

“DEARLY LOVED CHILDREN OF LIGHT: SHINE!”

EPHESIANS 5:1-17

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I would like to focus this morning primarily on living as children of the light and as wise children before God.

We are God’s dear or beloved children (5:1).

We are called to be imitators of God and to mimic or mirror His righteousness and goodness before the world as His children (5:1).

We don’t become children by doing so; rather, we are the children of God, Jesus’ younger siblings, and so because of this grace shown to us, we are to live as children of light.

Today we will focus on imitating God as children of light, who are discerning and wise children.

Last sermon we looked at the aspect of being God’s children as **walking in love as a costly self-sacrifice** (5:1-2).

Focus on two aspects of being God’s children this sermon: 1) We are to live in the light and so shine our lights before a dark world; and 2) We are to be discerning and wise.

Remember the goals of studying Ephesians (the purpose of the letter of Paul): Unity (1:10), Maturity (4:13), True Spirituality (5-6).

Because of God’s great sacrificial love for us in Jesus Christ, we have become His dearly beloved children. As God’s children we are called to live sacrificial lives of costly service in imitation of Christ our elder brother.

As imitators of Christ and dearly loved children (Eph. 5:1), we are called and empowered by God’s Spirit to reflect God’s Glory- -His light in a dark world. “Let your light so shine...” our Lord teaches.

As God grants us grace through His Spirit we are to live as children of light and wisdom, not partaking in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but rather we are to live exposing evil ignorance and sinfulness in the way we walk.

Living as discerning and wise children of light is to walk in love; it is to live self-sacrificially before God; it is to be Spirit-filled; it is to shine one's light before the world!

Summary Scriptural statement in this passage of Paul's Letter to the Ephesians:

^{ESV} Ephesians 5:15-16: Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.

Before we look at what it looks like to imitate God as children of light, let us take the Apostle Paul's warning seriously. In the middle of Paul's teaching on walking as imitators of God in Christ, he warns of God's wrath for the children of disobedience.

He does this to show that there are real consequences for our sins.

Some folks even claim to be children of God, but in the fact that they are NOT imitating God, but rather living like the world, they can have no assurance that they are truly children.

Again, becoming the children of God is never by our works; our works never justify us before God; on the works of Jesus Christ alone can save us and makes us beloved children.

However, we can not claim to be children if we are not seeking with the weakest faith we have to become like a strong Christ; we cannot claim to be children and be assured of this fact if we do not see any of Christ in us.

This is the important truth revealed in Ephesians 5:3-6.

Paul's argument is this: "You are to be imitators of Jesus as God's children; sexual immorality, impurity, covetousness, filthy and foolish talk is the fruit of the children of darkness.

"Let no one deceive you with empty words..." (5:6)

Let no one tell you through deception that you are a child; let no one assure you of escaping God's wrath if you are showing yourself to be in fellowship with darkness, rather than in fellowship with the Triune God.

"Don't worry; they are just being judgmental..." "Repentance? Why you've already done that- -don't worry, God is a loving God- he'll overlook the way you're living..." "Man, my family sure is legalistic, always telling me to turn to God and be careful of my sins..."

“I’m ok, you’re ok” (in its many forms and variations throughout the years).

“You’re a modern woman (a modern man), being this way is not sinful, you are liberated...” “Don’t worry about what they say about your sins- -you’re fine...don’t worry about it- -I love you, and that’s all that matters!”

THESE ARE EMPTY WORDS!

THEY PROMISE, THEY GUARANTEE, BUT THEY ARE LIES!

- Sanctification-Holiness leading to our assurance before God.
 - God’s goal for his children: “holy and blameless before him” (1:3-4); “that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish” (5:27).
 - No shame and fear to live holy lives (this will not change a person), but a reminder that they are children of God (5:1-2) - -dearly loved by God.
 - **Let the Gospel be the motivator for change;** the Gospel empowers those who are living inconsistently to understand who they are in Jesus.
 - Then as they grow in holiness or Christ-likeness, they gain assurance of their being children. The Apostle John brings these two thoughts together: children of God by grace and purification:

ESV 1 John 3:1-3: See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ² Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. ³ And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

- **No holiness? No Assurance.** Not perfection, but imperfect glimpses of Jesus’ character (Read 5:3-7).

