

LIVE WISE, WALK CIRCUMSPECTLY!

Ephesians 5.15-16: Walk wisely redeeming the precious little time you have!

Theme: Open your eyes and pay the price to redeem the precious little "free time" you have!

Before we even get started on our study, I would like to draw your attention to one word: "as."

- Paul exhorts us to walk circumspectly, and then he says that if we do that we'll be walking "as" wise.
- You may not be a wise person, but if you follow Paul's exhortation in this passage, you can live "as" a wise person would.
- Or, you may be a wise person—you may be a fairly successful, intelligent person who has a good grasp on life—but if you don't follow Paul's exhortation in this passage, you're living "as" a fool.
- The point: A lot more depends on your *choices* in life than on your *lot* in life...
 - ✓ More depends on what you *choose* to do with what you have, than on what you have.
 - ✓ This is exactly what Paul is saying in Ephesians 5.15-16: Pay the price to redeem the time and use what you have been given *wisely* (whether you're wise or not!).

I. (v15) Be Watchful: Walk Circumspectly!

- The first thing Paul does is tell us about the "what" (*what* we should do); he'll next tell us about the "how" (*how* we should go about doing *what* we should do).

A. We need to walk circumspectly: Defined...

1. *Circumspect* is a compound word: *cicum* + *spect*
 - a) *Cicum*: like *circumference*, it means "around" (like a circle)
 - b) *Spect*: like *spectator*, it means to look, observe, watch
2. Together: *cicum* + *spect* means to "look around" (be watchful and observant from all angles!).

B. We need to live circumspectly: Described...

1. (v15a) "See then...": (v14) Paul just told us Christians to wake up!
 - a) So many Christians are living comfortable lives out in the world, slumbering out in the dark.
 - b) And Paul says: "Wake up!" (v14) and walk like the child of light you are in Christ (v8) so that you can shine the light of Christ (v11) through your preaching and adorning lifestyle.
 - c) That requires that we walk *circumspectly*.
 - (1) We need to be *watchful* and *vigilant*—we need to live with your eyes wide open, watching from every angle possible.
 - (2) We need to be *careful* and *cautious* in this wicked world—in these evil days.
2. (1Pet 5.8) We need to be sober (not silly or slap-happy) and vigilant (not slumbering or distracted).
 - a) We live in a wicked world that is run by wicked beings (Satan, demons, and humans).
 - b) If we don't keep our eyes wide open and our "heads on a swivel," we will find ourselves out of the race, disqualified, or (worse!) another casualty of gross sin.

C. Paul's Exhortation: Be wise! Be watchful! Be *circumspect*!

1. If we are not walking circumspectly (watchful, careful, vigilant, sober), we're living as fools.
 - a) The fool is ignorant; he lacks common sense.
 - b) Just look around you at the world in which we live and how this world system continually draws us away from God, away from godliness, and away from God's will (the Mission).

- c) And Paul says: Wake up! Open your eyes and look this thing over from all angles always!
 - d) We have very limited resources (e.g., time and energy). If we do not live circumspectly (carefully; being vigilant in our use of our resources), we're living like fools because we are living for this world and things of this world that will be taken from us by death.
2. But, if we choose to walk circumspectly (watchful, vigilant, careful, sober), we're living wisely.
- a) And so the next thing Paul teaches us is how to do just that...
 - b) There is a price to pay to live circumspectly because you have "redeem" something that is precious (something that is highly valuable)...

II. (v16) Be Diligent: Redeem Your Time!

- Paul just told us "what" we should do (what we need to do is walk circumspectly) and now he is going to show us just "how" to do that (how to walk circumspectly: **redeem your time! be diligent!**).

A. Redeeming the Time Requires Your "Free Time"

1. "Free time" is one of those oxymorons in our language (a term made up of two mutually exclusive words, like "military intelligence").
 - a) Time is not free. Frankly, time is the most valuable resource we have given in this life (and there is precious little of it!).
 - b) Your time is not free. If you are a Christian, you are a slave to righteousness—a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ—and "your" time is not "free time" because "your" time is His time.
 - c) With "free time," we're referring to time at your personal discretion (outside of work, etc.).
2. "Free time" is also probably one of the most subtle and effective traps the enemy uses against us.
 - a) More often than not, people use their "free time" to do foolish things (people rarely walk circumspectly during their "free time").
 - b) (2Sam 11.1-2) David has some "free time" one evening because he (like so many Christians today) decided to stay home from the battle. He used his free time to look at pornography...
 - (1) David's "free time" looking at what he ought not (v2) led to adultery (v3-4) and murder.
 - (2) What do you use your "free time" to do?
 - (a) Do you use your "free time" to invest in eternal things or frivolous things?
 - (b) If we're honest with ourselves, most of us would probably have to say that we use our "free time" to do things of very little eternal value.
 - c) (Ezek 16.49) Sodomy (the moral corruption of a people) is the result (at least in part) of an abundance of idleness (free time!).
 - (1) There is nothing good that results from using our "free time" to do frivolous (idle) things.
 - (2) The time we have (especially our "free time") is extremely precious because it is so very limited, and because once it is gone... you can't ever get it back.
 - (3) (Dan 11.32) Rather than use our "free time" for idleness, those of us that know God ought to be strong and redeem that time to do exploits (def: striking and notable deeds; spirited and heroic acts).
3. How exactly do we do this? How exactly do we "redeem" the precious little free time we have...?

