

Ephesians 5:15-16 Commentary

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Ephesians 5:15 **Therefore be careful** * **how** you **walk**, not as **unwise men** but as **wise**, ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: **Blepete** (2PPAM) **oun akribos pos peripateite**, (2PPAI) **me os asophoi all' os sophoi**.

BGT Βλ πετε ο ν κριβ ς π ς περιπατε τε μ ς σοφοι λλ ς σοφο ,

Amplified: Look carefully then how you walk! Live purposefully and worthily and accurately, not as the unwise and witless, but as wise (sensible, intelligent people) ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

ESV Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise,

KJV: See then that ye walk **circumspectly**, not as fools, but as wise,

NET Therefore be very careful how you live— not as unwise but as wise,

NIV Ephesians 5:15 Be very careful, then, how you live--not as unwise but as wise,

NLT: So be careful how you live, not as fools but as those who are wise. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

NLT (updated) So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise.

Phillips: Live life, then, with a due sense of responsibility, not as men who do not know the meaning and purpose of life but as those who do. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: Be constantly taking heed therefore how accurately you are conducting yourselves, not as unwise ones but as wise ones

Young's Literal: See, then, how exactly ye walk, not as unwise, but as wise

ASV Look therefore carefully how ye walk, not as unwise, but as wise;

CSB Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk-- not as unwise people but as wise--

NKJ See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise,

NRS Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise,

NAB Watch carefully then how you live, not as foolish persons but as wise,

NJB So be very careful about the sort of lives you lead, like intelligent and not like senseless people.

GWN So then, be very careful how you live. Don't live like foolish people but like wise people.

BBE Take care then how you are living, not as unwise, but as wise;

THEREFORE BE CAREFUL HOW YOU WALK: blepete (2PPAM) oun akribos pos peripateite, (2PPAI):

- **Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise** Eph 5:33; Mt 8:4; 27:4,24; 1Th 5:15; He 12:25; 1Pe 1:22; Re 19:10
- **how you walk** Ex 23:13; Mt 10:16; 1Co 14:20; Php 1:27; Col 1:9; 4:5
- Ephesians 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Ephesians 5:15-21 Walking Carefully in an Evil Day](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 5:15-16 God's Wisdom for Families](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 5:15-17 Walking Wisely](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 5:15 Walking in Wisdom, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Ephesians 5:16-17 Walking in Wisdom, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

Be as **careful** and **wise** as **Jonathan Edwards** was when he wrote in his diary at age twenty

Resolved, never to lose one moment of time, but to improve it in the most profitable way I possibly can.

(I would add the prayer Ps 90:12 So teach us to number our days, That we may present to You a heart of wisdom.)

Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise

Therefore ([3767](#)) (**oun**) introduces a logical result or inference from what precedes (so, consequently, thereupon, then). **Therefore** is a **term of conclusion** draws us back to the immediate context, in which Paul has just given the command to be continually awake. But it undoubtedly also goes back to the beginning of this practical section where Paul implored his readers to "**walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called.**" (Eph 4:1+) adding that they were to "**walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk**" (Eph 4:17+). In chapter 5 Paul continued to emphasize the importance of the believer's walk giving the command to continually "**Walk in love**" (Eph 5:2+) like Christ and to continually "**Walk as children of Light**" since they are now light in the Lord (Eph 5:8+). And so here in verse 15, Paul picks up the theme of a worthy walk, emphasizing that it is to be **acareful**

walk, a **circumspect** walk (redeeming time) and a **controlled** walk (filled with the Spirit).

Moule has some great introductory comments to Ephesians 5:15-21 writing that...

THE Ephesians have learnt much now of the details of the holy life, and the last words which they (and we) have heard about it have pointed the thought full upon an element in it which is vital to its health—holy action, holy service. The believer, "light in the Lord," is to shed the light which he receives. There is to be a warm hearth-fire in his own soul's chamber, and a lamp fed with heaven's own sunshine is to hang from its ceiling. But it is also to be a radiant point in the dark world, finding way for its searching beneficent brightness through the windows of the soul, from the beacon-tower of the life, The range of penetration may be vast, or it may be very small. It may command a great region of the earth, or many regions; it may fill an age of time, it may affect all the ages; such was the range of St Paul's radiation, for example. Or it may light up one small neighbourhood, one poor home, the visitors to one sick-room; it may be limited in time by only a fragment of the disciple's one short life; such was no doubt the range of radiation for many an Asian saint then, as it is for many an English saint now. But the point is that there is intended to be radiation outward where there is light within. The Master's service is to be the dear object of the redeemed life. The sacred light is given indeed for the being's own bliss, rich and large; but it is never given to terminate there. And they best meet the Master's will who most willingly and most continually so keep the windows clear that the light within may radiate around, for conviction, and for gladness, just as freely and as far as may be.

Happy they who, by His grace, so serve Him. **Do we not know such lives?** They "cannot be hid"—not because they advertise themselves; that is the very last thing they do. But it is unmistakable that they are enjoying a great light within, and it "will out." Such (to keep close to our own time, and to no very extended circle) were William Pennefather, Arthur Blackwood, Frances Havergal. Such was that great light-bearer so recently called from us, D. L. Moody. Such are cherished names still among us, known to thousands who owe them more than they can ever tell, for the light brought by them into the thick darkness of worldliness, sin, doubt, and fear. But there have been, and there are, countless others whom no Christian history will ever name, but who live in transfigured hearts on which they have shone. Their "record is on high."

The Apostle comes now to a few more lines of general caution and precept, before he approaches his final topic, the Christian Home. **He has to appeal again for a grave remembrance that the "walk in the light" is no mere promenade, smooth and easy, but a march, resolved and full of purpose, cautious against the enemy, watchful for opportunity for the King, self-controlled in every habit, and possible only (if it is to be a reality) in the power of the eternal Spirit.** It is to be a walk, onward and upward, of holy and habitual praise, of fellowship in spiritual help, and of a mutual submission which means forgetfulness of self in the recollection of others, in the Lord...

See therefore, with eyes spiritually open to the path and its environment, that you **walk** (it is the seventh time that this pregnant word has been written - 8x in 7v - Eph 2:2 2:10 4:1 4:17 5:2 5:8 5:15) accurately; recollecting the importance of detail, **fully aware that life is made up of steps and incidents, and that nothing in it lies outside the claims of God.** Spend watchful thought upon duty and opportunity; think nothing trivial in such matters as use of time, manner of act and speech, consistency in common things;

not as unwise men, blind to the import and occasions of the passing day, and the relation of time to eternity, but as wise men, with that holy wisdom which comes of heart-concord with the will of God, and with a watchful use of thought and of every faculty for its ends. As you walk, make all you can of the events of life, to use them for Him.

[\(Ephesian Studies: Expository Readings on the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Ephesians - Goto page 265\)](#)

Be careful how you walk - carries the idea of looking around carefully so as not to stumble, which Paul explains equates with walking intelligently and not in ignorance.

F B Meyer in his comments on **King David's** sad failure to keep watch (cp 1Chr 20:1) warns that

"THERE are times and tides in the affairs of men; favorable moments for doing and daring, for attempting and achieving (cp Esther 4:14+). Hours when the ship must be launched, or it will have to wait for another spring tide. Days when the seed must be sown, or it will have to tarry till another autumn. Royal natures (**Ed**: Beloved as a believer, you are a "Royal Priesthood"! 1Pe 2:9+) show their quality by taking advantage of times like these, when God and circumstances favor a great attempt. Alas, if long-continued prosperity has robbed the kingly soul of its desire or power to use its sacred opportunity! **Once missed, it may never recur; and the soul that has missed it condemns itself, and loses heart, and surrenders itself to lower and ever lower**

depths of temptation."

Beware of moments and hours of ease. It is in these that we most easily fall into the power of Satan. The sultriest summer days are most laden with blight. There is no such guard against temptation -- next to the keeping power of Jesus, which is all-sufficient (Php 4:13+, 2Co 12:9+, 2Co 12:10+ 1Co 15:10) -- as occupation to the full measure of time and capacity. If we cannot fill our days with our own matters, there is always plenty to be done for others. You think that no one has hired you, but it is not so; the Master has sent you into his vineyard. If you cannot do one thing, you can another. There is the ministry of intercession for those who are in the field. There is the exercise of worship, in which you take your place amongst the priests. There is the ministry of comfort to some of the sad hearts within your own circle.

Redeem the time, because the days are evil. **Watch and pray** (Mt 26:41 - both commands from Jesus are present imperative) in days of vacation and ease, even more than at other times. (Our Daily Homily - 1Chronicles)

Bishop J C Ryle alluded to a **careful...walk** when he said "We may depend upon it as a certainty that where there is no holy living there is no Holy Ghost."

A W Tozer echoed this same thought when he said "The filling of the Holy Spirit (see Ep 5:18) brings a sharp separation between the believer and the world.

John Stott introduces this section writing that "Paul's next little paragraph is based upon two assumptions, first that Christians are sophoi,—wise people, not fools—and secondly that Christian wisdom is practical wisdom, for it teaches us how to behave. His word for to 'behave' throughout the letter has been a Hebrew concept, to 'walk'. Our Christian walk or behaviour, he has written, must no longer be according to the world, the flesh and the devil (Ep 2:1, 2, 3), or like the pagans (Ep 4:17). Instead, it must be 'worthy' of God's call, 'in love', and 'as children of light' (Ep 4:1; 5:1; 5:8). Now he adds a more general exhortation to us to behave like the wise people he credits us with being: look carefully how you walk, he writes. Everything worth doing requires care. We all take trouble over the things which seem to us to matter—our job, our education, our home and family, our hobbies, our dress and appearance. So as Christians we must take trouble over our Christian life. We must treat it as the serious thing it is. 'Be most careful then how you conduct yourselves: like sensible men, not like simpletons' (neb). ([The Message of Ephesians](#))

The **KJV** provides a more literal translation than the NAS rendering it as '**See** (NAS = be careful) **then that ye walk circumspectly** ([akribos](#)) (KJV) The ESV has "**Look** carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise."

William Gurnall rightly said "Set a strong guard about thy outward senses: these are Satan's landing places, especially the eye and the ear."

Be careful ([991](#)) (**blepo**) means to look at, behold, discern mentally, observe, perceive, consider, contemplate, look to in the sense of taking care, take heed. It means perceive with your eyes, the first use in the NT being by Jesus in Mt 5:28 warning that "everyone who looks at a woman with lust" is guilty of adultery! Have your eye on so as to beware of. **Blepo** generally denotes simply a voluntary observation or taking notice of something or someone.

The **present imperative** commands one to **continually** pay especially close attention to how they walk. "Be constantly taking heed how accurately you are conducting yourselves." We need to remember that our heart is more deceitful than all else and that the enemy of our soul constantly prowls around and his desire is for our soul. The only way to be continually on guard is to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18+), Who is continually at work (**energeo** = continually energizing) in us both to give us "the desire and the (supernatural) power" to walk in a manner pleasing to the Lord (Php 2:13NLT+).

Blepo - **NAS** renders **blepo** as - be on guard(1), behold(1), beware(5), careful(1), careful*(1), consider(1), facing(1), keep on seeing(2), look(7), looking(5), looks(1), partial(2), saw(12), see(54), seeing(8), seen(8), sees(8), sight(2), take care(5), take heed(5), watch(1). 117v in NT -Matt. 5:28; 6:4, 6, 18; 7:3; 11:4; 12:22; 13:13f, 16f; 14:30; 15:31; 18:10; 22:16; 24:2, 4; Mk. 4:12, 24; 5:31; 8:15, 18, 23f; 12:14, 38; 13:2, 5, 9, 23, 33; Lk. 6:41f; 7:21, 44; 8:10, 16, 18; 9:62; 10:23f; 11:33; 21:8, 30; 24:12; Jn. 1:29; 5:19; 9:7, 15, 19, 21, 25, 39, 41; 11:9; 13:22; 20:1, 5; 21:9, 20; Acts 1:9, 11; 2:33; 3:4; 4:14; 8:6; 9:8f; 12:9; 13:11, 40; 27:12; 28:26; Rom. 7:23; 8:24f; 11:8, 10; 1 Co. 1:26; 3:10; 8:9; 10:12, 18; 13:12; 16:10; 2 Co. 4:18; 7:8; 10:7; 12:6; Gal. 5:15; Eph. 5:15; Phil. 3:2; Col. 2:5, 8; 4:17; Heb. 2:9; 3:12, 19; 10:25; 11:1, 3, 7; 12:25; Jas. 2:22; 2 Jn. 1:8; Rev. 1:11f; 3:18; 5:3f; 9:20; 11:9; 16:15; 17:8; 18:9, 18; 22:8.

Give me a sight, O Saviour,
Of Thy wondrous love to me,
Of the love that brought
Thee down to earth, To die on Calvary.

Oh, make me understand it,
Help me to take it in,
What it meant to Thee, the Holy One,
To bear away my sin.

Jesus used **blepo** in a similar sense of contemplating in order to beware...

And Jesus answered and said to them, '**See to it** (blepo = present imperative) that no one misleads you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many. (Mt 24:4-5+)

Comment: He is speaking of the times especially preceding His return.

And He was giving orders to them, saying, "Watch out! **Beware** (blepo = present imperative) of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod." (Mark 8:15+)

And in His teaching He was saying: "**Beware** (blepo = present imperative) of the scribes who like to walk around in long robes, and like respectful greetings in the market places... (Mark 12:38+)

Paul used **blepo** with a similar meaning in Colossians writing...

See to it (blepo = present imperative) that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. (Col 2:8+)

The apostle **John** uses blepo to warn the believers to...

Watch (blepo = present imperative) yourselves, that you might not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward. (2John 1:8)

Comment: All believers will receive praise at the judgment or **bema** seat of Christ according to 1Cor 4:5, but some believers shall suffer loss of their rewards as described in 1Cor 3:11-15.

In **Hebrews** the writer warns...

Take care (blepo = present imperative), brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God. (Heb 3:12+)

Wuest adds that you are to "see to it that your conduct is accurate with respect to the demands of the Word of God. It is like a motorist accurately following on the right side of the center line dividing traffic. ([Wuest, K. S. Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: Eerdmans](#))

To reiterate, Paul's command in this passage is calling for continual attention to how we walk. Why? For we are continually in danger of walking down the wrong path, for our mortal enemies (Sin [flesh], Satan, System [of the fallen world]) are continually bombarding us with "fiery missiles" in an attempt to tempt us to doubt the goodness and sufficiency of God's way and try the errant way. (Pr 14:12, 16:25, 12:15)

Circumspectly (KJV) = this word is not directly translated in the NAS.

Circumspectly (199) (**akribos**) means characterized by exactness, thoroughness, precision, accuracy in addition to the associated idea of looking, examining, and investigating something with great care and alertness. **Akribos** pertains to strict conformity to a norm or standard, involving both detail and completeness, with focus on careful attention. In context **akribos** refers to ethical behavior with a focus on careful attention especially regarding the dangers and deceptions that continually assault us from our mortal enemies, the world, the flesh and the devil.

See to it that you walk circumspectly (**akribos** - accurately, diligently, carefully). Walk warily, exactly or diligently. Our English word **circumspect** is from the Latin **circumspicere** "to look around" and in turn is from **circum-** = around + **specere** (think "**spectacles**" - eye glasses) = to look which together convey the literal picture of looking around and figuratively the idea of being cautious. One who is walking circumspectly is one who is surveying all circumstances and possible consequences **BEFORE** (NOT **AFTER**!) acting or deciding. It reminds me of an old saying "**Look before you leap**!" (which means carefully consider the possible consequences before you take action!) In fact probably most of the time (given our fallen nature), it would be wise to LOOK and DO NOT LEAP! A great word picture!

The word **circumspect** was borrowed from Latin **circumspectus**, from **circumspicere**, "to be cautious." Near synonyms are prudent and cautious, though **circumspect** implies a careful consideration of all circumstances and a desire to avoid mistakes and bad consequences. If you are circumspect, you think carefully before doing or saying anything. A good quality in someone entrusted

with responsibility, ours being to shine as "Jesus people," as Spirit filled (Eph 5:18+) supernaturally energized lights in this dark world (Mt 5:14-16+, Php 2:14-15+). A good quality of a man or woman of God. A quality that is energized by the indwelling Spirit, for even though our own spirit is willing, our flesh is weak (Mt 26:41+)!

THOUGHT - This begs a simple question -- Are you walking in the Spirit (Gal 5:16+), because His guidance and supernatural enablement is the only way for us to continually **walk circumspectly**?

The idea of **akribos** is that our walk is in strict conformity to a standard, and as such calls for carefulness against any departure from what is proper to a believer's walk. How does one accomplish this charge to be careful how we walk? By not walking unwisely, but wisely, as those who are continually redeeming for themselves the precious time God gives, by understanding His good and acceptable and perfect will and by not being filled with wine but being filled with His Spirit.

Note that the NAS translates the adverb **akribos** ([199](#)) somewhat vaguely. Here are other translations that translate **akribos** more literally...

Be constantly taking heed therefore **how accurately** (akribos) you are conducting yourselves... (Wuest)

See, then, how **exactly** (akribos) ye walk (Young's Literal)

See then that ye walk **circumspectly** (akribos)... (KJV)

See to it that you walk carefully, with circumspection and not carelessly

There are 5 uses of **akribos** in the NT...

Matthew 2:8+ And he (Herod in seeking to kill the newborn Jesus) sent them (magi) to Bethlehem, and said, "Go and make **careful** search for the Child; and when you have found Him, report to me, that I too may come and worship Him." (**Comment:** God warned them in a dream not to return to Herod, Mt 2:12)

Luke 1:3+ it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything **carefully** from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus;

Acts 18:25+ This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching **accurately** the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John;

Ephesians 5:15 Therefore be careful (see discussion above) how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, (YLT: See, then, how **exactly** ye walk, not as unwise, but as wise)

1Th 5:2+ For you yourselves know **full well** that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.

Walk ([4043](#)) (peripateo from peri = about, around + pateo = walk, tread) means literally to walk about here and there or to tread all around. **Peripateo** then came to mean, to make one's way, to make progress, to make due use of one's opportunities and finally (as used by Paul in Ephesians), to live, to regulate one's life, to conduct one's self. Most of the NT uses refer to the daily conduct of one's life or how one orders their behavior or passes their life.

Walk is one of the **key words** of Ephesians (Eph 2:2, Eph 2:10; Eph 4:1, 17; Eph 5:2, 8, Eph 5:15) and describes "the whole round of the activities of the individual life." "**Walk** pictures our way of life, worked out in a daily, step-by-step process. In Paul's day, people didn't just walk for exercise. They walked to get to a destination. So to walk spiritually pictures steady progress toward a definite goal." ([Cole](#))

Peripateo - NAS renders peripateo as - behave(2), conduct ourselves(1), conduct yourselves(1), leading a life(1), leads a life(1), prowls about(1), walk(50), walk about(1), walk around(2), walked(7), walking(21), walking about(1), walks(5), were thus occupied(1). 90v in NT (**Meditate** [see also Primer on Biblical Meditation] especially on the figurative uses of **peripateo** in the **Pauline epistles**) - Matt. 4:18; 9:5; 11:5; 14:25f, 29; 15:31; Mk. 1:16; 2:9; 5:42; 6:48f; 7:5; 8:24; 11:27; 12:38; 16:12; Lk. 5:23; 7:22; 11:44; 20:46; 24:17; Jn. 1:36; 5:8f, 11f; 6:19, 66; 7:1; 8:12; 10:23; 11:9f, 54; 12:35; 21:18; Acts 3:6, 8f, 12; 14:8, 10; 21:21; Ro 6:4; 8:1, 4; 13:13; 14:15; 1 Co. 3:3; 7:17; 2 Co. 4:2; 5:7; 10:2f; 12:18; Gal. 5:16; Eph. 2:2, 10; 4:1, 17; 5:2, 8, 15; Phil. 3:17f; Col. 1:10; 2:6; 3:7; 4:5; 1 Thess. 2:12; 4:1, 12; 2 Thess. 3:6, 11; Heb. 13:9; 1 Pet. 5:8; 1 Jn. 1:6f; 2:6, 11; 2 Jn. 1:4, 6; 3 Jn. 1:3f; Rev. 2:1; 3:4; 9:20; 16:15; 21:24.

To walk circumspectly is to walk in the light of our exalted position and privilege as beloved children of God. To walk in an unwise manner means to descend from the high plane and privilege to the profane practices of the fallen world. To walk wisely is to redeem each day, "buying up" every precious moment God gives.

