

DO YOU KNOW WHAT TIME IT IS?

Ephesians 5:15-17

Eccl. 3, wisest man tells us there's a time for everything:

A time to give birth - A time to die;
A time to tear down - A time to build up;
A time to weep - A time to laugh;
A time for war - A time for peace.

His point: *wisdom is not always making war;*
wisdom is not always making peace;
WISDOM IS KNOWING WHAT TIME IT IS!

**People who know what time it is,
know how to use the time they have!**

In Eph 5:15-18 Paul considers 3 ways God's people ought to be different than other people.

He points out that when God called us out of darkness into light, from death to life, He did a wonderful thing.

He's done great job, making us His family.

We're 1 with Christ, & 1 with His people.

Since He has done such a great job in our life,

What does he want us to do? 4:1 Live like it!

5 KEY PHRASES: how we ought to walk in light of what God has done in our lives: Walk in unity 4:1-16

Don't walk like pagans 4:17-32

Walk in love 5:1-2

Walk in holiness 5:3-14

5 WALK WISELY 5:15-6:9

Don't walk like foolish people

But like wise people

3 PAIRS OF CONTRASTS: 15-18.

Describe what it looks like to live as wise rather than foolish people

(1) Not unwise but wise—apply knowledge to everyday living 15-16 *“Look carefully then how you walk, not as **unwise** but as **wise**, ¹⁶making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.”*

Wise people make most of time; they understand right priorities for our lives.

Kent Hughes: “Our lives are so busy! If you don’t think so, hesitate a moment next time light turns green, & listen to the whole world honking!”

Our day is ruined if we miss a panel in a revolving door!

Like **Queen in Wonderland** told Alice: “It takes all the running you can do just to stay in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else you must run 2X as fast!”

People are caught in trap of being too busy. **Our goal isn’t to find more time but use our time more wisely.”**

[Paul urges us:] **Make most of every moment.**

Lit., Paul tells us: *“buy up the time”*

Ironside: “People go bargain hunting: ‘If I buy that today, I can get a good price, much better than if I let it go until another time. It’s worth while to buy these bargains at this rate.’ Christians should be eager to obtain opportunities to witness for Christ, to serve the Lord, & to be a blessing to others... Buying up the opportunities, seeking to use them to the glory of our Lord, realizing that the days are evil & the time for serving Christ is

slipping fast away; opportunities lost will never be found again.”

BUY UP EVERY MOMENT! Hang on to every second!

Use your time wisely—Ask yourself, “How important will this event be when viewed from eternity?”

We should **understand character of our times**.

We need to know what time it is!

We live in evil days; time is fleeting.

Use every moment for God!

(2) Not foolish but understanding 17 “Do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”

Significant quality of godly people—I look for it in every leader—is ***discernment!***

Discernment is NOT a spiritual gift!

It’s a mark of people who walk with God.

We shouldn’t look like “***unthinking***” people who *don’t* understand what’s going on.

*We ought to **understand** what the Lord’s will is!*

We must **understand what God wants us to do & do it**.

Don’t let life pass, without giving it any thought.

How do we learn what God wants us to do?

We learn it by spending time in His Word

Tragedy of not knowing God’s Word...

Ironside: “I used to stop in a discourse & ask everyone who’d read the Bible through once to raise his hand. I had an audience of 500 people, all of whom professed to be Christians. When I put that question to them, only **2** raised their hands. I was ashamed to have the devil see it.”

Made comment in **1937** (before TV, days of fireside radio!

What do you suppose normal response would be today?

Goal isn't just to know what's in the book!

Goal's to *understand God's will*, so we DO it!

(3) Not controlled by wine but by God's Spirit 18

"Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit"

Indicator of wise person: recognizes harm wine can cause & good God's control brings.

Understand harm wine causes & avoid it!

Ephesus known for Greek culture & wine.

Overindulgence was common. Wine-god Bacchus dominated many lives—some even *inside* church.

Danger: leads to "debauchery" — degrades drinker & those around them.

Being "**under the influence**" produces temporary change of personality: some become sad, others giddy; some belligerent, others weepy; some sing, some shout; some become generous, others steal. Coward becomes hero. Heavy drinker thinks he's having fun; in reality, drunkenness degrades."

Solomon: **Prv 23:29-35** *Who has woe? Who has sorrow?*

Who has strife? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? ³⁰*Those who tarry long over wine; those who go to try mixed wine.* ³¹*Do not look at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup and goes down smoothly.* ³²*In the end it bites like a serpent and stings like an adder.* ³³*Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart utter perverse things.* ³⁴*You will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, like one who*

lies on the top of a mast. ³⁵*“They struck me,” you will say, “but I was not hurt; they beat me, but I did not feel it. When shall I awake? I must have another drink.”*

[Instead Paul advises:]

Understand the good God’s Spirit produces and seek Him!

There are parallels between what wine does and what God’s Spirit does in us:

When we cross paths with drunken person, people excuse him: “he’s not himself.” He’s “under the influence.” He’s not in control; alcohol controls his life. That’s what being filled with the Spirit’s about. It’s being “under the influence” of God’s Spirit—controlled by Him.

Main similarity: **both control our life!**

Fruit of Spirit—what He produces in us— superior to what wine produces!

If we want a worthwhile change,

let God control our life.

Control of Spirit is accompanied by traits which give evidence of His control. **5:19ff**

***People who know what time it is,
know how to use the time they have!***

Do YOU know what time it is?

How are we using OUR time?

Paul: if we understand God’s plan...

If we understand what He did for us by Jesus’ coming...

If we understand implications of His plan...

We’ll WALK differently & we’ll think differently!

We'll not be like the unwise

We'll use time wisely—because we live in evil times.

Most households spend 4-5 hours/day facing computer

Many other things take our family's time.

How much time do we invest in things of *eternal* value?

We'll understand God's will & do it—because we live in a culture that isn't interested in knowing God's will and is destined for destruction.

His thought isn't focused on major life decisions.

It's focused on everyday matters—lifestyle issues. How can I live today for GOD'S pleasure?

We'll allow God's Spirit to control our life

Others are living for selfish appetites, destroying their life under bondage to drugs & alcohol.

This isn't condemnation of *all* drinking.

We must ask, when our society spends so much effort trying to convince people not to drink & drive, while at the same time telling us that to have fun we ought to get drunk, wouldn't it just be easier to say "I won't drink!? Period. And be done with it? Nothing seems to make more sense for a faith that emphasizes understanding and knowing God's will!

I want to avoid legalism here, but the wisdom of that personal commitment makes sense to me!

If we walk in light of what God's done for us, we'll turn from such things & *walk wisely!*

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