

Ephesians 5:15-17 - Live Carefully

TSK, GreekLexicon, Gill, Robertson, Poole, JFB, Geneva, PNT, Trapp, Rienecker, Handfuls, Barnes, Clarke, Henry, Calvin, Hendrickson, Beloved congregation of our Lord: **You have dangers all around-** dangers in your home (carbon monoxide), neighborhood (thieves), work place (being falsely accused), or when you travel abroad (pickpockets). They can hurt or kill you. So you have to be careful.

There are many spiritual dangers around also...many, many. So you have to learn to walk carefully around them so they don't hurt or destroy you. This is the subject of the next 3 verses.

Our headings are:

Live with Care: The Command

Live with Care: Not as Fools

Live with Care: Learn how to do so

Our goals are: **That you will remember that in response to being enabled by God to serve him, you will live carefully so you don't bring shame to Christ, but rather, you will work to build up his kingdom.**

Walk with Care: The Command

15 See then that you walk **circumspectly**...16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

1. The Apostle Paul called on the Ephesian Christians to walk circumspectly, which literally means "to walk with care."

a. To walk with care is to watch in a circle...to watch all around. (Circum...round). As Christ's children, they had to watch out for dangers all around.

b. Apostle Paul did not expect the non-believer to walk with care. They couldn't! They had no sense of danger! They had been lied to by the Devil and they believed him!

c. Apostle Paul knew that being a Christian does not automatically make one able to walk carefully.

A Christian had to **learn the skill of how to live carefully.**

A Christian had to **learn where to walk.**

A Christian had to **learn what to say and when to say it** in different circumstances.

What happens if you don't follow the safe markings in a mine field? Likely you will have people looking for bits and pieces of you! **Just so is the danger of not living carefully.** **One mistake can destroy you:** a wrong step, a wrong word, a little fear!

2. So as part of their living carefully (circumspectly), Paul told the Ephesians to use their time wisely (redeem the time).

"Redeeming time" means to "buy time." **This phrase was taken from traders who would look for the best time to buy or to sell their products.** These traders sometimes

had to sell goods they loved so they could benefit their families—to meet their real needs. By doing this they would not have to store their goods.

“Redeeming time” is illustrated for us when you see people draining swamplands so the land can become good farmland.

3. The reason the Ephesians had to live carefully was because there was much spiritual danger all around.

Moses **added another reason to live carefully (redeeming the time).** Moses said **life was short and there was not much time to do good.**

Psalm 90:4 For **a thousand years in Your sight Are like yesterday** when it is past, And like **a watch** in the night. 5 You **carry them away like a flood**; They are like **a sleep**. In the morning they are **like grass** which grows up: 6 In the morning it flourishes and grows up; In the evening it is cut down and withers. 9 For all our days have **passed away in Your wrath**; We finish our years **like a sigh**. 10 The days of our lives are seventy years; And if by reason of strength they are eighty years, Yet their boast is **only labor** and **sorrow**; For it is soon cut off, and we fly away. 12 So teach us to **number our days...**

So life was full of troubles (so live carefully) and life was short (so live carefully).

4. Lessons:

a. If gratifying your senses takes over in your life— lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life-you will not care how you walk. Lust for pleasure and profit will lead to bad decisions for your body and soul. You would not care if an act were dangerous. So, brothers and sisters, **control your lusts**. When you are tempted to sin **ask God to remind you what Jesus did for you and ask him to put new desires in your heart so you can honor him.**

b. Don't walk along the dangerous edges of the Christian path. Don't try to get away with being as close to sin as possible and hope not to sin. You will fall off the cliff. Young people, don't put yourself in a position where you can easily commit adultery. Be careful where you go with a boyfriend or girlfriend. Your boyfriend or girlfriend is your Christian brother and sister first! Save yourself the shame of looking your brother in the face! Save yourself the shame of looking your Father in the face.

c. Positively, buy time...that others seem to waste. Save time. Use time better. See what are wasteful (not restful) things eat up your time and eliminate them. (Do you need so much YouTube time? Do you need so much sports? Do you need to text every 3.5 minutes?) Be involved in good activities and balance the time you spend on them. Even if you become too busy with church, work or study, you will likely get sick and you can even destroy your family. Those good things can become sinful.

Walk with Care: Not as Fools

15 ...not as fools but as wise,

1. Apostle Paul called on the Ephesians Christians not be foolish in their walk.

Literally translated, the Apostle Paul said: Stop becoming foolish.

2. What exactly did Apostle Paul mean by this – how could the Ephesian Christian become fools?

a. If they let their eyes wander to shiny, attractive things, that lured them from the path of right living and from keeping their eyes on the Savior, they were foolish. (Ever seen how boys can find the longest way to anyplace? It is always through the puddle!) That is fun for boys, but foolish for adults. Foolish people are guided by emotions, **whatever would bring them sensual satisfaction.** They use out all their oil and then have no fuel for later when they needed their lamp. This was surely a part reference to Bacchanalian mysteries–wicked parties–that destroyed the godly. Lusts drove the people of Ephesus.

b. If they tried a short cut to godliness, they were foolish. (Short-cuts are usually longer.) Someone might say, “I can marry someone who is not a Christian and he will change.” Another foolish person might have said, “Worshipping Diana, a goddess of wickedness is easy. She was more fun, advocating debauchery.” (**Worshipping idols is easy!**) But doing this was dangerous to their bodies and souls!

c. If they thought they couldn’t wait for God’s blessings, they were foolish. They lacked proper focus. “If I can just cheat this one time on my exam, I could save coming back to school for another year.” Foolishness.

d. Ultimately, the fools thought they could live without God! But they couldn’t.

