

# Series: Ephesians: *The Christian Mystery and Mission*

Week 19

CDOBC – beginning on 2/6/11

Title: “Daily Wisdom”

*Ephesians 5:15-17 ~ July 17, 2011*

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**OBJECTIVE:** To help apply God’s wisdom each day.

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## Announcements

- Welcome / guests – communication cards
- Missions Month – Dale Beyer

## Opening Prayer

I can remember, when I was in elementary school...I think it was 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> grade, that I was chosen to be a crossing-guard helper for a number of weeks. The elementary and Jr. High school that I attended was located on one of the busiest streets in town. I was quite proud of this honor, and I remember one day when I stopped a little kid from running out into traffic. Paul, in our verses today – is a spiritual crossing-guard for us. He is warning us of great danger, and directing us how to safely navigate our way.

Turn to Eph. 5:15-17 – *Read passage*

**15** “Be very careful, then, how you live--not as unwise but as wise, **16** making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. **17** Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.”

“then” (NIV) “therefore” (various translations) – connects this section with the previous verses in chapter 5.

**Direct your life by God's purpose** vs. 15

“Be very careful” is actually from two words in the Greek – the main verb *Blēpete* and an adverb *Akribōs*

*Blēpete* = “Be very careful” – this exact form of the Greek word is used 33x in the N.T. – by far the most common form of the root word *Blēpō*

*Akribōs* = carefully, properly, extremely accurate, very exact; researched down to the finest detail

Paul is giving us a double exhortation...he is commanding us (*Blēpete* is a present imperative) to not only be careful, but to be very exact and precise with our choices – to make sure we are not lazy in living a wise life. The adverb here (*Akribōs*) emphasizes that we need to make sure we are carefully applying the best – most optimal wisdom in our life!

Imagine a crossing-guard – or a policeman directing traffic in an intersection – blowing his whistle loudly to get your attention!

This is what Paul is doing here... “*Be careful – in the smallest detail of how you live*”!

“not as unwise but as wise”

When we speak of someone who is unwise – someone who is a fool, we usually think of someone doing stupid things...things that are unsafe...things that will obviously lead to some sort of trouble.

Pics from mom – crazy!!! Men @ work!

Indeed – these pictures display for us great foolishness...disasters waiting to happen. Have you ever wondered, when you buy something at the store, and you read

the label and it has a warning on it – “*Do not ingest*”, “*Do not...*” I’ve often wondered why they need to put those warnings on the label!! What a waste of ink and paper!!! Well, these people are shining examples of why we probably need the warning labels!

But this kind of foolishness is not what Paul is warning us about. There is another kind of foolishness that is more dangerous than cleaning your apartment window by standing on your exterior window sill fifty stories up – with no safety gear.

How does an “unwise” (foolish) person live?

Prov. 12:15 (NLT)

“Fools think they need no advice, but the wise listen to others.”

Psalms 14:1 (NLT)

“The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good.

Prov. 14:9 (NLT)

“Fools make fun of guilt, but the godly acknowledge it and seek reconciliation.”

Rom. 1:21-22 (NLT)

“Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. The result was that their minds became dark and confused. **22** Claiming to be wise, they became utter fools instead.”

2 Timothy 3:7 (NIV) (getting smarter, but more foolish)

“...always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth.”

Titus 3:3 (NIV)

“At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another.”

Remember, in Scripture, a foolish person is someone who rejects the truth and pleasures of God, and embraces the wisdom and pleasure of the world. Biblically, a fool is not someone who lacks intelligence. In fact, some of the smartest people - university scholars, philosophers, scientists, celebrities, politicians...some of these people are the smartest among us – but they are utter fools before God!

**God says** “Here I am” – **the fool says**, “You don’t exist!”

**God says** “Thou shalt not” – **the fool says**, “Watch me!”

**God says** “Do this” – **the fool says**, “You can’t make me!”

How does a “wise” person live?

Proverbs 2:6

“For the LORD gives wisdom, and from His mouth come knowledge and understanding.”

*“Years ago, when I was nearer to the beginning of my ministry than I am now, I spent most of my time trying to amass the facts and acquire the necessary skills for an effective ministry. I suppose that is true of anyone who is entering a new field of work. But as the years went by and I had acquired the necessary facts and skills, I found myself looking for something else: wisdom. I had the facts, but I was concerned how to use them. I had acquired the skills, but I wanted wisdom to apply them rightly. Today, when I pray, I pray for wisdom far more than any other element.”* (Ephesians, An Expository Commentary, by James Montgomery

Boice, p. 184)

Proverbs 3:6

“...in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.”

