

Imitate God
Ephesians 5:1-17

“What do you want to be when you grow up?” My son Joshua was asked this question in his first grade class. His response was “I want to be a preacher, and I want an office.” He wants to be what his father is. But he’s modified this recently saying that he first wants to work at **Dairy Queen**, and then become a preacher! This is because Kimberly’s first job was at Dairy Queen, and he thinks it would be a good first job for him too.

Many kids want to grow up and be like their parents. “Like Father like son” is an expression you’ve heard a lot. When I was a boy I had a toy shaving kit in order to shave like dad. I had some matching shirts, and caps, and wore the same number as pops. On Fridays, we would go to the bowling alley, and stop off at McDonalds. I wanted to order what he ordered, a Big Mac. Like father, like son.

In chapter 5:1, Paul urges us to imitate God. Be like God.

Sadly, there are many who have no fathers, have absent fathers, or abusive fathers. This is the “fatherless generation.”

But thankfully, everyone believer gets to call God “Father.”

Paul has painted a glorious picture of the Father already in Ephesians (cf, 1:3, 17; 3:14; 4:6). Now added to this list of truths about God is the application that we must imitate our God.

Paul tells us in other places to imitate him, as he imitates Christ (1 Cor 4:16; 10:31-11:1; Phil 3:17; 1 Thess 1:6; 2 Thess 3:7, 9); and he tells congregations to imitate other congregations (cf., 1 Thess 2:14). Only here in Ephesians are we told to “imitate God.”

Of course, we can't imitate God in everything. For example, we can't create the world out of nothing! We can't know all things either.

But we are to imitate him as far as it is possible, for we are his image bearers. Paul just said that we should reflect the likeness of God in the previous section by living lives of love and holiness (4:24-32). Verses and 1-2 are sort of like a positive summary of the previous passage. Then verses 3-17 continue the train of thought about living holy and compassionate lives, as we imitate God.

This passage is heavy, like the previous one. Paul doesn't hold back. **He's not running for political office!** Though it's like a right-left jab, we need this passage. "All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for reproof, *correction*, and training..." (2 Tim 3:16-17). God's Word corrects us. We need his fatherly correction.

So main point is clear: be imitators ("mimetai") of God. I love the simplicity of this verse. But "**How?**" We see three "**walks**" (the key verb in this section, "to conduct your life"): walk in love (v. 2); walk in light (v. 8); and walk in wisdom (15).

#1: WALK IN LOVE (5:1-2)

We are directed to God himself as the model of love. Paul highlights the love of the Father, and the love of the Son. Of course it is the Spirit who enables us to love (cf., Gal. 5:22). "God has poured his love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit." (Rom 5:5)

A. Love like the Father (5:1)

Notice the phrase "**as beloved children**" – How did we become his children? Do you remember Ephesians 1:5?

“In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus, according to the purpose of his will to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the beloved.” (1:4b-6)

God has adopted us. He has made slaves, his sons. He has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts (Gal. 4:5). He has given us a family called the church. He has given us family chores to do in the church. He has given us a kingdom. This should compel us to love!

Therefore, and appropriate application of Ephesians 1:5, is Ephesians 5:1. These two verses belong together! Because God has loved us, with adopting love, let us go love in the same way.

Amazingly, the Father has loved us in the Beloved (1:6). We share in the love that the Father has for the Son. That should affect us, and cause us to love this broken world.

App: How do we show his Fatherly love? By great acts of compassion and mercy!

- **Jesus said, “Be merciful just as your Father is merciful” (Matt. 5:44-48).**
 - Examples: shepherd orphans in their affliction (**adoption culture here- Matt, Jerry, Brad and Libby, & more**); look after the stranger; serve the widow, care for the poor.
- **Ephesians 4:28, which expresses this Fatherly- like love – “share with those in need.”**

B. Love like the Son (5:2)

Paul moves to the cross in verse two to talk about love. He just stated that Christ’s forgiveness of us is the motive for our forgiveness of others. Now, he goes back to the cross again to talk about love.

