

Christian Responsibility in Evil Days

Ephesians 5: 15-21

Ephesians is an interesting and challenging book. It is considered one of the “Prison Epistles,” written of Paul while imprisoned in Rome. Clearly the church at Ephesus was dear to the Apostle. According to [Acts 19](#), when he first visited there, Paul found only twelve believers, those whom Apollos had led to Christ. Paul spent much time at Ephesus, and from its humble beginnings, Ephesus became a “centerpiece” for spreading the Gospel throughout all of Asia.

We know from our studies in Revelation that Ephesus was the first church that our Lord addressed with a letter, given to John. Life in Ephesus was particularly difficult, with the temple of Diana, Greek goddess of fertility, located there. In spite of the difficulty they remained a witness for Christ.

Jesus was aware of their works and their labor for Him. He was aware of their commitment to sound doctrine. He was also aware that they had allowed their love to fade for the Lord. They had left their first love. Somewhere along the way, their love and devotion had grown cold.

There is much to be learned from the church at Ephesus. Certainly they started well, but in time their love and devotion waned. The same is true for the modern church. We need to apply the principles that Paul shared with the church at Ephesus so that we don't grow complacent and cold on the Lord. I want to look at these [principles for living](#) as we consider: [Christian Responsibility in Evil Days](#).

I. The Believers' Walk (15) – [See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise.](#)

A. Our Activity – [See then that ye walk.](#) This is a simple truth that we often have trouble fulfilling. Many times we embrace and follow the deeper things of God and neglect the fundamentals of our faith. Simply we are to walk with the Lord. We are to walk as a witness for Christ in this dark and evil day.

- Many in our day just need to walk for the Lord. Many just need to get off of their seat of complacency and unconcern and walk the road that God has called us to. Much of the darkness and trouble among our present generation is a direct result of a lack of activity from believers! We just need to commit to living the Christian life among the world around us.

B. Our Attention – [See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise.](#) Our walk is not to be done without care and wisdom. We are called to walk [circumspectly](#), literally walk “*exactly, accurately, and perfectly.*” Many are walking through this life, but few are walking circumspectly. Few in our day live their lives according to the Word and will of God.

- This generation needs to see those who walk upright and holy before the Lord and mankind. It is not simply our life to live. We have been bought with a price; we are obligated to walk according to the will of God. He has set the course that we are to follow rather than choosing our own path.

I. The Believers' Walk (15)

II. The Believers' Watch (16) – Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. This verse deals with our watch, our awareness. It involves:

A. Our Diligence – We are instructed to [redeem the time](#). This is an interesting phrase. The word [redeeming](#) in our text means “*to buy up, to ransom, to pay the price to recover.*” You might wonder how that applies to our lives today. How can we buy up time; how can we ransom our days? It is really quite simple; we are to make the most of every day and every opportunity that the Lord gives us. We are not instructed to literally buy time; we can't do that, but make the most of the time we are given.

- I am convinced that Baptist are notorious procrastinators. We are well aware that the Gospel needs to be shared. We are aware that there are countless lost souls around us every day who stand in need of salvation. We are aware that there are only 24 hours in any given day and that we need to be about the Lord's work. And yet, even knowing all of that, we still choose to put things off. We intend to do it, just not right now, not today.
- It is time for Fellowship Baptist Church to redeem the time. There is a work to be done and it has fallen our lot to fulfill that work. The lost around us are not guaranteed another day or another opportunity. We are not promised another day to labor for the Lord. Are we doing all that we can with the time we've been given? How much of our time during the course of a week is actually spent for the Lord?

B. Our Discernment – [Redeeming the time, because the days are evil](#). What is the sense of urgency in all of this? Why do we need to labor right now, redeeming the time; [Because the days are evil](#). This refers to the evil that we face on a daily basis. We must be aware and alert to the snares and temptations that come our way.

- You would have to agree that we are living in the presence of increasing evil. We used to enjoy an atmosphere that respected and even promoted the Christian faith, but that day has long passed. We now live in a society that is increasingly intolerant of our faith and the Christian voice. Many of our elected officials are weary of the conservative Christian. They would like nothing more than the church to be silenced and all Christian influence removed from our society.

- Have you ever known a more difficult day than now to live for Christ and be an effective witness? Has there been a more difficult season in our nation's history for our young people to identify with the Lord and express their faith?
- The days are evil, and this is to be expected. The Bible teaches that in the last days that wickedness will abound and the hearts of many will wax cold. Surely in a day like this, we need to redeem the time. We cannot deny that we are living in dark days. If there has ever been a generation that needed to make the most of every opportunity, it is ours! Let us wake each morning with a desire and determination to fulfill the work of the Lord. Light shines the brightest when it is darkest, and a small light is noticed abundantly.

