

Week 20: "Wise Living"

Day One: "Living Carefully"

Read: Ephesians 5:15-17

Reflect: Who do you know that you admire because they consistently "walk the talk," that is, they live out what they confess?

Dig: How is the thought of verses 13-14 of Ephesians 5 connected to verse 15?

Look up Colossians 4:5-6. What reason is given in this verse for living wisely?

Look up and read Proverbs 4:7-14 and answer these questions:

- a) How is wisdom described in Proverbs 4:7-9?
- b) What is the result (verse 12) of walking in wisdom?
- c) By contrast, what must we avoid (verse 14)?

Does wisdom have more to do with knowledge or more to do with skill in living?

Apply: List the 3 top challenges to wise, God-directed living that you are likely to come up against today. Now write out a prayer asking God to help you live wisely in those anticipated situations.

Week Twenty: "Wise Living"

Day Two: "Making the Most of Opportunity"

Read: Ephesians 5:15-17

Reflect: What use of your time is wasteful or might even expose you to temptation?

Dig: In the Bible there are both "clock time" (chronos) and the "right time" (kairos). The word "opportunity" in Ephesians 5:16 is kairos time-that is, it carries with it the hint of a divine appointment. How does Ephesians 2:10 help you understand the concept of divine appointments in your life?

What reason is given for our making the most of every opportunity?

According to Ephesians 2:1-2, who is behind this will?

How did we participate in it?

According to 2 Corinthians 6:2, what time is it?

Apply: In the space below, ask God's forgiveness for wasting or not being attentive to his divine appointments in your life... and also write out a short prayer that the eyes of your heart would be opened to his "kairos" moments today.

Week Twenty: "Wise Living"
Day Three: "Don't be a Fool"

Read: Ephesians 5:15-17

Reflect: What is one of the most foolish things you have done in your life?

What are the consequences of that foolishness?

Dig: Since Ephesians 5:17 begins with the word "therefore" being foolish is connected to the thought of the previous verse. So, taking into account Eph. 5:16, what is one way to be foolish?

What is the primary way that the Bible describes a fool? (See Psalm 14:1)

In Ephesians 5:4, what are "foolish talk and coarse joking" contrasted to?

How are living unthankfully and living as if there is no God (the fool says in his heart, "There is no God") connected? ... That is, how might one produce the other?

Apply: In the space provided here, list 5 things you are grateful for.

Conclude by asking God to deliver you from ungratefulness (foolishness).

Week Twenty: "Wise Living"
Day Four: "Knowing God's Will"

Read: Ephesians 5:15-17

Reflect: Why is knowing God's will daily important?

How do you go about finding out God's will for daily practical living?

Dig: According to Ephesians 5:8-10, what do children of the light try to find out?

According to Colossians 1:9, what did Paul pray for?

And according to that same verse, how does knowledge of God's will come-through what?

According to 1 Thessalonians 4:3, what is a very important part of God's will for us?

According to Ephesians 4:21, how is truth (God's will) described?

Apply: What have you already been taught about the "truth in Jesus" that you are not yet practicing at the level of obedience to which God is calling you?

Ask God for the power to take another step of obedience. Write out a prayer of confession and intercession for yourself.

Week Twenty: "Wise Living"

Day Five: Lectio Divina

Read: Ephesians 5:15-17 "Be very careful, then, how you live-not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is."

Lectio divina (a Latin expression which means Sacred reading) is done in three stages:

- reading: you read the passage slowly and reverentially, allowing the words to sink into your consciousness: after you have memorized the text, write down one word which strikes you and draws your attention and note why you chose that word.
- meditation: you allow the passage to stir up memories within you, so that you recognize in it your own experience or that of people who have touched your life: write down memories of events or conversations or other scripture passages.
- prayer: you allow the meditation to lead you to prayer -- thanksgiving, humility and petition. Write out a prayer based on the passage.