

Ephesians: What's God Saying to You? What are You Going to Do About It?

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I. Introduction

God says there are two ways we can live this life, the way of the fool or the way of the wiseman. One of these ways is everywhere; it's in the air we breathe, in the culture that surrounds us. It sounds right, it seems to make a lot of sense but it's actually senseless. It's what gives us things like swingers and over 50 genders. Then there's God's way. His way unveils the foolishness masquerading as wisdom. It reveals what is truly right and truly wrong.

II. Ephesians: What is God Saying to You and What are You Going to Do About It?

Chapter 5

God calls us to live wisely not as fools. Why? Because we're no longer who we used to be. We used to be complete fools who followed a philosophy of life that was not our own; it was given to us by God's enemy, 2:2. We had no clue that we were following it, but we were. However, God has now rescued us from that system. He's adopted us into His family and made us one with His Son, 2:4-10. This means that we're brand new: we're actually alive now, no longer dead, 2:1, 5. We have a different spirit beating inside us, 2:18, 22; 3:16-19. Now, we have Jesus teaching us the way of life, 4:20-21.

5:15, before Jesus found us, how did we used to live? We lived by the philosophy and spirit of the world; what the world said about pleasure, money, marriage, sex, work, race, depression, etc., is what we lived by. And the spirit that controls the world does not come from man, but from Satan, i.e., everything "good" or bad that the world has to offer finds its origin in Satan, 2:1-3. This is who we were and God doesn't want us to return there. He doesn't want us to be taken in by the world's trickery and deception, 4:14. We are no longer ignorant, blind, or separated from the life of God, therefore, God demands that we not live that way anymore, 4:17-19. Instead of that dead and wicked existence, God wants us to live carefully, wisely with eyes wide open to the reality of who we are and the enemy who wants to destroy us, 4:27. To live wisely means we pursue the life and works God has for us, 2:10. It means we do everything differently, our emotions, speech, job, money, forgiveness, sex, etc., 4:26-32; 5:3-5. It means we live and love the way God does, 5:1-2. It means we walk in God's light instead of Satan's darkness, 4:18; 5:8-14. And we must do so with a sense of purpose and urgency because the days we live in are evil, i.e., Satan is everywhere, 2:2; 4:14, 27; 5:11; 6:12. His influence is all around us. We have no time to waste.

5:17, in light of Satan's constant attacks and our need to navigate wisely through them, we need to know what the Lord's will is. That is, we need to be able to differentiate between Satan's view of life and the Lord's. Satan has a clear and wicked view on every aspect of our lives and he's constantly trying to get us to live by it. That is why we must be sure what God says about life, all of life, so that we follow the Lord and not Satan.

5:18, instead of getting drunk with wine (or high on any drug), we are to be filled by means of God's Spirit. This doesn't mean that we need to take a giant drink of the Spirit so that we'll be filled "with" the Spirit. We already have the Lord's Spirit inside us, 2:18, 22; 3:16-19; 4:6, which is why we grieve Him when we sin, 4:30. Instead, what the Lord means is that just like alcohol (or any other drug) takes control of our body and makes us do things, the Lord wants us to let His Spirit fully control our lives. He wants us to give Him complete control of every aspect of our lives from our emotions to our speech to our sex life to our parenting to our work life, everything, 3:16-19; 4:26-6:9.

It's OK to drink alcohol, one of the blessings God gave man is alcoholic beverages, Deuteronomy 14:22-26; Psalm 104:14-15. Our Lord drank wine every time He celebrated Passover (which is always celebrated with wine not grape juice). In fact, Jesus made approximately 120 to 180 gallons of great wine at a wedding feast (and make no mistake, it was wine not grape juice; this is obvious from the maître d's comments) John 2:6-11.

But it's NEVER OK to get buzzed or drunk, God is absolutely OK with us drinking alcohol, but He's NEVER OK with us getting buzzed or drunk. And getting "buzzed" is getting drunk; anytime you're affected in an obvious way by the alcohol, you're under its influence. God gives ample and clear warnings against drunkenness: it leads to many wicked, dangerous, and foolish things, Proverbs 4:17; 20:1; 31:4-5. The alcohol looks wonderful and enticing, but it's actually a viper that stings. It will make you hallucinate and say perverse things. You'll wake up with wounds unknown to you and it will bring sorrow, contentions, and complaints, Proverbs 23:29-35.

5:19, there are several things that will result from us allowing God's Spirit to control our lives: it will lead us to hear God's voice not just when His Word is preached but when it's sung. It will lead us to quote Scripture to one another. It will lead us to sing and make melody in our hearts to the Lord together and individually. In other words, as we live by God's Spirit, His voice is the one we'll hear as we evaluate the world around us even during worship service.

5:20, it will also make you more grateful. In the name of the One who rescued us, Jesus Christ, we'll actually thank God for everything, even the bad things (including pandemics) because we'll see just how God used all of it for our good (Romans 8:28).

5:21, finally, the Lord's Spirit will teach us a new way to see authority, ours and those over us. Instead of fighting it, we will willingly submit to those who have the right of authority over us, whether a husband, parent, or employer, 5:22-6:9. And perhaps more importantly, His Spirit will enable us to submit to those under us whether a wife, child, or employee. Instead of seeing ourselves as someone with unquestionable authority, we'll exercise authority the way God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit did towards each other. We'll realize that at the heart of who God is lies a sacrificial love and heart that longs to lay down its life for others. For example, when God the Father needed the Son to die for mankind, Jesus, though He was equal to God the Father in every way, He didn't insist on His deity. Instead, He laid down His life willingly at the Father's behest (Matthew 26:36-39; Philippians 2:5-8). This is what God's Spirit will teach us about submission and authority.

III. Conclusion

See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.