Ecclesiastes 10:2 A wise man’s heart is at his right hand, **But a fool’s heart at his left.**

3. Lessons:

a. Your wisdom must come from heaven, not fake news – lies from the Devil. A judge recently ruled that a PCA church in Florida is promoting hate speech because it promotes a biblical family model and opposes homosexual marriages. This is walking foolishly. Reject this evil judge. Hold on to wisdom from God, even if you have to pay a price for it. Walk in God’s way.

b. A few other examples: Consider how many seem to think it is good that we no longer have distinction between men and women (Our PM says we should say people-kind, not mankind.) and what the results are. This is foolish. Men who claim to be women are **abusing women in women’s shelters** and in women’s prisons. **Women are no longer able to compete on the same level in sports** now. Men who pretend to be women are allowed to be in women’s wrestling competition. Imagine what happens when a man who says he is a woman end up in a boxing ring! Just recently another doctor in England was fired for not calling a man a woman – a doctor! This is living as fools!

c. Here are a few more quotes from some leaders recently that show how foolish they are:

“If we have less children and use abortions to control the population, we will save the world.” But God said you should have children...and we surely shouldn't murder them.

“When you love yourself, you can conquer anything.” (In a list of daily inspirational quotes!) But this lacks wisdom. The truth is, if you love yourself you will destroy every godly order!

“If everyone has equal amounts of money we will all live in harmony.” But socialism can never work. Socialism is anti-God. Civil harmony will only come when hearts are changed by the Gospel of Jesus!

Walk with Care: Learn how to do so

17 Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the **will of the Lord is.**

1. The Apostle Paul called on the Ephesians Christians to learn how to walk with care.

It is no use walking without watching where you are going. You will likely fall off a cliff.

2. How were the Ephesian Christians able to walk with care?

They had to learn God's will. Ps. 1:2 – “whose delight is in the law of the Lord and he meditates on it...” Knowing God's will is wisdom!

3. Where do you find God's will?

a. God's will is not some secret, private knowledge that God gives to you. (“And the voice I hear as I tarried there, none other has ever known,” is dishonest.) People who argue this often are more interested in controlling others by their so-called “secret revelations.” John of Leiden, for instance, told his followers that God told him to go into their stores and help himself to their goods! He ignored God's Word that was made available to the world for some “secret” message!

b. God's will is not lived with just an intellectual knowledge, you must have experiential knowledge – faith in Jesus.

c. God's Word is his revealed will. If you want to know how to be saved, read God's Word. If you want to know how to be sanctified, read God's Word. God's Word is that lamp to your feet and that light to your path! There is no other way in the whole earth that will tell you these things! (This is the light!)

Psalms 119:9 How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to **Your word.**

d. What are some examples of God's will that you can find in this Word?

1 Thessalonians 5:18 in everything give thanks; **for this is the will of God** in

Christ Jesus for you.

1 Thessalonians 4:3 For **this is the will of God**, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality;

4. You must not just have an understanding of God's will, it is essential that you do God's will.

And you will only care to walk in the ways of the Lord if you fear God – have faith in him.

Job 28:28 And to man He said, 'Behold, **the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom**, and to depart from evil is understanding.'"

5. Lessons:

a. You do not have a natural instinct to know what is right and good...or even what to say for all occasions. So you need the revealed Word of God (and only the Word of God) to do so. This is where you will find true wisdom! In God's Word you will find Christ, how he lived and died for you, how you have been brought close to God, and how you are now able to live wisely!

b. Reject those who put flowery perfumes on rotten things or put lipstick on a pig. So when professors tell you there are alternative lifestyles...even if there is much pleasure in those lifestyles...reject the lifestyles they are promoting! Their so-called acceptable philosophies are lures of the Devil.

c. Ask God for the grace to love him by going to his Word and by walking with care.

Conclusion:

In contrast to the **wicked man whose life is based on his personal lusts**, a Christian must live his life with care.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Live with care. It is good for you, it is good for your neighbor who does not know Jesus, and it will bring glory to God.

2. Learn to live with care by knowing God's will. Living with care is **not determined by how you feel** because your feelings have been corrupted by sin. It is **determined by the Holy Word of God**. Devote time to the **reading of God's Word, meditating on it, and listening to explanations of it.**

3. The only way you will begin to learn to walk with care is when you have faith in Jesus – and believe he died for your sins on the cross.

Finally, if you are tired of walking your own way...doing your own thing...and living for your own pleasure and profit...then it is time to surrender. Ask God to change your heart and credit Christ's work for you. He will do it.