Consider the “power” of love, the “pattern” of love, and the “perfume” of love in verse 2.

The Power of Love. (Not like Huey Lewis!). “Love others like Jesus” sounds good, but we know we fail at this. Paul shows us that we need not only Jesus’ example, but we also need his death for the forgiveness of our sins.

We can’t simply be “good humanitarians” and go to heaven. We need a Savior who forgives us, and then empowers us to love the world – not to earn salvation but to demonstrate the fruit of salvation.

We would be crushed today under the weight of guilt, were it not for the cross. We have not loved God and neighbor perfectly. But Jesus did. He loved the Father and others perfectly, and died in the place of law-breakers like me and you.

So we need his death to be forgiven. Do you know this?

Clint was telling me a story about a conversation with a Christian brother who is ministering to students at Elon. One of the guys is Jewish, and he sat down with him to discuss the gospel. This kid grew up in the country in NC. Clint’s friend began with “Now, I’m sure you’ve been told that one of main beliefs of Christians is that Christ died for us, right?” The kid looked stunned and said, “No. I didn’t know that.” Later, after their Jewish friend joined their Bible study, one of the guys said, “I just wish Jesus would come back.” The Jewish friend said, “What? Jesus is coming back? Okay, put that aside, I’ve got to figure out the first coming first.”

I assume you know this but if not – Christ Jesus came, and lived a perfect, sinless life. He kept the law perfectly, and then died the death we deserved, as a substitute for sinners like us (2 Cor 5:21; Gal 3:13). He rose on our behalf. If you have faith in him, he will receive you. He will save you.

- Once a person comes to know Jesus, the Spirit of God then indwells them, and empowers them to love sacrificially.

The Pattern of Love. Now let's talk about his example. How did Jesus love? This is actually a wonderful verse for talking about a definition of love.

We might say that **love is** "giving ourselves away for the good of another." Paul says that Christ "loved us and gave himself for us." He echoes this verse when he talks about marriage in chapter 5, "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" (5:25). Love is giving ourselves up for others.

Love isn't just sentimentalism. It isn't just feeling sorry for someone. *It is a passion that leads to action.* Not in "word only but in deed and truth" (1Jhn 3:18). Jesus demonstrated his love with flesh and blood action (Rom 5:8).

Some of those actions include:

- Forgiveness others (Eph 4:32)
- Giving Financially (2 Cor. 8:9)
- Spreading the gospel (2 Cor. 5:14-21)
- Serving (13:34-35)
- Being patient (1 Cor. 13:4; Eph 4:2);
- Loving those who annoy you (Eph 4:2)
- Repenting of racism and displaying love to different people groups (Eph 2:11-22).
- Aiding the poor and the sick (Eph 4:29). (It was cool to see the guys last week ministering to the homeless – Keeland and others. May IDC folks be doing that all over the Triangle)

In Galatians Paul used this phrase that's here in Ephesians.

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who *loved me and gave himself for me.*
(Galatians 2:20 ESV)

In light of Christ's love for him, Paul lived a life to God.

The Perfume of Love. Christ death was an “offering” and a “fragrance to God” (5:2). In the Old Testament sacrifices, were place on an altar, and as it was consumed by fire it would give off an aroma. The idea of a “fragrant aroma” was an OT description of for God’s acceptance of a sacrifice because it the worshiper presented it sincerely and wholeheartedly.

Christ’s offering of himself was the ultimate acceptable sacrifice. It was a fragrant offering to God.

Notice, he gave himself up for us, but it was an offering to God.

This is the pattern of love for us. We don’t love like Christ in “an atoning sense,” but we do love in this “horizontal-vertical sense.”

Let there be a holy fragrance of love in your life, as you caring for others practically, sincerely, and generously, for the glory of God.

An example of this horizontal-vertical love is in Philipians. There the church gave an offering to Paul, and he said that their offering to him was a “fragrant aroma” to God (**Phil 4:18**). They gave to Paul, but God received it as worship.

