



MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

## Examining the text & our hearts:

*Bible Reading: Eph. 5:15-18*

15 Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk—not as unwise people but as wise— 16 making the most of the time, because the days are evil. 17 So don't be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. 18 And don't get drunk with wine, which leads to reckless living, but be filled by the Spirit: 19 speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music with your heart to the Lord, 20 giving thanks always for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 21 submitting to one another in the fear of Christ.

### I. Seeing the immediate and overall context: the days are evil (Eph. 5:15-16)

A. The overlap of ages – diagram from 2 weeks ago, but this time dark & light

- *'The days are evil' (Eph. 5:16b) "Christians live within **the overlap of two ages**...the present rule of **darkness** ('struggle against the cosmic powers of this darkness...resist in the evil day' Eph. 6:12-13) & the future **kingdom of Christ** that was inaugurated by Jesus' resurrection. So Paul exhorts his readers to take advantage of the time they have, 'making the most of the opportunity,' literally 'redeeming' or 'liberating' the present moment by doing good." [Peter Williamson]*

B. The influence of the evil cosmic powers/forces – Eph. 1:20-21; 2:1-2; 3:10; 4:14; 6:11-13, 16; 5:16

- How are the days evil?

C. Pay careful attention, then, to how you live [walk] – walk wisely

- *“Walking...wisely is defined in apocalyptic terms as having an awareness of the evil character of the present time & therefore, making good use of it (Eph. 5:16)—that is, understanding & doing the Lord’s will (Eph. 5:17 cf. 5:10). The actual term for using the time...has to do with ‘buying’ or perhaps ‘redeeming’ it, meaning ‘making the most of every opportunity’ ...This suggests a whole new way of engaging with [the world].” [Michael J. Gorman]*

## II. Three Contrasting Pairs (Eph. 5:15-18)

### A. Not..., but...

- *“This section is structured around three contrasts expressed by ‘not’ and ‘but’ (vv. 15, 17, 18) indicating both negative and positive admonition to walk wisely.” (H. Hoehner, p. 689)*
  1. Not unwise, but wise
  2. Not foolish, but understanding the Lord’s will
  3. Not drunk with wine, but being filled by the Spirit

B. One overarching principle & two practical ways – Walk wisely (principle) = Understanding Lord’s will + being filled by the Spirit

C. The guiding behaviors in the darkness: wisdom, discernment & being filled by the Spirit

## III. Wisdom (Eph. 5:15-16) – a wise walk – has very little to do with intelligence in the Bible

- *“For the last time, in 5:15, [Paul] uses [walk]...to introduce his next challenge to believers, that is, to walk in wisdom” (H. Hoehner, p. 689)*

A. Wisdom begins with the fear of the Lord (Prov. 1:7; 9:10) – I recognize my capacity and limits as a human, and realize I need to live under the guidance and authority of one who is greater than myself

B. No as unwise – huge contrast!

- *“The unwise...walk as those who despise or have no insight into God’s will.” (H. Hoehner, p. 692)*

