

**12.08.19 ~ Ephesians 5:15-21,
"Be Careful, Be Wise, Be Filled, Be Humble"**

Everyone is born separated from life with God, because of sin (**Ephesians 2:1-3**).

When anyone comes to God, repenting of sin and trusting in Christ for salvation; that person, according to what we have studied in chapters 4-5 of Ephesians, is led by God's Spirit (**4:1**) to live in a manner worthy of One who saved him; (**4:2**) to live in humility, as a sinner saved by grace; who is (**4:3-16**) to live in unity with members of the body of Christ; while (**4:17-32**) living separated from the ways of the world, as citizens of heaven; seeking (**5:1-7**) to imitate God, our Father; by (**5:8-14**) letting the light of Christ shine through us as we testify about Him, while seeking (**5:15-21**) to do God's will, with wisdom and understanding, in submission to Christ, as we study and apply God's Word to our life.

Paul instructs us in **Ephesians 5:15**, to "Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise." As we walk through this life we are to be looking and listening, evaluating with great care and alertness, the devils tactics and schemes.

The devil is working overtime to destroy the work of God and to disable the servants of God; and so, we must walk carefully, being wise and alert to his deception.

Christians are not immune to foolishness, nor is there a guarantee that we will not become confused; in fact, if you believe God's Word for salvation, but fail to accept as truth all the rest of it, you may very well become deceived; also, if you disobey or fail to hold firmly to the revealed Word of God, your spiritual compass will fail and your sense of direction will be compromised.

There is no excuse for a Christian to be foolishly led astray, when God's wisdom is available to guide us; but we must be committed to knowing and applying God's Word.

Paul declares (**Ephesians 5:16**) that we should be "making the most of [our] time, because the days are evil." For many of us, life can be a series of unfinished projects and good intentions that, at times, accomplished very little or nothing.

As Christians, we ought to redeem all the time we can and devote it to the Lord's work. One of the most spiritually foolish things a Christian can do is to waste time and opportunity, to doddle away at life in trivial and half-hearted service to the Lord.

Paul's desire was to use every minute of his life in the fullest service to God (**Acts 20:24**, NIV '84), "However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I

may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me - the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace."

Near the end of Paul's life, he reflects on his life (**Timothy 4:7**), "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith."

Many times we get so caught up with earthly concerns we forget that our life on earth is but a brief moment of time.

James 4:13-14, "Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.' Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are *just* a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away."

Many Christians today have compromised the teaching of God's word and have become complacent in honoring, obeying, and proclaiming God's Word; this has led to a growing spiritual atrophy, which has resulted in a departure from accurate Biblical teaching; with much of the so-called "church" falling victim to the godless culture that surrounds it.

This should not happen. God's people are not to believe or behave like the godless world around them, we are to be different (cf **2Corinthians 5:17**)!

See **Ephesians 5:17**. Our priorities must be God's priorities; the cure for foolishness and failure is to know and to do the will of God.

Romans 12:2, "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."

The will of God is not a secret. The Bible reveals God's clearly stated will, that we will know and respond to salvation through Christ!

Acts 4:12, "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."

Acts 2:21, "And it shall be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Acts 16:31, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved."

1Thessalonians 5:9, "For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ."

2Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance."

1Timothy 2:3-4, "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

John 14:6, "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.'"

God wants you to be set apart as His child, doing that which pleases and represents Him, so that others will see Christ in you and want to know God.

See **Ephesians 5:18**. Those who belong to God through Christ are to live in a manner that is honoring to God, obedient to God's Word, controlled by God's Spirit, exemplifying God's Son.

Paul warns us not to be controlled or influenced by alcohol, leading us into debauchery or decadence (to squander or waste self). Alcohol and other drugs can bring us to ruin by seducing, corrupting, and perverting us to the point of moral deficit -- knowingly and willfully we put substances into our body that negatively affect our physical/mental health, our behavior/beliefs.

God's point is clear, we are not to be influenced by anything that leads us away from God's control in our life. Instead of alcohol & drugs, we ought to fill ourselves with the things of the Spirit (God's revealed Word and Will).

Note: Scripture does not teach us to pray for or to ask to be filled with the Spirit, or the things of the Spirit.

See **Acts 4:29-31**. **Acts 4:31** is often cited as proof that we should pray for the Spirit, or ask God to fill us: *"And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness."*

But in the context of that passage, the believers aren't praying "to be filled," (**Acts 4:29**) but that they might "speak [God's] word with great confidence [boldness]," the result (**Acts 4:31**) is that they were filled with the Holy Spirit and allowed to speak the Word of God boldly.

Although people are definitely "filled" with the Spirit of God at times, asking or "praying" to be filled with the Holy Spirit is not taught in Bible:

Concerning John the Baptizer (Jesus's older cousin)...

Luke 1:15 says will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth. In **Luke 1:41**, when Elizabeth hears Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. **Luke 1:67** His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied.

Concerning Peter (fisherman turned Apostle)...

Acts 4:8, "Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: 'Rulers and elders of the people!'"

Concerning Saul (renamed Paul, the Apostle)...

Acts 9:17, "So Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.'"

None of the above "fillings" are in response to prayer, yet, the people were filled with the Holy Spirit. We find statements in the Bible "about" being filled, but there is no instruction for us to "ask" or seek to be filled; in fact, the only passage in the New Testament that commands us to "be filled with the Spirit," is **Ephesians 5:18**.

The Greek word translated "be filled" (in Ephesians 5:18) is *pleroo*, [literally, "be being kept filled]."

Born into the family of God, we cry out, like a newborn baby, for food, comfort, care, etc. In order to be continually filled with God's Spirit, we must feed on the Word of God, confessing our sins, surrendering our will and intellect, and using our time, talent and treasure to serve and to honor the Lord (cf. **Galatians 2:20**).

See **Ephesians 5:19-20**. Paul says here, that when we are filled [consumed] with the Spirit we should be, "speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with [our] heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father."

See **Ephesians 5:21**. This verse is a transition into the larger section (**Ephesians 5:22-6:9**), where we are instructed about relationships between husbands and wives, Christ and His Church, parents and children, and masters and slaves [employers and employees].

In short, we are to be subject [submit] to one another [this is a military term meaning to align ourselves under]. Christians are to willfully submit to one another, out of reverence for the Lord we serve.

A nation, church, organization, institution, agency, or family, cannot function without a chain of command or a line of authority; and those with the responsibility to lead, do not necessarily have their authority because they are better than anyone else, but for the most part because they have been appointed to hold these positions in order give oversight and provide management, for the purpose of functionality, and the overall productivity of the unit.

God commands all Christians: husbands as well as wives, parents as well as children, employers as well as employees, to have the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus (**Philippians. 2:5-8**) "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

All believers are spiritual equals in every sense; and we are to submit to one another out of reverence for and submission to the Lord, who loved us enough to die for us, that we might receive forgiveness for sins and adoption into God's eternal family.

We are to be expressing our love for one another as members of one body, encouraging one another to be careful and wise to feed upon, exemplify, and proclaim God's Word, as we humbly serve the Lord together.

Galatians 3:28, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

Colossians 3:17, "Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father." **23-25**, "Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality."

Pastor Mike
>'(((><