Louis Talbot on **circumspectly** - "**Circumspectly** means to pick the way, to be careful how we walk, as though we were walking on

a ground filled with broken bottles. In Australia people build high brick walls with soft cement on top around their property. Before the cement dries, broken bottles and other pieces of glass are stuck in so that when it dries sharp edges protrude, preventing an intruder from climbing over it. A cat walking on the top of such a wall carefully places her feet between the pieces of broken glass. She picks her way. She is doing what Paul says we are to do as we walk through life's pilgrimage. The devil has scattered plenty of glass in our way; he has thrown varieties of nets, traps and snares in our path in order to destroy our Christian testimony. But we are to walk circumspectly as resurrected people." ([Ephesians 4:17-32 The Body—Its Walk Part II](#))

Dr. G. Campbell Morgan gave a great illustration when he was teaching on [Ephesians 5:15](#) ... "See that you walk circumspectly." He described a beautiful flower garden surrounded by a high wall. To keep intruders out, he placed hundreds of pieces of broken glass into the cement top of the wall. Then one day he saw an old cat carefully placing his feet between the broken glass as he walked across the top of the wall, always advancing, but never cutting his paws. Dr. Morgan said, "That's what it means to walk circumspectly in this sinful world."

Steven Cole - if you're a soldier on patrol in a minefield, you must know where the mines are placed and be careful to avoid them. Paul is saying that we must walk that way as believers. We must choose our steps carefully, because the enemy has strewn the path with dangerous obstacles that will cause us serious harm if we are careless. The days are evil! And yet, many Christians just saunter through the minefield with no awareness of the grave danger that they face... "**Look carefully**" implies that if you are careless about how you walk, how you spend your time each day, you will not get through life without serious mishap. You will step on a mine or be attacked by the enemy or wander around hopelessly lost. The Gentiles walk in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, giving themselves over to sensuality and greed (Eph 4:17-19). But Christians are not to walk in that manner. We must walk carefully, because the days are evil. Without deliberate carefulness, the evil that surrounds us will overwhelm us....To walk carefully in this evil day,

- you must use your time wisely,
- understand the will of the Lord, and
- be filled with the Holy Spirit.

This is one reason that I urge you prayerfully to write out a one-sentence purpose statement for your life. It should describe what you think God wants you to be if you live to be 80. You should base it on biblically determined criteria. Then, underneath that purpose statement, write out some short-term goals that will move you toward your life purpose in each area (spiritual, relational, intellectual, moral, physical, financial, and vocational). Look at it often and readjust as necessary. If you just drift through life without thinking carefully about how to spend your time, you will not end up where God wants you to be. ([Ephesians 5:15-17 Walking Wisely](#))

The **Amplified Version** conveys the thrust of Paul's command rendering it...

Look carefully then how you walk! Live purposefully and worthily and accurately... (Ed note: Good advice. God's formula for real success!)

MacDonald - To walk circumspectly is to live in the light of our position as God's children. To walk as fools means to descend from this high plane to the conduct of worldly men.

Jonathan Edwards in his resolutions wrote...

5. Resolved, never to lose one moment of time; but improve it the most profitable way I possibly can.
6. Resolved, to live with all my might, while I do live.
7. Resolved, never to do anything, which I should be afraid to do, if it were the last hour of my life.
17. Resolved, that I will live so, as I shall wish I had done when I come to die.
18. Resolved, to live so, at all times, as I think is best in my devout frames, and when I have clearest notions of things of the gospel, and another world.
19. Resolved, never to do any thing, which I should be afraid to do, if I expected it would not be above an hour, before I should hear the last trump.
28. Resolved, to study the Scriptures so steadily, constantly and frequently, as that I may find, and plainly perceive myself to grow in the knowledge of the same.
41. Resolved, to ask myself, at the end of every day, week, month and year, wherein I could possibly, in any respect, have done better. Jan. 11, 1723.
52. I frequently hear persons in old age, say how they would live, if they were to live their lives over again:

Resolved, that I will live just so as I can think I shall wish I had done, supposing I live to old age. July 8, 1723.

56. Resolved, never to give over, nor in the least to slacken, my fight with my corruptions, however unsuccessful I may be.

Wayne Barber - Ephesians 5:15 tells us we are to be very careful as we walk. When we put on this new garment and walk out into a world permeated by darkness, this garment, Christ in us (cp Col 1:27), has the power to first of all **refuse** the deeds of darkness, secondly **reprove** the deeds of darkness, and thirdly **remove** the deeds of darkness. Light puts out darkness. Folks, when you put on the garment, when you are living what you have in Jesus Christ, it is a powerful weapon against the darkness that is residing in this world. (Ephesians 5:15-17 Walking as Light in a World of Darkness)

Charles Swindoll - Not One Lost Moment - Be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise. Ephesians 5:15 - God tells us not to be foolish, but wise, making the most of our time, taking every opportunity that comes our way and using it wisely. Before his twentieth birthday, Jonathan Edwards, the brilliant and godly philosopher-theologian who became God's instrument in the Great Awakening revival of the eighteenth century, resolved "**Never to lose one moment of time, but to improve it in the most profitable way I possibly can.**" That is exactly what he did, using well the intellectual gifts God had given him. He entered Yale at thirteen and at seventeen graduated at the head of his class. At twenty-six he was the minister of one of the largest congregations in Massachusetts. . . .Following the will of God requires wisdom, clear thinking, and, yes, even good old garden-variety common sense. (See [The Mystery of God's Will: What Does He Want For Me?](#))

NOT AS UNWISE MEN BUT AS WISE : me os asophoi all' os sophoi;

- **Not as unwise men but as wise** - 2Sa 24:10; Job 2:10; Ps 73:22; Pr 14:8; Mt 25:2; Luke 24:25; Gal 3:1,3; 1Timothy 6:9; James 3:13
- Ephesians 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Ephesians 5:15-21 Walking Carefully in an Evil Day](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 5:15-16 God's Wisdom for Families](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 5:15-17 Walking Wisely](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 5:15 Walking in Wisdom, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Ephesians 5:16-17 Walking in Wisdom, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

**Wisdom is the art of
spending time wisely!**

Not as unwise men but as wise - Here Paul explains what he means by walking carefully...first the **negative**, then the **positive**. To walk **unwise** is to walk any way except in the path of holiness, but to walk **wise** is to walk in the ancient path, turning neither to the left or the right. The **NKJV** has "See then that you walk circumspectly, not as **fools** but as wise." To walk **circumspectly** and thus wisely is to live in the light of our position as God's children. To walk as **fools** means to descend from this high plane to the conduct of worldly men.

[Etymology Online](#) - **circumspect** (adj.) "cautious, wary," (Heedful of circumstances and potential consequences; prudent.) literally "looking about on all sides," early 15c., from Latin circumspectus "deliberate, guarded, well-considered," past participle of circumspicere "look around, take heed," from circum = "around, round about" (see circum-) + specere = "to look".

Steven Cole - The wise man had the skill to live properly. At the root of wise living is the fear of the Lord: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding" (Prov. 9:10). Thus the wise person lives in a godly, skillful manner, thus producing a beautiful finished product that brings glory to the Lord. The only way to accomplish this is to follow the divine plan, given to us in Scripture. Just as God gave Moses the plan for the tabernacle, and skillful men crafted the beautiful final product, so we must follow God's directions if we want our lives to be beautiful for Him. The Bible tells us the godly character qualities that we need to develop. It warns us about the many temptations to sin that will harm or destroy us. It tells us how to determine our life-priorities so that we will make the best use of the years the Lord gives us. As Moses prayed (Ps. 90:12+), "So teach us to number our days, that we may present to You a heart of wisdom." ([Walking Carefully in an Evil Day Ephesians 5:15-17](#))

(Not wise) **Unwise** ([781](#)) (**asophos** from **a** = without + **sophos** = wise) (used only in Ep 5:15) means without wisdom and so unwise, silly or foolish. This adjective describes one who lacks the power of proper discernment.

Wise ([4680](#)) (**sophos**) is the practical application of acquired knowledge. Friberg says sophos generally describes "acquired

intelligence characterized by the ability to use knowledge for correct behavior (1Cor 6:5)." **Sophos** is the opposite of anoetos which means without understanding or foolish. **Sophos** in 1Cor 1:20 implies a "philosopher." The Hebrew word **chokmah** corresponds to the Greek **sophos**. **Sophos** describes the ability to use knowledge for correct behavior (1Co 6:5). **Sophos** describes understanding that which results in wise conduct. Jesus uses **sophos** to describe worldly wisdom (Mt 11:25, cp Lk 10:21, 1Cor 1:19-20), emphasizing that what the world refers to as "**wise**" does not allow one to see spiritual truth. In Ro 1:14, Paul refers to the Greeks as the "**wise**" (although not in spiritual matters). Paul then refers to those who profess to be **wise**, (Ro 1:22), who have jettisoned the clear evidence (Ro 1:19-20) of the natural revelation of God (mocking the truth of a Creator and substituting the theory of Evolution). In contrast to the wisdom of fools, Paul exhorts believers at Rome to be **wise** in a godly sense, wise about spiritual truth and how to live in an evil world opposed to God (Ro 16:19), referring to God Himself as **wise**. In First Corinthians Paul repeatedly denounces man's natural wisdom which is really not wisdom in spiritual matters. James 3:13 shows how practice wisdom is by describing the one who is wise (godly wisdom) as demonstrating he is wise by his good behavior. And here in Ephesians we see that the **wise** walk is a behavior that **redeems the time**, "buying up" every (spiritual) opportunity presented by God (Eph 5:16). In short, God pleasing **wisdom** is revealed by godly living and (in context) calls for one not to be controlled by wine but to be continually controlled by the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18).

Webster's definition of **philosopher** (philos = love + sophia = wisdom) - a person who seeks wisdom or enlightenment. A person of philosophical temperament, esp one who is patient, wise, and stoical. "For the Sophists it meant the study of things with a view to practical insight. Plato saw in it a profound desire for truth, yet not without relation to educational and political action. Aristotle equated it with a methodical attempt to explain sensory reality. The Epicureans perceived true philosophy in culture fulfilled in detachment. The Stoics regarded it as a mastery of reality culminating in progress in right conduct." (ISBE) (See [Philosophy - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#))

The first use of **sophos** in the **Septuagint (Lxx)** describes Pharaoh's "**wise**" men (Ge 41:8), who were not "wise" enough to tell him his dreams, because their wisdom was "natural" not "supernatural" wisdom, which He had bestowed on Joseph. In fact the second use of **sophos** in the Septuagint illustrates wisdom given to men by God (Ex 28:3). Practically, this stark Biblical contrast between man's wisdom and God's bestowed spiritual wisdom makes me wonder why I do not more often cry out for His wisdom when I am in a perplexing situation? (See James 1:5-8). To give you an expanded sense of the meaning of **sophos**, take a moment to go through the many uses in Proverbs (see below). For example, notice what Pr 1:5 teaches us about **sophos** - "A **wise** (Lxx = **sophos**) man will hear and increase in learning." Enjoy!

NIDNTT says in Classic Greek **sophos** denotes "an attribute, never an activity....Socrates' wisdom consisted in the fact that he knows that he knows nothing (Plato, Ap. 21)."

Zodhiates - In Class. Greek (**sophos**) not only described respected philosophers and other truly learned men but was also appropriated by vain quibblers and rhetoricians whom Aristophanes parodied and Plato and Aristotle censured. The meaning of **sophós** in the NT and its Hebrew equivalent, **chokmah**, differs from the classical meaning in at least two ways. First of all, the biblical concept of wisdom is Theo-centric rather than anthropocentric. It denotes a fear of God and an understanding of His ways (cp Pr 9:10). Lastly, wisdom signifies the possession of a certain adeptness or practical ability. It does not necessarily imply brilliance or scholastic training (cp 1Cor 1:26-27); rather, **sophós** indicates adroitness, the ability to apply with skill what one knows (especially spiritual truth). (Word Study Dictionary-NT)

There are 20 uses of **sophos** in the NT translated in NAS as wise(16), wise man(2), wise men(1), wiser(1).

Matthew 11:25 At that time Jesus said, "I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the **wise** and intelligent and have revealed them to infants.

Matthew 23:34 "Therefore, behold, I am sending you prophets and **wise** men and scribes; some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city,

Luke 10:21 At that very time He rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit, and said, "I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the **wise** and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight.

Romans 1:14 I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the **wise** and to the foolish.

Romans 1:22 Professing to be **wise**, they became fools,

Romans 16:19 For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be **wise** in what is good and innocent in what is evil.

Romans 16:27 to the only **wise** God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.

1 Corinthians 1:19 For it is written, "I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE **WISE**, AND THE

CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE." 20 Where is the **wise** man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

1 Corinthians 1:25 Because the foolishness of God is **wiser** than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. 26 For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many **wise** according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; 27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the **wise**, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong,

1 Corinthians 3:10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, like **awise** master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it.

1 Corinthians 3:18 Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you thinks that he is **wise** in this age, he must become foolish, so that he may become **wise**. 19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. For it is written, "He is THE ONE WHO CATCHES THE **WISE** IN THEIR CRAFTINESS"; 20 and again, "THE LORD KNOWS THE REASONINGS of the **wise**, THAT THEY ARE USELESS."

1 Corinthians 6:5 I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not among you one **wise** man who will be able to decide between his brethren,

Ephesians 5:15 Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as **wise**,

James 3:13 Who among you is **wise** and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom.

Sophos - 145v in the Septuagint often translates the Hebrew word **chokmah** (or related words in this family) --Ge 41:8; Ex 28:3; 35:10, 25; 36:1, 4, 8; Deut 1:13, 15; 4:6; 16:19; 32:6; Judg 5:29; 1 Sam 16:18; 2 Sam 13:3; 14:2, 20; 20:16; 1 Kgs 2:9; 3:12; 4:20; 1 Chr 22:15; 2 Chr 2:7, 12ff; Job 5:13; 9:4; 15:2, 18; 32:9; 34:2, 34; 37:24; Ps 49:8; 58:5; 107:43; Pr 1:5-6; 3:35; 6:6; 9:8-9, 12; 10:1, 4, 8, 14; 12:15, 18; 13:10, 13-14, 20; 14:1, 3, 7, 16, 24; 15:2, 7, 12, 20; 16:14, 21, 23; 17:24; 18:15; 19:20; 20:1, 26; 21:11, 20, 22; 22:17; 23:15, 19, 24; 24:5, 7, 23; 25:12; 26:5, 12, 16; 27:11; 28:11; 29:8-9, 11; 30:24; Eccl 2:14, 16, 19; 4:13; 6:8; 7:4f, 7, 19; 8:1, 5, 17; 9:1, 11, 15, 17; 10:2, 12; 12:9, 11; Isa 3:3; 19:11f; 29:14; 31:2; Jer 4:22; 8:8f; 9:17, 23; 51:57; Ezek 27:8f; 28:3; Dan 1:4, 19f; 2:10, 12ff, 18, 21, 24f, 27, 48; 4:6, 18; 5:7f, 11, 15; Hos 14:9; Obad 1:8

In short we are to be walking as God expects (His will) and enables (by His indwelling Spirit) believers to walk. To walk **circumspectly** is to live in the light of our position, privilege and power as God's children. It's to attain to our potential as men and women who are in Christ (see in Christ and in Christ Jesus). To walk as **fools** means to descend from this high plane to the conduct of worldly men.

John Eadie writes that "If the Ephesian Christians walked without taking heed to their ways, then they walked as fools do, who stumble and fall or miss the path. **Wisdom**, not in theory, but in practice—**wisdom**, and not mere intelligence — was to characterize them; that **wisdom** which preserves in rectitude, guides amidst temptations, and affords a lesson of consistency to surrounding spectators. And if there be any allusion to Eph 5:11, then the inferential meaning is—it would be the height of folly to rebuke that sin which the reprovcr is openly committing; to condemn profane swearing, and barb the reprimand with an oath; or exemplify the vices of wrath and clamor in anathematizing such as may be guilty of them. It is strange infatuation to be obliged, in pointing others to heaven, to point over one's shoulder. And one peculiar proof and specimen of wisdom is now given (in Eph 5:16) ([Ephesians 5 Commentary](#))

John MacArthur - Every believer is responsible to walk wisely.

I believe the moment an individual becomes saved, God deposits enough wisdom in him to make him absolutely responsible for his behavior. Someone may say, "Wait a minute! How can a brand-new believer walk in wisdom? Doesn't he grow into that? Haven't wise Christians been saved for many years?"

Such questions miss the point of Ephesians 5:15. The first word in this verse takes us back to Paul's invitation to become saved in verse 14: "Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." In other words, Paul is saying, "Because you are saved, you are to walk in wisdom." When you received Christ, you simultaneously received wisdom and therefore are responsible to walk wisely. First Corinthians 1:30 says, "By [God's] doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption." At the moment of salvation you are made wise, righteous, and sanctified. You don't get redeemed first and receive those things later. Colossians 2:3 says, "In [Christ] are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." You are in Christ, and all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in Him; consequently, "in Him you have been made complete" (v. 10).

If you're redeemed, you have wisdom. You don't have to wait till you've been saved five, ten, or forty years. You're no longer a fool—you're wise. And on that basis Paul says, "Walk as wise. Live according to the wisdom that you possess." (Strength for Today)

Walking wisely is a step in the right direction.

Sometimes a soldier has the thankless task of clearing mine fields from enemy territory. If you're aware of the procedure, you know the work is both dangerous and tedious. To proceed in an orderly fashion, a soldier marks areas that are considered dangerous and areas that have been cleared. Above all, he makes sure he is careful where he's walking!

In the spiritual realm, Paul is telling believers in Ephesians 5:15 to walk carefully. The Greek term translated "careful" speaks of looking carefully from side to side and being alert to what is going on. We need to be extremely alert because the world we're walking through is a mine field of sin and temptation. Therefore, we must walk carefully, exactly, and accurately. The wise Christian carefully charts his course according to life principles designed by God. He doesn't trip over the obstacles that Satan puts in his path or fall into the entanglement of the world's system. He is "careful."

The Greek word translated "walk" means "daily conduct," "daily pattern," or "daily life." The daily pattern of our lives must reflect wisdom. The Greeks saw wisdom primarily as head knowledge. They tended to spin off theories that had no practical implications. To them, the wise people were the intellectuals and the philosophers. **The Hebrew mind, however, defined wisdom only in terms of behavior. When a person becomes a Christian, it's more than a change in theory—it's a change in how he lives.**

Paul is saying in verse 15, "If you used to be a fool, but you've been made wise in Christ, then walk wisely." In other words, we're to **practice our position, to live in accordance with who we are** When we became Christians, we came out of foolishness into wisdom. Therefore, we need to act like it!

Be careful not to act foolishly and step on Satan's mines. Your spiritual transformation demands that you live your life with care. ([Strength For Today](#))

Check Your Work- I'm getting pretty good at math. That's because every day my son Steve and I have a little math session. He does his 30 junior high math problems, and I help him check them over. Sometimes we even get them all right.

As I go over Steve's math, I notice that he understands how to do his problems. In fact, in some areas he's better at it than I am. But occasionally, despite knowing how to do the problem, he gets the wrong answer. He either gets a little sloppy in using the right formula or he just doesn't check his answers carefully.

Aren't we all a little like that in our Christian life? We know what we should do. We have a good understanding of how to live the Christian life, but we get careless or lazy. We know better, but we fail.

For instance, we know we aren't supposed to gossip. But before we know it, we're roasting a fellow Christian. Or this: We know God wants us to keep our mind and heart pure, but we let down our guard and watch a TV program or movie we know is not edifying.

It's true, isn't it? We all get a little sloppy in how we live for God. Let's be more careful and pay closer attention to our Christian walk (Ephesians 5:15). Let's make sure we're doing quality work for our heavenly Father. —J D Branon ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord, help me to apply Your Word
And move it from my head
To actions that won't shame your Name
But honor You instead.
—Sper

**Give your all for Jesus,
He gave His all for you.**

Ephesians 5:16 [making](#) the [most](#) of your [time](#), [because](#) the [days](#) are [evil](#). (NASB: Lockman)

Greek: exagorazomenoi (PMPMPN) [ton kairon, hoti ai hemerai ponerai eisin](#). (3PPAI)

Amplified: Making the very most of the time [buying up each opportunity], because the days are evil. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

KJV: Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

NLT: Make the most of every opportunity for doing good in these evil days. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: Make the best use of your time, despite all the difficulties of these days ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: buying up for yourselves the opportune time, because the days are pernicious.

Young's Literal: redeeming the time, because the days are evil;

MAKING THE MOST OF (REDEEMING) YOUR TIME: *exagorazomenoi* (PMPMPN) *ton kairon*:

- **Making the most of your time** - Romans 13:11; Galatians 6:10; Colossians 4:5
- Ephesians 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Ephesians 5:15-21 Walking Carefully in an Evil Day](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 5:15-16 God's Wisdom for Families](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 5:15-17 Walking Wisely](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 5:15 Walking in Wisdom, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Ephesians 5:16-17 Walking in Wisdom, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

REDEEM THE TIME

Order my footsteps in Thy Word,
And make my heart sincere;
Let sin have no dominion, Lord,
But keep my conscience clear.
--Isaac Watts

See in depth onsite discussion on Redeem the Time - below are a few quotes from this article...