C. Making the most of your time/redeeming the time

## IV. Understanding the Lord’s Will (Eph. 5:17)

A. So, don’t be foolish

B. Reading scripture (Eph. 3:3-4; Col. 3:16 – sister verse to Eph. 5:18-19)

C. Be renewed in your mind (Rom. 12:2)

D. Giving thanks (1 Thes. 5:18)

E. Sexual purity (1 Thes. 4:3)

F. Equipping others (Eph. 4:12)

## V. Being Filled By the Spirit (Eph. 5:18)

A. And, don't be drunk with wine

B. Present – “be being filled” – continual experience

- *“The filling of the Spirit...commanded in Eph. 5:18...is the essence of biblical spirituality (Chafer), and...the focal point of the NT for believers’ (MacArthur)...The phrase translated as ‘be filled’ is based on the present passive imperative tense of the Greek word pleroo...A more literal rendering of this word is ‘be being kept filled,’ which indicates a conscious continuation. [1.] The imperative aspect indicates that this is a mandate, not an option, or merely a suggestion for Christians. [2.] The continuous aspect requires a day-to-day, moment-by-moment submission to the Spirit’s control. [3.] Yet the passive component...indicates that this is not something to be done by the believers but something that is allowed to be done...[by] yielding to the indwelling Spirit.” [J. L. Whittington]*
- *“Being filled with the Spirit is presented both as an admonition for all believers and as a continual rather than a once-for-all experience.” [Michael J. Gorman]*
- *“The verb is in the plural form...Both imperatives in Eph. 5:18, the prohibition and the command, are written to the whole Christian community. They are universal in their application. We are none of us to get drunk; we are all of us to be Spirit-filled. The fullness of the Holy Spirit is emphatically not a privilege reserved for some, but a duty resting on all.” [John Stott]*

C. “By the Holy Spirit” not the human spirit

- *“Some deny that Eph. 5:18 speaks of the Holy Spirit at all. Westcott, for e.g., takes en pneumati as a contrast to ‘in the flesh’; thus we have the marginal reading of the RV, ‘be filled in spirit’ [i.e., the (human) spirit]. The obvious weakness of this is that the ‘spirit-flesh’ contrast does not appear in Ephesians. Further, as F. F. Bruce notes, the phrase en pneumati appears elsewhere in Ephesians (Eph. 2:22; 3:5; 6:18), each time referring to the Holy Spirit. F. F. Bruce concludes, ‘In those three [other] places the Holy Spirit is certainly intended, and equally certainly it is he [the Holy Spirit] that is intended here (in Eph. 5:18)’.” [C. John Collins]*
- Note also that the contrast is *not* between being filled in the (physical) body with wine vs. being filled in the (human) spirit (with/by the Spirit). In Ephesians “body” is used exclusively for Christ’s Body.

D. Passive – allow yourself to be filled

- *“The Lord’s command [is] ‘be filled with the Spirit’. Paul doesn’t say, ‘Fill yourselves with the Spirit’. He says, ‘let the Holy Spirit fill you’ (NEB). God is calling us to ‘the life-long walk in the Spirit’. He is calling us to ‘keep on being filled with the Spirit.’” [Charles Cameron]*

E. Indicative – a command, not an option

F. Not a comparison but a contrast

- *“Some people have too readily deduced...that drunkenness & the fullness of the Spirit are comparable. The fullness of the Spirit, they say is spiritual inebriation [drunkenness] & the Apostle is [contrasting] 2 intoxicated states—physical through wine & spiritual through the Spirit’s fullness. This is not so...It is true that on...Pentecost the 120 [were accused of being] ‘filled with new wine’ (Acts 2:13) [But,] it is a great mistake to suppose these first Spirit-filled believers were in a kind of drunken stupor or that is a pattern for all future experiences of the Spirit’s fullness. The opposite is the case. In Eph. 5:18 drunkenness & the Spirit’s fullness are not comparable in this respect...The fullness of the Spirit involves no loss of self-control” [John Stott]*

G. Not an ecstatic or sensational experience in Ephesians

H. Bezalel (Exo. 31:1-4)

- *“In the OT we...find an expression for being filled with a spirit or the Spirit...Three of the five occurrences appear in Exodus, in the account of the craftsmen who are to work on the tabernacle. For example, in Ex. 31:3 the Lord says of Bezalel ‘I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom and in understanding and in knowledge, and in every (kind of) work.’...In every one of these cases the idea is that the Spirit fills the person in order to fit him for some task for the sake of the covenant people: working on the tabernacle, leading the people, speaking as a prophet.” [C. John Collins]*
- *“All the readers are urged to ‘be filled with the Spirit’ (plural imperative); that is, each one has a task to carry out for the sake of the rest of the Body, and each needs to have the Holy Spirit empower him for the task.” [C. John Collins]*