A wise person is a person who seeks after God and as Paul commanded in 5:1 – one who imitates God. Wisdom is exemplified by David in the first verse of the book of Psalms:

Psalm 1:1

“Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.”

Godly wisdom is not found in fortune cookies, horoscopes, or eastern mysticism.

The wise person has put their faith in God – in Christ.

The wise person wants to know God more.

The wise person ‘hungers and thirsts for righteousness’ (Matt. 5:6)

The wise person wants to please God, not man.

The wise person makes the most of every opportunity.

**Be prepared for opportunities** vs. 16

16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

“...making the most of every opportunity” in the Greek is literally *‘redeeming the time’*

Our English translations are almost split in how they translate this phrase. Some say “making the most of every opportunity” (NIV, NASB, NLT, RSV, NRSV), others say “redeeming / make the most of the time” (KJV, NKJV, ASV)

Both translations are correct. The Greek has the idea of redeem / purchase / take full advantage of the opportunity.

*Kairos* = time – does not have the idea of chronological time (*chronos*), but more specifically, a specific moment or opportunity. Not time in general, but a fixed season or occasion.

Vs. 6a has two primary ways of application in our life. One way is in regard to our personal obedience / holiness.

When temptation enters your life, there is a critical window of time for you to resist. See James 1:14-15

When we are tempted, if you are being careful how you walk, you will realize the temptation that is before you. It is at this juncture, that you have a small window of time to flee from the temptation (1 Cor. 6:19) or to defend yourself from the temptation (Eph. 6:13-19). If you fail to act for holiness in this small window or opportunity, the temptation will overpower you and you will sin...you will live as unwise or a fool.

The second way this applies to our life is in regards to ministry opportunities that God brings before us. Being alert to spiritual opportunities that God brings to you – being alert to the opportunities to serve in the Church – and/or opportunities in your Oikos to share Christ – or discuss something with spiritual significance!

How many opportunities do you think you miss on a weekly basis? I know there are days where I know I have missed two or three opportunities to say something related to Christ or related to Church, etc. We need to learn to look for these opportunities...and act on them when God brings them to us! Why is this so important? “...because the days are evil.”!

*“Outside of purposeful disobedience of God’s Word, the most spiritually foolish thing a Christian can do is to waste time and opportunity, to fritter away his life in trivia and in half-hearted service of the Lord.”* (The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Ephesians, by John

MacArthur, p. 223).

God gives each of us the great, priceless commodity of time – and He gives each of us the same amount of time. Are you making the most of it? Are you making the most of every opportunity?

## Application

17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.”

In light of the warning and command Paul has given us, he now applies vs. 15-16, and gives us two commands.

**First: Don’t be a fool!**

Because you have God’s wisdom in your life (see 1:8 – “...the riches of God’s grace that He lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.”), don’t ignore it – live according to God’s wisdom. Don’t live according to godless thoughts and motivations. The dangers / evil in the world is not something to play around with. As he has mentioned 2x earlier in this passage, “...there must not be even a hint...” (vs. 3) and “...it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do...” (vs. 12). A fool ignores or undervalues the Word of God, and accepts or overvalues the word of man.

**Second: Know God’s will for you.**

For some, this is an overwhelming thought. However, to know the will of God is not overly complicated...in fact, Paul has already shared some specific insight already in the previous verses of chapter 5.

When people have asked me this question, I try and give a simple answer. God's will is to be obedient to Him. In 5:1, Paul commanded us to "Be imitators of God" – and in vs. 9, he gave us specific things to pursue – goodness, righteousness, and truth. In other verses here in chapter 5, he has told us what to avoid. God's will is more about obedience than it is about a specific decision, vocation, or direction. David summed it up well...

Psalm 37:4

"Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart."

When we imitate God – delight ourselves in Him (think of imitating your favorite athlete – you take delight in their skill, grace, aggressive play, etc.), then our heart will be so transformed that we will want what God wants, not what our sinful nature wants. We will be good, righteous, and truthful. This will lead to a life of wisdom, not of foolishness.

A wise person lives with attention details.

A wise person seizes on the opportunities that God brings.

A wise person is aware of the evil in the world.

A wise person lives according to the will of God.

I pray all of us will apply God's wisdom each day.

Close in prayer