

Be Filled

Ephesians 5:15-21



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Ephesians 5:15-21 (KJV) "See then that ye walk¹ circumspectly², not as fools³, but as wise, {16} Redeeming the time, because the days are evil⁴. {17} Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. {18} And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; {19} Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; {20} Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; {21} Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."

The Word of God frequently **uses the word "walk" to describe the process of living**. This is the Greek peripateo {pronounced per-ee-pat-eh'-o, Present Active Indicative, habitual action implied}, and if I were to translate this text from the Greek it would literally be "keep on walking". That is a wonderful description for living - walking - for this is the first thing we all learn to do. We walk! We who are under the sound of this Scripture are commanded to "keep on walking" - *circumspectly*², that is, [akribos² {pronounced ak-ree-boce'}] *carefully*². We could say that the Scripture is telling us "watch your step!" . Those who "keep on watching their step" are *wise*, whereas those who do not "watch their step" are *foolish* or *unwise* [asophos³ {pronounced as'-of-os}].

1. You Are Commanded By God To Avoid Walking In The World Because You Live In An Evil Age

Ephesians 5:15-16 (KJV) "See then that ye walk¹

circumspectly², not as fools³, but as wise, {16}
Redeeming the time, because the days are evil⁴."

The Bible tells us that **the days are evil**⁴ (poneros⁴ {pronounced pon-ay-ros'}, *wicked* and *full of pain*). When our Lord Jesus prayed for His Church, He knew that He was leaving His Bride in a wicked world. Yet He had to go and leave the Bride, so that she could carry on His work of preaching the glorious Gospel of salvation. Jesus said in His prayer:

John 17:14-17 (KJV) "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. {15} I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. {16} They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. {17} Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

This prayer in itself shows us all that there are *two conditions* a person can exist in. You can either be *in Christ, and thus hated by the world*, or you can be *in the world, and thus loved by the world*. When Jesus prayed, He prayed that His Church, those *called out believers* in Him, would *remain separate* from the evil of this world.

Why are "**the days evil**", as our Ephesians text tells us? The days are evil because each day finds itself inhabited by *spiritually dead* people. When a person is physically born into this life he or she is born *physically* alive but *spiritually* dead. This is the curse that Adam brought on all of humanity. As the Scripture says:

1 Corinthians 15:22 (KJV) "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

Adam's legacy, the *inheritance* that he left for us all, is a condition the Bible calls *spiritual death*. Every child born is born physically alive but spiritually dead. We do not like to think this, that every precious child and every precious grandchild is born *spiritually dead*, but they are. Further, those who are *spiritually dead* quite naturally (or unnaturally, depending on how you look at it) walk *according to the ways of evil*. The Bible says:

Ephesians 2:1-2 (KJV) "And you hath He [God] [made alive] who were dead in trespasses and sins: {2} Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:"

Prior to salvation by faith in Christ, a work that Jesus Christ referred to as being *born again* (**John 3:3, 7**), you walked according to the **course of this world**, that is, you walked following that dead sin nature that was inside you. Everything you did prior to salvation was *dead works*, for it came from a spiritually dead vessel. Even the *good things* you did - and unbelievers do accomplish *apparent* good things - were tainted by the sin nature that permeated your entire being. When God looks at someone who is not born again His judgment is:

Romans 3:10-12 (KJV) "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: {11} There is none that

understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.
{12} They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."

ILLUSTRATE

When **you were dead you walked like *dead men***. In fact, there's a good modern phrase for this. In North Georgia *capital punishment* is still very much carried out. On the day an inmate is to be executed as he is walked that final mile to the electric chair anyone approaching that person is warned by the guard, who says "dead man walking". This is the state of every person prior to salvation by faith in Christ. We were all ***dead men walking, physically alive but spiritually dead***. Our every work, a production from a dead man walking. But once we were saved, once God the Holy Spirit entered our lives and made us alive, we became *living and new creatures* for whom the Scripture says:

2 Corinthians 5:17 (KJV) "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

The old things passed away. The old dead life went away, and we were raised to newness of life. Yet were we made completely sinless? Absolutely not! We still sin, and fall into sins trap if we are not careful. Why is this dangerous? Because the Bible teaches us:

Romans 6:23 (KJV) "For the wages of sin is death."