Amy Carmichael was an example of this. She was a great missionary to India, who spent much of her ministry caring for ill-treated children, and she saved many from forced prostitution (which took place in the temples). She founded the Dohnavur Fellowship, which become a refuge for over one thousand children. She died in India in 1951 at the age of 83. She asked that no stone be put over her grave. But the children she cared for put a bird bath over her grave with the single inscription "Amma", which means "mother." Carmichael lived out her saying: "One can give without loving, but one cannot love without giving." Sherwood Eddy said of her: “Her life was the most fragrant, the most joyfully sacrificial, that I never knew.”

(Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad*, 112). May God make us a people that love others like Christ loves us, and may our love be a pleasing aroma to God.

#2: WALK IN LIGHT (5:3-14)

Next, Paul describes (in what some consider a new section), this theme of light and darkness. He contrasts works of darkness with the fruit of light.

John says that “God is love” (1 John 4:8), and that “God is light” (1 John 1:5). Therefore, if we are to imitate God, it makes sense that we talk about love and light.

Down in **verse 8**, Paul says “At one time you were darkness.” Notice its not that you “were walking *in* darkness” (though that’s true). It is “you *were* darkness.” Now, he says, “you *are* light in the Lord.” So, your identity has changed. Because you are light, Paul says – walk as children of the light.

Once again this theme is brought home: become what you are! (This is another “formerly but now” passages). You are light! God has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9).

How do we walk in the light?

Let me sketch out this dense section with three exhortations: (1) Exalt God, not Idols; (2) Exhibit the Fruit of Light; (3) Expose the Darkness.

A. Exalt God not Idols (3-6)

Paul mentions several sins here to describe a dark life: (1) sexual immorality, (2) impurity, (3) covetousness, and (4) filthiness/foolish talk/crude joking. These sins grow out of a heart that has replaced God with idols, with functional gods that can't satisfy.

He says that these acts should "not even be named among the saints" or "not a hint" (NIV) (3), and that they are “out of place” (4).

Where's the line? "Not a hint." He doesn't say, "Get as close as you can get." Don't get close to it. Don't try to justify your sin.

Let's explain these sins, and then talk about how these sins are really the result of the idolatry.

Sexual Immorality and Impurity (3a)

We think we are advanced in the twenty-first century. Then you read this, and you see that we have the same sin issues.

"Impurity" is a broad word that that refers to any type of filth. It is sometimes combined with sexual immorality, but when Paul says "every kind" it shouldn't be limited to this. I take it to mean that we should live lives of "pervasive holiness." Living in the light, means to follow the command, "Be holy, for I am holy."

"Sexual Immorality." Paul puts sexual immorality at the top of the list in other places:

In the parallel text in Colossians, he says,

"Put to death what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry."
(Colossians 3:5; cf., Gal 5:19, 1 Cor. 6:9-11).

The word is "**pornei**," which is a "broad word covering any sexual sin" (Snodgrass, 268). Scripture condemns particular types of sexual sin (homosexuality, fornication, adultery, bestiality, etc), and also lustful thoughts (Matt. 5:27-30).

People will try to work around the teaching of Scripture. But remember what Paul says, **"not a hint!"** not a hint! Don't try to think of a loophole. **"What about Big Olga Dot Com" – large Russian**

women thumb wrestling in their pajamas – not a hint! What about these new literary genre called “Mommy porn.” – Not a hint!

You were darkness. Now you are light. Become what you are!

Don't rename sin, like “It is for mature” audiences” – as if a bunch of *frat guys were looking at naked women were a mark of maturity*. It's “The Gentlemen's Club.” There they have naked women, beer and meat – the false trinity. They call it “Gentlemen.” As if all the men in there are playing polo, discussing Tolstoy or Dostoyevski.

The Gentleman is at home with his wife loving her like Christ loved the church.