There's always enough time to do God's will.

Instead of counting the days, make your days count.

To spend time wisely, invest it in eternity.

The wise know God's limits—fools know no bounds.

ETERNITY will be appreciated only in the measure that we have rightly handled TIME!—F. King

God can turn any difficulty into an opportunity.

Wasting the gift of time insults the Giver of time.

Here is a link to a zoom talk I gave to a group of men in Maryland at the beginning of 2021 [Redeem the Time - Zoom Video](#)

Solomon gives an excellent parallel thought from the Old Testament

"Whatever your hand finds to do, verily, do it with all your might; for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol where you are going." (Ecclesiastes 9:10-see [Spurgeon's devotional](#))

Life passes like a flash of lightning
Whose blaze barely lasts long enough to see.
While the earth and the sky stand still forever
How swiftly changing time flies across man's face.
O you who sit over your full cup and do not drink,
Tell me, for whom are you still waiting?
-- [Herman Hess \(Klingsor's Last Summer - p 166\)](#)

How does a believer walk wisely and not walk foolishly? Paul says one way is by **making the most of your time**. In other words the first sign that a person is **wise** is that he is sensitive to how he uses his time. He makes a disciplined use of his time. (cp

Moses' prayer Ps 90:12 - see [Spurgeon's notes below](#)) We all understand that time is valuable, for even the lost world says "time is money". We all have the same amount of time, but in this context as explained more fully below, Paul is not speaking so much of time in general but of the opportunities that are placed before us. In the next segment Paul explains that wise people discern the will of God (Ep 5:17).

Redeeming the time calls for a "**supernatural** (Spirit controlled) **sense of urgency**", for the time is short for each of us (see Jn 9:4, 12:35, Ro 13:11+, 1Co 7:29-31+).

Someone once wrote a wise saying which is so apropos in regard to the opportunities God gives each believer...

Lost, yesterday, somewhere between sunrise and sunset,
two golden hours, each set with sixty diamond minutes.
No reward offered, for they are gone forever.

Making the most (redeeming)([1805](#)) (**exagorazo** from **ek** = out or from -- If something is in something else, then **ek** describes separating it in respect to place, time, source or origin + **agorazo** = buy, acquire possessions or services in exchange for money with the result that whatever has been bought is the buyer's by right of possession <> from **agora** = market place where things were exposed for sale, a forum, a place in which the people assemble and where public trials were held) means literally to buy out of (**ek** = out of) the market place. It means to completely redeem. Click for word study on exagorazo. Believers are to take advantage of every spiritual opportunity because we know that the night is coming when no one can work. There is an open window in time for the gospel. We must seize the moment!

Exagorazo - 4v in NT - Gal. 3:13; 4:5; Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5, translated (NAS) as making the most(2), redeem(1), redeemed(1).

Galatians 3:13+ Christ **redeemed** us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE"—

Galatians 4:5+ so that He **might redeem** those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

Ephesians 5:16 **making the most of** your time, because the days are evil.

Colossians 4:5+ Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, **making the most of** (present tense - see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#) this exhortation) the opportunity.

There is one fascinating use in the Septuagint of Daniel 2:8+

The king replied, "I know for certain that you are **bargaining** (Lxx = exagorazo) for time (Lxx = kairos), inasmuch as you have seen that the command from me is firm,

John Eadie writes that "The **unwise**" allow the propitious moment to pass, and it cannot be recalled. They may eulogize it, but they have missed it. The **wise**, on the other hand, who walk correctly, recognize it, appreciate it, take hold of it, make it at whatever sacrifice their own, and thriftily turn it to the best advantage. They redeem it ([Ephesians 5 Commentary](#))

Ray Stedman writes that **exagorazo** "is a word from the market place. You go down to your supermarket and look for bargains because you know they will not last long; they are passing, changing. Therefore, make the most of them and buy them up. This is exactly the word he employs here. Buy up the opportunities which are created constantly by the evil days." ([Watch how you Walk - Eph 5:15-20](#))

Warren Wiersbe laments "How foolish to stumble along through life and never seek to know the will of the Lord! Instead of walking *"accurately"* (which is equivalent to "circumspectly"), they miss the mark, miss the road, and end up suffering on some detour. God wants us to be wise and understand His will for our lives. As we obey His will, we "buy up the opportunities" (redeem the time, Eph 5:16) and do not waste time, energy, money, and talent in that which is apart from His will. Lost opportunities may never be regained; they are gone forever. (See [Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament](#))

G Campbell Morgan in his book *The True Estimate of Life and how to Live* has an entire chapter (VII) on **Redeeming the Time** and he introduces it with a discussion of the origin of the verb **making the most of ("buying up") (exagorazo)** "**Buying up.**" The word so translated comes from another word, which means "the market-place." ([agora](#)) In rural districts the market is often held upon one day of the week, somewhere in the center of the town, sometimes under cover, sometimes in the open; and to that common meeting-place those come who have goods to offer for sale and those who desire to purchase, and there they transact their business. In eastern towns the same habit obtained. The merchantman came to the market-place in the center of the town, bringing his wares with him, there to transact his business; and he watched the market, and waited for a favorable opportunity, either to buy or sell, and when the opportunity presented itself he acted with promptitude. **He bought up his opportunity.** (Chapter 7 in the book *The True Estimate of Life and how to Live*)

Chuck Swindoll on "**Staying Young**" - We had some fun today and now want to be very serious. Life is brief -- stay with me now -
- Life is brief, a very tiny slice in light of eternity. Here we are. This is all we got on earth, Jesus had 33 years and finished His work. You may finish yours at 50. You may finish yours at 87. You know how long. Be sure you have come to the Cross. Be sure that's taken care of. Be sure you've given your heart and soul to the Lord Jesus Christ. That's first. And then pick up His enthusiasm and energy about life and don't **wait** for something to happen before you engage. Herman Hess in a fine little short story entitled to claim '[\(Klingsor's Last Summer - page 166\)](#)'. My sister introduced me to that little story. It has a great few lines that I want to close with. Listen to them -

Life passes like a flash of lightning
Whose blaze barely lasts long enough to see.
While the earth and the sky stand still forever
How swiftly changing time flies across man's face.
O you who sit over your full cup and do not drink,
Tell me, for whom are you still waiting?

God help me to live my life like my granddad, not my dad. I loved them both. But there's nobody like my granddaddy to help me know life can be lived to the full, even with other folks say "You oughta retire." Don't waste your breath. You want to leave your work, leave it, just don't retire from living. If you do, you can wind up that little table that IHOP with five other guys that look just like you and a waitress that can't wait for you to get out.

We realize Lord if we don't mind, it don't matter. We acknowledge that You're the One Who calls this shot about aging. Our years are all numbered before You. Not one of our deaths is a surprise. Thank You for putting us on an earth that is so full of color and variety in creative people and challenging opportunities and so much we can never get our arms around. Forgive us for being bored in the midst of Your magnificent creation. Show us the value of living every day [to the hilt](#), living it in the will of God. We ask this in the Name of Jesus by saying "Amen." (Full Audio message - [Staying Young as Your Family Grows Older - Part 1](#))

Thomas Brooks has these devotional thoughts on time as it applies to a believer...

A jewel more worth than a world! ("The Hypocrite Detected")

"Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." Ephesians 5:16

Time is a jewel more worth than a world!

Time is not yours to dispose of as you please; it is a glorious talent, which men must be accountable for--as well as any other talent. Of all talents, time is the hardest to improve well. Ah, beloved, have not you need to improve your time--who have much work to do, in so short a time:

- your souls to save,
- a God to honor,
- a Christ to exalt,
- a hell to escape,
- a race to run,
- a crown to win,
- temptations to withstand,
- corruptions to conquer,
- afflictions to bear,
- mercies to improve, and
- your generation to serve!

"Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom." Psalm 90:12⁺

"Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might; for in the grave, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom." Eccl 9:10.

**Your time is short,
your task is great,
your Master is urgent,
and your reward is sure.**

The devil makes all the haste he can to outwork the children of light—in a speedy dispatch of deeds of

darkness, because he knows his time is short. He will not let slip any opportunity whereby he may do mischief. Oh may you not let slip any opportunity wherein you may honor a good God, and be serviceable to your generation. ([Mute Christian](#))

Puritan **Thomas Watson**...

Make spending your TIME a matter of conscience. "Redeeming the time" (Eph. 5:16).

Many people fool away their time, some in idle visits, others in recreations and pleasures which secretly bewitch the heart and take it away from better things. What are our golden hours for—but to attend to our souls? **Time misspent is not time lived—but time lost!**

Time is a precious commodity. A piece of wax in itself is not worth much—but when it is affixed to the label of a will and conveys an estate, it is of great value. Thus, time simply in itself is not so considerable—but as salvation is to be worked out in it, and a conveyance of heaven depends on using it well—it is of infinite concern!

Think of your SHORT STAY in the world. "We are here for only a moment, visitors and strangers in the land as our ancestors were before us. Our days on earth are like a shadow, gone so soon without a trace!" (1Chr. 29:15). There is only a span between the cradle and the grave. Solomon says there is a time to be born and a time to die (Eccl 3:2)—but mentions no time of living—as if that were so short it was not worth naming! Time, when it has once gone, cannot be recalled. "My life passes more swiftly than a runner. It flees away, filled with tragedy. It disappears like a swift boat, like an eagle that swoops down on its prey." Job 9:25,26. This Scripture compares time to a flying eagle. Yet time differs from the eagle in this: the eagle flies forward and then back again—but time has wings only to fly forward --it never returns! "Time flies irrevocably."

The serious thoughts of our short stay here would be a great means of promoting godliness. What if death should come before we are ready? What if our life should breathe out before God's Spirit has breathed in? Whoever considers how flitting and winged his life is—will hasten his repentance! ([The Godly Mans Picture](#))

Spurgeon's Devotional on Ecclesiastes 9:10...

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do," refers to works that are possible. There are many things which our heart findeth to do which we never shall do. It is well it is in our heart; but if we would be eminently useful, we must not be content with forming schemes in our heart, and talking of them; we must practically carry out "whatsoever our hand findeth to do."

One good deed is more worth than a thousand brilliant theories. Let us not wait for large opportunities, or for a different kind of work, but do just the things we "find to do" day by day.

**We have no other time in which to live.
The past is gone;
the future has not arrived;
we never shall have any time but time present.**

Then do not wait until your experience has ripened into maturity before you attempt to serve God. Endeavour now to bring forth fruit (**Ed: How?** cp Jesus' words in Mk 4:20, 8, Mt 13:23, Lk 8:15, Jn 15:4,5, cp Ro 7:4+ contrasted with Ro 7:5+).

Serve God now, but be careful as to the way in which you perform what you find to do—"do it with thy might." (cp 1Co 15:10, 2Co 6:1, Col 1:29+, Heb 13:21+)

Do it promptly; do not fritter away your life in thinking of what you intend to do **to-morrow** as if that could recompense for the idleness of **to-day**. No man ever served God by doing things **to-morrow**. If we honour Christ and are blessed, it is by the things which we do **to-day**.

Whatever you do for Christ throw your whole soul into it (Col 3:23, 24+).

Do not give Christ a little slurred labour, done as a matter of course now and then; but when you do serve Him, do it with heart, and soul, and strength (cp Mk 12:30).

But where is the might of a Christian? It is not in himself (Zech 4:6), for he is perfect weakness (2Co 12:9+, 2Co 12:10+). His might lieth in the **Jehovah Sabaoth, LORD of hosts (of armies)**. Then let us seek His help; let us proceed with prayer and faith, and when we have done what our "hand findeth to do," let us wait upon

the Lord for His blessing (cp Isa 40:31+).

What we do thus,
will be well done,
and will not fail in its effect.

REDEEM THE TIME "NOW"

James Montgomery Boice, the great Christian pastor and writer, who **redeemed the time** well until his untimely death at age 61 (June 15, 2000) wrote that there are...

a number of biblical words for time and contrasted **kairos**, which deals with the significant moment or opportunity, and **chronos**, which deals only with time's duration. There is another biblical word which I did not mention then but which I turn to now as an appropriate closing: the word **nun**. It means "**now**," and it occurs in verses which show that the **kairos** in which we live, the **pregnant present moment**, is eternally significant. "Once you were not a people, but **now** you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but **now** you have received mercy" (1Pe 2:10+). "Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep **now**, for you will laugh" (Lk 6:21+). "**Now** is the time of God's favor, **now** is the day of salvation" (2Co 6:2). If you and I are going to redeem time, as wise men and women, we had better do it **now**, because there may be no opportunity tomorrow. If we are to understand the will of God, now is the moment that counts. If we are going to be filled with God's Spirit, now is when we need filling. (Bolding and italics added for emphasis) ([Ephesians](#))

We need to live as though Jesus would come today.

-- Sammy Tippit

Redeeming the time has special reference to Christian witness in the world both here and in Col. 4:5. In Ephesians 5:15 and the parallel passage in Colossians 4:5 (+) Paul uses the **middle voice** which conveys a "reflexive" sense to **exagorazo** - the idea then is of buying up for **oneself**, of buying up every opportunity (kairos), turning each opportunity to the best advantage for **oneself**.

Conduct (present imperative) yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, **making the most** (exagorazo = present tense = continually) of the opportunity. (See + Colossians 4:5)

Comment: Wuest translates it "buying up for yourselves the strategic, opportune time." The idea is to be habitually, continually "buying up" all that is anywhere to be bought and not allowing the moment to pass by unheeded or unused but to make it one's own.

Thayer adds that **exagorazo** as used in (Eph 5:16) and (Col 4:5) means to "Buy up or out of for one's self and so to make wise and sacred use of every opportunity for doing good, so that zeal and well doing are as it were the purchase money by which we make the time our own."

The venerable **Pastor Harry Ironside** wisely reminds us that "Time is given us to use in view of eternity."

MacArthur writes that **exagorazo** "has the basic meaning of buying, especially of buying back or buying out. It was used of buying a slave in order to set him free; thus the idea of redemption is implied in this verse. We are to redeem, buy up, all the time that we have and devote it to the Lord. The Greek is in the middle voice, indicating that we are to buy the time up **for ourselves**—for our own use but in the Lord's service. (See [The MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

Hodge adds that Ephesians 5:15 can be translated "availing yourselves of the occasion, i.e. improving every opportunity for good." ([Ephesians 5 Commentary](#))

The **UBS Handbook Series** adds that "The readers are being told to seize and use every opportunity to carry on their Christian witness, because these are evil days, In some languages it is necessary to specify what is involved in every opportunity. Accordingly, it may be necessary to translate make good use of every opportunity you have as "every time you can do something good you should" or "you should use every chance to do good. ([Bratcher, R. G., & Nida, E. A. A Handbook on Paul's letter to the Ephesians. UBS handbook series. New York: United Bible Societies](#))

The idea then is turning each **season** (kairos) to the best advantage since none can be recalled if missed. "Every time you can do something good you should."

As someone else has said

Beware of wasting the present. Instead of killing time, redeem your spare moments today. Wasting the **gift** of

time insults the **Giver** of time.

Redeem the time! God only knows
How soon our little life may close,
With all its pleasures and its woes,
Redeem the time!
— Anonymous

The idea is not to make best use of time as such (although that is certainly advisable), which is what we should do in the sense of not wasting it, but of taking advantage of the opportunities that present themselves.

What are you living for? What are you working for? Beloved the hard working farmer should be the first to receive his share of the "wages" even now [2Ti 2:6+] and yet even better he is storing up wages in the "bank of heaven" (cp 1Ti 4:8+, Mt 6:20+, cp Mt 19:21, 1Ti 6:17, 18, 19, He 10:34+, He 11:26+; 1Pe 1:4+). **Are you working for this life or the life to come?** Do not lose heart as you labor [Gal 6:9, 10], striving according to His power which mightily works within you [Col 1:28+, Col 1:29+; He 13:20, 21+], for your "payday" awaits eternity and the **bema seat** [word study] seat of Christ [2Cor 5:10, 1Co 3:11, 12, 13, 14, 15], the Lord of the harvest. Redeem the work days you have [Ep 5:16+, Ro 13:11+, Ro 13:12+] for the days are evil and our life is but a vapor - cp Ps 90:12+, Jas 1:10, 11+, Jas 4:14, Ps 102:3+, Ps 102:11+, Ps 103:15, 16+, Ps 144:4+, Isa 40:6, 7, 1Pe1:24, 25+, Job 7:6)

MacDonald - Every day brings its opened doors, its vast potential.

H C G Moule...

buying up the opportunity, as it evermore occurs, "buying it out" from alien ownership, from the mere use of self, securing it for your Master at the expense of self-denying watchfulness. Do this, remembering that you will need to do it if you are to be really serviceable to Him; **it will not do to let things drift, as if circumstances would take care of themselves**, and automatically serve the Lord's servant; because the days are evil; **the "days" of your human life in a sinful world do not lend themselves to holy uses where the man who lives them does not watch for opportunities.**

This precept is for all time. No doubt there were special conditions in Asia at that date which may have led St Paul to write it down with a heart centered upon peculiar and acute difficulties. In many respects the "days" at Ephesus were "evil" as they are not now, at least for those of us whose lot is cast in lands which bear the Christian name, and are full on their surface of the Christian tradition. But then, to the age, as to the day, "sufficient is the evil thereof." We have our characteristic obstacles, here and now, to the active doing of the Master's work, and to the silent diffusion of His light; among them is the Christian tradition itself, where it exists along with spiritual death in men's wills and affections. So now, as distinctively as then, "the days are evil" for the full Christian enterprise. And the "evil" must be reckoned with, now as ever, by the merchants of the King, "seeking goodly pearls"; they must be on the watch, and "buy up the opportunity" **at a real cost.** (Ed: You might want to ponder that thought - It will cost to buy up the opportunities - What will it cost? For one thing, death to self, which seeks "opportunities" to gratify self, cp Ro 13:14+.)

We may be sure on the other hand that St Paul does not mean, for in the wisdom of the Spirit he could not mean, that we are enjoined to force occasions for our witness or appeal. The imagery of purchase looks just the other way; it points to a lawful acquisition, though at a real cost. **We have need to ask as earnestly for wisdom as for courage and persistency in life and work for Christ.**

But then, that thought is not to be the miserable excuse for a contented silence. Rather, it is to be our deep motive for such a close personal walk with God, such a readiness, through the prayer of faith, to spend and be spent for Him, such a maintained consciousness that His holy service is our true *raison d'être* as Christians, that when the opportunity is ready for us we shall be ready for it (cp "prepared" in 2Ti 2:21+). **More than half the price of the "purchase" will thus be paid by our own secret watching and prayer over our own unhindered communion with God.** ([Ephesian Studies: Expository Readings on the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Ephesians - go to page 269](#))

To usefulness and power
There is no royal road;
The strength for holy service
Is intercourse with God.

S F D Salmond sums up the essence of Paul's charge in this section writing that "The sense comes to be this -- the character of wisdom by which their walk was to be distinguished was to show itself in the prompt and discerning zeal with which they made every

John Henry Jowett discusses **The Watchful Use of Opportunity** based on "Redeeming the time." Eph. 5:16.

The disciple of Christ is to be an expert merchant in the commodity of time. He is to be always engaged in "buying up opportunity." He is to allow no one to be the peer of the Master's servant. His vigilance must never sleep, and he must never be away from the market. Every moment must be bought up for the King, and used in the service of His Kingdom.

And therefore the disciple will be busy buying in seasons both sad and joyful. He will not allow the evil one to buy any of the brighter seasons for his own infernal purpose. Seasons of merriment will be purchased for the Lord; bright moments of wit and humour will be gained for Him. This will never mean that merriment will lose its sparkle; it will really mean that sunlight will be added to common daylight, because the merriment will shine with the very lustre and purity of the love of Christ. All wit will be perfectly clean and therefore translucent, containing nothing which darkens or defiles. Gaiety will become the most intimate friend of sanctity and will be the possession of the Lord.

And the watchful merchant will also buy up the darker seasons for his Lord. He will not allow his moments of disappointment, or sickness, or adversity, to be owned and used by the devil. He will rather claim that the black seasons may be used for the home of Christ, and he will accordingly bring them and offer them to His service. A dark house, with the Lord in it, becomes a temple of ineffable fellowship.

But in all these purchasings everything goes to the early buyer. To be first in the market must be our constant aim. Let us regard every moment as precious treasure, and before the enemy of our souls can lay his hand upon it let us be up and buy it for the Lord. (Life in the Heights)

It is said that long ago when an eastern emperor was crowned at Constantinople, the royal mason would set before his majesty a certain number of marble slabs. One he was to choose then and there for his tombstone. The ancients thought it wise for him to remember his funeral at the time of his elevation, for his life would not last forever. If we could sense how short life is, and how unpredictable, it would perhaps be so much easier to give it all to Christ. (Kent Hughes)

James 4:14 Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. -

In October, 1997 economist William Vickery was awarded the Nobel Prize for Economics. He was sixty two. The prize was a high point in his life. Twenty-four hours later he was dead. We have all known the suddenness of loss. One day someone is healthy, the next day they are gone.

