκριβῶς (carefully). The dictionary definition for this word is “pertaining to strict conformity to a standard or norm with focus on careful attention.” What sorts of things get in the way of us doing this consistently?

Ephesians 5:16 - ἐξαγοραζόμενοι τὸν καιρὸν, ὅτι αἱ ἡμέραι πονηραὶ εἰσιν.

...making the most of the time, because the days are evil.

2. ἐξαγοραζόμενοι τὸν καιρὸν (making the most of the time) – What do Christians do to “make the most of the time” or “take advantage of the opportunities” God gives us? Let’s come up with at least three.
3. “The days are evil” – What makes this a fitting reason to make the most of the time? In other words, what will happen if we *don’t* make the most of the time?

Ephesians 5:17 – διὰ τοῦτο μὴ γίνεσθε ἄφρονες, ἀλλὰ συνίετε τί τὸ θέλημα τοῦ κυρίου.

For this reason, do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

4. This is basically a reiteration of verse 15—don’t be unwise (foolish) but be wise.
 - a. The foolish person (unbeliever) has no chance at understanding what the Lord’s will is. His will for his people’s lives on earth is found in **Mark 12:29-31**. What is it?
 - b. We see his ultimate desire in **1 Timothy 2:4**. What is it?
 - c. In what ways does not understanding those things affect the life of the foolish? In other words, how is the life of the foolish different from the life of someone who understands these things?

What comments and questions do you have?

Ephesians 5:18 – καὶ μὴ μεθύσκεσθε οἴνῳ, ἐν ᾧ ἐστὶν ἀσωτία, ἀλλὰ πληροῦσθε ἐν πνεύματι,

And do not become drunk on wine, in which there is debauchery; rather, be filled by the Spirit

5. Another trip to Proverbs! Turn to **Proverbs 20:1**. It's obvious that Paul is not making a new law.
 - a. What examples does God share with us in his Word about alcohol being misused?
 - b. When has God used wine or alcohol as a blessing for his people?
 - c. So, as we often do, we need to make the distinction between a substance itself being bad vs. the manner in which it is consumed.
6. The word “debauchery” speaks to wastefulness and, more seriously, reckless abandon.
7. While being filled with wine brings reckless abandon, what behaviors or mindsets does being filled with the Spirit bring?

Ephesians 5:19 – λαλοῦντες ἑαυτοῖς [ἐν] ψαλμοῖς καὶ ὕμνοις καὶ ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς, ᾄδοντες καὶ ψάλλοντες τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμῶν τῷ κυρίῳ,

Speaking to one another [with] psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making music with your heart to the Lord

8. The behaviors and mindsets mentioned above then lead to praise to God, which is appropriate when we are under the Spirit's influence (not Pentecostal; the Spirit lives in us through the means of grace).
9. Let's talk about the types of musical settings mentioned here:
 - a. Psalms – we have all 150 of them in the Bible. Plus, we now have a resource that sets each one of them to music for public or private use (the Psalter). These are Old Testament texts which retell the story of salvation, highlighting God's power, wisdom, and love.
 - b. Hymns are also familiar to us. It's improbable that the New Testament Church had a hymnal; still, they must have had songs that became used regularly and were poetic in format.
 - i. It didn't take long for hymns to be written down, as we have a hymn from about AD 200 in our hymnal. Does anyone know what hymn that is?

- c. Spiritual songs – I’ll be honest, from a grammatical standpoint, I don’t know what the difference is between these and hymns. They both indicate sacred songs; songs of praise; or songs used in worship settings.
 - i. One commentator suggested that hymns (ὕμνοις) are songs of praise directed to God or to Christ, while spiritual songs (ὕδαϊς πνευματικαῖς) are songs that dwell on themes other than direct praise to God or to Christ. But then, in the next sentence, the same commentator admits that there could be some overlap between the two terms.
 - ii. The NIV84 Study Bible footnote suggests that all three terms could refer to the Psalms, since there are definite hymns and songs of praise included there.

10. These songs are not just meant to praise God; they are also a form of speaking to one another. When we sing songs (whether chanted psalms, beloved hymns, or something we’ve never sung before), we are not just singing to sound good; we are singing to teach the truths of God’s Word to ourselves and to others. What added insight does that give to the songs we use in worship (liturgy, psalms, hymns, or other)?

11. “Singing and making music with your heart” – We not only make audible sounds; we mean what we sing; it comes from the heart. It’s not just an empty going through the motions.
- a. During what parts of the service might going through the motions of singing happen most easily?
 - b. What helpful tips do you have to stay focused, to mean what you sing and sing what you mean?

Ephesians 5:20 – εὐχαριστοῦντες πάντοτε ὑπὲρ πάντων ἐν ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρί.

Always giving thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

12. Even as we speak to one another through our worship, this is our main purpose. We give thanks for everything (yes, really!) to the Lord, for he is good, and his mercy endures forever.

What comments and questions do you have?

Closing Prayer CW 234 Praise to the Lord, the Almighty
Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!
O my soul, praise him, for he is your health and salvation!
Let all who hear Now to his temple draw near, Joining in glad adoration! Amen.

Next week (October 24): There is that call meeting scheduled for the beginning of the Bible Class hour. We will still plan to have class following that meeting, as time allows.