

Open the Eyes of My Heart (Part 21)

Ephesians 5:15-21

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Remember when God offered to give Solomon whatever he asked for, rather than asking for wealth, prosperity, peace, or power, Solomon was just wise enough to know that he needed more wisdom, and was commended by God for this request. Pursuing wisdom requires humility. When I was young I stubbornly dismissed what my father said; but as I grew up, being humbled by life's challenges and complexities, I realized how wise he was. We all must be humble enough to realize we need wisdom. Paul tells us in today's passage that we must walk in wisdom (Ephesians 5:15). This is the fifth statement he makes about how we should walk, the first four being to walk in a manner worthy of our calling (4:1), to walk not like the Gentiles in the futility of their minds (4:17), to walk in love as Jesus loved us (5:2), and to walk as children of the light, who have no need to hide (5:8). We must recognize that we need wisdom, but what does it mean to live in wisdom?

First, walking in wisdom is deliberate. In v. 15 Paul tells us to look carefully how we walk. This is purposeful and deliberate. We must consider and reflect on how we are living our lives and whether we are committing ourselves to wisdom, which isn't the same as knowledge. We live in an age where all knowledge is available on the internet, but even with all this at their fingertips, many are still unwise. Wisdom is passed down from previous generations, the time-tested application of knowledge and experience to how we live. A transformed life is the result of wisdom that comes from true knowledge and experience of Jesus. So why is it so important to be deliberate in walking in wisdom? Paul tells us in v. 16 that we must make the most of our time because the days are evil. The word used for time is *kairos*, meaning season, moment, period, or opportunity, rather than *chronos*, which just means time in the sense of calendars and clocks. We must take this opportunity to live wisely because the days are evil. These days we see turmoil all around us. Despite technological advancement, the world is falling apart. The days are evil, and they are short. We are closer than ever to Jesus' return, and we should pray for it, because only He can fix everything. We must recognize that as we long for His return, as we live in this broken world, it becomes even more critical to live in wisdom. Don't continue living as if things will go on forever, but consider the days you are living in and use your time and resources wisely as the end approaches (Ps. 90:12; Matt. 24:32). Be aware of what God is doing in the

world and be deliberate. Wisdom isn't stumbled upon but is sought. When you seek wisdom, you see the world differently and live differently.

Second, living in wisdom is Spirit-led. Paul tells us not to be drunk (v. 18). He's not saying we cannot drink any alcohol, but not to drink in excess to the point of drunkenness. We must not be controlled by alcohol, drugs, or anything else that can hijack our minds. Rather we must be controlled by the Spirit. Paul isn't saying that we should be drunk with the Spirit in comparison to being drunk with wine, because that would emphasize a sense of euphoria and stupor. Rather, Paul is emphasizing that we shouldn't be controlled by alcohol, which leads us to live in debauchery, but rather be controlled by the Spirit, which leads us to live in wisdom. We must ask God for guidance through the Spirit. Be sensitive and listen to the Spirit.

Third, walking in wisdom is readily identifiable (vv. 19-21). Paul says that it's visible in joy, celebration, and praise (v. 19). Wisdom is outwardly expressed as joyful praise. It's not the same as being happy or euphoric all the time. But if in these evil days we live in, we recognize the hope we have in Jesus, and that we have been called from being children and slaves of Satan to being God's children and heirs to the kingdom of heaven, it should lead to joyful celebration. For what we have in Christ overshadows anything in this world. In v. 20 Paul says that wisdom is also expressed in constant thanksgiving. If we truly realize what we have in Jesus, we will give thanks. In my home church, my Sunday school teacher George used to start prayers by expressing how thankful he was. It was a reminder of the importance of thanking God. Likewise when we pray for food, we should primarily be giving thanks rather than just asking for the food to nourish us, which it always does anyways. We must practice giving thanks in all circumstances, because God has dramatically changed our circumstances for the better. Finally, wisdom expresses itself in humility in relationships (v. 21), in submitting to each other out of reverence for Christ, who humbled Himself for all of us. Paul talks much more about this in the next section, but for now let us be deliberate to live Spirit-led lives of wisdom that express joy, thanksgiving, and humility in our relationships. May God grant us this wisdom in these evil days.