

Ephesians 5:15-21

WISE LIVING

Ephesians 5:15-21

- ▶ The Apostle Paul wrote to a group of converts immersed in an evil culture. The Ephesian believers were surrounded by pagans who lived for the moment, who rejected the general revelation of God in creation and the special revelation of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Their society focused on the worldly and trivial, and indulged their every fleshly whim and desire. This epitomizes foolishness: to ignore the reality of God, to reject His Lordship over one's life, to spurn His gracious offer of forgiveness, to live as though this world were all that is or ever will be.
- ▶ Lest these old patterns of thinking creep back into the hearts and minds of the Ephesian believers, Paul urgently warns his brothers and sisters in the faith to remember the brevity of this life, the evil, deceptive nature of satanic counterfeits, and the wonderful prospect of walking in and living by the Spirit of God. Only this kind of wise living, befitting our high calling in Christ, can bring joy now and reward in the life to come.

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▶ Holy Spirit

- ▶ The Holy Spirit is the divine agent who creates, sustains, and preserves spiritual life in those who place their trust in Jesus Christ. Not merely an influence or an impersonal power emanating from God, the Holy Spirit is a person, the third member of the Trinity, equal in every way to God the Father and God the Son. Among the many characteristics of personhood that the Holy Spirit manifests are:
 - ▶ He functions with mind, emotion, and will
 - ▶ He loves the saints, He communicates with them, teaches, guides comforts, and chastises them
 - ▶ He can be grieved, quenched, lied to, tested, resisted, and blasphemed.

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- ▶ The Holy Spirit indwells all believers, illuminating their understanding and application of God's Word. He fills them, seals them, communes with them, fellowships with them, intercedes for them, comforts them, admonishes them, sanctifies them, and enables them to resist sin and to serve God.

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▶ Wisdom

- ▶ In the New Testament, wisdom is used most often to refer to the ability to understand God's will and apply it obediently. It refers basically to applying truths discovered, to the ability to make skillful and practical application of the truth to life situations.

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- ▶ 5:15 So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise.
- ▶ 5:16 Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days.
- ▶ 5:17 Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do.
- ▶ 5:18 Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit,
- ▶ 5:19 singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts.
- ▶ 5:20 And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- ▶ 5:21 And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

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- ▶ Ephesians 5:15-20
 - ▶ Contrasts believers and unbelievers, with an emphasis on the difference between wise and foolish living. Wise living is the result of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

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- ▶ 5:15 So be **careful** how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise.
 - ▶ Careful (circumspectly) – carefully, accurately, exactly, carries the idea of looking, examining, and investigating something with great intensity
- ▶ Mirror 5:15 – Take accurate stock of your life; wise conduct defeats foolishness.

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- ▶ 5:16 **Make the most of every opportunity** in these evil days.
 - ▶ Make the most (redeeming) – buying back; we are to buy all the time we have and devote it to the Lord
 - ▶ Every Opportunity (time) – not seconds, minutes, and hours, but a fixed, measured, allocated season; that is, our individual lifetimes as believers
- ▶ Mirror 5:16 – Wisdom converts time into opportunity and frees your day from slog.

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- ▶ 5:17 Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do.
- ▶ Mirror 5:17 – Make his master plan your meditation.

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- ▶ 5:18 Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, **be filled with the Holy Spirit**,
 - ▶ Be filled with the Holy Spirit – To be under the influence of God's Spirit; to be dominated and controlled by the presence of Christ through His Word
 - ▶ The tense of the Greek for be filled makes clear that such a Spirit-filled condition does not stop with a single experience, but is maintained by continually being filled, as commanded here. The Holy Spirit is to influence all aspects of our lives, overflowing in transformed relationships, dynamic ministry, and enhanced worship, which includes a personal prayer language (“tongues”).

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- ▶ 5:19 singing **psalms** and **hymns** and **spiritual songs** among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts.
 - ▶ Psalms – Old Testament psalms put to music
 - ▶ Hymns – Songs of praise, different from Old Testament psalms in that these likely praised the Lord Jesus Christ by name
 - ▶ Spiritual Songs – Probably songs of testimony
 - ▶ Note the place of songful worship as a means to fulfilling the directive in v.18 – to be filled continually with the Spirit. Psalms are scriptural lyrics in song; hymns are humanly inspired lyrics in song; spiritual songs are impromptu rhythmic lyrics given by the Holy Spirit in one's language or in "tongues" (1 Cor 14:15).
- ▶ Mirror 5:19 – Speak psalms to one another; burst out in spontaneous celebration songs and spirit-inspired resonance. In your heart do not let the music stop; continue to touch the Lord with whispers of worship.

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- ▶ 5:20 And **give thanks for everything** to God the Father in the name of our Lord **Jesus** Christ.
 - ▶ Give thanks for everything – Showing appreciation for who God is and gratitude for what He has done should mark the children of God.
 - ▶ Give Thanks – To be grateful, to express gratitude, to be thankful. Eleven of the thirty-nine appearances of the word in the New Testament refer to partaking of the Lord's Supper, while twenty-eight occurrences describe the praise words given to the Godhead. During the second century, Eucharist became the generic term for the Lord's Supper.
 - ▶ Jesus – The Greek transliteration of Hebrew Yeshua, “He Shall Save,” which is the shorter form of Yehoshua (Joshua), “Yahweh Is Salvation.” It was a common male Jewish name. Ten men in the Old Testament were named Yeshua, and three men in the New Testament, in addition to the Lord, were so named.

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- ▶ Mirror 5:20 – Because you are identified in the Name of Jesus Christ, you can afford to always overflow in gratitude to the Father, in spite of everything that happens to you. You are not under circumstances but above circumstances because you are in him!

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- ▶ 5:21 And further, **submit** to one another out of **reverence** for Christ.
 - ▶ Submit – Literally “to stand under.” The word suggests subordination, obedience, submission, subservience, subjection. The divine gift of prophetic utterance is put under the control and responsibility of the possessor.
 - ▶ Submit – humbling oneself before others – a characteristic of a Spirit-filled believer.
 - ▶ Reverence – In classical Greek the word signified flight. Later it came to denote that which causes flight; hence, fear, terror, dread. In the New Testament it denotes both the fear of terror and the fear of reverence toward God. The English word “phobia” transliterates the Greek word.
- ▶ Mirror 5:21 – Inspired by the selfless consideration you witnessed in Christ, show perfect courtesy to one another.

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- ▶ To be filled with the Spirit involves confession of sin, surrender of will, intellect, body, time, talent, possessions, and desires. It requires the death of selfishness and the slaying of self-will. When we die to self, the Lord fills us with His Holy Spirit. The filling of the Spirit is not an esoteric, mystical experience bestowed on the spiritual elite through some secret formula or other such means. It is simply taking the Word of Christ (Scripture) and letting it indwell and infuse every part of our being. To be filled with God's Spirit is to be filled with His Word. And as we are filled with God's Word, it controls our thinking and action, and we thereby come more and more under the Spirit's control.

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- ▶ Paul suggests that wisdom should lead believers to understand and to God's will. How can we know the will of God for our lives?
- ▶ What suggestions do you have for others (and yourself) for finding ways to spend more time in God's word?
- ▶ King Solomon talked about living foolishly versus living wisely in Proverbs 1:20-33.