

## Walk Carefully; Ephesians 5:15-17

- I. Walk
  - A. A way of living, manner of life
    - 1. We walk every minute of every day
    - 2. This is our way of living, so our walk is very important
    - 3. Our direction is determined by our walk (we can say one thing and behave in a completely opposite manner)
  - B. Walk in love
  - C. Walk in light
  - D. Walk carefully
- II. Carefully
  - A. Ephesians 5:15 (ESV); Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise,
  - B. Strict conformity to a standard or norm, with focus on careful attention, accurately, carefully, well <sup>1</sup>
  - C. “We’ll just wing it”
    - 1. A phrase we use when we cannot come up with a plan to complete our objective
    - 2. Some are just ‘winging it’ through life — they have no plan
    - 3. Proverbs 29:18 (ESV); Where there is no prophetic vision the people cast off restraint, but blessed is he who keeps the law.
    - 4. “Cast off restraint” — the Hebrew word literally means, to let your hair down
    - 5. We can understand this as living in the moment without any thought of the future — without inhibitions
  - D. Patrol planning
    - 1. Before any combat patrol we would have to plan everything out
    - 2. We would sit down with a map and go over our objective, the route, the enemy emplacements, what to do should we have any enemy contact
    - 3. Our walk (lives) is one big, long combat patrol (we are part of the Lord’s army)
    - 4. We must carefully plan out not only our route, but also what to do in case we’re attacked (we will be attacked)
    - 5. 2 Timothy 3:12 (ESV); Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,
  - E. Carefully means to look around so you don’t stumble
    - 1. When we are setting up our defensive positions, we walk the terrain
      - a) We look for any place the enemy can hide
      - b) We look for any place the enemy can find cover
      - c) We mark off distances so we know how far the enemy is from our defensive positions
      - d) We set up fields of fire so we don’t accidentally shoot someone who is friendly
      - e) We set up a final protective line that if the enemy crosses we fall back to secondary defensive positions (all set up the same way)
      - f) Could you imagine “winging it” during a battle?
    - 2. “Winging it” causes stumbling
  - F. We must walk intelligently and not in ignorance
- III. Discernment
  - A. We must plan wisely (which requires discernment)
  - B. Unwise — one who lacks the power of proper discernment, unwise, foolish <sup>2</sup>
  - C. Ephesians 5:16 (ESV); making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.

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<sup>1</sup> William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 39.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 144.

D. How do we make the best use of our time?

1. James 3:13–17 (ESV); <sup>13</sup> Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. <sup>14</sup> But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. <sup>15</sup> This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. <sup>16</sup> For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. <sup>17</sup> But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.
2. Colossians 4:2–6 (ESV); <sup>2</sup> Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. <sup>3</sup> At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison— <sup>4</sup> that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak. <sup>5</sup> Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. <sup>6</sup> Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

E. Ephesians 5:17 (ESV); Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

F. This discernment, or understanding, of the Lord's will is so important for our walk and our faith — it is our purpose!

G. God's two-fold eternal purpose

1. God wants all men to be saved
  - a) 2 Peter 3:9 (ESV); The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.
  - b) Therefore, we tell people about the mighty works of God
  - c) 1 Peter 3:15 (ESV); <sup>15</sup> but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,
  - d) Therefore we take up our cross daily, we die to ourselves, we renounce all that we have — we work and serve in the Kingdom
  - e) Matthew 5:14–16 (ESV); <sup>14</sup> “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup> Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. <sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.
  - f) Ephesians 2:8–10 (ESV); <sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.
2. He wants the saved to become more like His Son
  - a) Romans 8:28–29 (ESV); <sup>28</sup> And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. <sup>29</sup> For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.
  - b) Our task is to be conformed to the image of Christ

H. Proper discernment of God's will for us, His children, is so important for our walk with Him

IV. Walk Carefully

- A. Have you identified (discerned) your end goal?
- B. Have you made a Patrol Plan?
- C. Understanding who God is and what his will is for us is key to walking carefully