ESV Ephesians 5:3 But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.

ESV Ephesians 5:12 For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret.

- Sexual immorality, impurity, covetousness, filthiness, foolish talk, and/or crude joking: “No inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God” (5:5).
- **No family resemblance?** Not the least bit of a similarity? No assurance that one is a Christian.
- I realize soberly that we have all got a long way to go. I realize that some of you have very fragile and sensitive consciences. I am aware that I also struggle with sin, and know very sympathetically how easy it is to be duped in a temptation or to be seduced by the evil one.
- I also know how often we are soberly reminded by God in Scripture to make sure that we are who we say we are. The demons believe and shudder, James says (James 2); Our Lord says many will say to me on that day ‘Lord, Lord’ and he will say he did not know them; Peter tells us to make our calling and election sure (2 Peter 1:10).
- Part of making our calling and election sure is evaluating before Scripture our Christian life and love. Are we fighting against indwelling sin? Have we been desensitized to sin? Do we have a healthy fear of God as LORD and father? We must be warned by verses 5-6 of chapter 5.
- ***^{ESV} Ephesians 5:5-6: For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. ⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.***
- We should seek to find out if we are truly called and elect. Do we have faith? Do we believe in Christ alone for our salvation alone? Do we want to imitate him and be like him?
- We should make the distinction between our being justified by faith alone once and for all as a reality received by faith alone, and the joy of assurance that comes to us after we have grown.
- Assurance is not of the essence of faith; you can have true faith and not necessarily possess assurance of salvation yet- -but you should seek assurance as you learn to rest more and more in what Christ has done for you and what he is doing in you now through sanctification.

- But our assurance can be spoiled by sin.
- Westminster Confession of Faith is clear on this biblical truth:

*WCF 11.5 God doth continue to forgive the sins of those that are justified;(1) and, although they can never fall from the state of justification,(2) **yet they may, by their sins, fall under God's fatherly displeasure, and not have the light of His countenance restored unto them, until they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg pardon, and renew their faith and repentance.**(3) (1)Matt. 6:12; 1 John 1:7,9; 1 John 2:1,2. (2)Luke 22:32; John 10:28; Heb. 10:14. (3)Ps. 89:31,32,33; Ps. 51:7-12; Ps. 32:5; Matt. 26:75; 1 Cor. 11:30,32; Luke 1:20.*

*WCF 18.3 This infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith, but **that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties, before he be partaker of it:(1) yet, being enabled by the Spirit to know the things which are freely given him of God, he may, without extraordinary revelation, in the right use of ordinary means, attain thereunto.**(2) **And therefore it is the duty of everyone to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure;(3) that thereby his heart may be enlarged in peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness in the duties of obedience,(4) the proper fruits of this assurance: so far is it from inclining men to looseness.**(5) (1)1 John 5:13; Isa. 1:10; Mark 9:24; Ps. 88; Ps. 77:1-12. (2)1 Cor. 2:12; 1 John 4:13; Heb. 7:11,12; Eph. 3:17,18,19. (3)2 Pet. 1:10. (4)Rom. 5:1,2,5; Rom. 14:17; Rom. 15:13; Eph. 1:3,4; Ps. 4:6,7; Ps. 119:32. (5)1 John 2:1,2; Rom. 6:1; Tit. 2:11,12,14; 2 Cor. 7:1; Rom. 8:1,12; 1 John 3:2,3; Ps. 130:4; 1 John 1:6,7.*