Adrian Rogers gives 4 principles on **how to redeem time...**

A. The Prayer Principle - Principle number one is what I want to call the prayer principle. How important that you let prayer be the key that unlocks the door of the morning, that you begin your day with prayer. As the poet said, "Lean your arms upon the windowsill of Heaven, and gaze at the face of God" (paraphrase of Thomas Blake). As you greet the day, begin the day with prayer, spend enough time every day, in the morning, to get God's will for your life. Prayer must be in the morning. You see, it's not a waste of time to wait on God any more than a woodchopper is wasting time when he sharpens his axe. I've said this before from this pulpit, and I honestly believe it. There's enough time in every day to do everything that God wants you to do and to do it gracefully. It's an insult to God to say you don't have enough time. If you don't have enough time, you're doing something God did not intend for you to do—either something that you've imposed upon yourself, or you've allowed others to impose upon you. So, what you must do in prayer every morning—the principle of prayer—is to get quiet before the Lord, and let God speak to your heart.

B. The Priority Principle - Now, after the prayer principle, there comes the priority principle. I mean, after God speaks to you, it's very obvious that you've got some priorities. You see, life would be simple, if life were a choice between good and bad. Very frankly, most of the choices that I have to make are not choices between good and bad—they are choices between good and best. Isn't that true? I mean, I don't have time to read good books for I haven't read the best ones yet. I need to find out what God wants me to do. Most of the time, management books tell you how to do more things. How you can play and work, and how you can read, and how you can do all of those things, are fine; they all have their place. But you see, my dear friend, what you do is far more important than how you do it. I mean, to get your priorities correct. Jesus, who lived only to the age of 33 in His humanity here on earth, said, when He bowed His head, "It is finished" (John 19:30). And, the Lord Jesus said to the Father, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4). Now, notice it was the work that God gave Him to do. Now, there were many

villages wanting Jesus to come and teach, there were many places that wanted Jesus to heal and so forth, but Jesus didn't do everything. Jesus didn't go everywhere. Sometimes, when the crowds were clamoring after Jesus, He just got alone. But, He could say, at the end of His ministry, "I have finished the work thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4). You go to our bookstore, some bookstore, and buy the little book by Charles Hummel, called *The Tyranny of the Urgent*. It's a great little book: *The Tyranny of the Urgent*. Do you know what our problems are, dear friend? We're constantly having a battle between the important and the urgent. Now, what is more important—the plumbing in your house, or your quiet time with God? "Well," you say, "my quiet time with God." What's more urgent—your quiet time or your toilet that's overflowing? You say, "That's more urgent; I've got to get that fixed." Your wife calls you and says, "Adrian, no matter what you're doing, you go in there and you've got...—I mean, the thing is overflowing." Now that, my dear friend, is something that is urgent. And, it is the urgent so many times that keeps us from the important. Isn't that true? I mean, in all of life, we have these things, that somebody calls, and you've just got to do this, you've just got to do that. It takes such incredible willpower, such an incredible prioritizing of priorities, to see the difference between the urgent and the important. Your greatest danger is letting the urgent things crowd out the important things.

C. The Promptness Principle - Third principle—not only the prayer principle, not only the priority principle, but there is the promptness principle. Boy, am I speaking to me at this time! This deals with the sin of procrastination. The Bible says, in James 4:17, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). Sin is not just merely doing wrong; it is failing to do what you ought to do. Did you know that procrastination and disobedience are different shades of the same sin? Procrastination and disobedience are different kinds of the same sin. In my life, what I want to do is to cultivate the habit of instant obedience. Now, where most of us fail, it is in this area of willpower. Isn't that correct? I heard a good definition of willpower—I copied it down, and I want you to listen to it: "When you have a job to do, begin this very hour. You supply the will, God supplies the power." Isn't that great? "When you have a job to do, begin this very hour; you supply the will, God supplies the power." And, my friend, that is willpower. When there is something you know you ought to do it, and do it now.

D. The Power Principle - There's the promptness principle, and, last of all, there's the power principle—there's the power principle. Most of us think, "Oh boy, I'd just have it made, if I did exactly what God wants me to do." I've already talked to you about this willpower, which is really God's power. Listen—in verse 16, he says, "Redeem the time" (Ephesians 5:16)—that's the promptness principle. In verse 17, he says, "Be... not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:17)—that's the prayer principle. Look in verse 18: "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18)—that's the power principle. You see—the power principle is to do God's will in the power of the Holy Spirit. Most of us don't need to learn to work harder—we need to work with more power. We need to learn to work with more effectiveness. ([Sermon](#))

Warren Wiersbe - How long will the rest of our lives be? We don't know; nobody knows. We may have many years, or we may have many days. We could be called home to glory before the day ends. We don't know. "Man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment" (Heb. 9:27+). It is an **appointment**, not an **accident**, and God knows when it is going to be. When you are redeemed, you are set free from bondage to the old life. This is why Ephesians 5:16 tells us to **redeem the time**. Don't live the rest of your life the way you used to live. You have been set free from that. "The old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Cor. 5:17+). Therefore, **redeem the time**, buy up the opportunity, **make the most of the rest of your life** I would like to apply that, if I may. Perhaps you are born again, but you are following the traditions of other people. You are doing what everybody else does. **Why don't you ask God what He wants you to do with the rest of your life?** Perhaps you are in the wrong school, and you ought to be in another school training to serve God. Perhaps you are pursuing the wrong career. Perhaps you are a successful businessman, but God is calling you into His service. You could use your experience and your gifts to glorify God in full-time Christian service.

**If you knew you had only ten years left to live
or one year left to live,
how would it change your life?
We should be living each day
as though it were our last.**

We are redeemed from bondage to sin; we are redeemed from bondage to the old life. We should live wholly for God. (See [Key Words of the Christian Life](#))

Say to yourself each morning—"My soul, thou hast to-day a God to glorify, a Christ to imitate, a soul to save, a body to keep under (control), time to redeem, temptation to overcome--verily, I must be about my Father's business (cf Jn 9:4)." (Dean Goulburn.)

The years, freighted with golden possibilities, have been buried one by one in the bosom of an eternity which never gives up its dead. (Duckworth)

Be not afraid, oh, duty-neglecting Christian, to rise up with a fixed resolve and retrace your steps and say : "I will redeem the time. I will renew my vows with Jesus." (George Truett - A Quest for Souls)

Ps 143:5 I remember the days of old; I meditate on all Thy doings; I muse on the work of Thy hands. - The consideration of the past will stimulate us to redeem the time.

1. The whole life of man is short.
2. How much shorter has it become to us!
3. Had it been spent aright, its increased shortness would not be a matter of regret.
4. But only look back! (James Stewart)

Verses 15-21. Another remedy against sin, is care, or caution, it being impossible else to maintain purity of heart and life. Time is a talent given us by God, and it is misspent and lost when not employed according to his design. If we have lost our time heretofore, we must double our diligence for the future. Of that time which thousands on a dying bed would gladly redeem at the price of the whole world, how little do men think, and to what trifles they daily sacrifice it! People are very apt to complain of bad times; it were well if that stirred them more to redeem time. Be not unwise. Ignorance of our duty, and neglect of our souls, show the greatest folly. Drunkenness is a sin that never goes alone, but carries men into other evils; it is a sin very provoking to God. The drunkard holds out to his family and to the world the sad spectacle of a sinner hardened beyond what is common, and hastening to perdition. When afflicted or weary, let us not seek to raise our spirits by strong drink, which is hateful and hurtful, and only ends in making sorrows more felt. But by fervent prayer let us seek to be filled with the Spirit, and to avoid whatever may grieve our gracious Comforter. All God's people have reason to sing for joy. Though we are not always singing, we should be always giving thanks; we should never want disposition for this duty, as we never want matter for it, through the whole course of our lives. Always, even in trials and afflictions, and for all things; being satisfied of their loving intent, and good tendency. God keeps believers from sinning against him, and engages them to submit one to another in all he has commanded, to promote his glory, and to fulfil their duties to each other.

Sammy Tippit in Fire in Your Heart -Many Christian acts I do on earth I will also do in in heaven.....I sing. I will sing in heaven. I serve God. I will serve God in heaven. There's one thing I won't be able to do in heaven: bring the lost to Jesus. It will be too late. My heart must be set aflame for the lost now. We must all be about our Father's business. The other truth that should drive us out of our easy chairs is that Jesus is coming again. **Christians in the West spend a lot of time debating the theological ramifications of His coming. In the Eastern Europe, they live in anticipation of it.** We need to learn to long for the coming of Jesus. **Anticipate His coming, not by debate but by practice** We need to be on the streets, in the workplace, and throughout the neighborhoods calling people to Jesus. **We need to live as though Jesus would come today.** Some may argue that Paul and the early Christians anticipated the coming of Christ, and He didn't come in their generation. Yet Paul and other early Christians shook the Roman Empire for the glory of God. Perhaps if we anticipated the imminent return of Christ, we would shake Western civilization for His glory! Awake, Christian! Life is short! Christ is coming! Redeem the time!

May not life be filled fuller of blessings, if only we know how to redeem the time, and appreciate the opportunity to perceive the God that is near us? (H. W. Beecher.)

If any day passes without embracing some opportunity for learning new truth, or doing some fresh good, he should feel with that Roman Emperor who said, "I have lost a day." (J. G. Angley, M. A.)

Steven Cole - Our text tells us how to walk wisely, so that we make the precious years that God allots to us count for His purpose and glory. There is a paradox in that God is the sovereign over time. He has a divine will (Eph 5:17) and He "works all things after the counsel of His will" (Eph. 1:11). And yet at the same time, He allots time to us to use responsibly to bring about His sovereign will. We must walk carefully and redeem the time that He gives us (Eph 5:15-16). To make your life count for eternity, you must give careful thought to how you spend your time. ([Walking Wisely Ephesians 5:15-17](#))

What are you doing with your time? J. R. Miller comments on "Be very careful, then, how you live--not as unwise but as wise--making the most of the time" Ephesians 5:15-16

Our days, as God gives them to us--are like beautiful summer fields.

The hours are like trees with their rich fruit, or vines with their blossoms of purple clusters.

The minutes are like blooming flowers, or stalks of wheat with their golden grains.

Oh the endless, blessed possibilities of our days and hours and minutes--as they come to us from God's hands!

But what did you do with yesterday? How does the little acre of that one day look to you now?

What are you doing with your time? Every moment God gives you, has in it a possibility of beauty or usefulness--as well as something to be accounted for.

Are you using your time for God?

"Show me, O Lord, my life's end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting is my life!"

Psalm 39:4NIV (cf Ps 90:12)

[An ancient Greek statue](#) depicted a man with wings on his feet, a large lock of hair on the front of his head, and no hair at all on the back. Beneath was the inscription:

"Who made thee? Lysippus made me.

What is thy name? My name is Opportunity.

Why hast thou wings on thy feet? That I may fly away swiftly.

Why hast thou a great forelock? That men may seize me when I come.

Why art thou bald in back? That when I am gone by, none can lay hold of me."

Buying Time -- Consider this: "If we had to buy time, would there be any difference in how we would spend it? Would the days of our lives be used more wisely?" That's what time management consultant Antonio Herrera asked the participants in a seminar he conducted on the subject. Then Dr. Herrera became more specific. He asked, "What if you had to pay in advance \$100 an hour for the time allotted to you? Would you waste it?" The answer should be obvious. Of course, we can't put a price tag on the minutes and hours we possess. They are given to us freely. But that doesn't excuse us from using them conscientiously, carefully, and wisely. The giver of time is God Himself, and that places a far greater value upon it than any monetary figure could suggest. We must therefore use our time intelligently, taking advantage of opportunities it provides for us to serve the Lord and to do His will.

Only one life

Twill soon pass

Only what's done

For (in) Christ will last

So teach us to number our days,
That we may present to Thee a heart of wisdom.

-- Moses Ps 90:12⁺

Quotes on Time:

- Life is too short for us to do everything we want to do; but it is long enough for us to do everything God wants us to do. - Anon.
 - Spend your time in nothing which you know must be repented of; in nothing on which you might not pray for the blessing of God; in nothing which you could not review with a quiet conscience on your dying bed; in nothing which you might not safely and properly be found doing if death should surprise you in the act. - Richard Baxter
 - Time should not be spent, it should be invested in the kingdom of God. -John Blanchard
 - Time is not yours to dispose of as you please; it is a glorious talent that men must be accountable for as well as any other talent. - Thomas Brooks
 - There is nothing puts a more serious frame into a man's spirit than to know the worth of his time. -Thomas Brooks
 - We are to redeem the time because we ourselves are redeemed.-Richard Chester
 - Half our life is spent trying to find something to do with the time we have rushed through life to save. -Will Rogers
-

TIME: Three most difficult things to do are: keep a secret, forget injury, and make good use of your leisure time (it's really not yours

anyway but His...He's just "loaning" it to you.)

God set a goal, yet gave the choice
To mortals how time may be spent,
Admonishing that worth, not length,
Values time's accomplishment.
— Mortenson

Solomon wisely exhorted his readers

"Whatever your hand finds to do, verily, do it with all your might; for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol where you are going. (Eccl 9:10)

Shakespeare wrote,

There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.
(Julius Caesar, 4.3.217)

Time (2540) (**kairos**) means a point of time or period of time, time, period, frequently with the implication of being especially fit for something and without emphasis on precise chronology. It means a moment or period as especially appropriate the right, proper, favorable time (at the right time). **Kairos** speaks of a limited period of time, with the added notion of suitability ("the suitable time", "the right moment", "the convenient time"). **Kairos** refers to a distinct, fixed time period, rather than occasional moments.

Kairos - NAS renders **kairos** as - age(1), epochs(2), for a while(1), occasion(1), opportune time(1), opportunity(3), proper time(5), right time(1), season(1), seasons(4), short*(m)(1), time(55), times(10) 80x in NT - Matt. 8:29; 11:25; 12:1; 13:30; 14:1; 16:3; 21:34, 41; 24:45; 26:18; Mk. 1:15; 10:30; 11:13; 12:2; 13:33; Lk. 1:20; 4:13; 8:13; 12:42, 56; 13:1; 18:30; 19:44; 20:10; 21:8, 24, 36; Jn. 7:6, 8; Acts 1:7; 3:20; 7:20; 12:1; 13:11; 14:17; 17:26; 19:23; 24:25; Rom. 3:26; 5:6; 8:18; 9:9; 11:5; 13:11; 1 Co. 4:5; 7:5, 29; 2 Co. 6:2; 8:14; Gal. 4:10; 6:9f; Eph. 1:10; 2:12; 5:16; 6:18; Col. 4:5; 1Th 2:17; 5:1; 2Th. 2:6; 1 Tim. 2:6; 4:1; 6:15; 2 Tim. 3:1; 4:3, 6; Titus 1:3; Heb. 9:9f; 11:11, 15; 1Pe 1:5, 11; 4:17; 5:6; Rev. 1:3; 11:18; 12:12, 14; 22:10.

Richards explains that...In the NT, **chronos** and **kairos** are the two basic words translated "time." Chronos designates a period or space of time. It is very close in meaning to the rather scientific way in which Westerners speak of time. **The function of kairos, also often translated "time," is to characterize the content and the quality of the time it indicates. Kairos**, whatever the duration of the chronos involved, **highlights the significance of that brief or extended moment**. It was at the "right time" that Christ died for the ungodly (Ro 5:6; Eph 1:10) and forever changed the character of time. Not only must all of history be reinterpreted by that moment, but time itself has become different too. We live in an "acceptable time," a day of salvation, a day of opportunity (2 Co 6:2). (New international encyclopedia of Bible words)

In a sense **kairos** alludes to the brevity of life, which begs one to pause and ponder his or her life like flowering grass, here today, gone tomorrow and in light of this truth to take a sincere, possibly sobering inventory of our daily activities of thought, word and deed!

Kairos is not so much a succession of minutes (Greek **chronos** 5550), but a period of **opportunity**. **Chronos** refers to chronological time, to clock time or calendar time, to a general space or succession of time. **Kairos**, on the other hand, refers to a specific and often predetermined period or moment of time and so views time in terms of events, eras, or seasons. In other words, **kairos** defines the best time to do something, the moment when circumstances are most suitable, the psychologically "ripe" moment.

In rhetoric **kairos** is "a passing instant when an opening appears which must be driven through with force if success is to be achieved." (E. C. White, *Kaironomia* p. 13)

Kairos is a season, an opportune time, an opportunity ("window of opportunity"). It is a fixed and definite time. It is a period possessed of certain characteristics. For example, a "season" is a time characterized by a particular circumstance or feature. Thus the time for bringing forth fruit [karpophoros - see study of karpophoreo] is the season (kairos) in which the tree bears fruit, in contrast to late autumn, when there is no more fruit.

Kairos does not emphasize a point of time but rather a time space filled with all kinds of possibilities. And so Kairos characteristically means an **"opportunity"** (and is so translated in some versions -- in in the NIV and NASB) which represents the

best time to do something, the moment when circumstances are most suitable.

From the **Moody Bible Institute's "Today in the Word"** we read that the idea of kairos..."is not clock time but what one writer calls "kingdom opportunities," those openings for ministry that often come at inconvenient times; a friend who wants to talk, a child with a problem, the chance to lend a hand to someone in need. Paul is encouraging us to keep our lives uncluttered so that we can respond when the need arises—because kingdom opportunities can get squeezed out of an overly tight schedule." (September, 1989)

Paul uses **kairos** in a manner similar to his use her in Ephesians in the following examples...

So then, while we have **opportunity** (kairos) let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith. (Galatians 6:10+)

Conduct (present imperative) yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of (exagorazo) the **opportunity** (kairos). (Col 4:5+)

In Romans Paul uses **kairos** exhorting the saints that there is an urgency in regard to the instructions he has just given writing...

And this do, knowing the **time** (kairos) that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. (Ro 13:11+)

I have only just a minute, only 60 seconds in it;
Forced upon me; can't refuse it; didn't seek it, didn't chose it.
But it's up to me just how I use it.
I must suffer if I lose it, give account if I abuse it.
Just a tiny little minute, but eternity is in it.

MacArthur writes that **kairos** "denotes a measured, allocated, fixed season or epoch. The idea of a fixed period is also seen in the use of the definite article in the Greek text, which refers to the time, a concept often found in Scripture (cf. Ex. 9:5+; 1Pe 1:17+). God has set boundaries to our lives, and our **opportunity** for service exists only within those boundaries. It is significant that the Bible speaks of such times being shortened, but never of their being lengthened. A person may die or lose an opportunity before the end of God's time, but he has no reason to expect his life or his opportunity to continue after the end of his predetermined time. Having sovereignly bounded our lives with eternity, God knows both the beginning and end of our time on earth. As believers we can achieve our potential in His service only as we maximize the time He has given us. (See [The MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

Webster defines "**opportunity**" as a favorable juncture of circumstances or a good chance for advancement or progress. Study the following verses and see if you can discern the "window of opportunity" aspect in each verse to help give you a "feel" for the meaning of **Kairos** (Mt 13:30, 21:34, Mark 11:13, 13:33, Lk 4:13, 19:44, Lk 21:24, Acts 1:7, 17:26, 2Co 6:2, Gal 6:9, Eph 2:12, 2Th 2:6, Rev 1:3). There is no good English equivalent to **kairos**, and when it is plural with **chronos** it is translated "seasons," or times at which certain foreordained events take place.

Redeem the time because...

It is very precious for the richest man in the world cannot purchase a single second!

It has eternal consequences (cp 1Ti 4:8+)

It is so short (see Thomas Watson's sermon below -- Time is so Short)

It cannot be recovered once it is past.

It is not your own (cp 1Co 6:19+ , 1Co 6:20+)

G. T. Dunney says we should redeem the time "With an eye to God's judgment day employing it (2Co 5:10+), rescuing each opportunity from the chains of sloth, ease, and listlessness."

Warren Wiersbe in his discussion of **redemption** asks an important question...

How long will the rest of our lives be? We don't know; nobody knows. We may have many years, or we may have many days. We could be called home to glory before the day ends. We don't know. "Man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment" (He 9:27+). It is an **appointment**, not an **accident**, and God knows when it is going to be.

When you are redeemed, you are set free from bondage to the old life This is why Ephesians 5:16 tells us to **redeem the time**. Don't live the rest of your life the way you used to live. You have been set free from

that. "The old has gone, the new has come!" (2Co 5:17+). Therefore, redeem the time, buy up the opportunity, make the most of the rest of your life.

