

Walking in Unity

Written by Mike Mitchener

Thursday, 08 March 2012 11:27 - Last Updated Friday, 20 April 2012 13:31

“Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. □ And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,□ addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart,□ giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” – Ephesians 5:15-20.

This passage in Ephesians answers a crucial question about a topic that was brought up in chapter 4, verse 3 of Paul’s letter. As believers, we are called to be “eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

The question is:

**H
ow can we, as the body of Christ, walk in unity?**

People tend to move toward dis-unity. You do not have to look very far to see how fragmented and divisive mankind can be. **It just comes naturally.**

However, God desires unity for His people, so He supernaturally **creates**

it as He places people from diverse backgrounds, different cultures, and radically different walks of life into **one body**

And what **unites**

this one body? The blood of Jesus Christ, and His subsequent resurrection are the superglue that binds us together!

But as powerful as the “glue” is, believers are commanded to **maintain** the unity. In other words, believers are always at work either maintaining unity or creating division.

Either working for Him or against Him!

And what genuine believer consciously wants to divide what the blood of his Savior has

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put together?

Ephesians 5:15-20 looks at two specific ways we should walk in order to *maintain unity*

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1. If you want to walk in unity, you have to walk in wisdom (Ephesians 5:15-17)

Walking in wisdom means to walk with precision, accuracy and exactness -- not carelessly or without proper guidance or forethought. Sometimes we get so busy that we don't give things much forethought.

Don't fall into this trap!

Don't wander through life not knowing where you are going.

Don't leave life to chance.

Make wise decisions, seeking to do the will of God.

It should go without saying, but walking in such a way is a *mark* of true wisdom. Fools drift with the wind and the tide, but wise men follow a specific course.

For example, only a fool would set out in a sailboat on a day with no wind, with no destination in mind. He would accomplish absolutely nothing on his journey.

A wise man, however, would plan in advance, making sure to set out on a day with favorable weather with a charted course in hand.

There is an often-quoted Harvard study showing the benefits of "charting your course." Harvard's graduating class was asked to take a survey related to setting goals. Only 3% of the class had written down specific goals at the time of graduation. A follow-up survey 10 years later revealed that the 3% who had set goals had made more money than the other 97% combined.

Perhaps this "study" is a myth, but the positive effects of goal setting are well documented! There is power and wisdom in putting goals and plans in writing.

Ephesians 5:16 says that we should walk wisely, "making the best use of the time." Life is short!

Take a few moments to write down the activities that you did this past week.

You had 168 hours. How did you use your time?

Can you honestly say that you made the best use of that time?

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Not “good” use of your time, not “busy” use of your time, but the *best* use of your time?

Did you spend time in God’s presence, seeking His face?

Did you walk humbly, surrendered, broken?

Did you build up the body of Christ?

Did you have any eternal conversations with the hurting or the lost?

Did you worship the Lord; were you made to be a success or a worshipper?

Did you care for your physical health too?

I could ask many more probing questions, but I think you get the idea.

You just can’t buy any more time! So you need to be sure to “redeem it” so that it has the highest value you can possibly get out of it. It is a gift from God to be used wisely. God is not impressed with busy people.

He is impressed when you use your time the way He intended:

worshipping Him, walking with Him, and working for Him -- ministering to the lost and needy in the context of your profession.

You were placed on this earth to worship God as you meet the needs of a lost and dying

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world, sharing the love of Christ and the message of the gospel to those around you.

2. If you want to walk in unity, you have to be walking in the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18-20)

In Ephesians 5:18, Paul gives us insight into what it is like to be filled with the Spirit. It is the opposite of getting drunk with wine.

Think about it – when a drunk takes a drink, he yields control of his body and his decision-making processes to the alcohol.

Instead, we need to yield ourselves to the control of the Holy Spirit.

If you are a Christian, He is already in you.

You won't get "more" of Him.

However, the more you yield to Him, the more evident the fruit of the Spirit will be in your life.

A wise man's walk is characterized by being controlled by the Spirit. As a believer, you have all of the Holy Spirit; but the real question is,

"Does the Holy Spirit have all of you?"

Ephesians 5:19-20 describes what it looks like when a person is filled with the Spirit. They "address one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with their heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Yep, you guessed it.

Just like walking in wisdom, walking in the Spirit boils down to worshipping God!

The term "worship" is actually best defined as the recognition of God's moral authority in your life and thus being obedient to Him. This worship *shows up* in a person's life through singing, serving, giving thanks, etc.

Worship is *not* the stirring of emotions to music. God addresses this kind of empty praise in the book of Amos (5:14-15, 21-24) when He tells the Israelites that He would not accept their worship rituals, services, and offerings because they were coupled with immorality and wickedness.

Without the root of worship (obedience to God), the result of worship (singing, giving thanks, etc.) is

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nsive

to God.

WOW!! Take a moment and meditate on THAT!

God desires true worship from His people. He created Adam and Eve to worship Him. He may have given Adam the task of gardening, but Adam was to do his work as an expression of worship.

What were you created for?

To be a mechanic, or a mechanic who worships?

To be a teacher, or a teacher who worships?

To be the president of a large company, or a CEO who worships?

You were created, first and foremost, to be a worshipper -- to worship and serve a holy and righteous God.

To maintain the unity created by God, we should first and foremost carry out our call to worship God. Walking in wisdom leads to worship of God. So does walking in the Spirit. Ephesians 5:15-20 points at these two ways for us to walk in order to maintain unity. As each person in the body of Christ carries out his/her role as a worshipper of God, the unity of that body will be maintained.