

THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS
"Walking Circumspectly"
Ephesians 5:15-21

INTRODUCTION

1. The Christian walk is of major concern to the Spirit of God as expressed in this letter (4:1, 17-5:14). Make no mistake about it. To believe on Christ is crucial. To behave like a believer is critical.

2. All of the responsibilities under the dispensation of grace are expectations of the Holy God who saved us. They must not be treated as options for the believer.

3. Continuing, therefore, exhortations to His own, the Lord urges a life of wisdom (v. 15). The "therefore" connects the verse with all these preceding relating to Christian walk (in fact, the verb "walk" is used here the seventh time in Ephesians). The "that" means how or in what manner one's deportment is to be. The word "circumspectly" denotes accuracy or living in strict conformity to a standard and detail. To be wise is to be enlightened and deporting with heart-concord with the will of God. To be unwise is to be darkened and blind to the import of one's daily life to eternity. It is this kind of walk with which this section is burdened. To fulfill such a walk, it may be:-

1. BY REDEEMING THE TIME v. 16.

a. The exhortation

To "redeem" means to buy out or purchase completely." The verb is used elsewhere as here (Dan. 2:8; Col. 4:5). The word "time" is "occasion" or "opportunity." Hence the phrase means to buy out the opportunity or avail oneself of the occasion. It means to pay the price in effort and exertion necessary in using the time. To improve every opportunity for good is essential to the verse.

b. The explanation

The moral corruption of these days does not lend itself to Holy uses where the believer does not watch for opportunities. Sin abounds and only watchful redemption of time will produce the desired walk (v. 15).

2. BY UNDERSTANDING THE WILL OF GOD v. 17.

a. The exhortation

"Wherefore" is really "on account of this." The idea is that based on the previous verse, the believer is not to become (not simply "be") foolish, mindless, or witless. By the permitted habit of forgetfulness. How great is the negative appeal not to become senseless and unthinking! To do so would be to misuse one's understanding (cf. for same word Luke 12:20; 1 Cor. 15:36; 2 Cor. 11:16).

b. The explanation

The opposite to foolish senseless unthinking is to bring together things or understand. The key issue is the will of God, discerning things by that standard. It is making His will the standard and rule for one's conduct. Blessed be God. While many make financial success, academic prowess, professional attainment their primary consideration, the Spirit urges God's will as absolutely essential to a circumspect walk.

3. BY BEING FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT v. 18.

a. The exhortation

The present passive imperative makes it clear that intoxication is utterly forbidden. It is given as an example of needless folly (v. 17). There is clear forbidding here because it leads to "excess" or dissoluteness. Those who take refuge in a verse like this to support social drinking should take a hard look at Romans 14 and 1 Cor. 8-10. Behaviour is always qualified by its affect on other believers.

b. The explanation

Contrary to seeking refreshment or excitement from wine, the one who has right discernment will seek the same from the Holy Spirit. With wine there is revelry, debauchery, riot, and what cannot save (cf. Titus 1:6; 1 Pet. 4:4). To be filled with the Spirit is to allow Him to control one's thoughts, feelings, words, and actions (cf. Luke 4:1; Acts 6:5; 11:24). Oh, for His fullness in our lives!

c. The expression vv. 19-21.

1) Joyfulness v. 19. Those who are filled with the Spirit express themselves in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Corporate worship is assumed in rich variety of sacred song from the heart. 2) Thankfulness v. 20. Four items are noted here: a) always (constant) b) for all things (everything) c) unto God (directed) d) in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ (mediated). 3) Considerateness v. 21. The reciprocal deference which makes Spirit-filled people is opposed to rudeness, pride, and selfish preference (cf. Rom. 12:10).