Sin brings corruption, sin brings death. The believer is like a person who was bitten by a deadly pit viper. That

person was dying, its venom going through the body and destroying the host. Yet by calling on the name of Jesus that person was given a *wonderful anti-venom*. Though the condemnation of Adam still hung on every believer, the Blood of Christ brought *eternal life* and a promise of one day being in Heaven with Jesus.

But now listen, My Beloved! Sin brings with it *corruption and death*. **Christians are saved by Grace - not to continue *living in sin* - but they are saved to live their lives for Jesus in this present evil age.** The believer, freed from the *overwhelming power of the Old Sin Nature*, was not freed so that he could sin without worrying about it. The Bible warns:

Romans 6:1-2 (KJV) "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? {2} God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"

We were dead to God and alive to sin, now we are dead to sin and alive to God. Set apart from the rest of the world, the Christian walks *carefully* lest he fall back into the trappings of the world. Why does this matter? Again, remember that **the wages of sin are death**. Sin is unnatural, against the Law of God, against the normalcy of creation. If I were given anti-venom to counteract the poison of a pit viper, why should I pick up that snake once more? No Beloved. **Freed from the snake of sin we are commanded to *walk carefully*, lest we fall back into sin's snare (2 Timothy 2:24-26).**

The wages of sin are death, and those who step into

sin's snare step into something destructive. Christians who should know better fall into sexual sin, and in so doing bring the terrors of AIDs and HIV into their lives. They find themselves out of fellowship with God, and under His terrible hand of discipline. They, like Hezekiah (**2 Kings 20:2-3**), find their lives shortened, and the Death Angel telling them "get your affairs in order". Like **Saul**, the believer who has fallen into sin's snare finds himself *not* master of his domain but *mastered* by his domain. Like **King David** the believer who falls into sin can find that:

2 Samuel 12:10-11 (KJV) "... the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. {11} Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun."

Sin's wages are terrible, for they shorten life. Further, when the believer walks outside of God's Will, following after sin instead of after the Spirit of God, the believer angers God while delighting the Devil. Oh my Beloved, if I could tell you of the times I have had believers sharing how sin had ruined their lives. How many pulpits were destroyed by arrogance, how many ministries by careless walking? How many children of the stumbling saint have walked away from the Gospel of salvation, ridiculing it, because the parent mocked that Gospel by how they walked in this life?

Praise God that we do not have to live our lives trapped in sin's snare. The solution? **We who are saved do not walk following sin, but we walk following God the Holy Spirit.**

2. You Are Commanded By God To Walk Empowered By The Holy Spirit of God

Ephesians 5:18 (KJV) "... And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled⁵ with the Spirit;"

Praise God! The believer is not trapped in a state where we must walk as the world walks, but the **believer is enabled** to walk according to God's Will!

Notice that there are **two commands** in this verse. One command is a *negative command*:

be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess

And one command is a *positive command*:

but be filled⁵ with the Spirit

Now follow this for a moment: **God would not command us to do something that cannot be done.** We do not serve that type of God. Our God is *faithful*, and ever loves us:

1 Corinthians 1:9 (KJV) "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord."

Our God told Israel to **take the Promised Land.** Our God

told King David to move the Ark of the Covenant. Our God told His people to **cross the Red Sea**. Our God told Noah to **build an Ark**, by which his family was saved. Our God told Sarah, Abraham's wife, that she would have a child, and be the mother of many nations. Our God told Joshua to lead Israel **seven times around Jericho (Joshua 6:20)**, and said that the walls would fall at that appointed time. **What God commands, that God empowers, Blessed be His Name!**