*WCF 18.4 True believers may have the assurance of their salvation divers ways shaken, diminished, and intermitted; as, **by negligence in preserving of it; by falling into some special sin, which woundeth the conscience and grieveth the Spirit; by some sudden or vehement temptation; by God's withdrawing the light of His countenance, and suffering even such as fear Him to walk in darkness, and to have no light:(1) yet are they never utterly destitute of that seed of God, and life of faith, that love of Christ and the brethren, that sincerity of heart and conscience of duty, out of which, by the operation of the Spirit, this assurance may, in due time, be revived;(2) and by the which, in the mean time, they are supported from utter despair.**(3) (1)Cant. 5:2,3,6; Ps. 51:8,12,14; Eph. 4:30,31; Ps. 77:1-10; Matt. 26:69-72; Ps. 31:22; Ps. 88; Isa. 1:10. (2)1 John 3:9; Luke 22:32; Job 13:15; Ps. 73:15; Ps. 51:8,12; Isa. 1:10. (3)Micah 7:7,8,9; Jer. 32:40; Isa. 54:7-10; Ps. 22:1; Ps. 88.*

The great Augustine of Hippo, who was a very worldly and sexually immoral guy before God's saving him, said once: "Give me chastity and self-control- -but not yet."

The Scripture that God used to save him from darkness and to transfer him by God's power into the Kingdom of Light was:

ESV Romans 13:11-14: Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.¹² The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.¹³ Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy.¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

How can we be imitators of God as dearly loved or beloved children? (5:1)

Walking in the Light- -no more darkness- -but now- -DISCERNMENT.

Why are we not to be involved with darkness- -because we have been rescued from darkness. As the Apostle Paul says in Colossians 1:

ESV Colossians 1:13-14: He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

“From darkness to light” pattern of conversion from the Kingdom of Darkness and the Kingdom of Jesus:

ESV Acts 26:18 to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

ESV 1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

ESV John 8:12 Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

“Walk as children of light (5:8)- Not darkness (5:3-7)

- Walking in light; walking in darkness (a contrast)
 - “The fruit of light” (5:9- “What is good and right and true?”)

ESV Philippians 4:8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

- A tree depends upon the light to be fruitful. In contrast, place a tarp over a bush, tree or grass for a season, and you will find the results of what darkness brings to the living (slugs! ☺)
- Place tomato plants, or flowers, or tropical plants on the inside, and they will not be fruitful, but they will die.
- “The works of darkness” (4:18)- in Ephesians, darkness is ignorance, error and evil:

ESV Ephesians 4:17-18: Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. ¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.

“The works of darkness are unfruitful” (5:11):

ESV Ephesians 5:11 Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.

- **Walking in light; God is light** (5:8)- Reflecting God’s Glorious Light/Being like Christ (another way of speaking of imitation):

Illustration (from Bryan Chapell’s friend, quoted in *Ephesians*, REC, 250).

It was a full moon over a ridge in the Colorado Rockies- -the sky was a vanilla glow. A man heard a goose, when he looked up he saw not one goose but thousands flying overhead.

The man saw flocks filling the sky from mountain to horizon. In the dark, the man was able to make out the white underbelly of each bird and as they flew in formation, they were like strings of Christmas lights across the beautiful night sky.

“The beauty and wonder of the sight were a gift of the Creator to John [my friend], causing him to marvel that God could make these ordinary creatures bear such dramatic witness to the glory of their maker.

But it was not until years later that John wrote of the greater wonder that the event brought to his mind and heart. He realized that he had been able to see each goose because its breast was reflecting light off the snow, which was reflecting light off the moon, which was reflecting light of the sun on the other side of the earth millions of miles away.

The light from each creature that provided such beauty and wonder was not from the goose but was derived from a vastly distant sun sharing its glory at the will of the Heavenly Father.

The glorious light of the Son in creatures like us is Paul's theme in this portion of Ephesians (5:8-21)."

How does our light shine? How do we reflect the glory and beauty of Jesus as children of light?

- Goodness, like God's goodness and generosity. **Goodheartedness toward others instead of malice (Eph. 4:26-27)**
- Righteous, like God's righteousness: Holy and blameless before others (1:3-4); God's image of righteousness displayed as we put on the new man who we are in Jesus Christ (4:24). **Honoring God's standards in living a separated, consecrated, holy life and not indulging in sensuality and selfishness (Eph. 4:19; 5:3-5).**
- Truth; God is truth: Speaking the truth in love (4:15, 25); loving the truth; being conformed to the truth (4:23-24). **Showing integrity (a "whole-some" person before God and man; speaking truthfully as opposed to old habits of lying and deceit (Eph. 4:25).**
- Light: transparency in our life before God and each other; living before God's face ("Lift up your countenance" "Let your light so shine...")
- Walking in light that exposes darkness and keeps Christians alert and soberly awake!