What do you do with this sin? You don't manage it (sin in moderation), or rename it, redefine it, or minimize it. You do as Colossians says – *you kill it!* You should do as 1 Cor. 6:18 says – *flee from it*. Or as 1 Thess 4:3 says – *abstain from it*.

Ultimately, pornei is idolatry. Paul doesn't call it “idolatry” like he does “covetousness,” but it is the result of idolatry.

Romans 1 shows us this progression.

“For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or *give thanks to him* but they became futile in their thinking... they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature instead of the Creator” (Rom 1:21, 25).

Did you catch that – they did not thank God and honor him? As a result, they were led into all forms of immorality (Rom 1:26-32).

Paul says in Eph 5:4, particularly related to the sin of speech, but surely connected to immorality and greed, “let there be thanksgiving.”

Each of these sins comes from a heart that is not satisfied in God.

A failure to be thankful to God and worship him, will lead to a life of immorality. Your life is an overflow of your heart.

Your sexual sin problem is fundamentally a worship problem.

Much of the ancient world had sexual practices wrapped up in their idolatry (like in Ephesus). Though we the culture doesn't call this idolatry today – it still is. What thrills you? What kind of glory are you wanting to see? Because the answer to this is pornei, it is right to call it a functional idol today.

Instead “Glorify God with your body” (1 Cor. 6:20) Don't give yourself up to the god of this age. Use your body to glorify God in your singleness and in your marriage.

The Bible is not anti-sex. It is pro intimacy within the covenant of marriage.

We were talking about this sin as elders. A large portion of our counseling is spent on this issue. It is more accessible today than ever.

I've heard some of you say that it's on the TV's at your work; it's playing in the football dorms at universities; it's on the phones of middle school boys, as they sit in the cafeteria before school. It's a temptation everywhere.

App: I want to say that we want to be a place of healing for folks. But you can't have healing apart from repentance. Repentance involves acknowledging the sin; believing that you need to change; then changing your life.

Covetousness (3b)

Covetousness is the insatiable desire to have more. Paul identifies it as "idolatry" here and also in the Colossians text (3:5).

It is tenth commandment, which makes it impossible to keep the first commandment, to have no other gods.

Greed or covetousness is about the heart. It is about desiring something more than God.

Jesus told us to be on our guard against it, and don't become a "rich fool" (Luke 12:14-ff). Why? Because no one thinks they're greedy. "You're not my wife." Greed is sneaky.

Keller preached on **7 deadly sins** and his wife said "It will be the **lowest attendance.**" She was right. Keller said no one was hostile, upset, or anything because no one thought it applied to them. In all my ministry, no one has ever confessed the sin of materialism and greed to me. Be on your guard.

Jesus told us to and to delight in God instead, and store up treasure in heaven (Luke 12:32-34).

Paul says, "Godliness with contentment is great gain." (6:6). Later he says that greed kills (6:9-10), and he commands the rich to "set their hopes not on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy" (6:17).

Learn to grace of contentment and generosity. And, as Paul says here, "Let there be thanksgiving" to God, instead of a lust for more and more.

Ultimately, the god of money will not satisfy. It is empty. Find your satisfaction in God alone.

Make money, thank God for money, use money for the right purposes, but worship God.

Corrupt Speech (4)

Paul mentions three particular sins of the tongue, which expands his word in Eph 4:29:

- **Filthiness or obscenity** means to use language that is shameful or disgraceful (cf., Col 3:8).
- **Foolish talk** refers to the *speech of a fool that is associated with sin*. Don't participate in it, and don't enjoy listening to it. One thinks of the fool in Proverbs. Or, perhaps **day-time talk shows!** Some suggests that the type of talk that Paul is referring to is talk associated with sexual sin and drunkenness (Thielman, 330).
- **Crude joking** – This term usually has a positive connotation but here it is used negatively (Snodgrass, 269). There's nothing wrong with humor and laughter, but it can be abused.
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- **Thielman** says, "In the context of Ephesians 5:3-4, where the concern is with inappropriate sexual behavior and speech, the term probably refers to *the misuse of an otherwise attractive quality*: quick witted, clever humor employed in a malicious or sexually vulgar ways." (331, my emphasis).

