

"The Practice of the Believer"

Ephesians 4-6

Part 15

Introduction: Today we are returning to our study of the book of Ephesians. The last time we were together was in April, so I need to give you a little background to get our minds prepared.

Notice Ephesians 5:11

In this verse Paul warns his readers about getting involved in the works of darkness. The idea here is that we are surrounded by darkness and if we are not careful, we can grow accustomed to the darkness. There is such a saturation of darkness in our society, and we must stay alert so that we do not slipped into the ways of the world. Listen to the words of an unnamed writer:

"Our magazines are loaded with accounts of sordid crime, our newsstands with concentrated corruption. We are engulfed in a tidal wave of pornographic filth. Television has put us in the dark with Sodom and Gomorrah—right in the living room. We get used to it, acclimated to it. We accept, as a matter of course, its art, its literature, its music, its language. We learn to live with it without an inner protest."

Not only are we to not get involved in the deeds of darkness but we are to reprove them. This means we are to watch out for one another. If we see a believer getting close to the darkness it is our responsibility to help them to see the error of their ways.

Notice Ephesians 5:12

We are not only to avoid the deeds of darkness, but we are also not to even speak of what is done by those involved. We must NOT speak of them because just talking about the deeds of evil will arouse the appetites in people.

Romans 16:19

¹⁹ For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.

Application:

I want to just pause here for a few thoughts if we could. I have said this many times and I will continue to say that we are in a day that is very dangerous. The forces of evil have always been very strong but today they are given many more opportunities and so there are many more dangers around us.

We need to understand that the demonic spirits are very powerful. I am not just talking about physical power, but I am talking about power over the mind.

1 Peter 5:8

⁸ *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:*

Satan is looking for people whom he can use and people whom he can destroy. We as believers must be very careful about what we allow ourselves and our families to get exposed to. We you get too close to the darkness you can open a door for the demonic world to have great influence over your life and over your thoughts.

Let me just remind you of the power of Satan. He is the most powerful being ever created by God.

Jude 1:9

⁹ *Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.*

Michael the archangel would not even get in a dispute with Satan for he knew better than to do so. Satan wanted the body of Moses to possess it and thus make it look like he had been resurrected and then lead Israel into destruction. Michael knew that only the power of God was greater than Satan's power.

The Devil is NOT some make believe character. He is real and he is extremely powerful. If he and his demonic spirits gain access to the mind, we are in no way a match for them.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

³ *For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:*

⁴ *(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)*

⁵ *Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;*

The STRONG HOLDS here are fortresses. They are ungodly, evil, wicked thoughts and philosophies. They are thoughts and reasonings from the beings of darkness.

When a person exposes themselves to the darkness this is what can happen. Satan uses many means to get people exposed. He uses television, books, and the internet.

I cannot caution you enough to be careful! You who have young children must be very alert to what is happening in their lives. You better be praying over them and filling their minds with God's Word. That phone they carry can be the open door that exposes them to the demonic world. You cannot be too cautious.

Now let us get back to Ephesians.

Notice Ephesians 5:13

We are to live as light to expose the deeds of darkness.

Notice Ephesians 5:8

Matthew 5:14-16

¹⁴ *Ye are the light of the world.* A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

¹⁵ *Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.*

¹⁶ *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works,* and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Proverbs 4:18-19

¹⁸ But *the path of the just is as the shining light,* that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

¹⁹ *The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.*

Notice Ephesians 5:14

Here is a call for believers to wake up. Many have become apathetic. Many have been lulled to sleep by the comforts and the ease of this old world. They do not see the dangers. They look at people who stand up and speak of the dangers of spiritual darkness as those that are RADICAL and EXTREME. Let me just say that evil is RADICAL and EXTREME and destroying thousands of lives each day. So, it is good to be the same as we stand against it.

This now brings us to where we are in our study today.

I. Walking Circumspectly

Notice Ephesians 5:15

In this letter Paul is very concerned about the Christian WALK.

Ephesians 2:10

¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Ephesians 4:1, 17

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

¹⁷ This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

Ephesians 5:2, 8

² And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.

⁸ For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

Now here in 5:15 Paul calls the believer to walk "circumspectly". The word means, "EXACTLY" or "ACCURATELY". If we look at another verse, we can better understand what Paul is saying here.

Matthew 7:13-14

¹³ Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

¹⁴ Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

In verse 14 we see that the way to eternal life is through the STRAIT GATE. This would be Jesus Christ.

John 10:7-9

⁷ Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.

⁸ *All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.*

⁹ *I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.*

So, Jesus is the Door/Gate. Then in Matthew we see that the path we walk after that is NARROW.

Matthew 7:14

¹⁴ *Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*

Getting back to what Paul is calling for in Ephesians then is to walk in the middle of this path. This is the circumspect walk. It is to stay away from the edges. It is to stay out of the briars and the bushes. It is to walk in the will of God and be very careful not to get exposed to dangers.

Websters definition of circumspect means **“to be wary and unwilling to take risks”**.

Notice Ephesians 5:15 again.

We are not to walk as FOOLS but as wise men. What does it mean to walk as a fool? Let us notice another verse.

Psalm 14:1

The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.

The fool lives like there is no God. He lives as though the warnings and the commands of the Bible false. He lives to please his own personal desires of the flesh. I want to connect something else here.

Matthew 7:21-27

²¹ *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*

²² *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?*

²³ And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

²⁴ Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

²⁵ And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

²⁶ And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

²⁷ And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

Jesus Words make it very clear. The foolish man who refuses to heed the Words and the warnings of Jesus Christ is like a man who builds his house upon the sand. There is no stability.

Application:

There is an application here for believers in all of this.

When the warnings of the Word of God are ignored, and you get off of the narrow path you can expect trouble in your life and not just for you but also for your entire house.

II. Redeeming the Time

Notice Ephesians 5:16

Here Paul calls on believers to redeem the time because the days are evil. I want to explain to you what he is calling us to do. He is NOT calling on us to make full use of every minute of the day. It is good however that we do not waste time.

John 6:11-13

¹¹ And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.

¹² When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.

¹³ Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.

Here in Ephesians 5:16 Paul is calling us to seize every opportunity available to glorify God. This means that when there are opportunities to serve the Lord those opportunities become top priority. This is not the way many believers operate. They have their own personal agendas, and it is their own personal desires that are top priority. Serving the Lord happens only if there is not something else to do. It is rare that people will sacrifice their time and their desires in order to meet the needs of others.

Philippians 2:19-22

¹⁹ But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state.

²⁰ For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state.

²¹ For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.

²² But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel.

Conclusion:

Paul tells us the days are evil.

Listen to the words of Stedman:

"These are evil days, not only because of the widespread fears and tension and violence, but also because of the materialism that creates such hollowness and emptiness within. But what is the result? It is the evil days that make people want to know the truth about God. It is the evil days that give us opportunity to demonstrate Christian life. Therefore, buy up the opportunities. Understand, as you look at life, that this is the way life is."

Psalm 90:10-12

¹⁰ The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

¹¹ Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.

¹² So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.