

When Life Is Eating Your Lunch

Walk It Out Part 3K- Intensive Peace Ephesians 5:15-20

Main focus of this series: This series is a formulation of key teachings and understandings from the book of Ephesians. It is the textbook for Christian living, affective church growth and unity. It is also a manual for harmony in the home and an affective lifestyle in our work place in the world. Ephesians draws many lines, it is clear and very defined. Why many Christians fail to live fully in the shadow of the cross is because they have never ventured into the truths documented in Paul's writings to the Ephesians. In an effort to decipher each statement of Paul in Ephesians we believe we will learn how to successfully operate in the three positions of the believer: to **sit (Ephesians 1-3)**, to **walk (Ephesians 4-6:9)** and to **stand (Ephesians 6:10-24)**. The first half of Ephesians (chapters 1-3) tells us what a Christian is and the last three chapters define how to live that out in harmony with other believer's and separately from non-believer's.

The importance of this message today: It is so challenging for us to walk appropriately in our Christian walk. It is so easy to slide off onto one side of the ditch or the other while we move down the road on our spiritual journey. Sometimes it seems easier for us to live in the atmosphere of intense discipline and warfare, the ER of spirituality, or just as easy to slide over and bask in absolute peace and grace of God rather than march down the middle of the road in a perfect balance of both. Most of the challenges we face as Christians demand the dynamics of both expressions to fulfill our call, the intense warrior of God and the spirit filled lover, thus...intensive peace. Today our objective is to focus on the first segment of this thought, the Intensive Christian. By properly understanding this side of the circle we can walk in balance in the other segment of the balanced circle.

Intro: On some of our walks at the zoo my wife has often pointed out the ducks and geese in the pond. What has always amazed me is the gracefulness of the swan. On the upside this huge fluffy cloud of beautiful feathers is sliding gracefully across the pond while on the underside it is beating and pounding the water intensely with it's ugly webbed feet. The picture of the upside and downside is absolutely the opposite of each other, yet it is the same. It is a great illustration of what occurs each and everyday in the body of Christ. As a matter of fact, many people are perfectly at home being the paddling feet and others are at home floating across the water. It does take us both as the body of Christ. But more importantly today, we are called to activate under the water line as much as above it and vice versa. This is why we end up in the ditch. This is why there are aggressive warrior type of Christian's and then there are those who would best be imagined sitting around the camp fire eating smores and singing "Kombiya my Lord."

In one way, this is a perfect picture of the scriptures that we will be studying out this morning. We are challenged to both walk in a way that is as intense as you would expect from any army commander in the middle of battle while living in harmony and peace as expressed in a simple song.

"Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is."

Ephesians 5:15-17

“Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Ephesians 5:18-20

The Intensive Christian

Today we will focus on Ephesians 5:15-16, below the water line of the Christian. This passage has been called the Bible's key to time management. The KJV says to **walk “circumspectly”** (KJV), our English word **circumspect** is from the Latin **circum-** = around + **specere** = look and conveys the literal picture of looking around or figuratively being cautious. One who is walking circumspectly is one who is surveying all circumstances and possible consequences before acting or deciding.

the NIV tells us to live “**very careful**”, both words are taken from the Greek word (199) (**akribos**) which means **exactness, thoroughness, precision, accuracy** in addition to the associated idea of **looking, examining, and investigating** something with great care and alertness. The Greek word **blepo** means to watch out, to be sensitive, to be aware, to be on the alert at all times.

Misinterpretation of the Walk:

- **A Captured Christian**: This Christian has nothing in his walk but a fearful spookiness about him and all his steps are shameful attempts of pleasing an angry God. Though this captured Christian labor intensely for that approval there is no relief. This is not a true picture of an appropriate Christian walk.
- **A Caribbean Christian**: On the other hand there are those who have exhausted themselves from carrying anything that even resembled a heavy burden of and shook it off for a spiritual margarita under the shade tree of grace and their life is as effortless and at ease as anyone has ever seen.
- **A Confident Christian**: The Christian that God has called us to be is not one full of **fear and shameful steps** or the demand that one would **perform at each step**. But the intensity and sincerity walk that God calls us to is an **alert, intentional act** that glorifies our God.

We are careful about many things:

- We are careful how we look...
- We are careful how we dress...
- We are careful how we talk...
- What are you real careful about?
- **We are careful about what we value**- I remember guys who value their collection of sports memorabilia or star wars models and action figures so much that they will almost build a shrine and donate a whole room to it's existence. It is valued and therefore they are careful to honor it in a worthy manor.
 - **We should be careful about what we value.**
- **When King Heron in Matthew 2:8** ordered the Magi to, “Go and make **careful** search for the Child...” He was not saying, “Just see if you can find him.” He was saying, “Turn over every rock, don't lose your purpose for going that way.