I would like to apply that, if I may. Perhaps you are born again, but you are following the traditions of other people. You are doing what everybody else does.

**Why don't you ask God
what He wants you to do with the rest of your life?**

Perhaps you are in the wrong school, and you ought to be in another school training to serve God. Perhaps you are pursuing the wrong career. Perhaps you are a successful businessman, but God is calling you into His service. You could use your experience and your gifts to glorify God in full-time Christian service.

**If you knew you had only ten years left to live or one year left to live,
how would it change your life?**

We should be living each day as though it were our last. We are redeemed from bondage to sin; we are redeemed from bondage to the old life. We should live wholly for God. ([Key Words of the Christian Life: Understanding and Applying Their Meanings](#)) (Bolding added)

Wayne Barber gives us some practical advice on how we can **redeem the time** writing...

What do you mean, "**redeem the time**"? Purchase it. To purchase it, I have to have the collateral. Not only do you have to have the collateral, you have to have the right kind of collateral if you are going purchase anything. **So what is the collateral to purchase time? It is my choices.**

We have to understand this. Life is filled with one choice after another choice after another choice. It is not putting the garment on in the morning and thinking it is going to stay on you all day. You have to continue all day long to make those choices.

What are those choices motivated by? They are motivated by what the Word of God has taught us. They are motivated by our respect for God. Now to be the right choice it has to be a choice that honors Christ and His Word. That is the way I purchase time. I have only got one time around, and I have to learn to make proper choices.

How many choices did you make yesterday? We have to learn that time is short. We only have one season. We only go around one time. Make those choices. Why? Because every time you choose, you are going to do something. That is called a deed and one day we will answer for those deeds at the Bema Seat of Christ (cp 2Co 5:10-+).

Are they wood, hay and stubble? (1Co 3:12, 13, 14, 15) What is wood, hay and stubble? They are stupid, fleshly, religious choices. Sometimes they are not even religious. What are precious stones? They are choices that were made based on God's Word and my willingness to do what He tells me to do. We are making those choices, moment by moment by moment....

(In summary) From the time I was saved to the time I die I have an **opportunity**. I am to make the most of that **opportunity**. **How do I do that?** By redeeming the time. How do you purchase time? By the choices that we make. We have to suffer the consequences of wrong choices. Paul says, "You only have from the time you are born again until the time you die. Now make the most of that time. Redeem the time. Make wise choices." (Ephesians 5:15-17 Walking as Light in a World of Darkness)

The idea is not to make best use of time as such, which is what we should do in the sense of not wasting it, but of taking advantage of the opportunities that present themselves. One who lives life carelessly and without forethought would be walking foolishly. One who doesn't use his time wisely obviously would be unwise. Finally, one who isn't following God's will would be most foolish.

Adoniram Judson alluded to making the most of your opportunities when he wrote that...

A life once spent is irrevocable. It will remain to be contemplated through eternity...the same may be said of each day. When it is once past, it is gone forever. All the marks which we put upon it, it will exhibit forever...each day will not only be a witness of our conduct, but will affect our everlasting destiny....How shall we then wish to see each day marked with usefulness...! It is too late to mend the days that are past. The future is in our power. Let us, then, each morning, resolve to send the day into eternity in such a garb as we shall wish it to wear forever. And at night let us reflect that one more day is irrevocably gone, indelibly marked.

Many years ago when the great missionary Adoniram Judson was home on furlough, he passed through the city of Stonington,

Connecticut. A young boy playing about the wharves at the time of Judson's arrival was struck by the man's appearance. Never before had he seen such a light on any human face. He ran up the street to a minister to ask if he knew who the stranger was. The minister hurried back with him, but became so absorbed in conversation with Judson that he forgot all about the impatient youngster standing near him. Many years afterward that boy—who could never get away from the influence of that wonderful face—became the famous preacher Henry Clay Trumbull. In a book of memoirs he penned a chapter entitled: "What a Boy Saw in the Face of Adoniram Judson." That lighted countenance had changed his life. Even as flowers thrive when they bend to the light, so shining, radiant faces come to those who constantly turn toward Christ! Over 3000 years ago Moses prayed a prayer (see Ps 90:12 in next note below) that is reflected in the life of Adoniram Judson and might well be an appropriate prayer of every saint who loves "His (Christ's) [*appearing*](#)" (see + 2 Timothy 4:8) ([Spurgeon's devotional](#))...

This is **Coram Deo** living before the face of God, **Carpe Diem** seizing the day, because **Tempus Fugit**, time flies and so our daily prayer should be

So **teach** (an imperative) us to number our days, that we may present to Thee a heart of wisdom. (Psalm 90:12)

Spurgeon commenting on Psalm 90:12 writes:

So teach us to number our days. Instruct us to set store by time, mourning for that time past wherein we have wrought the will of the flesh, using diligently the time present, which is the accepted hour and the day of salvation, and reckoning the time which lies in the future to be too uncertain to allow us safely to delay any gracious work or prayer. Numeration is a child's exercise in arithmetic, but in order to number their days aright the best of men need the Lord's teaching. We are more anxious (eager) to count the stars than our days, and yet the latter is by far more practical.

That we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Men are led by reflections upon the brevity of time to give their earnest attention to eternal things; they become humble as they look into the grave which is so soon to be their bed, their passions cool in the presence of mortality, and they yield themselves up to the dictates of unerring wisdom; but this is only the case when the Lord himself is the teacher; he alone can teach to real and lasting profit. Thus Moses prayed that the dispensations of justice might be sanctified in mercy. "The law is our school master to bring us to Christ", when the Lord himself speaks by the law. It is most meet that the heart which will so soon cease to beat should while it moves be regulated by wisdom's hand.

A short life should be wisely spent. We have not enough time at our disposal to justify us in misspending a single quarter of an hour. Neither are we sure of enough life to justify us in procrastinating for a moment. If we were wise in heart we should see this, but mere head wisdom will not guide us aright.

The time is short!

If thou wouldst work for God it must be now;
If thou wouldst win the garland for thy brow,
Redeem the time.
With His reward
He comes; He tarries not; His day is near;
When men least look for Him will He be here;
Prepare for Him!
—Horatius Bonar

The great sixteenth-century reformer **Philip Melanchthon** kept a record of every wasted moment and took his list to God in confession at the end of each day. It is small wonder that God used him in such great ways.

Time: A creation of God which marks the duration of life and which is measured by changes in the created order. The flow of time is directed by God who appoints particular "times" within his unfolding purposes. Because human life is brief, time should be used properly, making the most of every opportunity. (Manser, Martin H., Dictionary of Bible Themes)

Christianity gives real value to life for it "is a life that impels the seizure of every opportunity for good-doing. "Redeeming the time "--buying up the opportunities. **Opportunity** is the flower of time which blooms for a moment and is gone for ever." (G Barlow)

WATCH FOR OPPORTUNITIES "Redeeming the time." Chances must be sought for putting in the right word, and when God sends it we must make the most of it. We must go on the principle of **now** or **never**. This will make us eager to embrace opportunities; and in turn we must urge the undecided to embrace Christ at once. Every act of kindness to the unconverted will help us. (T. L. Cuyler,

D. D.)

John Broadus said "Opportunity is like a fleet horse that pauses for a moment at one's side. If you fail to mount him in that moment, you can hear the clatter of his hoofs down the corridors of time. That opportunity is gone forever."

P. Grant on The merchandise of time

The word here translated "redeem" literally means to purchase in the market, and is quite different from the theological term, which means to re-purchase. Time is thus presented to us as a precious commodity.

I. The obligations to the practice of making merchandise of time.

1. On the mode in which we employ our time our everlasting destiny depends. One of the plainest principles of commerce is that any commodity is desirable in proportion to the returns it is capable of securing. The same principle applies here. The everlasting consequences which flow from it give to time transcendent value. Were it not for these we might say, "Let us eat and drink," etc. Just as a merchant, then, is most anxious about a profitable bargain so ought we to be about redeeming the time.
2. Time is short and uncertain. In commerce the rarity of an article enhances its value, and should any doubt exist as to another opportunity for procuring it the merchant is proportionately anxious to obtain it without delay. Had we for certain a considerable period to live in our neglect might be excused; but as it is we are bad spiritual merchants if we fail to redeem the time.
3. Unless you check the progress of sin now it will become every day more difficult, and eventually become impossible. What merchant would allow an unprofitable line of business to lengthen out as men do the life of sin. He stops promptly, lest by delay all chance of retrieving his fortune should be gone.

II. Directions for complying with the exhortation.

1. Have a plan or system for the distribution of time. Every man of business knows the importance of pre-arrangement and method. How much more so is this on which hang such infinite issues. In your plan set aside time for devotion.
2. Beware of those things which rob you of the best portion of it.
 - (1) Idleness.
3. Watch for and improve those occasions in which you can best promote not only your own eternal interests but those of others, and particularly of your family.
4. Accustom yourselves to serious and impartial self-examination. Take stock as men of business do.

L. O. Thompson - The right use of time

If this year is to be more valuable than the last, we must more carefully attend to the use of our time.

I. When to use time rightly.

1. Now. The present moment is a king in disguise.
2. While it is ours. The past is a memory; the future, an undivided inheritance.
3. The present is the only moment which can be used.

II. How to use time rightly.

1. By a circumspect walk.
2. By wisdom in its employment.
3. By helpful recreation. Avoid the two extremes of overwork and no work.
4. By the redemption of every fleeting moment. Take care of the seconds, and the hours will take care of themselves. Devote it all to God.

III. Why should we use time rightly?

1. Because of its value. The destiny of eternity hangs upon a moment of time.
2. The time is short.
3. When lost it can never be redeemed.

4. All that we have to do must be done quickly.

5. We shall have to account for our time.

IV. Lessons:

1. We shall make the most of time, if we work in it with zeal and diligence.

2. We should see to it that we are unreplicable in its use and in our work and recreation.

3. We should seek out, and not merely wait for, time in which to benefit others, or reprove the evils of our day. John the Baptist reproved Herod at the cost of his head; Jesus freely gave Himself for us all, and the disciples devoted their whole lifetime to teaching, preaching, exhorting, and re proving.

4. We should learn to be more faithful in the use of the present, because so much of the past has run to waste.

5. Avoid procrastination and building air castles.

6. Daily examine what use you have made of your time.

V. Illustrative scriptures. Ecclesiastes 8:5; Ecclesiastes 9:10; Ecclesiastes 12:1; Romans 12:11; 1 Corinthians 7:29; 2 Corinthians 6:2; Galatians 6:10; Ephesians 6:13; Colossians 4:5; James 4:13-15; 1 Peter 1:17; Revelation 22:20.

THE TIME IS SHORT!

Puritan divine **Thomas Watson** preached a sermon on 1Cor 7:29 ("**the time is short**") from which the following excerpt is taken (take a moment and read his entire [exhortation!](#))...

A seasonable admonition—"The time is short." This word "**time**" I shall take more strictly as the term and period of man's life. The time is short. The diverse instances of mortality, may serve as so many commentaries upon the text. The Greek word for "short" alludes to mariners who roll up their sails and bring them into a narrow compass when the ship draws near the harbor. Though the sails of man's life were spread larger in the times of the patriarchs, now God is folding up these sails in a narrower compass: "The time is short." The Scripture frequently asserts the brevity and transitoriness of man's life.

Psalm 89:47ESV: "Remember how short my time is."

Psalm 39:5: "Behold, You have made my days as a hand-breadth," which is the least of the geometrical measures.

Job used three elegant metaphors to set forth the shortness of man's life. Job 9:25-26:"My life passes more swiftly than a **runner**. It disappears like a swift **boat**, like an **eagle** that swoops down on its prey."

If we look to the land, man's life is like a swift runner. If we look to the sea, it is like a swift ship. If we look to the air, there it is like a flying eagle.

Life is compared to a **cloud** (Job 7:9). A cloud is a vapor drawn up by the sun into the middle region of the air. When this cloud comes to its full proportion, it is soon dispersed and blown away with the wind.

**Life gathers as a cloud, bigger and bigger—
but all of a sudden it is dissipated by death.**

Our life is but a **breath**, even less.

Psalm 39:5: "My life is no longer than the width of my hand. An entire lifetime is just a moment to you; human existence is but a breath."

There is but a span between the cradle and the grave. Solomon said, "There is a time to be born—and a time to die" (Ecclesiastes 3:2)—but mentions no time of living—as if that were so short, it were not worth speaking of.

QUESTION. In what sense is the time of life short?

ANSWER. It is short in respect to the uncertainty—it may instantly expire

Our time is short, because of the uncertainty. Hezekiah, it is true, had a lease of fifteen years sealed (Isaiah 38:5)—but we have no such lease sealed for us—death may be within a day's march.

There are so many casualties, that it is a wonder if the slender thread of our life is not cut off by an untimely death. Have you not seen a virgin on the same day dressed in her bridal apparel—and her winding sheet?

Time is short in respect to its improvement. If we reckon that for time which is well-spent, then time is brought into a narrow compass indeed. A great part of our time lies fallow. Take from our life all the time of eating, drinking, sleeping, besides idle impertinences—and then how short is our time! How little is the time wherein we can truly say, "This time I have lived!" Oh, how little is the time which is spent with God!

**Time misemployed is not time lived—
but time lost.**

Time is short compared with eternity. There is no telescope which can see to the end of eternity. Eternity is a day which has no sun setting. It is a circle—without beginning or end. Eternity is a sum which can never be numbered, a line which can never be measured. Reckon as many millions of years as there have been minutes since the creation, and they stand as ciphers (an unimportant thing) in eternity. The most elevated strains of rhetoric cannot reach eternity. It is a sea without bottom—or banks. Time may be compared to a spot of earth lying at the mouth of the great ocean.

**Time is a spot on this side of eternity.
What a little spot of that, is man's life!**

Thus you see, in this sense, time is short.

It will not be long before the silver cord is loosed and the golden bow broken (Ecclesiastes 12:6). Time goes on apace.

**The poets painted time with wings,
because it flies so fast.**

In Joshua's days, when the sun and moon stood still, time went on. In Hezekiah's reign, when the sun went ten degrees backward, time went forward. Our whole life is nothing else but a passage to death—where there is no staying by the way or slacking our pace.

USE 1.

See what a poor inconsiderable thing life is. The time is short, and upon this small wire of time hangs the weight of eternity. Life is but a short scene acted here. It is but a vapor or puff of wind (Jas 4:14). Life is made up of a few flying minutes. Oh, then, how imprudent are those, who will damn their souls to save their lives! He would be unwise who, to preserve a short lease, would lose his inheritance. How many there are who, to preserve this short life, will take sinful courses, defraud and oppress and build up an estate—but will pull down their souls! Many, to save their skins, will destroy their souls.

It is better to endure a blow on our body or estate—than suffer our precious soul to be damaged.

The soul is the man of the man.

The soul is the princely part, crowned with reason. It carries in it some faint idea or resemblance of God. The soul is a rich diamond set in clay. What folly it is to save the clay—and lose the diamond! Tiberius the emperor, for a drink of water—lost his kingdom!

USE 2. EXHORTATION.

BRANCH 1. Is time so uncertain and short? Let us often contemplate the shortness of life.

Feathers swim upon the water—but gold sinks into it. Light, feathery people float in vanity—but serious Christians sink deep into the thoughts of their death.

Dt 32:29: "Oh, that they were wise—that they would consider their latter end."

Forgetfulness of the latter end—makes life sinful—and death formidable. People naturally shrink back from the thoughts of death.

Amos 6:3: "They put far away from them the evil day."

When they are young, they hope they shall spin out life to the blossoming of the almond tree. When old age comes, they hope to renew their strength as the eagle, though their bodies are subject to corruption and they feel the symptoms of mortality in them. Deafness of hearing—is death creeping in at the ear. Dimness of sight—is death creeping in at the eye. Yet they are so frantic as to persuade themselves of long life. Bodily diseases are but death's harbingers which go before to prepare a lodging for death. Why, then, do men dream of an earthly eternity?

Psalm 49:11: "Their inward thought is that their houses shall continue forever."

Where is the man who contemplates time's shortness, or makes another's death a looking-glass in which he may see his own dying face?

Some may say this discourse of the shortness of time is fit for such as are mortally ill, whom the physicians have given over. But those who are in health, may live many years.

Though your blood is fresh in your veins, and your bones are full of marrow—you know not how short your time may be. He was not sick nor in fear of sickness who said,

"Soul, take your ease—eat, drink, and enjoy yourself." But that very night, death terminated his life (Luke 12:20).

A strong constitution is no guarantee of a long life. People likely enough to live, have been suddenly taken away by convulsions and strokes. How soon may death sound its alarm! It is reported of Zelenchus that the first he brought into his new house, was a tombstone. Oh, meditate on the transitoriness and brittleness of life! Think often of your tombstone!

QUESTION. What advantage will accrue to us, by often thinking of our short stay here?

ANSWER 1. Meditation on the shortness of time would cool the heat of our affections for the WORLD.

These visible objects please the fancy—but they do not so much delight us—as delude us. They are suddenly gone from us. Worldly things are like a fair picture drawn on the ice—which the sun quickly melts.

The time is short, so why should we overly love that which we cannot keep over long? 1Co 7:31: "The fashion (or pageant) of the world passes away." Time passes away as a ship in full sail. This, thought on seriously, would mortify covetousness. Paul looked upon himself as ready to loosen anchor and be gone. His love to the world had already died, Galatians 6:14: "The world is crucified to me—and I unto the world." Who would covet that which has neither contentment nor continuance?

Peter had the same view in 2Peter 1:14: "Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle." Among the Grecians, the city of Sparta had a king for a year and then he was to lay down his crown—which made everyone strive not to be king. Why should we so toil about the world as if we were to live here forever? What need is there for a long provision—if it is for a short way? If we have enough to bear our charges to heaven, that should suffice. Suppose a man's lease were ready to expire and he should fall to building and planting; would not he be judged to be foolish? When our time is so very short now, to follow the world immoderately, as if we would fetch happiness out of the earth which God has cursed—is a degree of madness. We shall soon have no need of the earth—but to be buried in it!

ANSWER 2. Meditation on the shortness of time should be a means to HUMBLE us

Augustine calls humility the mother of the graces. Balm sinks to the bottom of the water. A good Christian sinks low in humility. And what can sooner pull down the flags and banners of pride—than to consider we are shortly dropping into the dust! The priest was to cast the feathers of the fowls by the place of the ashes (Leviticus 1:16). Just so, all your feathers of honor must shortly lie in the ashes. Shall not he who is clothed with mortality—be clothed with humility? The thoughts of the grave—should bury our pride.

ANSWER 3. Meditation on the shortness of time, would hasten our REPENTANCE.

Repentance is as necessary, as heaven. As moisture and natural heat preserve life—so repenting tears and a heart burning with love preserve the soul. It is natural to delay repentance. We say with Haggai 1:2, "The time is not yet come." But, the text says, the time is short. Our life is a candle, which is soon blown out.

The thoughts of time's uncertainty and swiftness, would keep us from putting off our repentance. There is no time for us to delay. It is observed of the birds of Norway, that they fly faster than the birds of other countries. By the instinct of nature, knowing the days in that climate to be very short, they therefore make more haste to

their nests. The consideration of short abode here, will make us avoid delays and fly faster to heaven upon the wing of repentance.

ANSWER 4. Meditation on the shortness of time would give us an antidote against the TEMPTATIONS of Satan.

Temptation is Satan's eldest daughter, who woos for him. Satan does more mischief by his wiles—than his darts. He knows how to suit his temptation, as the farmer knows what seed is proper for such a soil. Satan tempted Achan with a wedge of gold; and David with beauty. It is hard to keep up the banks of grace against the sea of temptation. I know no better remedy against Satan's immodest solicitations than this text: "the time is short."

"What, Satan, do you tempt me to vanity—when I am going to give up my accounts at the judgment? Shall I now be sinning—when tomorrow I may be dying! How shall I look my judge in the face!" Christian, when Satan sets sinful pleasure before you, show him a death's-head. This will make temptations vanish.

ANSWER 5. The consideration of the shortness of our stay in the world would be a help to TEMPERANCE.

It would make us sober and moderate in the use of worldly comforts. By excess, we turn lawful things into sinful things. The bee may suck a little honey from the flower—but put it into a barrel of honey—and it is drowned. We may with Jonathan dip the end of the rod in honey—but not thrust it in too far. The flesh, when pampered, rebels. The best preservative against intemperance is this—the time is short!

The Egyptians at their great banquets, used to bring in the image of a dead man, and say to their guests, "Look upon this—and proceed in your banquet." An excellent antidote against excess. Joseph of Arimathea erected a sepulcher in his garden—to spice his flowery delights with the thoughts of death.

ANSWER 6. Meditation on the shortness of time would much mitigate our grief for the loss of dear RELATIONS.

It is observable that when the Apostle said, "The time is short," he immediately added. "Let those who weep be as if they wept not."