^{ESV} Ephesians 5:13-14: But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, ¹⁴ for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

^{ESV} Romans 13:11-14: Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. ¹² The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³ Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. ¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

ESV 1 Thessalonians 5:5-8: For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. ⁶ So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. ⁸ But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.

A few weeks ago in our sermon series when I focused on “filling with the Spirit” contrasted with drunkenness, I reminded you of how drunkenness and sleepiness go together as evil enemies aimed to cause Christians not to be **sober and alert** in their service and anticipation of the return of the Lord!

Walking in the light is to be awake to the reality that the end is at hand (1 Peter 4:7ff), and to walk not in a sleepy-like state with regard to wickedness, but to be wise to its influences and dangers.

Living as children of light exposes the seduction, lies, and deception of the evil that is in this present age.

Through our “light works” or witness as children of light, God can use these to expose the unfruitful works of darkness, and by the power of His Spirit can awaken the dead from their sleep (5:14).

As Christians, we must seek to stay awake.

Nature of awakenings: Christians begin to be more aware of the brevity of their lives, the dying lost who are under God’s wrath, and begin to live as those who have been redeemed as children.

How specifically? By seeking to know what is pleasing to God in every circumstance they find themselves in.

Not merely outward external performance of duties to God; but from the heart, desiring to do what pleases him. As Bryan Chapell says we are to “delight in God’s delight” (*Ephesians*, 253).

Mere outward conformity of the law and the commands of God can be done with hearts far from God rather than having hearts pleasing before him, saturated by God’s grace.

- **We are to be “Discerning Children”** (5:10)- “What is pleasing to the Lord?”

ESV Romans 12:2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

We must always engage the world with Christ while guarding ourselves against the world.

- The main war is not “out there” but in the heart (this prevents us from buying into the “fortress mentality” of sheltering in Christianity and/or the monastic so-called “solution” to the evils of the world.

“Monastics become invisible and irrelevant by detaching themselves [from the world]. But Compromisers [with the world] become invisible and irrelevant by blending in. Christ has a different plan. He is different from the world. Holy” (Ed Welch).

- Our hearts must keep their eyes on Christ (5:1- “imitating Christ”) and be reminded of who we are as God’s children- -we are to keep our identity in Christ before us as we engage the world and guard our hearts.

Paul Tripp reminds teens: “I have said to my children many times, ‘There is a war out there. It is being fought on the turf of your heart. It is fought for the control of your soul. Each situation you face today is a skirmish in the war.

Be careful, be aware of the battle. Don’t forget that there is a scheming enemy out there who is out to deceive, divide, and destroy. Go out there knowing that to win you must fight. You must not relax, you must not forget.”

Ed Welch writes: “...Worldliness is most effective when it gradually numbs or sears the conscience. It saves the prostitutes for later, while it now urges us to try “obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking” (5:4).

What is the difference between knowledge and discernment?

ESV Ephesians 5:8a,10 “Walk as children of light...and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.”

Discernment is about applying the knowledge we have of God’s Word in certain situations. We know God’s revealed will such as “Thou shall not murder, commit adultery, covet, etc...”

...But **how in this specific situation** do I live for God in a way that is pleasing to him?

Those who walk in darkness and disobedience are described as not possessing discernment (Isaiah 27:11; 29:14; 44:18-19; 1 Cor. 1:19).

Biblical texts on discernment:

Discernment is to be a mature Christian (cf. Eph. 4:13-16) able to constantly practice distinguishing good from evil:

ESV Hebrews 5:14 But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

ESV Romans 12:2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Discernment is something we should pray to God to possess more of in our lives:

ESV Philippians 1:9-11: And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment,¹⁰ so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ,¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Discernment is to be wise in the way we live:

King Solomon was granted a discerning wise and discerning mind by God:

ESV 1 Kings 3:12 behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you.