The believer is commanded to be filled⁵ with the Spirit. Not to be filled with wine, but to be **filled⁵** with the Spirit. How is one **filled⁵** with the Spirit? Well, let's look at the word itself. This is the **Greek pleroo⁵** {pronounced play-ro'-o, Present Passive Imperative}, which means *to fill to the top, to render full*. What is most important in this verb is *the VOICE it is in*. A Greek verb has *tense*, *voice*, and *mood*. Now I don't have time to explain Greek grammar in detail, but I want you to understand this. Our verb in this sentence, pleroo⁵ {pronounced play-ro'-o} is in the Present *tense*, the **Passive voice**, and the Imperative *mood*. A verb in the *Passive Voice* means that the subject of the sentence - that's the Christian - *receives the action of the verb*. **Do you make the Holy Spirit fill you? Absolutely not!** I cannot make God do anything. But I can do this. **I can get out of the way and let God do what He will with me.** This is what the *Passive Voice* of pleroo⁵ declares. That is also what the context of our verse suggests.

How is the believer *filled with the Spirit*? What do we do to be *filled* with the Spirit? **The Bible never tells a believer how to be filled with the Spirit, it just**

commands that we be in that state. The filling of the Spirit is so amazingly simple and easy to receive that many Christians fail to ever reach that state. The truth of the matter is, the **filling of the Spirit is the natural state that every Christian should be in.** When the believer **actively avoids sin and sin's negative behavior** then God the Holy Spirit is free to **empower that believer for service.** How do we know this?

First we know it because **Jesus promised it.** He said:

John 7:37-39 (KJV) "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. {38} He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. {39} (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)"

The Spirit was not given to the believer until Christ ascended unto Heaven. Once Jesus was glorified, though, the Spirit of God came to indwell every believer saved by faith in Christ. The Spirit of God in you *will empower you to serve* as long as you remain obedient to Him. It is **a matter of yieldedness: to whom do you yield yourselves, to God or to sin?** The Bible says:

Romans 6:12-14 (KJV) "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. {13} Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the

dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. {14} For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."

If you are *yielded* to God then God the Holy Spirit will empower you to service. If you are yielded to sin, then *sin, rather than God the Holy Spirit*, becomes your controller. Many Christians over the years have discovered this to be true. Yield to God, live in God's care. **Yield to self, to sin, to Satan,, and live under sin's dominion.**

Jesus said, "**If you're hungry, come to Me and drink**". The power of the *filling* of the Spirit **comes on the believer** submitted to God. If you **yield yourself to God, God empowers**. If you yield yourself to sin, *sin destroys*.

There are many today who profess the name of Christ who yield to sin, to self, and to sorrow. God wants more of you, dearly Beloved! The Christian is **called to a long obedience in the same direction**. We are not called to anything but loving faithfulness to our God, and He has promised to provide the empowerment. God told the Corinthians:

2 Corinthians 4:1-2 (KJV) "Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; {2} But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

The Apostles lived their lives without seeing the spread of the Gospel over the world. Most of the Churches that Paul addressed failed, or were failing, and thus the reason God used the Word to write to them. **Though the Apostles saw little fruit in their ministries they avoided sin and trusted God.**

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (KJV) "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. {17} For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; {18} While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Though by all outward evidences it appeared that things were bad, the Apostles trusted the Risen Savior, continuing forward for Jesus. As **they avoided sin's trap God the Holy Spirit empowered them, filling them so they could serve Jesus Christ.**

3. What Must I Do?

Ephesians 5:18-21 (KJV) "... but be filled with the Spirit; {19} Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; {20} Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; {21} Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."

The Bible is very clear as to the Christian's responsibilities in the fellowship of the Church. I **must avoid sin, and if I do sin, confess** my sin to God (**1 John 1:8-10**). But barring sin and yielding to the Holy Spirit, what am I commanded to do? Our context tells us clearly. Look at **verse 19**:

"Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord ..."

What does that sound like? Don't it sound a lot like *Church services*, singing and praising God? Notice the word *yourselves*. The **Christian is called to a life of service to God within the Church**. The Christian is *gifted* by God the Holy Spirit to serve the Creator *within* the Church assembly. We see the same thing taught in:

Colossians 3:16-17 (KJV) "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. {17} And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."