No doubt the loss of relations is grievous to the fleshly part. It is like pulling a limb from the body. When God strikes us in our right eye—we weep. It is lawful to give vent to our grief. Joseph wept over his dead father. But though true religion does not banish grief, it bounds it. We must weep—as if we wept not. Rachel's sin was that she refused to be comforted (Matthew 2:18). If anything can stop the issue of sorrow, at least assuage it, it is this, "The time is short." We shall shortly have our losses made up and enjoy our godly relations again in heaven!

ANSWER 7. Meditation on the shortness of time would make us highly value GRACE.

Time is short—but grace is forever. 1Jn 2:27: "The anointing which you have received from Him abides in you." Grace is a blossom of eternity; it is an immortal seed (1 John 3:9). Grace is not blasted by death—but transplanted into a better soil. Grace is not a lease which soon expires—but an inheritance entailed forever. He who has true grace can no more lose it—than the angels can, who are fixed in their heavenly orb. Grace shall outlast time—and run parallel with eternity.

BRANCH 2. If time is so short and winged, take heed of MISSPENDING this short time. To misspend time, is the worse wastefulness.

1. Take heed of spending time UNPROFITABLY.

Domitian wasted much of his time in catching flies. Many live merely to cumber the ground. Judges 10:4: "Jair had thirty sons who rode around on thirty donkeys" and they died. So it may be said, such a one was born in the reign of such a king and he possessed such an estate—and he died. His life was scarcely worth a prayer—or his death worth a tear. An idle person is a cipher in the world—and God writes down no ciphers in the Book of Life. Many are like the wood of the vine—useless. Ezekiel 15:3: "Will men take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon?"

Too many resemble the lilies which do not toil, neither do they spin. They spend their time as the emperor Caligula. He was at a great expense to provide a navy, and when it was provided he sent his mariners to sea to gather cockle-shells, and so they sailed home again. God has furnished men with precious time wherein they may work out salvation—and they employ it in foolish vanities. What reward can be expected—when

there is no work done? Who is crowned as a conqueror—who never fights? Matthew 25:30: "Cast the unprofitable servant into utter darkness!"

2. Take heed of spending time VICIOUSLY.

Many spend their short time in drinking, gaming, and whoring. Esau lost the blessing, while he was hunting. Many lose heaven, while they hunt after sinful pleasures. Sin is boiled to a great height in this age. Men count it a shame, not to be vile. They are steeped and boiled in wickedness! They live in the world to infect others—as the cockatrice with its breath poisons the herbs. What a dreadful account will they have to give, who have nothing to show God but their sins!

BRANCH 3. If the time of life is so short, let us IMPROVE it. Ephesians 5:16: "Redeeming the time." If a man had but a short time on a farm, he would make the best improvement of it and get as good a crop as he could out of it before he left it. The thoughts of our short stay here on earth, should make us improve this little inch of time.'

That we may do this better, remember we are accountable to God for our time. God will say, "What have you done with your time?" If a master entrusts his steward with money and goods—he expects that he should give him an account of what he has done with them—and how he has employed them. All of us are stewards, and God will call us to a reckoning and say, "What have you done with the talent of time which I entrusted you with?"

QUESTION: How should we improve this short time?

ANSWER: In general, mind salvation work (Philippians 2:12). He who lays up gold and silver is wise for his children—but he who gets salvation is wise for himself.

Especially, improve this short time by a serious examination. Examine how the case stands between God and your souls. 2 Corinthians 13:5: "Examine yourselves." Examine yourselves—as the goldsmith does his gold. Time is short, and what if God should say this night, "Give an account of your stewardship!"

Reckon with yourselves about your debts. Are your debts paid—and your sins pardoned? Reckon with yourselves about making your will. Time is short; you may die before night. Have you made your will? I mean, in a spiritual sense, have you given up your will to God and, by solemn vow—set seal to the will? They are most fit to resign their souls to God—who have resigned their wills to Him.

Call yourselves to account about your evidences for heaven. Are your evidences ready? Your desires are your evidences. Do you desire Christ for Himself—as beauty is loved for itself? Can nothing quench your thirst but Christ's blood? Is your desire quickened into endeavor? This is a blessed sign.

For lack of this self-examination, many who are well known to others—are unknown to themselves. They know not where they shall go when they die—or to what coast they shall sail—to hell or to heaven.

Improve this short time, by laying hold of all the seasons and opportunities for your souls. The mariner takes the fittest season; he sets to sea while the wind blows. Time is short, and opportunity (which is the cream of time) is shorter. Let not the seasons of mercy slip away unimproved.

While God's Spirit strives with you, nourish His sweet whispers and motions. When the dove came flying to the windows of the ark, Noah reached out his hand and pulled it into the ark. So when God's Spirit (this blessed dove) comes to you, entertain and welcome Him into the ark of your souls. If you repulse the Spirit, He may refuse to strive any more. Gospel seasons, though they are sweet, are swift.

While God's ministers are with you, make use of them. Zechariah 1:5: "The prophets, do they live forever?" Their time (by reason of their labors) is scarcely so long as others. We read of lamps within the pitchers in judges 7:16. Ministers are lamps—but these lamps are in earthen pitchers, which soon break. Though ministers carry the word of life in their mouths—yet they carry death in their faces! Improve their labors while you have them. They thirst for your happiness and, as so many bells—would chime in your souls to Christ.

Improve this short time by keeping up a close communion with God. 1 John 1:3: "Our communion is with the Father." This sweet communion with God is kept up by holy meditation. Genesis 24:63: "Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening." Meditation cements divine truths into the mind. It brings God and the soul together. Meditation is the bellows of the affections. It gives a sight and a taste of invisible glory. Psalm 104:34: "My meditation of Him shall be sweet."

Communion with God is kept up by prayer. Praying days are ascension days. Caligula placed his effigies in the

capitol, whispering in Jupiter's ears. Prayer whispers in God's ears. It is a secret parley and conversation with God. On this mount of prayer, the soul has many sweet transfigurations.

Improve this short time by doing all the service you can for God. Wisdom may be learned from an enemy. Satan is more fierce because he knows his time is short (Revelation 12:12). We would act more vigorously for God seeing our time is short. Our lives should be as jewels—though little in quantity yet great in value. Paul knew his stay in the world was short, therefore, how zealous and active was he for God while he lived! 1 Corinthians 15:10: "I labored more abundantly than they all." Paul's obedience did not move as slowly as the sun on the dial—but as swift as the sun in the sky. Is time short? Let us be "God-exalters." Let us bring glory to God in doing good to others. As aromatic trees sweat out their precious oils, so should we lay out our strength for the good of others.

Let us do good to their souls and convince the ignorant, strengthen the weak, and bring back the wandering. A good Christian is both a diamond and a lodestone—a diamond sparkling in sanctity; and a lodestone for his attractive virtue in drawing others to Christ.

Let us do good to their bodies. Many at this day say to their sorrows, "You are our companions." Let our fingers drop with the myrrh of liberality. Hebrews 13:16: "Don't forget to do good and to share what you have with those in need, for such sacrifices are very pleasing to God." Let us feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and be temporal saviors to others.

Could we thus improve our time—our lives, though short, would be sweet. This would be the way to cast abroad a fragrant, redolent smell in God's church, like the orange trees which perfume the air where they grow.

Could we thus improve our time, we might have our consciences drawing up a certificate for us, as in 2 Corinthians 1:12. Then it does not matter if the world censures—as long as conscience acquits; it does not matter how cross the wheels go—if the clock strikes rightly.

Could we thus improve our time, we might have an easy and joyful passage out of the world. This was Hezekiah's comfort when he thought he was lying on his deathbed. 2 Kings 20:3: "I beseech You, O Lord, remember how I have done that which is good in Your sight." To improve time aright answers God's cost, credits true religion, and saves the soul.

USE 3.

Let this strike terror into every wicked person who exhausts his strength in sin; his time is short—and then begins his hell. He spends his life in a frolic. He takes the timbrel and harp and rejoices at the sound of the organ (Job 21:12). But the time is shortly coming, when all his mirth shall cease. Revelation 18:22, "Never again will the sound of music be heard there—no more harps, songs, flutes, or trumpets." "All the fancy things you loved so much are gone. The luxuries and splendor that you prized so much will never be yours again. They are gone forever." Revelation 18:14. The grave buries all a sinner's joy. When a wicked man dies—the devil gets a windfall.

Handley C. G. Moule comments that...

buying up the opportunity, as it evermore occurs, "buying it out" from alien ownership, from the mere use of self, securing it for your Master at the expense of self-denying watchfulness. [*The same phrase occurs (Aramaic and Greek) Da 2:8: 'I knew of a certainty that ye would buy the time'; where the meaning plainly is, 'that ye would get your desired opportunity at the expense of a subterfuge.'... In Col. 4:5 [+] the special thought is of opportunities in intercourse with 'them that are without.' Here surely it is the same. The thought of seizing occasions to let in 'the light' upon 'the darkness,' that it may become 'light,' is still in view.*] Do this, remembering that you will need to do it if you are to be really serviceable to Him; it will not do to let things drift, as if circumstances would take care of themselves, and automatically serve the Lord's servant; because the days are evil; the "days" of your human life in a sinful world do not lend themselves to holy uses where the man who lives them does not watch for opportunities.

This precept is for all time. No doubt there were special conditions in Asia at that date which may have led St Paul to write it down with a heart centred upon peculiar and acute difficulties. In many respects the "**days**" at Ephesus were "**evil**" as they are not now, at least for those of us whose lot is cast in lands which bear the Christian name, and are full on their surface of the Christian tradition. But then, to the age, as to the day, "sufficient is the evil thereof." We have our characteristic obstacles, here and now, to the active doing of the Master's work, and to the silent diffusion of His light; among them is the Christian tradition itself, where it exists

along with spiritual death in men's wills and affections. So now, as distinctively as then, "**the days are evil**" for the full Christian enterprise. And the "**evil**" must be reckoned with, now as ever, by the merchants of the King, "seeking goodly pearls" (cp Matthew 13:46); they must be on the watch, and "**buy up the opportunity**" at a real cost.

We may be sure on the other hand that St Paul does not mean, for in the wisdom of the Spirit he could not mean, that we are enjoined to force occasions for our witness or appeal. The imagery of purchase looks just the other way; it points to a lawful acquisition, though at a real cost. We have need to ask as earnestly for wisdom as for courage and persistency in life and work for Christ. But then, that thought is not to be the miserable excuse for a contented silence. **Rather, it is to be our deep motive for such a close personal walk with God, such a readiness, through the prayer of faith, to spend and be spent for Him, such a maintained consciousness that His holy service is our true *raison d'être* as Christians, that when the opportunity is ready for us we shall be ready for it.** (cp 1Pe 3:15+) More than half the price of the "purchase" will thus be paid by our own secret watching and prayer over our own unhindered communion with God. ([Time's Shortness](#))

**To usefulness and power
There is no royal road;
The strength for holy service
Is intercourse with God.**

([Ephesians 5:15-21 Christian's Watchfulness... - Goto page 265](#))

Redeeming the Time - A Tragic Illustration - We missed him. Our chance to change things came and passed and we did not know it was there. A dark-skinned little boy sat through Sunday School classes for three years at a great Baptist Church (First Church, San Antonio) but someone missed him. His name was Sirhan Sirhan, and at age 24 he shot and killed Senator Robert Kennedy. In a welter of words and the shudder of grief throughout our nation, the persistent thought keeps recurring—someone missed him. (Dr. Jimmy Allen, former pastor of First Baptist Church, San Antonio, Texas in Pulpit Helps, May, 1991, [Sirhan Sirhan | Bible.org](#))

William MacDonald: "Redeeming the time." (Eph. 5:16)

In a day when men of the world are becoming increasingly allergic to work, Christians must make the most of every passing moment. It is a sin to waste time.

Voices from every age testify to the importance of diligent labor. The Savior Himself said, "I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4).

Thomas a Kempis wrote, "Never be idle or vacant; be always reading or writing or praying or meditating or employed in some useful labor for the common good.

When asked the secret of his success as an interpreter of the Word, **G. Campbell Morgan** said, "**Work—hard work—and again, work!**"

We should never forget that when the Lord Jesus came into the world, He served as a carpenter. The greater part of His life was spent in the shop in Nazareth.

Paul was a tentmaker. He considered it an important part of his ministry.

It is a mistake to think that work is a result of the entrance of sin. Before sin entered, Adam was placed in the garden to dress it and to keep it (Gen. 2:15). The curse involved the toil and sweat that accompany work (Gen. 3:19). Even in heaven there will be work, for "his servants shall serve him" (Rev. 22:3).

Work is a blessing. Through it we find fulfillment of our need for creativity. The mind and body function best when we work diligently. When we are usefully occupied, we enjoy greater protection from sin, because "Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do" (Isaac Watts).

Thomas Watson said, "Idleness tempts the devil to tempt."

Honest, diligent, faithful work is a vital part of our Christian testimony. And the results of our labor may outlive us.

As someone has said, "Everyone owes it to himself to provide himself with some useful occupation while his body is lying in the grave."

And William James said, "The great use of a life is to spend it for something that will outlast it." ([Truths to Live By-Daily Devotional](#))

Our efforts in life must be seasonable. There is a religious forethought. He who neglects to gather in summer neglects the bounties of the Lord as well as neglects his own future necessities. The man who sleeps in harvest is pronounced a fool, because he lets his opportunity slip. **The historian writes concerning Hannibal that when he could have taken Rome he would not, and when he would he could not. We are to be men of opportunity--that is to say, we are to buy up the opportunity, to redeem the time. When God opens a gate He means that we should go through it, and pass into all the inheritance beyond. There was a king of Sicily who was called "The Lingerer," not because he stayed till opportunity came, but because he stayed till opportunity was lost. There is a time to wait and a time to act. Overlong waiting means loss of chance,** for the king has passed by, and the gates are closed; but to wait patiently until everything is ripe for action is the very last expression of Christian culture. (J. Parker, D.D.)

TIME IS PRECIOUS.

1. It is precious, because we have much business on our hands; business which relates, not to our bodies only, but to our souls; not merely to this life, but to the whole duration of our existence.
 2. It is precious, because it is short and uncertain; and our work must be done soon, or it never can be done at all.
 3. It is precious, because part, and with many, the greater part of it is gone already. What remains is increased in value, as it is contracted in length. We had none to waste at first; we have need to be frugal now. (J. Lathrop)
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Life Application Commentary writes that...

The believers should carefully use their time, making use of opportunities for doing good (see Galatians 6:10). This implies that we should not allow ourselves to be controlled by our circumstances; rather, we should make use of time as a valuable commodity or resource, as a master does with his servant. We should not read into this verse that God expects or condones workaholics. God has given us periods of both work and rest. We must never find in Scripture an excuse to neglect our physical needs or the needs of our families.

Make a quick mental list of the things you really value. Undoubtedly your list would include your loved ones, your home, your church, and perhaps a few other possessions. Would it also include your time? Paul's admonition to live carefully, "making the most of every opportunity," is a reminder of the preciousness of time. ([Barton, B. et al: The NIV Life Application Commentary Series: Tyndale](#))

Vance Havner

Somewhere I have read about a garden in which was a sundial bearing the inscription, "It Is Later Than You Think." In the wilderness of this world there is one sure sundial, the Word of God. From Genesis to Revelation it bears for us today the timely warning, "It Is Later Than You Think." In these frantic times, while millions rush madly through in modernity's much-ado-about-nothing, there are few who pause before the Eternal Timepiece to read its solemn message and meditate thereon.

It is a tragic thing to end up one's days like Saul, trying to call back the Samuels of lost opportunity. There is no witch or wizard in time or eternity who can turn back time in its flight and make one "a child again just for tonight."

Harry Ironside writes that...

Just as people go out bargain hunting and say,

"There, if I buy that today, I can get it at a good price, much better than if I have to let it go until another time. It is worth my while to buy these bargains up at this rate."

Let the Christian be just as eager, just as earnest, to obtain opportunities to witness for Christ, to serve the blessed Lord, and to be a means of blessing to others with whom he comes in contact. Buying up the opportunities, seeking to use them to the glory of our Lord Jesus, realizing that the days are evil and the time for serving Christ is slipping fast away, and that opportunities once lost will never be found again. Therefore,

From **Essex Congregational Remembrancer**...On redeeming the time: —

I. DIRECTIONS.

- 1. We must redeem time by sincerely repenting of sin and devoting ourselves immediately to the great business of life.**
- 2. We must redeem time by considering the various ways in which we have wasted it, and avoiding them for the future.**
- 3. We must redeem time by forming a wise and judicious plan for the regulation of our conduct, and firmly and conscientiously adhering to it.** The immortal Alfred, one of the best of kings that ever filled the British throne, divided his time into three portions, allotting eight hours to sleep, recreation, and meals, eight to public business, and eight to private study and devotion; and by constantly adhering to his plan, he accomplished the works and acquired the wisdom which have excited the admiration of posterity. Dr. Doddridge adopted nearly the same plan, and by that means he was enabled to educate so many young men, to preach so frequently, and to leave the world those various writings which have enlightened the minds and aided the devotion of multitudes. Colonel Gardiner always set apart two hours in the morning for devotion, and if his troops had to march at six o'clock he rose at four to commune with God, and like his Divine Master prepare for arduous duties by fervent prayer.
- 4. We must redeem time by forming habits of activity and diligence.** It requires great labour to improve time as it comes — what then must it require to redeem it? Should a husbandman or mechanic have lost any time in his work, he redeems it by extra exertion; in like manner should we redeem the time which we ought to have spent in serving God and preparing for eternity.

II. REASONS.

- 1. The merciful purpose for which time is granted, and the greatness of the work which we have to perform.**
- 2. Because the period in which we can redeem time is not only very uncertain, but may be extremely short.** The goldsmith gathers up every particle of gold. The very least which he can discern he deems too valuable to be lost. Can you, then, willingly suffer the loss of your precious moments, when worlds on worlds cannot buy one of them back again? Many who are now on the bed of death or passing into eternity, would part most gladly with all the wealth they have amassed, and all the fame they have acquired, for another year, or another month. While time lingers for you, improve it. Conscientiously set apart its hours as they come to the highest purposes.
- 3. We should redeem time because of the eternal consequences which will result from the use we make of it** As our time is given us by God, He will call us to account for the way in which we have spent it. Every day therefore brings with it an awful responsibility. (Essex Congregational Remembrancer.)

TIME IS SIGNIFICANT because it is so rare. It is completely irretrievable. You can never repeat it or relive it. There is no such thing as a literal instant replay. That appears only on film. It travels alongside us every day, yet it has eternity wrapped up in it. Although this is true, time often seems relative, doesn't it? For example, two weeks on a vacation is not at all like two weeks on a diet. Also, some people can stay longer in an hour than others can in a week! Ben Franklin said of time, " ... that is the stuff life is made of." Time forms life's building blocks. The philosopher William James once said, "The great use of life is to spend it for something that will outlast it." —Lloyd Cory, Quote Unquote

Opportunity may only knock once, but **temptation** leans on the door bell!

Swindoll - I'D LIKE TO PLAY DEVIL'S ADVOCATE and tell you how to waste your time. **Five** proven ideas come immediately to mind: First, worry a lot. Start worrying early in the morning and intensify your anxiety as the day passes. **Second**, make hard-and-fast predictions. For example, one month before his July 1975 disappearance, Jimmy Hoffa announced: "I don't need bodyguards." **Third**, fix your attention on getting rich. You'll get a lot of innovative ideas from the secular bookshelves (I counted fourteen books on the subject last time I was in a bookstore), plus you'll fit right in with most of the hype pouring out of entrepreneurial seminars and high-pressure sales meetings. **Fourth**, compare yourself with others. Now, here's another real time-waster. If it's physical fitness you're into, comparing yourself with Arnold Schwarzenegger or Jane Fonda ought to keep you busy. **Fifth**, lengthen your list of enemies. If there's one thing above all others that will keep your wheels spinning, it's perfecting your skill at the Blame Game. Put these five surefire suggestions in motion and you will set new records in wasting valuable time.