Wise folks are discerning in the way they live:

ESV Proverbs 16:21 The wise of heart is called discerning, and sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness.

ESV Proverbs 17:24 The discerning sets his face toward wisdom, but the eyes of a fool are on the ends of the earth.

ESV Proverbs 14:8 The wisdom of the prudent is to discern his way, but the folly of fools is deceiving.

Discerning, mature Christians know that their hearts deceive them and they have hidden faults that only God knows about:

ESV Psalm 19:12 Who can discern his errors? Declare me innocent from hidden faults.

What is discernment doing?

- Living before the face of God
 - Not taking any situation or decision lightly or carelessly
 - Taking our sinful, deceptive hearts seriously
 - Knowing our tendency to deceive ourselves and others
 - Knowing how easy it is for us to forget that our “fellowship” with darkness is no more- -that we are now children of light and we called to live in a way that is not as “natural” and perhaps as “easy” as before
 - Keeping our constant focus on God
- What kind of questions does **discernment ask?**
 - **In context of Ephesians and what Paul has said thus far; here are helpful questions:**
 - How does the sensuality and greed of the world affect me? The hundreds, maybe thousands of daily messages on internet, TV, billboards, friends, etc advertise darkness all the time.
 - How do I think? What is my imagination focused on? Do I intentionally live by Christ’s Spirit watching for polluted thoughts that have been shown to me, or arise from my sinful heart?
 - Do I know the difference between holy and righteous anger and self-centered anger?
 - Do I love my spouse as Christ loved the Church? Do I submit to my spouse as the Church submits to Christ?
 - Am I seeking to obey my parents in the LORD, and repent of my devious deeds and departures from God’s Word?
 - Do I seek to be filled with the Spirit daily?
 - Am I aware of the wrath of God and does this motivate me to fear God in a healthy way?
 - Do I seek counsel from others in Christ’s body before making a decision because “we are members of one another”?

- How do you determine what is best for you and your family?
- What is most pleasing to the LORD?
 - For education, marriage, business relations
 - For friendships and companions
- We should never be guided by feelings, nor by mere inclinations to do something that we think is a result of prayer (e.g. “I prayed about this and have a peace, etc.”).
- Rather, we must search the Scriptures, seek counsel, go with what is opposite to your “gut” many times- -find out the best way to die to self, and to serve another, and you’ll find what is most pleasing to the Lord.

ESV Ephesians 5:11-12: Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. ¹² For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret.

But HOW are we supposed to “take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness”? We live in this world!?

- “Take no part” or “having nothing to do with” (*synkoinoneo*, συγκαινωνεῖτε)- means “partnership” or “partaking” (from *koinonea* common fellowship).
- “Partnership” means that we have aligned ourselves, often without conscious intent, with a worldview that exalts acceptance by others and self-indulgence (Ed Welch).
- Stay away from evil. Remember, a little leaven works through the whole lump...
- Be warned against unhealthy friendships, companions, and especially relationships with the opposite sex who are in darkness and live according to darkness.
- Friendship with an unbeliever is not the same as “partnership”.
- But we need the Body of Christ most of the time in our relationships. This is our TRUE FELLOWSHIP AND PARTNERSHIP in Jesus Christ (Eph. 4:1-6). Why?

Scripture teaches that our hearts can be hardened by sinful unbelief and that we are easily distracted and cannot persevere without encouragement from our family in Jesus:

ESV Hebrews 3:13 But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

ESV Hebrews 10:24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

- **How to expose darkness?** Live as light. Live loving and forgiving, and serving as Christ came to live, love, forgive and serve.
- Live honestly before God knowing our own hearts (especially in light of Paul's very strong admonition in Ephesians 5:3-7); some questions we might ask:
 - How do the sensuality and the greed of the world affect me and my thinking?
 - Am I preoccupied with being accepted by worldly people; am I constantly bombarded with unclean images and worldly thoughts of money?
 - Do I need to take captive the thoughts in my heart and mind?
 - Am I sobered by God's wrath in a healthy way?
 - How much time do I waste (I have heard that most spiritual folks reply when asked at the end of their lives to the question 'What would you have done differently?' say: "I would have taken more time to pray.")
- Show the better way to friends and family who are lost in the dark.
- We cannot completely remove ourselves from the world, from our relationships, from those who practice evil and darkness (we would have to leave the world as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 5:9).