We will give an account for every careless word spoken (Matt. 12:36). So guard your words. I can't tell you how many times people have said something like, "**Don't cuss the preacher is around.**" Being at a **Saints game a few years ago...."**

Instead, let there be **thanksgiving!** (eucharistia).

Here we are back at the issue of worship. Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks (12:34). Thanksgiving will come out of your mouth, when worship to God is in the heart.

As you reflect on the grace of God in your life, thank him. Do this always, not on Thanksgiving Day (**1 Thess. 5:18**)

One would think that **the opposite** of this dirty talk would be something like “noble talk” or “truthful talk” but he puts **thanksgiving**. Why?

I think Paul is getting at not only the kind of speech that should come from your mouth but the kind **of attitude that should be in your heart**.

Sexual sin, greed, and corrupt talk **is about self-centered thinking**. It is about what I want to gratify **my sinful desires**. **But thanksgiving is the attitude that says, “thank you for your generosity God, you have given me everything I need. I don’t need to go looking to substitute gods for pleasure and joy”**.

Paul hits this again in **Eph 5:18-21**. Notice the emphasis on the heart. This type of thanksgiving is a result of the Spirit’s work in us. That’s where the power is at for replacing idols with true worship.

Ingratitude will lead to more and more sin. On the flip side,

Snodgrass says it well, “Thanksgiving is an antidote for sin, for it difficult [impossible] to both give thanks and sin at the same time” (276).

Warning (5-6)

In verse 5, Paul says that those who persist in this lifestyle will not inherit the kingdom of heaven. (See also 1 Cor. 6:9-10, Gal. 5:19-21). The unrepentant will not inherit the kingdom.

“Do Christians fall into these sins? Of course! But true Christians will not persist in them, for persistence in sensuality is a graceless state” (**Hughes, 159**).

Paul told the Corinthians, “such were some of you. But you were washed, sanctified, and justified” (1 Cor. 6:11). Those who fail to repent share will not inherit the kingdom.

This warning shows how foolish worldly pursuits are in the grand scheme of things.

- What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul?” (Mark 8:36).
- What good is that momentary sexual thrill in comparison with the eternal enjoyment of the kingdom?

In **verse 6**, Paul strengthens this by saying speak of the fate of the unrepentant: “because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience” (cf., Col. 3:6). Sons of disobedience will be under the wrath of God. Earlier, Paul said that’s what we were (Eph. 2:2), until God made us alive. Since we are alive, avoid the darkness.

He also says “Do not be deceived with the words of others.” Listen to God’s Word. Many scoff at the idea of judgment. But Paul says it’s coming. Paul told the Thessalonians, “Turn from your idols to the living God.” (1 Thess. 1:9)

Summary of verses 3-6: To imitate God by walking in light, you must be a worshiper of God. You need to understand that “we become like that which we worship.” (cf., Psalm 135:18). Paul said, we should behold the glory of the Lord in order to be made like him:

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.

For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3:18

You have a God more satisfying than sexual sin and greed; a God worthy of endless thanksgiving; a God who has given you a kingdom. Glory in him.

B. Exhibit the Fruit of Light (7-10)

In verses 7-10, Paul says that we should display lives of holiness since we are now light. How?

First, display light by not being partners with those in darkness (7).
In 2 Cor. 6:14-16, he says,

“Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness. What fellowship has light with darkness? What accord does Christ have with Belial (Satan)? What agreement has the temple of God with idols?

Christians must be in society to live on mission. And we should love and befriend those outside the faith. But we are not to participate in the sins of unbelievers. Don't share their greed, their sexual immorality and their speech.

Let me give you to haunting illustrations of how those who are training for ministry can participate in darkness.

Second, display light by living out your identity (8).