Paul says that the wise person is identified by where he places his “*careful*.” We are all careful about something but Paul says that the wise and the unwise are determined by where they place their “careful” on “living.”

- **Unwise (781) (asophos** from **a** = without + **sophos** = wise) means foolish, not walking as God expects and enables believers to walk. To walk **circumspectly** is to live in the light of our position as God’s children. To walk as **fools** means to descend from this high plane to the conduct of worldly men.
- To walk in any way except in the path that we would call “holiness,” turning in either other direction is to walk as a fool!
- **Wise (4680) (sophos) is the practical application of acquired knowledge.** To walk **circumspectly/carefully** is to live **wisely** in the position God has placed us in. To walk as fools means to fall from the place where we are supernaturally empowered and lowered to only act on the level of worldly men.

Why Be Careful?

“Watch, (blepo), out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully.”

II John 8

“But each one should be careful, (blepo), how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ...It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work.”

I Corinthians 3:10b, 13b

*“See to it, (blepo), **brothers**, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.”*

Hebrews 3:12-13

*“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the grave, where you are going, there is neither **working** nor **planning** nor **knowledge** nor **wisdom**.”*

Ecclesiastes 9:10

Four things you will not be able to repent of when you go to your grave:

1. You can not repent of **what you should have done**. (Worked)
2. You can not repent of **what you had intended to do**. (Planned)
3. You can not repent of **what you could have learned**. (Knowledge)
4. You can not repent of **how you should have used more wisdom**. (Wisdom)

What Is Paul Saying?

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

Ephesians 5:15-17

Make The Most Of Every Opportunity

- “Carpe Diem” seizing the day!

- **Make the most/Conduct-** *exagorazo* = present tense = continually of the opportunity.

“Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.”

Colossians 4:5

- **John MacArthur** explains that the basic meaning of *exagorazo* is that of **buying back or buying out. It was used of buying a slave in order to set him free; thus the idea of redemption is implied in this verse.** We are to redeem, buy up, all the time that we have and devote it to the Lord. (MacArthur, J: Ephesians. Chicago: Moody Press)
- I heard this statement a couple of weeks ago, **“Every encounter with another person is an interview.”** We have to be careful here to not give the illusion that we are encouraging acts of manipulation, that we maneuver our behavior so that when we meet people we act in a way to see what we can get off of them. But, our encounters with others is always a testimony of who we are and who Christ is in us. At almost every opportunity upon the first encounter with a new person you only get once chance to make a first impression. Every encounter is an opportunity for your future. You may not know that your involvement in the water fountain conversation is an interviewing process for the person standing there who may end up the next boss. I am not asking you to be Mister Righteous and nail every person standing there with the glaring righteous Word of God. God doesn't even ask that of you. He is asking you to behave in such a way that a person would have no reason to question why you shouldn't be on their team in the future. You are so committed to Godly character and ethics that you would be the first person that they would hire.
- ***Exagorazo*** means to "...buy up or out of for one's self and so to make wise and sacred use of every opportunity for doing good." One commentator called *"...making the most of every opportunity..."* the **"buying up for yourselves the strategic, opportune time."** Here, the idea is that you are to be habitually, continually "buying up" all opportunities, not allowing any moment to pass that would benefit you and the name of Jesus Christ.
- **Pastor Harry Ironside** wisely reminds us that **"Time is given us to use in view of eternity."**
- **By the time you reach the age of 75, the clocks and watches of this world will have ticked away a total of nearly 2.5 billion seconds.**
- **Making the most of every opportunity is the same as the idea getting released out of prison for the penalty of a wasted life and everyday, while in jail, you were confronted with the reality of all that is offered outside those walls and somehow within you a deep chant starts to develop, a war cry begins to emerge, “This will never happen to me again. When I am set free, I will never waste one breathing moment!”** But few learn this lesson. We are not penalized for laziness, neglect or being unwise in our society. In some ways we are paid for it. God will not be listening to all your excuses for why you did not take advantage of all the opportunities that presented themselves around you.
 - **God will look at you and question “why,” in all the opportunities, did you not make a difference**

- **Why were you so selfish and full of pride?**
- **Why were you so given to gossip, strife and division?**
- **Why did you make yourself so available to bitterness, hurt and unforgiveness?**
- **Why were you deceived by the subtle words that hindered your progress?**
- **Wake up! Break out! Free yourself to the opportunities around you and do not be imprisoned with the lies and deceitfulness that would bind your new life!**
- **As someone else has said:**