I. The Believers' Walk (15)

II. The Believers' Watch (16)

III. The Believers' Wisdom (17) – [Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.](#) We must understand that in Paul's day, the believers at Ephesus were bombarded with all sorts of false doctrine and idolatry. The temple to Diana was there. The influence of the Roman culture was very prevalent in that day. Also, there were Jews who sought to corrupt the Gospel with the legalities and rituals of the law. They refused to accept a relationship with God based on grace alone, apart from the works of man. Paul wanted them to understand the contrary influences and be wise concerning the will of God and His plan for the church and their individual lives.

- This is an important truth that cannot be over-emphasized in our day. We are responsible to understand what the will of God is. It is our obligation to obtain that understanding and live by it. The word [understanding](#) means to "*grasp, perceive, or comprehend.*" All believers are responsible to grasp and comprehend the will of God in their lives.
- Many today seem to believe that it is impossible to fully know the will of God. They appear to think that if someone isn't able to reveal God's will for their lives then they will never know or understand it.
- Why is it such a problem in our day? Why do we see so many who appear to have no idea concerning the will of God for their lives? The main reason is a lack of diligence and concern on their part. God's will is available and it is understandable. However, we must look in the right places if we are to find and understand it. Talk show hosts and TV evangelists do not possess the will of God for your life. Bestselling books or magazines do not either.
- God's will is found within His Word. If you want to be wise concerning the will of God, seek His will within His Word. It will teach us how to live and maintain our lives. It provides instruction for our faith and Christian practice. [2 Tim. 2:15 – Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.](#) [2 Tim.](#)

3:16 – All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

I. The Believers' Walk (15)

II. The Believers' Watch (16)

III. The Believers' Wisdom (17)

IV. The Believers' Welfare (18) – *And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.* Paul reveals another fundamental truth and obligation in the life of believers. Now, often this verse is used to make the argument concerning strong drink. Clearly there is application for that, but the focus of this verse is the filling of the Spirit.

- The charismatic movement has caused many to shy away from the Spirit. Many tend to downplay or even discourage the Spirit's role in our lives. Keep in mind that this is not an option; it is a command. We are to be filled with the Spirit!
- Now, I want to clarify something. At the moment of salvation, all believers are indwelt with the Holy Spirit. We are now the temple of God and His Spirit dwells within us. The initial indwelling of the Spirit is not in view here. This is a command to continually be filled with the Spirit. The word **filled** means "*to make full; to cause to abound; to fill to the brim so that nothing else is wanting.*" It carries the idea of *being constantly filled; literally to keep on being filled.* It is the will of God for all believers to be filled with the Spirit on a continual basis.
- This is something that is lacking in most of our lives. We are filled to the brim with the cares and desires of the world, but not the Spirit!

V. The Believers' Worship (19-21) – We are also responsible for worship as we travel the road of life. Paul speaks of three aspects of that worship.

A. Our Praise (19) – *Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.* There isn't a lot of singing and melody in our hearts these days. Part of our worship must include our praise to the Lord.

- Who else has a song to sing? Who else has received that which we have? Who else is promised life eternal and the blessing of God? Surely if anyone ought to have a song within their hearts, it ought to be the church. Do you possess a song of praise as you reflect on the goodness of God? **Ps.95:1 –**
O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.

B. Our Prayers (20) – Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is difficult to accept, but it is commanded from the Word of God. Paul declares that we are to give thanks for **all** things unto the Lord. In other words, we are to be in an attitude of prayer and thanksgiving unto the Lord every day and in every situation!

- Phil.4:6 – Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 1 Thes.5:18 – In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. We could handle that better if it said in some things or most things, but we are to be thankful in all things. This is attainable in light of Rom.8:28.

C. Our Posture (21) – Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. This too is a vital part of worship. Without submission we will never achieve worship. Submitting is a military term that means “to arrange under; to yield to, or obey.”

- Often we have a problem with submission, but it is the will of God for our lives. We will never effectively and appropriately worship Him until we learn to submit to the Lord as well as others. Our world has become a “me” centered society. Most are determined to have their way regardless of the needs of others. May we be willing to humble ourselves in submission.

Surely you would agree that we are living in difficult and evil days. Even in these difficult times we have an obligation and responsibility to the Lord. Are there areas in your life that need attention? Are you filled with the Spirit and walking in the ways of God? If not, please come as the Lord leads.