I've already mentioned this, and we have talked about this repeatedly in Ephesians, but again, the Christian life is about living out your identity. You are light; now live in it. This is an amazing statement.

“No text is as strong in its explanation of conversion” (Snodgrass, 271).

We aren't light in ourselves, we are light *in the Lord*. Because he is light, and we are in him, we are light.

Here we see a wonderful example of the indicative and imperative at work. Because you are light (a fact), now **“walk as children of light”** (imperative). Live before the eyes of God in holiness..

Every time I go to the airport I have to submit to the inspection. This is to make sure no one is carrying anything on the plane that is not permitted. I have never been afraid to walk through the “screening machine” because I have nothing to hide. **In the same way, have nothing to hide. Walk in the light – live a life of integrity.**

Third, display light by doing all that is good, right and true (9).

“Fruit of light” – this has to do with the results of dwelling in God’s light. God is good and right and true. As his imitators, we are to do that which is good and right and true.

This trio of virtues seems to be a bit of a summary of the ethical content previously covered in Ephesians, and resembles the fruit of the Spirit.

Those who walk in light do “good works” (2:10), they live righteously (4:24), and they speak truthfully (4:15).

Fourth, display light by pleasing the Lord (10).

Here’s the thing about living a holy life as a believer. It may not please everyone. You may be mocked for following Jesus. As I preach these things, the surrounding culture thinks we are living in the stone-age, and need to live in the 21st century.

But at the end of the day, this is the bottom line question: “What will please the Lord?” Walking in the light pleases God.

Sometimes you will be faced with a choice to either offend God or people – I will choose offending people, and pleasing God.

Snodgrass says this is a positive way of saying “Do not grieve the Spirit” (4:30).

A. **Expose the Darkness (11-14)**

Paul goes on to say that believers are **not to participate** in darkness; instead they are called to expose the darkness (11-13). The latter is the positive counterpart to the negative exhortation. We are to “let our light shine” as Jesus said (Matt. 5:16).

Notice two effects of shining the light: (1) light **exposes**, (2) light **transforms**.

First light exposes the sin of unbelievers (11). “**Expose**” carries the idea of correcting or convincing someone.

Walking in the light doesn’t mean avoiding contact with people. It means to live a holy life, and to confront and expose the darkness.

Though the text doesn’t tell us how to do that specifically, it surely means with words and deeds.

We need wisdom, discernment, gentleness and courage to know how to confront and expose the darkness.

V. 12 – These works “**done in secret**” are too indecent to mention.

Paul says sins (like these just mentioned) are “**shameful**.” Don’t participate in that which is shameful – instead expose it.

13 – Paul briefly explains the process of exposing darkness. He says that the light illuminates darkness (these secretive and shameful deeds), as evil is seen for what it is.

Second, the light transforms unbelievers into the realm of light (14). This verse seems to speak of the transforming power of the light of truth and purity. O’Brien summarizes it well,

“The disclosure of people’s sins effected through believers’ lives enables men and women to see the sinful nature of their deeds. Some abandon darkness of sin and respond to the light so that they become

light themselves. This understanding is confirmed by verse 8, which speaks of the transformation that had taken place in the readers' experience, and by the confession of 14b." (372-373).

JB Philips paraphrase, "It is even possible [after all, it happened to you!] for the light to turn the thing it shines upon into light also."

App: Expose the darkness in the corrupt places of our world, where young children are enslaved, widows' land is taken, forced labor is happening, where there is an abuse of power. Bring the light of justice, exposing shameful, secretive sins, and bring the light of the transforming gospel to them.

14b: The last part of verse 14 is about the transforming light of Christ. It seems to combine passages on the resurrection and light, like Isaiah 26:19, 60:1, and Jonah 1:6.

These words are probably a hymn or an early confession, used at baptism. Those baptized would be reminded to "rise and shine."