"Beware of wasting the present. Instead of killing time, redeem your spare moments today. **Wasting the gift of time insults the Giver of time.**"

- An **ancient Greek statue** depicted a man with wings on his feet, a large lock of hair on the front of his head, and no hair at all on the back. The inscription asked what his name was and in response it said that it's name was "Opportunity" it went to explain the lock of hair on the front of it's head was so that it could be grabbed when it passed a good opportunity and no hair on the back so it could not be grabbed when worthless opportunities try to grab him.
- **Opportunity/Time: Kairos** does not emphasize a point of time but rather a time space filled with all kinds of possibilities. And so Kairos characteristically means an "**opportunity**" (and is so translated in some versions -- in the NIV and NASB) which represents the best time to do something, the moment when circumstances are most suitable. Webster's defines "**opportunity**" as a **favorable juncture of circumstances or a good chance for advancement or progress**. There is no good English equivalent to *kairos*, and when it plural with *chronos* it is translated "seasons," or times at which certain foreordained events take place.
- **Dr. Jimmy Allen, pastor of First Baptist Church in San Antonio, Texas** confessed in an article that a dark-skinned little boy sat through Sunday School classes of his church for three years, never really being noticed. Later, at the age of 24, that boy, **Sirhan Sirhan**, took a gun and killed Senator Robert Kennedy. Pastor Allen said, "We missed him. Our chance to change things came and passed and we did not know it was there." (Dr. Jimmy Allen, former pastor of First Baptist Church, San Antonio, Texas in Pulpit Helps, May, 1991, from 10000 Sermon Illustrations. Dallas: Biblical Studies Press)

"Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom."

Psalm 90:12

- **Instead of counting the days, make your days count.**
- **You don't have to be great to start but you have to start to be great!**- Keith Davis

"Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much..."

Luke 16:10

Those who have a track record of high achievement are considered to be careful with their life and those who are careful with their life have a better track record

of making their life count.

Being careful with your life does not mean you will not have failures. It doesn't even guarantee you will even have fewer failures. It does mean you will have more successes. Those who are careful with their life are more apt to say, "I did what I set out to do." Those who are careful with their life may get knocked down, but they know how to get back up. Those who are careful with their life know that they are meant for great things. That their efforts are in line with obedience of God's Word. That they are set for the blessings of God. Those who are careful with their life are not living under the fear of never pleasing God or the fear of trying to impress man. They are living in faith knowing that God loves His children and that He loves to show up in mighty ways to glorify His name through His children. A person careful with their life knows that when things go wrong that is not an indication of who my Father is!

Five abilities that help "Careful" people with their life and it helps them think correctly no matter what the challenges of life may be.

1. **Careful People Review Life More Than They Review The Things of Life-**
Vs. 15 - **"Be very careful, then, how you live..."**

- **Careful People Are Not In A Constant Review of Lack:** Careful people do not review over and over what they do not have by way of things. They are careful with things but reckless with life. To be "careful" with life is to review the process more and more until you have worked out all the bugs. Like any manufacturing business, when the system of production is right normally the product is right. What happens with those who are not careful with life is that such a great concentration on "things" manipulates their thoughts that any systematic way of life is ignored or considered a hindrance.
- **Careful People Are Not In A Constant Review of Less:** Careful people do not stay in a constant position of comparing themselves with others. This only antagonizes their life and can cause them to harbor bitterness and resentment toward one another. The main passion of a person focused on "more" is to have more than the person around them, no matter what the excess, no matter what the price and no matter what the sacrifice. Comparison is a horrible way to do life. It is not living carefully, it is living carelessly. Many people caught in this way of living is like the bumper sticker that says, "The one with the most toys wins!"
- **Careful People Are Not In A Constant Review of Loss:** A careful person is *refined* by their losses, not *defined* by them.

*"If righteous people turn away from their righteous behavior and ignore the **obstacles** I put in their way, they will die."*

Ezekiel 3:20a

Careful people do not live in the fear, regret or turmoil of the losses of life but they are bettered by them. They do not ignore them, they allow them to make them stronger, wiser and more focused. This is not saying that they refuse or ignore the experience pain or the disruption loss can bring

into their life, they just don't stay there. There is a time you count your losses and move on. King David lost his first born son and surprised everyone when he washed his face and put on clean clothes after much pain and prayer. He moved on.

2. **Careful People Reject Unwise Thinking!** - Vs. 15 - *“Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise...”*

It is amazing how many people allow unhealthy, useless, fearful thoughts to dwell in their mind. Many people are attacked, manipulated and controlled by unwise thinking. This thinking has become a habit to the point of unhealthiness. **This is not a battle of logic, it is a battle of reality!** These statements here are not meant to be insensitive or uncaring. But they are to be revealing. Careful people reject unwise thinking, thinking that accuses, fears, judges, thinking what is angry, cursing, figuring out ways to manipulate. Careful people dwell on Biblical principles because no other principles can sustain you.

