

Eph 5:15-16 Redeem the Time ¹⁵ So then, be careful how you walk, not as unwise people but as wise, ¹⁶ making the most of your time, because the days are evil.

Therefore, look how carefully you are walking.

When Paul tells us to look carefully how we are walking, he's talking about examining ourselves to determine if our walk is in line with who Christ wants us to be.

Self-examination is an important part of living as a Christian, but we have a problem—our sin nature prefers self-deception. Deceiving ourselves is easy and comfortable. 1 John 1:8 **8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.** It is dangerous to lie to ourselves. 2 Cor 13:5 **5 Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?** We must examine ourselves to see if we are truly in Christ. Those who allow themselves to be put under the influence of the enemy become blind to the truth, and they can believe that anything that they're doing is right, or necessary, or God's Will. That's why we need the Holy Spirit to examine us and teach us. Psalm 26:2-3 **2 Examine me, Lord, and put me to the test; Refine my mind and my heart. 3 For Your goodness is before my eyes, And I have walked in Your truth.** Allow God to shine His light on us. 1 John 1:7 **7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.** If we will agree with God that sin is sin, and confess it before Him, then we will be cleansed, washed clean, and we won't need to even consider it anymore, because it has been removed from us as far as the East is from the West.

One difficulty with self-examination is that we do not always know our own hearts. Jeremiah 17:9 says, **"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"** True self-examination must be done with the Holy Spirit, who searches the deep things of the heart 1 Cor 2:10–11 **10 For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. 11 For who among people knows the thoughts of a person except the spirit of the person that is in him? So also the thoughts of God no one knows, except the Spirit of God.** We need the Holy Spirit's help, if we're not to be deceived. The psalmist says, **"Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way"** (Psalm 139:23–24. At the same time, we must humbly admit our inability to change ourselves and rely on the power of the Holy Spirit within to transform us into the image of Christ. Romans 8:29 **29 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters; 30 and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.**

Some translations say "See then that you walk circumspectly. To "walk circumspectly" means "to watch or look carefully at how you live, to be vigilant and mindful of your behavior, to be on the lookout." The apostle Peter delivers a similar word of warning: **"Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour"** (1 Peter 5:8). With deliberate, vigilant determination, we must live rooted in God's wisdom and an understanding of God's will. Let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect" (Romans 12:2, **2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.** If we are to walk circumspectly, we must discern the will of the Lord. How do we gain the wisdom to know God's will? Through reading God's Word: **"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in**

righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim 3:16–17). As we study and meditate on God’s Word, we realize the truth it contains, and want to apply it to our lives. Psalm 119:15-16 **15 I will meditate on Your precepts And regard Your ways. 16 I shall delight in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word.** We are to diligently study the Scriptures. And, if we will do this, then we will have no time for infighting and gossip. 2 Timothy 2:15 **14 Remind them of these things, and solemnly exhort them in the presence of God not to dispute about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the listeners. 15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a worker who [g]does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. 16 But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness,**), it becomes a guiding, illuminating force to direct our footsteps Psalm 119:105-6 **your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path. 106 I have sworn and I will confirm it, That I will keep Your righteous judgments.** If we’ll allow it to, God’s Word will separate the Truth from the lies that we tend to tell ourselves. God’s Word is living and active to do this very thing if we will stay in it, and allow the Holy Spirit to apply it to our lives. Hebrews 4:12 **12 For the word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, even penetrating as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.** We must pay close attention to what the Lord has revealed in His Word—and it should change our lives, as we apply what we’re reading to our lives—we’re not hearers only, but doers of the Word. Then we’ll see evidence of increasing resemblance to our Heavenly Father in our lives. God is able to show us God’s will and teach us how to walk circumspectly in these evil days. because it is “a lamp shining in a dark place”. 2 Pet 2:19 **9 And so we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.** Believers are enabled to live wisely and walk circumspectly by the empowering of the Holy Spirit. Ezekiel 36:27 **27 And I will put My Spirit within you and bring it about that you walk in My statutes, and are careful and follow My ordinances. not as unwise but as wise.**

We walk carefully because we’re walking not as unwise but as wise. Sophia, “wisdom,” means using knowledge to gain true insight—applied knowledge. The best wisdom is that which has been given by God for insight into the true nature of God’s plan. How do we discern the will of the Lord and gain the wisdom to know God’s will? We start by asking for it: **“If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you”** (James 1:5).

taking advantage of every opportunity.

Make the most of every opportunity. Use your time wisely, make the most of your time. No matter how it’s translated, it means that we should be diligent about using our time here on earth to serve God! Don’t waste it—you don’t know how much more you have. Spend your time wisely--“redeem the time”. Snap up every opportunity that comes to share the Gospel, and share God’s Truth with people. Col 4:5 **5 Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity.**

Because the days are evil.

People are to make the most of the opportunity at hand because the days are evil. That means that many people aren’t going to listen to the truth. The days are evil, so we’re fighting an uphill battle, just like the first Apostles, preaching to a culture that is largely Pagan—and even worse, because they think that they know something about Christianity, but all that they know is the false narrative that the world, and the servants of the enemy want them to hear. We are not to fear the present evil age or avoid interaction with sinners in it, but instead seize every opportunity we get. Take advantage of every opportunity in this immoral environment to live a life that pleases God, and share His Truth.