
WALK WISELY

Ephesians 5:15-20 (CSB)

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.

I love this section of the Bible because you can apply it to your life today before you walk out of this building. The Apostle Paul is writing God's words to a congregation just like ours, and it's all about how you live day-to-day. It doesn't say, "Think about the deep purpose of your existence." It says, "Watch how you *walk*." Your walk is practical. How do you move through the world? How do you get around obstacles? How do you get things done? Your walk is your day-to-day life. And this passage says we need to pay careful attention to our walk. Is it wise or foolish?

WALKING SILLY

When I read this, I thought of the Monty Python sketch called "The Ministry of Silly



Walks." A lot of stuff from the Monty Python crew is crude, even sacrilegious, but this sketch always makes me giggle. It's an imaginary department in the British government that's in charge of researching and funding silly ways to walk. It's ridiculous. Men in fancy suits kick their legs over their heads and to the side, all with a straight face. It's non-sensical,

inefficient, and the joke is that it's a complete waste of time and taxpayer money. Google it at your own risk.¹

You and I must consider, is my walk, the way I spent this last week, non-sensical, inefficient, a waste of time? **“Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk—not as unwise people but as wise. (Ephesians 5:15)**

WALKING IN A MINEFIELD

When a comedian walks foolishly, it's cute. It's funny. Do you know who doesn't think it's funny? Rahmatullah Rahmat.² I don't know where Mr. Rhamat is now, but as of last year, he was defusing land mines in Afghanistan. If he walks foolishly and steps on a buried bomb, boom! He doesn't have a leg. He needs to pay careful attention to how he walks.

That's probably closer to our situation. God says, **“Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk—not as unwise people but as wise—making the most of the time, because the days are evil.” (Ephesians 5:16)** We don't live in a comedy sketch. We live in a minefield. There are so many evil things around us, so many bad influences on the next generation, so many evil desires that live in our own hearts. The days are evil. If we don't pay careful attention to our daily walk, boom! We might find ourselves in severe spiritual danger.

In your alone time, if you're foolish, you'll have no defense against the temptations the devil throws at you. If you're not paying attention to your interactions with other people, then you'll miss opportunities to encourage them when they need it. Because we live in a minefield, God says:

WALK WISELY

- 1. Think with God's mind.**
 - 2. Get high on God's joy.**
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¹ <https://youtu.be/eCLp7zodUil>

² <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/in-afghanistan-clearing-landmines-to-save-lives>

THINK WITH GOD'S MIND

The first way to walk wisely is to think with God's mind. It says, **“Don't be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.”** (Ephesians 5:17) If you want to walk wisely, you need to understand what God wants.

If you want to understand what I want, you can't read my mind. You have to listen to my words. But if you're going to understand what God wants, you *can* read his mind because he wrote down what he wants. The Bible is a written record of God's mind. If you're going to walk wisely, get familiar with the Bible.

WHAT GOD WANTS

Walking wisely might be different depending on where you are in your walk through this world. What does God want for parents? You don't have to guess. He wrote it down. **“Do not exasperate your children but bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.”** (Ephesians 6:4)

What does God want for employees? You don't have to guess. He wrote it down. **“Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do.”** (Ephesians 6:7-8)

There are times when it's hard to tell what God wants. But 99% of the time, that's not our problem. It's easy to know God's will. It's hard to do it.

See, there are other ways to think about your daily life without God's mind. You could do what's popular. You could do what's easy. You could do what will be best for you in the long run. There are many ways to think about daily life that ignore God's will, lots that are foolish.

I've only been a parent for six weeks, and already so often, I've chosen what's convenient instead of what God wants me to do. I've been an employee for longer than six weeks, and somehow every day, I find myself having a selfish attitude or looking at someone else's work instead of what God wants me to do. It's so easy to live daily life without the mind of God.

It makes you wonder, how does God think about us? If you had a friend who knew what you wanted and every day she was listening to other advice, doing the opposite of what you want, what would you think about that person? That would be infuriating! You would think that God would be furious at us, that he would forget about us.

But this is the most shocking thing about God's will. **"God our Savior, wants all people to be saved."** (1 Timothy 2:3-4) He wrote that in the Bible. It's shocking, but God loves you. It seems like God should be furious at us, but all the evidence is that he loves you. That's what he wrote in the Bible. And then he put his money where his mouth is. He sacrificed his only Son, Jesus, to rescue you and me from our sin. I still can't figure out why, but in God's mind, he loves us.