What do I need to do?

1. First, avoid sin. If you have sin in your life, confess it to God and move on! You should neither dwell on the sin, obsessing on its evil, nor should you entertain that sin.

2. Yield to God the Holy Spirit and the Word of Christ (the Bible). The Christian who will not yield to both God and Spirit is either *carnal*, or *no Christian at all!* It is a matter of submission.

3. *Work together in the Church to the glory of Christ*. Sing together, pray together, love together. You have been given salvation by Grace, the Greatest Gift in the world. Praise God in Christ. Praise Jesus. Praise Him, praise Him! The early Church found its most phenomenal growth when each member of that Church **was in one accord and in one place**. The Scripture says:

Romans 12:10 (KJV) "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;"

as well as in our closing text:

Ephesians 5:21 (KJV) "... Submitting⁶ yourselves one to another in the fear of God."

Submitting⁶ is the Greek verb *hupotasso* {pronounced hoop-ot-as'-so, Present Middle Imperative}, which means *to be in subjection to, to yield to another*. We are to yield to one another **in the fear of God**, not for any other reason. The Christian life is a *yielded* life, yielded to God and yielded to *family*. **Listen Beloved: God works within the framework of yieldedness**. In fact, God showed us how to yield, when He knelt and washed the disciples feet, when He spread His arms and allowed them to be nailed to the tree. If He yielded His life for us,

the least we can do is yield our lives to one another -
praise to His Blessed Name!

In the name of Jesus Christ:

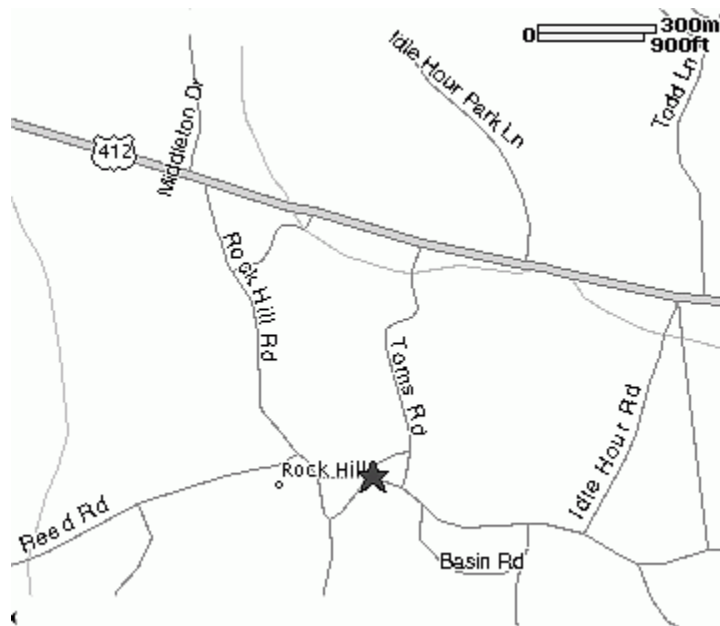
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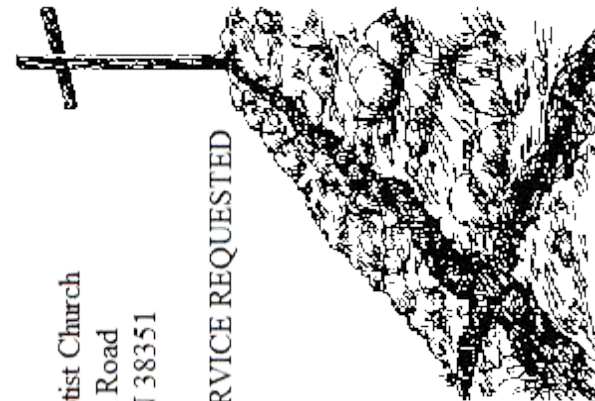
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