OUR GOAL, then, is not to find more time but to use time more wisely. Make an honest appraisal of your week. If there are leaks in your time dike, why not plug them? If your priorities should be sifted more clearly from the trivia, that would be to your

advantage. If a simple plan would help to organize your day, that's only playing it smart. If you should give a kind but unqualified, unexplained "No" more often, do it. It's easy to forget that time is our slave, not our sovereign, isn't it? (See [Day by Day with Charles Swindoll](#))

John Phillips - Suppose that a wealthy man were to give someone \$1440 a day to spend. He had to spend it. The gift did not allow him to save it, still less to hoard it. At the end of each day what was not spent was lost. The same sum would arrive every day until the end of life. Then an accounting would be made of what the recipient had done with the sum. There it was \$1440 a day to spend or squander, to be used buying things for oneself or in helping others, to be wasted on trifles or invested for eternity. Every day God gives us 1440 minutes to be spent by us and us alone. We have to spend it. We cannot save up some of today's time for tomorrow. We have none of yesterday's time left over for today. All of these precious minutes are ours. However, when life is over, there will be a strict accounting of what we have done with that time. We, as Christians, will give our accounting at the judgment seat of Christ. The unsaved will render account at the Great White Throne. But an accounting will be made. "Make the best possible use of your time," Paul says. Paul might have wasted his time moping over the restrictions placed upon his liberty. Not him! He invested that time in writing immortal books, in praying for the furtherance of the gospel, in talking to those who came or were sent to him about the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, in meditating upon the Scriptures long since committed to memory, and in preparing himself for new missionary journeys should he be released or to meet the Lord in Glory should Nero order his execution. (See [Exploring Colossians & Philemon: An Expository Commentary](#))

Tim Schoap - "Making the most of the opportunity." exagorazo kairos, Lit. "redeem the time," buy it up. **Picture a garage sale shopper, making every Saturday morning minute count.** Time is short for this fallen world. We must redeem time, and every opportunity God has given us by using it in the most effective way possible. Think of Jesus' parables of hidden treasure, the pearl of great price in Mt. 13:44-46, where the characters give up all for that treasure of the kingdom. This is the same idea. You can never have the last 5 minutes back, so evaluate your activity. How does it contribute? Each opportunity with outsiders is to be bought, and treated as precious. ([Colossians Study](#))

Mark Dever - What situations are you in right now that you won't always be in? How are you using those situations in obedience to God? Trust the Lord to use you in those situations instead of always seeking for new situations. **Trust the Lord to use you in this moment, instead of waiting until the next one, since you don't even know if the next one will come. Don't let the passing permanence of great buildings and established institutions, or the lulling tedium of long hours and minutes, make a fool of you!** "The days are evil," says Paul in Ephesians 5:16, meaning that they are dangerous, they are a fleeting opportunity, and so we must **redeem the time**, we must make the most of every opportunity. So we say with Paul that, in view of certain judgment, Christ's love compels us to proclaim the Good News (cf. 2 Cor. 5:10-14). (See [Nine Marks of a Healthy Church](#))

The lights which God hath set in the firmament **ENABLE US TO REDEEM THE TIME; to retrieve the misspent past by the right improvement of the present. Each day is a miniature of the whole of life and of all the seasons of the year.** Morning answers to spring; midday to summer; afternoon to autumn; evening to winter. We are children in the morning, with fresh feelings and hopes; grown-up men and women, with sober and sad experiences, at noon; aged persons, with whom the possibilities of life are over, in the afternoon and night. - H. Macmillan, D. D.

BECAUSE THE DAYS ARE EVIL: hoti ai hemerai ponerai eisin. (3PPAI)

- Eph 6:13,15; Ps 37:19; Eccl 11:2; 12:1; Amos 5:13; John 12:35; Acts 11:28,29; 1Corinthians 7:26,29, 30, 31
- Ephesians 5 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Ephesians 5:15-21 Walking Carefully in an Evil Day](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 5:15-16 God's Wisdom for Families](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 5:15-17 Walking Wisely](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 5:15 Walking in Wisdom, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Ephesians 5:16-17 Walking in Wisdom, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

Related Passage:

Eph 6:13 Therefore, **take up** (aorist imperative) the full armor of God, (Why is this so critical?) that you may be able (have the supernatural power) to resist in **the evil day**, and having done everything, to stand firm.

MOTIVATION TO WALK CAREFULLY

What should be a powerful motivator to believers to buy up the time? As Paul explains, **the day are evil**, referring to moral evil (especially to the moral evil he has described earlier in Ephesians 5). The fact that the times in which they lived were morally so corrupt was a strong reason for making every opportunity for good their own. **Are you buying up the opportunities for spiritual good which the Lord is graciously giving you?**

Because (hoti) is a conjunction which in this context serves as a **term of explanation**, explaining why we should walk carefully and why we should be continually redeeming the opportunities God places in our path! The fact that there is active evil opposing that which is good, lends a sense of urgency to redeem the time. And the fact that there is active evil (see meaning below of *poneros*) opposing good, means we must not try to accomplish this redemption of time by depending only on our good intentions and our type triple A compulsive personality, but by seeking spiritual sustenance from His Word and spiritual power from His Spirit!

Days (2250) (hemera) is used figuratively of the times in which we live. They are characterized by a propensity to active evil.

Are evil - The verb is in the **present tense**. Not some days are good and some are evil, but the days in which Paul (and we) lived were continually evil. This reminds us of God's assessment of men in Genesis 6 before He flooded the earth, Moses recording that Jehovah "saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was **only evil continually**." (Ge 6:5-6)

Pastor Ray Stedman writes that "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. ([Ephesians 5:15-20: Watch How You Walk](#))

Evil (4190) (poneros) from **pónos** = labor, sorrow, pain) is "active evil" or evil in active opposition to good. The days are pernicious. *Poneros* describes that which is actively harmful, hurtful, evil in effect or influence. From the root (**pónos**) we see the sense of that which is full of or oppressed by labors.

Poneros - 78x in the NT - Matt. 5:11, 37, 39, 45; 6:13, 23; 7:11, 17f; 9:4; 12:34f, 39, 45; 13:19, 38, 49; 15:19; 16:4; 18:32; 20:15; 22:10; 25:26; Mk. 7:22f; Lk. 3:19; 6:22, 35, 45; 7:21; 8:2; 11:13, 26, 29, 34; 19:22; Jn. 3:19; 7:7; 17:15; Acts 17:5; 18:14; 19:12f, 15f; 25:18; 28:21; Rom. 12:9; 1 Co. 5:13; Gal. 1:4; Eph. 5:16; 6:13, 16; Col. 1:21; 1 Thess. 5:22; 2 Thess. 3:2f; 1 Tim. 6:4; 2 Tim. 3:13; 4:18; Heb. 3:12; 10:22; James. 2:4; 4:16; 1 Jn. 2:13f; 3:12; 5:18f; 2 Jn. 1:11; 3 Jn. 1:10; Rev. 16:2

John Eadie writes that "The apostle...does not adduce the fewness of the days to inculcate in general the diligent use of time, but he insists on the evil of the days for the purpose of urging Christians to seize on every opportunity to counteract that **evil**... furnishes a strong argument. Their days were **evil**. All days have indeed been evil, for sin abounds in the world. But the days of that period were characterized by many enormities, and the refining power of Christianity was only partially and unequally felt. If these days so evil afforded any opportunities of doing good, it was all the more incumbent on Christians to win them and seize them. The very abundance of the **evil** was a powerful argument to redeem the time, and the apostle writing that letter in a prison was a living example of his own counsel...The Greek fathers are careful to remark that the apostle calls the days evil, not in themselves...as they are creatures (creations) of God; but on account of the events with which they are connected. ([Ephesians 5 Commentary](#))

WE LIVE IN EVIL DAYS - You may recall that Alice in Wonderland said to the Cheshire Cat, "Would you tell me, please, which way I should go from here?" "That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the cat. "I don't much care where," said Alice. "Then, it doesn't matter which way you go," the cat replied. We don't live in a wonderland. We live in a hostile world with stern limitations. We cannot go just anywhere we want to go. The past is a closed door, and the future depends on what we do today and what it does to us. Time marches on!

Vance Havner says that this evil day is one of

Anarchy in the world

Apostasy in the church

Apathy in the individual believer

MacDonald offers an insightful explanation of "**evil days**" writing that "What lends special urgency to this matter is the evil character of the days in which we live. They remind us God will not always strive with man, the day of grace will soon close, the opportunities

Spurgeon on "time" in Ps 90:12— **So teach us to number our days.** Instruct us to set store by time, mourning for that time past wherein we have wrought the will of the flesh, using diligently the time present, which is the accepted hour and the day of salvation, and reckoning the time which lieth in the future to be too uncertain to allow us safely to delay any gracious work or prayer. Numeration is a child's exercise in arithmetic, but in order to number their days aright the best of men need the Lord's teaching. We are more anxious to count the stars than our days, and yet the latter is by far more practical.

That we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Men are led by reflections upon the brevity of time to give their earnest attention to eternal things; they become humble as they look into the grave which is so soon to be their bed, their passions cool in the presence of mortality, and they yield themselves up to the dictates of unerring wisdom; but this is only the case when the Lord himself is the teacher; he alone can teach to real and lasting profit. Thus Moses prayed that the dispensations of justice might be sanctified in mercy. "The law is our school master to bring us to Christ", when the Lord himself speaks by the law. It is most meet that the heart which will so soon cease to beat should while it moves be regulated by wisdom's hand. A short life should be wisely spent. We have not enough time at our disposal to justify us in mispending a single quarter of an hour. Neither are we sure of enough life to justify us in procrastinating for a moment. If we were wise in heart we should see this, but mere head wisdom will not guide us aright.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

(All from Spurgeon's Note on Ps 90:12)

Ps 90:12. So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Moses who was learned in all the sciences of the Egyptians (among which arithmetic was one) desireth to learn this point of arithmetic only of thee, O Lord; and why? Is it because, as Job speaketh, thou hast determined the number of his days? Would Moses have thee reveal to every man the moment of his end? Such speculations may well beseem an Egyptian, an Israelite they do not beseem. Thy children, O Lord, know that it is not for them so to know times and seasons which thou keepest in thine own power, and are a secret sealed up with thee: we should not pry into that counting house, nor curiously inquire into that sum. It is not then a mathematical numbering of days that Moses would be schooled in, but a moral; he would have God not simply to teach him to number, but to number "so"; and "so" points out a special manner, a manner that may be useful for the children of God. And indeed our petitions must bear this mark of profitable desires, and we should not ask aught of thee but that by which (if we speed) we may become the better; he that so studies his mortality learns it as he should, and it is only thou, O Lord, that takest him out such a lesson. But what is the use, O Moses, that thou wouldst have man make of such a knowledge? "Even to apply his heart unto wisdom." O happy knowledge, by which a man becomes wise; for wisdom is the beauty of a reasonable soul. God created him therewith, but sin hath divorced the soul and wisdom; so that a sinful man is indeed no better than a fool, so the Scripture calleth him; and well it may call him so, seeing all his carriage is vain, and the upshot of his endeavours but vexation of spirit. But though sin have divorced wisdom and the soul, yet are they not so severed but they may be reunited; and nothing is more powerful in furthering this union than this feeling meditation -- that we are mortal. -- Arthur Lake.

Ps 90:12 So teach us, etc. Moses sends you to God for teaching. "Teach Thou us; not as the world teacheth -- teach Thou us." No meaner Master; no inferior school; not Moses himself except as he speaks God's word and becomes the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ; not the prophets, not apostles themselves, neither "holy men of old", except as they "spake and were moved by the Holy Ghost." This knowledge comes not from flesh and blood, but from God. "So teach Thou us." And so David says, "Teach me Thy way, O Lord, and I will walk in Thy truth." And hence our Lord's promise to his disciples, "The Holy Ghost, He shall teach you all things." -- Charles Richard Summer, 1850.

Ps 90:12 Teach us to number our days. Mark what it is which Moses here prays for, only to be taught to number his days. But did he not do this already? Was it not his daily work this, his constant and continual employment? Yes, doubtless it was; yea, and he did it carefully and conscientiously too. But yet he thought he did it not well enough, and therefore prays here in the text to be taught to do better. See a good man, how little he pleaseth himself in any action of his life, in any performance of duty that he does. He can never think that he does well enough whatever he does, but still desires to do otherwise, and would fain do better. There is an affection of modesty and humility which still accompanies real piety, and every pious man is an humble, modest man, and never reckons himself a perfect proficient, or to be advanced above a teaching, but is content and covetous to be a continual learner; to know more than he knows and to do better than he does; yea, and thinks it no disparagement to his graces at all to take advice, and to seek instruction where it is to be had. --Edm. Barker's Funeral Sermon for Lady Capell, 1661.

Ps 90:12 Teach us to number our days.

**"Improve Time in time, while the Time doth last.
For all Time is no time, when the Time is past."**

--From Richard Pigot's "Life of Man, symbolised by the Months of the Year", 1866.

Ps 90:12. Teach us to number our days. The proverbial oracles of our parsimonious ancestors have informed us that the fatal waste of fortune is by small expenses, by the profusion of sums too little singly to alarm our caution, and which we never suffer ourselves to consider together. Of the same kind is prodigality of life: he that hopes to look back hereafter with satisfaction upon past years, must learn to know the present value of single minutes, and endeavour to let no particle of time fall useless to the ground. An Italian philosopher expressed in his motto that time was his estate; an estate, indeed, that will produce nothing without cultivation, but will always abundantly repay the labours of industry, and satisfy the most extensive desires, if no part of it be suffered to lie waste by negligence, to be overrun by noxious plants, or laid out for show rather than for use. -- Samuel Johnson.

Ps 90:12. To number our days, is not simply to take the reckoning and a measurement of human life. This has been done already in Holy Scripture, where it is said, "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." Nor yet is it, in the world's phrase, to calculate the chances of survivorship, which any man may do in the instance of the aggregate, but which no man can do in the case of the individual. But it is to take the measure of our days as compared with the work to be performed, with the provision to be laid up for eternity, with the preparation to be made for death, with the precaution to be taken against judgment. It is to estimate human life by the purposes to which it should be applied, by the eternity to which it must conduct, and in which it shall at last be absorbed. Under this aspect it is, that David contemplates man when he says, "Thou hast made our days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee", Psalms 39:5; and then proceeds to include in this comprehensive estimate even those whose days have been the longest upon earth: "Verily, every man at his best estate is altogether vanity." --Thomas Dale, 1847.

Ps 90:12. To number our days. Number we our days by our daily prayers -- number we them by our daily obedience and daily acts of love -- number we them by the memories that they bring of holy men who have entered into their Saviour's peace, and by the hopes which are woven with them of glory and of grace won for us! --Plain Commentary.

Ps 90:12. Apply our hearts unto wisdom. Sir Thomas Smith, secretary to Queen Elizabeth, some months before his death said, That it was a great pity men know not to what end they were born into this world, until they were ready to go out of it. --Charles Bradbury.

Ps 90:12. Apply our hearts unto wisdom. St. Austin says, "We can never do that, except we number every day as our last day." Many put far the evil day. They refuse to leave the earth, when the earth is about to take its leave of them. --William Secker.

Ps 90:12. Apply our hearts unto wisdom. Moses speaketh of wisdom as if it were physic, which doth no good before it be applied; and the part to apply it to is the heart, where all man's affections are to love it and to cherish it, like a kind of hostess. When the heart seeketh it findeth, as though it were brought unto her, like Abraham's ram. Therefore God saith, "They shall seek me and find me, because they shall seek me with their hearts", Jeremiah 29:13; as though they should not find him with all their seeking unless they did seek him with their heart. Therefore the way to get wisdom is to apply your hearts unto it, as if it were your calling and living, to which you were bound apprentices. A man may apply his ears and his eyes as many truants do to their books, and yet never prove scholars; but from that day when a man begins to apply his heart unto wisdom, he learns more in a month after than he did in a year before, nay, than ever he did in his life. Even as you see the wicked, because they apply their hearts to wickedness, how fast they proceed, how easily and how quickly they become perfect swearers, expert drunkards, cunning deceivers, so if ye could apply your hearts as thoroughly to knowledge and goodness, you might become like the apostle which teacheth you. Therefore, when Solomon sheweth men the way how to come by wisdom, he speaks often of the heart, as, "Give thine heart to wisdom", "let wisdom enter into thine heart", "get wisdom", "keep wisdom", "embrace wisdom", Proverbs 2:10, 4:5, 8:8, as though a man went a wooing for wisdom. Wisdom is like God's daughter, that he gives to the man that loves her, and sueth for her, and means to set her at his heart. Thus we have learned how to apply knowledge that it may do us good; not to our ears, like them which hear sermons only, nor to our tongues, like them which make table talk of religion, but to our hearts, that we may say with the virgin, "My heart doth magnify the Lord", Luke 1:46, and the heart will apply it to the ear and to the tongue, as Christ saith, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh", Matthew 12:34. --Henry Smith.

Ps 90:12. -- Of all arithmetical rules this is the hardest -- **to number our days.** Men can number their herds and droves of oxen and of sheep, they can estimate the revenues of their manors and farms, they can with a little pains number and tell their coins, and yet they are persuaded that their days are infinite and innumerable and therefore do never begin to number them. Who saith not upon the view of another, surely yonder man looketh by his countenance as if he would not live long, or yonder woman is old, her days cannot be many: thus we can number other men's days and years, and utterly forget our own, therefore this is the true wisdom of mortal men, to number their own days. --Thomas Tymme.

Ps 90:12. -- Observe here, after that Moses had given us a description of the wrath of God, presently his thoughts are taken up with the meditation of death. The wrath of God thought on makes us think of death ... Let us often think of the wrath of God, and let the thought of it so far work upon us, as to keep us in a constant awe and fear of God (see notes on **phobos**); and let this fear drive us to God by prayer, that fearing as we ought, we may pray as we are commanded, and praying, we may prevent the wrath of God. If

our present sorrows do not move us, God will send greater; and when our sorrows are grown too great for us, we shall have little heart or comfort to pray. Let our fears then quicken our prayers; and let our prayers be such as are able to overcome our fears; so both ways shall we be happy, in that our fears have taught us to pray, and our prayers have made us to fear no more. -- Christopher Shute, in "Ars pie moriendi: or, The true Accomptant. A Sermon", etc., 1658.

Ps 90:12. It is evident, that the great thing wanted to make men provide for eternity, is the practical persuasion that they have but a short time to live. They will not apply their hearts unto wisdom until they are brought to the numbering of their days. And how are you to be brought, my brethren? The most surprising thing in the text is, that it should be in the form of a prayer. It is necessary that God should interfere to make men number their days. We call this surprising. What! is there not enough to make us feel our frailty, without an actual, supernatural impression? What! are there not lessons enough of that frailty without any new teaching from above? Go into our churchyards -- all ages speak to all ranks. Can we need more to prove to us the uncertainty of life? Go into mourning families, and where are they not to be found? -- in this it is the old, in that it is the young, whom death has removed -- and is there not eloquence in tears to persuade us that we are mortal? Can it be that in treading every day on the dust of our fathers, and meeting every day with funerals of our brethren, we shall not yet be practically taught to number our days, unless God print the truth on our hearts, through some special operation of his Spirit? It is not thus in other things. In other things the frequency of the occurrence makes us expect it. The husbandman does not pray to be made believe that the seed must be buried and die before it will germinate. This has been the course of the grain of every one else, and where there is so much experience what room is there for prayer. The mariner does not pray to be taught that the needle of his compass points towards the north. The needle of every compass has so pointed since the secret was discovered, and he has not to ask when he is already so sure. The benighted man does not pray to be made to feel that the sun will rise in a few hours. Morning has succeeded to night since the world was made, and why should he ask what he knows too well to doubt? But in none of these things is there greater room for assurance than we have each one for himself, in regard to its being appointed to him once to die. Nevertheless, we must pray to be made to know -- to be made to feel -- that we are to die, in the face of an experience which is certainly not less than that of the parties to whom we have referred. This is a petition that we may believe, believe as they do: for they act on their belief in the fact which this experience incontestably attests. And we may say of this, that it is amongst the strangest of the strange things that may be affirmed of human nature, that whilst, in regard to inferior concerns, we can carefully avail ourselves of experience, taking care to register its decisions and to deduce from them rules for our guidance -- in the mightiest concern of all we can act as though experience had furnished no evidence, and we were left without matter from which to draw inferences. And, nevertheless, in regard to nothing else is the experience so uniform. The grain does not always germinate -- but every man dies. The needle does not always point due north -- but every man dies. The sun does not cross the horizon in every place in every twenty-four hours -- but every man dies. Yet we must pray -- pray as for the revelation of a mystery hidden from our gaze -- we must pray to be made to know -- to be made to believe -- that every man dies! For I call it not belief, and our text calls it not belief, in the shortness of life and the certainty of death, which allows men to live without thought of eternity, without anxiety as to the soul, or without an effort to secure to themselves salvation. I call it not belief -- no, no, anything rather than belief. Men are rational beings, beings of forethought, disposed to make provision for what they feel to be inevitable; and if there were not a practical infidelity as to their own mortality, they could not be practically reckless as to their own safety. --Henry Melvill.