- Some are still in the darkness, and they need to come to the light. Some are spiritually asleep/dead, and then need to wake up.
- And if we are awake, let us walk as we are awake! We need a holy Wake Up Call! Sound the Alarm. There's a world in need... Stop consuming your time with sin, and start loving the world, and light it up. **Like Rip Van Winkle, many sleep through the war.**

Notice the blessing, "Christ will shine on us!" There is no greater blessing than to have him shine on us!

Summary of 5:7-14:

Therefore, when we, who were once darkness but are now light, who have been awakened from our sleep, when we shine the light of truth and righteousness upon the darkness, with our words and deeds - we make visible the shameful and secretive deeds of darkness, and we may also be used to help people come to the light themselves.

#3: WALK IN WISDOM (5:15-17)

In the same spirit of verses 7-14, believers must awake up and live lives that are wise.

Paul tells them to walk “carefully,” to “make the best use of the time,” and to “understand the will of the Lord.”

15 - “Walk carefully” is explained by the following verses – “not as unwise,” “not foolishly” and if we peak down to verse 18: not in drunkenness.

In the Colossians parallel, Paul says, “Walk in wisdom toward **outsiders**, making the best use of the time” (4:5). He says that we do that by having speech that is “gracious, seasoned with salt” (4:6).

Be very careful how you act and talk around outsiders for the sake of the gospel.

We think of Proverbs on this matter of wisdom.

- There are many contrasts with the way of folly and the way of wisdom:
 - fool is right in his own eyes/wise man listens to advice (12:15);
 - the prudent acts with knowledge/the fool flaunts his folly (13:16)
 - Whoever trusts in his own mind is a fool/but he who walks in wisdom will be delivered (28:26)
 - A wise son makes a glad father/but a foolish son is sorrow to his mother (10:1)
 - "One who is wise is cautious and turns away from evil/but a fool is reckless and careless" (14:16)
 - "Those who walk with the wise become wise/but a companion of fools will suffer harm" (Prov 13:20)
 - "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom/but fools despise wisdom and instruction." (Prov 1:7, 9:10)

Which way are you living? The fool is practicing the sins here in Ephesians - recklessly, flaunting folly, hanging with fools, despising wisdom.

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- It should be valued "like gold." (Prov 16:16)

James says that God gives wisdom if you ask for it (James 1:5; cf. Prov 2:6).

Paul says in Jesus is hidden all the treasures of wisdom (Col 2:3). Jesus said those who build their lives on his word are building it on the rock, but the fool builds on sand (Matt 7:24-27)

“By Making the Most of Your Time” (16)

Wise believers use their time well. Paul makes a point to remind the Ephesians that they are living in the last days – *we are awaiting Christ’s return. Therefore, how you live matters.*

Live with a mission!

- Identify those things that take your time away.
- Ruthlessly prioritize.

We should “make the most of our time” because we don’t want to waste our lives.

The phrase “the days are evil” refers to the idea of this “present evil age” (Gal 1:4) in which we are living. But despite the darkness, and evil that is present, we are to live as light in the world.

“Understand what the will of the Lord is” (17).

Usually when Christians talk about God’s will, they are referring to God’s will regarding major decisions about things like their career. That’s not what Paul has in mind here.

This is about God's will that has already been revealed.

We need to understand Christ, the Christ of the Bible, and pattern our lives after him.

- **It is God's will that we be holy (1 Thess 4:3), and that we be conformed to the image of Christ (Rom 8:29).**
- **The wise person follows this instruction. They submit to the lifestyle of Christ – in sacrificial love for others, in holiness, in truth.**

The wise person is not intoxicated by alcohol or anything else, but is filled with the Spirit (5:18). (We will address this more next week).

Jesus

We are new creations today because Jesus submitted to Gods' will.

- **He cried out, "It is finished" after doing God's will obediently.**
- **He rescued those who didn't love others perfectly; those who committed these dark, shameful deeds; and those who were living a life of total futility.**
- **And now, his Spirit is in us, enabling us to imitate God – by walking in love, by walking in light, by walking in the Spirit.**

Let there be thanksgiving to God for his Son, our Savior.