“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable- if anything is excellent or praiseworthy- think about such things.”

Philippians 4:8

3. **Careful People Redeem Their Opportunities**- Vs. 16a - *“Be very careful, then, how you live— making the most of every opportunity...”*

- **Careful people redeem their opportunities by recognizing and defining distractions.** A distraction is anything that diverts your attention from your current opportunities. Many people do not realize that they are not at a dead end, they are just full of distractions. They have allowed so many things to get their attention they have no time to concentrate on the important things. If could happen in your marriage, you job, your education or even in your relationship with God. Distractions are an enemy of a careful person. They do not tolerate it nor can they co-exist. Distractions always come in the cloak of a new idea offering an easier way, rest, fun, excitement but ends up leaving you a great distance from the finish line.
- **Careful people redeem their opportunities by recognizing and defining values.** A value is anything that is considered worthy of investing time, talents and resources into. When people have not defined their values: personally, spiritually, economically or socially, they will either be imbalanced in one of those areas or they will be a failure in all. Not placing a value on things, either good or bad, will always be a surprise to what amount of time, talent and resources are spent on things considered less valuable. Today, many young men would say that they do not value T.V. or video games more than their children or God, but where they are spending their time, developing their talents and spending their resources you would think differently. Your values are what gives you perimeters for your journey. Values are the things that are the core principles that are fundamental in your life. You will not exchange any

value for just any destination because you are committed first to certain values. Again, your values are what gives you perimeters for your journey.

- **Careful people redeem their opportunities by recognizing and defining goals.** A goal is anything that is considered worthy of time, talents and resources to support your values. It is important, no, it's imperative that you take the time to start establishing some dreams by writing them down. This is the first step towards establishing your goals.

Someday I Will...

- Someday I will go...
- Someday I want to...
- Someday I will stop...
- Someday I will have...
- Someday I will learn...
- Someday I want to earn...
- Someday I will establish...

We have a natural tendency to resist setting goals because we don't want to disappoint ourselves or risk failure. Also we resist setting goals because it feels like we limit what could happen. If we choose “*this*” then that means we can't have “*that*.” We want it all and in the process we don't have anything of value. **Careful people capture the opportunities in life because they are not focused on everything, just a few good things that lines up with their core values.** It takes great courage to set goals, especially high goals, to believe that God has made you of greater purpose and success.

“Let all that I am praise the Lord; may I never forget the good things he does for me. He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases. He redeems me from death and crowns me with love and tender mercies. He fills my life with good things. My youth is renewed like the eagles!”

Psalm 103:2-5 (NLT)

4. **Careful People Redefine Their Day**- Vs. 16b - *“Be very careful, then, how you live— because the days are evil.”*

Everyday you wake up is waiting to be defined by you. Careful people are resistant to attitudes, words and actions that would enhance the idea that this is going to be a bad day. You will see opportunity or you will see defeat. You will see sunshine or you will see one bumper sticker said, “Every silver lining has a cloud.” You can watch the weather channel to determine your day. You can watch the news to determine your day. You can listen to your radio station to determine your day or you can determine your day. The truth is, how you start your day will pretty much determine your day! Careful people knows that the days already start out in the negative, “...*the days are evil.*” But you must determine how you respond to the day.

*"This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."
Psalm 118:24*

5. **Careful People Renew Their Understanding of God's Will**- Vs. 17-
"Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is."

It really is foolish trying to live the Christian life without understanding what God's will is. Think of the reasoning in that? But it is an everyday acceptable occurrence in our lives that goes unchecked. We wake up and never think twice, what is God's will for me today. What is God telling me? What would He have me do?

Knowing the will of God is knowing the right direction of God. Now, there are so many things the Bible declares as His will. There is no need to seek God and seek God for His *revelatory* will when you have not spent the time knowing His *written* will. It is so amazing how many people neglect and reject the written will of God and are so passionate toward the revelatory will and revelation that He has to offer. What is God's will? God's will is everything that should become a "value" to you.

*"But the love of the Lord remains forever with those who fear him. His salvation extends to the children's children of those who are faithful to his covenant, of those who obeys his commands!"
Psalm 103:17-18*

Careful people know that the core issues of our spiritual life will and should spill over into our everyday life. When you are settled in agreement with the covenant relationship with God then the revelatory words of God will not be restrained. Paul tells Timothy,

*"And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know who I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day."
II Timothy 1:11-12*