B. Redeeming the Time Requires Diligence

1. (2Pet 1.5-8) Diligence is required to grow in Christ and to bear fruit (to be and make disciples).
 - a) Homework: Pull out your concordance and look up the mentions of diligent in Proverbs.
 - b) Diligence consists of three things: Definition... Dedication... Discipline...

2. To be diligent and redeem the time, you have to first **define the goal** (or goals).
- a) What are you striving toward? What are you seeking to accomplish?
 - b) Example: 2Peter 1.5-8
 - (1) The ultimate goal: (v8) Be fruitful in our knowledge of Christ.
 - (2) Other goals to get there: (v5-7) Add this... then that... to ultimate be fruitful!
 - c) Other examples:
 - (1) Evangelize Southern Johnson County
 - (2) Be effective in consistent, constant, intentional, biblical evangelism.
 - (3) Learn the Bible.
 - (4) Be a pastor, teacher, preacher.
 - (5) Teach and train my children.
 - d) Most all of the biblical goals for the follower of Christ center around the Mission:
 - (1) To be a disciple of Christ in order to make disciples of Christ (great goals!).
 - (2) We all ought to pursue these goals (same goals for every Christian).
 - (3) But, each of us will pursue these goals a little different because we are all a little different in our divine design (personality, gifts, passion, etc.).
 - e) What is necessary to redeem the time is to define the goal:
 - (1) Ask yourself: At this point in my life and ministry, what is it that I need to accomplish?
 - (2) Define that clearly because you need to focus on it, run toward it, and fight for it!
3. To be diligent and redeem the time, you have to **dedicate yourself to reaching the goal**.
- a) Understand: This is your choice.
 - (1) There are so many things (even good things!) competing for your precious little "free time," that you have to make a choice about what to do with your time.
 - (2) And if you do not choose to dedicate yourself to something, you've chosen to fritter away your time by either doing nothing or by doing so many things that you don't do anything well.
 - b) It's your time and you decide what to do with it.
 - If you have defined the goal, only you can dedicate yourself to reaching it. Your choice.
4. To be diligent and redeem the time, you have to **exercise the daily discipline** to do what it takes to move toward the goal.
- a) Your defining of the goal and dedication to reaching that goal mean nothing without the daily discipline to willingly, intentionally use your "free time" to move closer to that goal.
 - b) Here is where the hard work and heavy lifting come in...
 - (1) Because after a day's work, you come home tired and worn out. What will you do with that hour or two (or half hour!) of "free time" before you collapse in bed?
 - (2) Or after a week of working your job, what will you choose to do with your "free time" on the weekend?
 - c) If you've done your homework, you know what you need to do (you've defined your goals), and if you've really dedicated yourself to moving toward those goals...
 - (1) ...the only thing left is to exercise the discipline each day to do what it takes to use your "free time" to doing something to move one step closer to reaching those goals.

- (2) This means you'll probably have to say "no" to many other things (even good things) in order to redeem your time and do the necessary things (the best things).
- (3) And that's hard (no sugar-coating it: it's hard, and that's why most people aren't disciplined). Here is where you have to pay the price.
- (4) Redeeming the time always involves a price tag...

C. Redeeming the Time Requires that You to Pay the Price

1. No one else can pay this price for you; it's your time, it's your life, it's your choice.
2. (Luke 14.25-33) Following Christ (being His disciple in order to make other disciples) comes with a price tag.
 - a) (v28-30) What's the cost? What does being and making disciples require of you?
 - b) There is plenty of materials for the building project: People (souls) and the Word of God.
 - c) There is no lack of builders: God Himself gives the increase.
 - d) So, what's the cost? What is required of us? What do we "pay" to get the job done?
3. The price tag is commitment.
 - a) (v33) Little by little, God wants more and more commitment from us... until He has it all.
 - b) And that commitment will manifest itself in the goals you have **defined** for your life, your **dedication** to those goals (over other nice things you could do in life), and your daily **discipline** to use your time (in spite of how tired you are!) to move a little close to reaching those goals.

Conclusion:

(Eph 5.16b) The days are evil...

- You need to walk circumspectly (v15a) because the days in which you live are evil (v16b).
- This world exerts a tremendous influence on us daily (constantly!).
- If we are not watchful, sober, careful, vigilant... we'll find ourselves carried away by the world system, living for things that have no eternal value.
- Do not underestimate the influence of the world in which we live! It is evil!

Therefore... what should we do...?

1. (v15) Be watchful and walk circumspectly!
 - Walk "as wise" even though you may not be! Be vigilant, watchful, careful, and sober!
 - Don't let your guard down. Don't get comfortable. Wake up and redeem your time!
2. (v16) Be diligent and redeem your time!
 - Pay the price to redeem the precious little "free time" you have.
 - Define the goal (whatever that may be at this point in your life and ministry).
 - Dedicate yourself to reaching that goal (choose!).
 - And then exercise the daily discipline to use what little "free time" you have to move one step closer to that goal.

Redeem the time because the days in which we live are evil.