And if you want to walk wisely, you need to understand that God loves you. You know the places you failed last week. So does God. Think about your sin with the mind of God. It's forgiven, bundled up in the body of Jesus, and nailed to a cross, sunk in a grave never to be remembered again. In the mind of God, you have been scrubbed with the blood of Jesus. You're perfect. You're lovely. And he wants you so desperately that he will stop at nothing to be with you. Can you think about yourself with the mind of God? Can you think about the person next to you with the mind of God? Now you're walking wisely.

RADICALLY SUPPLEMENTED

There's an old preacher who claims that he can think with the mind of his wife. They've been married 50 years. He says, "Whenever something happens, I instantly have my own instinctive response. But after 50 years, I also know how my wife would react. I know how she thinks, her values, and how she would respond." The old preacher is still an independent thinker. It's not like he's gone through some Vulcan mind-meld. But he has been radically supplemented so he can think with the mind of his wife.

Now imagine if you were radically supplemented by a mind that knows everything and loves everyone. What if, for every interruption in your day,

you had your own instinctive reaction, *plus* you had God's perfect reaction. The more time you spend reading God's mind in the Bible, the more you're thinking with God's mind. Then you are walking wisely.

GET HIGH ON GOD'S JOY

The second part of walking wisely is that you get high on God's joy. The passage says, **"And don't get drunk with wine, which leads to reckless living, but be filled by the Spirit: speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music with your heart to the Lord."** (Ephesians 5:18-20)

Because our daily walk is a minefield, we need a pick-me-up. You can lift your spirits. You can get high, just don't do it foolishly.

A FOOLISH WAY TO GET HIGH

A foolish way to get high is to get drunk. And it works- for a little while because alcohol is a depressant. That doesn't mean it makes you depressed. Drunk people are often happy. But alcohol depresses your mental ability. The reason drunk people are happy is that their brains don't work. There are dangers in life, responsibilities, projects, stressors, things that bother you when you're fully aware. But they don't bother you when you're drunk. "It's all good. Whee!" Why? Because your brain doesn't work right. You're out of touch with reality. Then the next day, oof. Reality hits. Getting drunk with wine can get you high, but ultimately you crash. (The same thing happens when you get high on adrenaline or romantic love or personal achievement. Those things are not bad, and wine is not bad, but it is foolish to rely on the high you get from them because they all end in a crash.)

A WISE WAY TO GET HIGH

Want to know a wise way to get high? God says, **"Be filled by the Spirit."** (Ephesians 5:18) The Holy Spirit is not a depressant. He does not make you out of touch with reality. He makes you more aware of reality. In other words, alcohol makes you forget your problems for a moment. Skydiving and falling in love make you forget. The Holy Spirit helps you remember

the solution. Holy Spirit makes you see that you can have joy despite your problems because the person who controls all things will do anything for you, has done everything for you, has given up his own Son for you, and will never leave your side. That's reality. You wouldn't know it unless the Holy Spirit put faith in your heart. There is a joy from the Holy Spirit that can lift your spirits and get you high.

And kind of like when you're drunk, when you're high on God's joy, you're more willing to sing. Some of you are not naturally singers by choice. But in this room, during this hour, you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. I love it because, with your song, you are speaking God's joy to the people around you. It's like instead of passing them a drink, you're handing them some Holy Spirit so that they can get a little relief from whatever's got them down. When you're high on God's joy, when you share that joy, then you're walking wisely.

WHAT DOES YOUR WISE WALK LOOK LIKE?

You walk wisely when you think with God's mind, when you get high on God's joy. So, what would it be like if we took the 15 minutes immediately following this church service, and we spent them wisely? What would our church be like if everyone saw a stranger in the atrium and didn't think, "what makes me comfortable?" but thought with God's mind. "No matter how different we are, God loves that stranger and died for them just like he did for me. And now he's put us together in this church to speak encouragement and joy to one another." How amazing would it be if we were all a little wiser after church? What does a wise Sunday afternoon look like? How about a wise Monday? Let's be people that think with God's mind and get high on God's joy.

PRAYER

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, you have given us mind-blowing wisdom in your word. Make us wise. Help us know your will and do it. And help us appreciate how much you love us. Unleash our voices to speak and sing to one another so that your joy lives in us all week long.

Amen.