ESV 1 Corinthians 5:9-10: I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people - ¹⁰ not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.

- We must however, seek to be aware of our easily influence our own sinful hearts are in the presence of evil and darkness; how easily we are "prone to wander" and to forget righteousness.
- We must live in relationships and friendships living for Christ and showing the hope of a life of holiness and love for Jesus.
- We must not make friends and have companions with the wicked thinking that we will not become like them...

Ultimately we must be wise!

“We are to walk as wise children” (5:15-17)

- Wise children (5:15-17) - “What is the best use of my time?” (5:16); “What is the will of the LORD in this particular situation?” (5:17)
 - Walking as a fool; walking as wise (a contrast)

Wisdom is not less than God’s Law and Commandments, but it is so much more.

Wisdom is about taking what we know about Christ, His truth, His Word, and His commands and applying them in each part of our lives.

Where does this truth apply in the nitty-gritty, detailed moments of my day?

- I am to witness to unbelievers? How will I not become like them if I get too close?
- Watch out for using wisdom as an excuse for witnessing and/or being a Christian when in reality you’re just a coward.
- How much of popular culture should I know in order to be able to contextualize the gospel properly?
- How much do I show forth the kindness and grace of Christ in my political involvement and convictions? Do I truly live as if I am fighting more for an earthly kingdom than a heavenly one?
- Should I drink with others in order to have a forum for showing them that Christians can be “cool” too?
- What should I do if I marry another Christian, but they are not of my same confessional background?
- What’s the difference between being in the world and not of it?
- When have I become unnecessarily strange in my faith toward unbelievers? When have I become too close and involved in my faith with unbelievers?
- I think especially for those Christians who have experienced the unnecessary limits of legalism, they have to be wise when they discover their newfound liberty in Jesus- -they must be aware that they now can go too far in the liberality direction.
- Listen to Sovereign Grace Music or the Beatles?
- Take time to write a friend who is discouraged and tweet, chirp and bark on Facebook?
- Watch this ‘R’ rated movie, even though I don’t cuss- -what is the worldview and mindset of the characters?
- Read my bible in devotion or read ‘Jane Eyre’ and ‘Huckleberry Finn’.
- “All things in moderation” sounds good- -but our hearts are weak- -we don’t live like this really.

That's why we need wisdom from God.

Do you seek wisdom from God?

Do you ask for wisdom for your children?

Do so, because God promises it to His children when they ask- -especially when they realize that they don't have any, and need it desperately!

James 1:5-7: If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. ⁶ But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

We have learned about counting the cost- -but we must also count the time.

How much time do we actually have here?

Words and images such as “vapor” “mist” and “brevity” biblically characterize our lives.

ESV Psalm 90:12 So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.

- Pray for each other, especially to be pure in heart before Jesus, and to recognize the reality that we are children of God.
- Pray that we will seek to be filled and speak Scripture and encouragement to one another as a body- -do it!
- Pray for discernment in yourself; your family; your children.
- Seek God for wisdom in each situation so that you can confidently know what pleases the Lord.
- Don't be a monk, but don't be partners in a sinful world.
- Be alert, sober, and awake in the light.
- Be the light as you reflect the Glory, Beauty and Goodness of Jesus Christ as “imitators”.

Don't withdraw; don't deceive yourself.

But be who you are a child of God.

Live the costly and sacrificial life imitating Christ in this world.

Be the light of the world in the darkness- -exposing evil by your very presence in a group.

Be different- -but don't seek fortresses or monasteries.

Be different- -be holy- -be consecrated as you go into the world to bring God's people to Himself.

JESUS SAYS: "I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD"

I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life.

BE IMITATORS IN HIM: REFLECT HIS GLORY!

SHINE, CHILDREN, SHINE!

^{ESV} Philippians 2:14-15: Do all things without grumbling or questioning, ¹⁵ that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world...

^{ESV} John 1:4-5: In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

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