Ps 90:12. So teach us to number our days, etc. Five things I note in these words: first, that death is the haven of every man; whether he sit on the throne, or keep in a cottage, at last he must knock at death's door, as all his fathers have done before him. Secondly, that man's time is set, and his bounds appointed, which he cannot pass, no more than the Egyptians could pass the sea; and therefore Moses saith, "Teach us to number our days", as though there were a number of our days. Thirdly, that our days are few, as though we were sent into this world but to see it; and therefore Moses, speaking of our life, speaks of days, not of years, nor of months, nor of weeks; but "Teach us to number our days", shewing that it is an easy thing even for a man to number his days, they be so few. Fourthly, the aptness of man to forget death rather than anything else; and therefore Moses prayeth the Lord to teach him to number his days, as though they were still slipping out of his mind. Lastly, that to remember how short a time we have to live, will make us apply our hearts to that which is good. --Henry Smith.

Verse 12. Our hearts. In both the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, the term "**heart**" is applied alike to the mind that thinks, to the spirit that feels, and the will that acts. And it here stands for the whole mental and moral nature of man, and implies that the whole soul and spirit, with all their might, are to be applied in the service of **wisdom**. --William Brown Keer, 1863.

Ps 90:12 Wisdom. I consider this "**wisdom**" identical with the hypostatic wisdom described by Solomon, Proverbs 8:15-31, and Proverbs 9:1,5, even Immanuel, the wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption of his people. The chief pursuit of life should be the attainment of an experimental knowledge of Christ, by whom "kings reign and princes decree justice; whose delights are with the sons of men, and who crieth, Whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord; come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine which I have mingled." David in the Psalms, and Solomon, his son, in the Proverbs, have predictively manifested Messiah as the hypostatic wisdom, "whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." -- J. N. Coleman.

HINTS FOR PASTORS AND LAYPERSONS - Ps 90:12.

1. The Reckoning.

What their usual number.

How many of them are already spent.

How uncertain the number that remains.

How much of them must be occupied with the necessary duties of this life.

What afflictions and helplessness may attend them.

2. The use to be made of it.

To "seek wisdom" -- not riches, worldly honours, or pleasures -- but wisdom; not the wisdom of the world, but of God.

To "apply the heart" to it. Not mental merely, but moral wisdom; not speculative merely, but experimental; not theoretical merely, but practical.

To seek it at once -- immediately.

To seek it constantly -- "apply our hearts", etc.

3. The help to be sought in it. "So teach us", etc.

Our own ability is insufficient through the perversion both of the mind and heart by sin.

Divine help may be obtained. "If any man lack wisdom." etc. --G. R.

Ps 90:12. -- The Sense of Mortality. Show the variety of blessings dispensed to different classes by the right use of the sense of mortality.

It may be an antidote for the sorrowful. Reflect, "there is an end."

It should be a restorative to the labouring.

It should be a remedy for the impatient.

As a balm to the wounded in heart.

As a corrective for the worldly.

As a sedative to the frivolous.

--R. Andrew Griffin, in "Stems and Twigs", 1872.

MISSED OPPORTUNITY- Our chance to change things came and passed and we did not know it was there. A dark-skinned little boy sat through Sunday School classes for three years at a great Baptist Church (First Church, San Antonio) but someone missed him. His name was Sirhan Sirhan, and at age 24 he shot and killed Senator Robert Kennedy. In a welter of words and the shudder of grief throughout our nation, the persistent thought keeps recurring—someone missed him. (Dr. Jimmy Allen, former pastor of First Baptist Church, San Antonio, Texas in Pulpit Helps, May, 1991, from [10000 Sermon Illustrations. Dallas: Biblical Studies Press](#))

Jonathan Edwards...

According to my propounded method I proceed to show you how reasonable it is that we should redeem the time. You will find this to be a most rational performance when you have considered of these following things.

1. The inestimable value of time.

2. The brevity and uncertainty of it.

3. The impossibility of recalling it.

4. The end and design of God's intrusting us with it.

5. The account we must give for it.

I read of Amasis, an Egyptian king, that he made an order, that every man should once a year give a particular

account how he spent his time, and in what way he lived. My brethren, there is a day coming, when you must all give an account of your time; all your time must be reckoned for at the great and general audit of the world.

The shortness of time

Time's a hand's breadth; 'tis a tale;
'Tis a vessel under sail;
'Tis an eagle in its way,
Darting down upon its prey;
'Tis an arrow in its flight,
Mocking the pursuing sight;
'Tis a short-lived fading flower;
'Tis a rainbow on a shower;
'Tis a momentary ray
Smiling in a winter's day;
'Tis a torrent's rapid stream;
'Tis a shadow; 'tis a dream;
'Tis the closing watch of night,
Dying at the rising light;
'Tis a bubble; 'tis a sigh;
Be prepared, O man, to die.
(Quarles.)

Charles Bridges on the Redemption of time -

I. What makes it so supremely important to redeem time?

1. Its connection with eternity. Time is the seed of eternity.
2. So much time has gone by, and cannot be recalled. A dying English queen cried, "A world of money for an inch of time!"
3. Because of the worth of the work that is given us to do in it. What would be said of a farmer idling his time while his fields lay uncultivated, or a general occupied with trifles when the enemy was in the camp?
4. The special reason given in the text--"Because the days are evil."

II. Mark how this redemption of time can be accomplished.

1. Take the exercise of the responsibility to God. Begin with heartfelt prayer. Seek to know the value, and to obtain strength for performing the duty. We must begin with God if we are to prosper. Even all our strength put to the wheel will not move it; the work will break down because the power is insufficient. But God will give what we need (Deuteronomy 33:25; 2 Corinthians 12:9; Philippians 4:13-19).
 2. Having begun to lead a new life in the exercise of prayer, and in the life that prayer brings out for us to live, remember another important rule, viz., to keep the great end of life before us. We are either sinners lost in sin or saved by grace. If lost in sin, the work given us to do is, "Believe," etc. We look to the Saviour as the object of our love, and we go to Him as the source of our strength. One brings the brightness and the other brings the power.
 3. Another rule for us to remember as redeemed and saved sinners, is our responsibility, and the one object of our life, viz., "To me to live is Christ," etc. Let us turn our eyes on Him. If we suffer our hearts to wander from that centre we immediately become palsied creatures, living for no earthly object or value at all. In conclusion, let us remember, in the exercise of this life, that He who died for us has a claim on the best of our time and the whole of our heart.
-

John Piper - The clock never stops ticking. Nothing but God is more persistent than the passing of time. You can't stop it or slow it. It is sovereign over all human resistance. It will not be hindered or altered or made to cease. It is utterly oblivious to young and old, pain and pleasure, crying and laughing. Nothing, absolutely nothing, makes a difference to the unstoppable, unchangeable tick, tick, ticking of time. Anna Akhmatova, a Russian poet, said that war and plague pass, but no one can cope with "the terror that is named the flight of time" (Quoted in D. M. Thomas, Alexander Solzhenitsyn [New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998], 270). I have an unusual

habit when I go to bed. After Noël and I pray, I crawl into bed and situate myself on my left side, facing the red glow of the radio-alarm-clock numbers on the bedside table. I pull my hands up in front of me at about face level and wait for a few minutes in stillness, usually praying silently with gratitude for the wife who lies behind me, and for my children, and for the ministry God has given me. Then I take my right hand and curl my fingers around my left wrist and find my pulse. I watch the red minute number until it changes, and then I begin counting. One...two...three...When the number changes and one minute has passed, I stop. I began this peculiar habit out of the vain notion that if my heart rate were very slow, from good exercise (or genes), it may mean that my heart is healthy and I will live long. Such is the silliness of human thought. The effect has been otherwise. Now, as I count the beats, it is not the rate that fixes my attention, but the succession. One beat, then another, then another, on through the night, about twenty-one thousand times while I sleep. The effect of this little exercise is that I fall asleep most nights, lulled by the steady rhythm of my heart and with a sober sense of my very fragile existence. Any one of those beats could be my last. I cannot will my heart to beat one more time. If it stops, it stops. I and my time on earth are over. "If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take." Time is precious. We are fragile. Life is short. Eternity is long. Shall we not then enter on every venture with a vigilance like that of the young Jonathan Edwards when he wrote his fifth resolution: "Resolved, Never to lose one moment of time, but to improve it in the most profitable way I possibly can;" which is really a subpoint of his sixth resolution: "Resolved, To live with all my might, while I do live" (The Works of Jonathan Edwards, vol. 1, ed. Edward Hickman [Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1974], xx). Yes, this can become compulsive and unhealthy. But for those of us who need to hear it as an antidote to squandering the preciousness of irretrievable time, let us hear it. The church I serve is generous to me beyond all my deserving. As I write these words I am on a one-month leave to complete this book. I enter the month with a sense that every minute counts. O to be a faithful steward of the breath God has given me. Three texts resound in my ears. 1) "Redeem the time" (Ephesians 5:16, KJV). 2) "It is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy" (1 Corinthians 4:2). 3) "His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me" (1 Corinthians 15:10, author's translation). Surely God means for our minutes on earth to count for something significant. Paul said, "In the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain" (Philippians 2:16). In the same way, I have good hope from the Lord that my "labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58, KJV). And I commend this promise to you. No minute need be lived in vain. Eternity will render it significant if lived in faith for the glory of God. In the end we rest in this: "My times are in Your hand" (Psalm 31:15). ([A Godward Life](#) - Part 2)

Where did we come up with this concept of "spare time," anyway? Is there any time for which we aren't accountable to God? Is there any time during which God doesn't care what you are doing? No Christian has ever had spare time. You may have spare time from labor or necessity, you may stop working and refresh yourself, but no Christian ever had time off from living like a Christian.

—William Law

Mark Dever - As Christians, we have come to realize that history is not cyclical, always repeating itself in an endless rotation of events, but that God will one day bring history to a close in judgment. We know that He has given us this life, and that He will require it back. The time that we have is limited, the amount is uncertain, and how we use it is up to us. So Paul tells the Ephesians to make the most of every opportunity (Eph. 5:16). Like a collector buying up every known specimen of some cherished item, we should desire to capture each fleeting hour and turn it into a trophy for God, using it for Him. We shouldn't be content with thinking, "I'll live another couple of years in selfishness and then, when all of my desires are taken care of, I'll turn and follow Christ." No, we shouldn't be content with that! We should know, as Paul knew, that, "The time is short. From now on... those who use the things of the world [should use them] as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away" (1 Cor. 7:29, 31). What situations are you in right now that you won't always be in? How are you using those situations in obedience to God? Trust the Lord to use you in those situations instead of always seeking for new situations. Trust the Lord to use you in this moment, instead of waiting until the next one, since you don't even know if the next one will come. Don't let the passing permanence of great buildings and established institutions, or the lulling tedium of long hours and minutes, make a fool of you! "The days are evil," says Paul in Ephesians 5:16, meaning that they are dangerous, they are a fleeting opportunity, and so we must redeem the time, we must make the most of every opportunity. So we say with Paul that, in view of certain judgment, Christ's love compels us to proclaim the Good News (cf. 2 Cor. 5:10-14). (See [Nine Marks of a Healthy Church](#))

Redeeming the Time - Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk—not as unwise people but as wise—making the most of the time, because the days are evil.—Ephesians 5:15–16

These days we are bombarded with opportunities that entice us to invest our time and energy. Each day the voices of urgency cry out for every available moment. So many causes promise that time spent on them will reap great rewards; how can we recognize God's voice among so many competing voices?

A fool makes unwise choices with his time. With every new opportunity that comes along, the fool chases off in a different direction, not questioning whether that is the best choice. The loudest voice gains his attention. At some point the fool discovers to his dismay that he has squandered the investment of his time.

The days in which you live are evil. Marriages are under tremendous pressure, families are disintegrating. Multitudes are dying each year without hearing the gospel of Jesus Christ. Investing your life wisely is critical to you and to those around you. Foolishly spending your time in sinful or wasteful pursuits can cost you and others dearly.

Often, it is not evil pursuits that rob your time. Rather, the temptation is to sacrifice what is best for what is good. The enemy knows that blatantly tempting you with evil will be obvious, so he will lure you with distractions, leaving you no time to carry out God's will. He will tempt you to so fill your schedule with good things that you have no time for God's best. You may inadvertently substitute religious activity for God's will, pursuing your own goals for God's kingdom instead of waiting for His assignment. Time is a precious commodity. Be sure to invest it wisely. ([Henry Blackaby - Experiencing God Day by Day](#))

Redeeming the Time

During World War II, economist E. F. Schumacher, then a young statistician, worked on a farm. Each day he would count the 32 head of cattle, then turn his attention elsewhere. One day an old farmer told him that if he counted the cattle, they wouldn't flourish. Sure enough, one day he counted only 31; one was dead in the bushes. Now Schumacher understood the farmer: you must watch the quality of each beast. "Look him in the eye. Study the sheen on his coat." You may not know how many cattle you have, but you might save the life of one that is sick.

This is wise counsel for composition students as well. The one who asks "How many words do you want?" invariably strings together a poor piece of writing. But the one who focuses on the assignment—a childhood fear, a person I admire—writes something worth reading.

Evaluating my everyday use of time and resources, I noticed how often I tended to count and measure—abstracting from a situation rather than living it. Take the routine of soft-boiling an egg. After the water came to a boil—a goal for which I would wait impatiently—I would slowly count to 100 while the egg cooked to the desired firmness. In this numerical mode, I would keep an eye on the clock and sometimes snap at my husband, absorbed in the newspaper.

After reflecting, I tried a new way of measuring the cooking time for eggs—one I would have scorned as a young wife and mother interested in "saving" time. Experimentation showed that the eggs are cooked to perfection after three Hail Marys [or three verses of a hymn]. I watch the water with interest until it boils, then I use the boiling time to place myself in touch with earlier generations of cooks who measured their recipes with litanies, using time to get beyond it. —Sally Cunneen in *The Christian Century*. Leadership, Vol. 7, no. 3.

As we contemplate the prospect of death, a new stimulus should be given to duty and action. For it has been well said, "Duty is done with all energy then only when we feel 'the night cometh when no man can work' in all its force." Let me lead your thoughts then for a brief space in this direction. "Redeem the time." This is the precept, the echo of a past inspiration, which the Holy Spirit of God would still sound in our ears as we look forward to the termination of present life. Spend the life in earnest, and as if the whole future depended upon it. Spend to-day as if there were no certain to-morrow. Be watchful about little things, and especially the brief moments of time. The few pence and the fragments of food have their value. (A. Williamson, M. A.)

Source Unknown - One single year is made up of 31,536,000 seconds. Every tick of the clock records the ever-lessening opportunities of life. Time is in perpetual motion. Like a strong, ever-flowing river, it is bearing away everything into the boundless ocean of eternity. We never know the value of time till we know the value of the fragments into which it is broken up. To make the most of a single hour we must make the most of every minute of which it is composed. The most dangerous moments of a man's life are those when time hangs heavily on his hands. He who has nothing to do but kill time is in danger of being killed himself. It is a miracle of divine goodness if he is preserved from serious folly, or something worse; and such miracles rarely occur. The man who has learnt the value of time can learn any lesson this world may have to teach him. Time is the opportunity for the exercise of Christian wisdom, and should be the more sedulously used when the days are evil "when evil is in power. Oh for wisdom to number our days (Ps 90:12), to grasp the meaning of present opportunity! Here come the moments that can never be had again; some few may yet be filled with imperishable good. Let us apply our hearts "all our powers" unto wisdom.

TIME AND ETERNITY- Recently, at a conference of magazine publishers in the United States, the representatives were requested to stand and give the name of their publication. Inevitably it seemed that a delegate from the Christian magazine, *Eternity*, always followed one from the secular periodical, *Time*. A burst of laughter among the delegates resulted when *TIME* and *ETERNITY* were thus linked together. Yet there is food for thought here, for indeed the two are vitally related and closely interlocked. The final

rewards and position of the saved will be governed by their faithfulness, after their conversion, in filling the hours here with loving service, holy adoration, and diligent study. The lost too will be beaten with "few" or "many stripes" in relation to their deeds and attitudes while here on earth. Therefore, someone has wisely written: "Use well opportunity, drift not with the tide; killing time is not murder, it's suicide!" Indeed, eternity will magnify that which we have done in time.

May I make a practical suggestion for the new year? Always carry something with you to fill the moments that would otherwise be spent in idleness. For instance, take with you a little New Testament which you can study and mark up as you wait your turn in the doctor's office; or a text — printed on a card — which you can memorize while you ride the bus to work; or a notebook in which you jot down helpful suggestions or prayer requests. These are all good ways to "redeem the time" and make golden investments in eternity. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Too busy to read the Bible, too busy to wait and pray!

Too busy to speak out kindly to someone by the way!

Too busy to care and struggle, to think of the life to come,

Too busy building mansions to plan for the heavenly Home.

Too busy for all that is holy on earth beneath the sky,
Too busy to serve the Master, but—not too busy to die!
—Anon.

ETERNITY will be appreciated
only in the measure that we have rightly handled **TIME!**
—F. King

**Ephesians 5:15-16 has been called the
Bible's key to time management.**

Time For Everything- Perhaps the most sought-after but elusive possession of the 90's is "time for everything." The film industry focused on this dilemma in a comedy about a harried man who is cloned so he can fulfill his roles as father, construction foreman, and husband. While pop culture proclaims that people can juggle multiple roles if they just manage them well enough, it takes more than cellular phones and pagers to pull it off in real life.

But "redeeming the time" goes far beyond being efficient. It's a wonderful phrase that can also be translated "making the most of every opportunity." It suggests an attitude toward living that sees every situation as the perfect occasion to do God's will and influence others for Him. During these evil days, we are to live out the goodness God has placed in us through faith in Christ.

How much time do we have today? Time for prayer? Time to answer a child's question? Time to be interrupted by someone in need? Time to consider others during an inconvenience or delay?

May the Lord give us wisdom to grasp today's opportunities and make time for what's important to Him. --D C McCasland [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#)

Lord, help us to redeem the time
You give us every day--
To take each opportunity
To follow and obey.
-Sper

There's always enough time to do God's will.

Our Measured Life- Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom. . --Psalm 90:12

The root meaning of the word translated **number** in "teach us to number our days" (Ps. 90:12) is "to weigh" or "to measure." We are to place each day in the balance and make it tip the scales in a way that will bring glory to God and blessing to the lives of others.

When the great artist Raphael died at the early age of 37, friends and relatives carried his marvelous but unfinished painting The Transfiguration in the funeral procession. His family felt that because of the limited time he was allotted to use his creative genius, the painting was an appropriate symbol of his unfulfilled earthly aspirations. That half-completed picture has another meaning--a message that should impress itself on all of us: Life is fleeting and death may come unexpectedly. We should treasure each hour as

a gift of great value and use it to the best advantage.

If we realize the value of our days, we will try to spend them profitably. To have no regrets at life's end and have much reward in heaven, we must make the most of every opportunity (Eph. 5:15-16). In the words of the psalmist let us pray, "Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom" (Ps. 90:12). --H G Bosch ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The clock of life is wound but once,
And no man has the power
To tell just when the hands will stop,
At late or early hour.
- Anon.

**Instead of counting the days,
make your days count.**

THE WISE USE OF TIME Ephesians 5:15-16 F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk

GOD DESIRES to give each life its full development. Of course, there are exceptions; for instance, in some cases the lessons and discipline of life are crowded into a very brief space of time, and the soul is summoned to the Presence-chamber of eternity. But, on the whole, each human life is intended to touch all the notes of life's organ. There is an appointed time when it shall be born or die, shall weep or laugh, shall get or lose, shall have halcyon peace or storm cast skies. These times have been fixed for you in God's plan; do not try and anticipate them, or force the pace, but wait thou the Lord's leisure. In due time all will work out for thy good and for His glory. Say to Him "All my times are in Thy hand."

Times and seasons succeed one another very quickly. Milton, in his glorious sonnet on the Flight of Time, bids her call on the leaden-stepping hours, referring to the swing of the pendulum; and, indeed, as we look back on our past life it will seem as though each experience was only for a moment, and then had vanished, never to return. We are reminded of the cobbler, who, as he sat in his kitchen, thought that the pendulum of his clock, when it swing to the left, said For ever; and to the right, Where? For ever--where? For ever--where? He got up and stopped it, but found that, although he had stopped the questioner, he had not answered the question. Nor could he find rest until, on his knees, he had been able to face the question of the Eternal, and reply to it.

We must be on the alert to meet the demand of every hour. "Mine hour is not yet come," said our Lord. He waited patiently until He heard the hours strike in heaven, and then drawing the strength appropriate to its demand, He went forth to meet it. Each time and season is kept by the Father in His own hand. He opens and none shuts; He shuts and none opens. But in that same hand are the needed supplies of wisdom, grace, and power. As the time, so is the strength. No time of sighing, trial, temptation, or bereavement is without its special and adapted supplies. Take what is needed from His hand, and go forth to play the part for which the hour calls.

PRAYER - Oh, that Thou wouldst bless us indeed and enlarge our coasts of useful service. Let Thine hand be with us, and keep us from all evil that would grieve Thee. AMEN. ([Our Daily Walk by F B Meyer - Aug](#))

The use of opportunity - The apostle bids us "buy up" out of the market what we can never purchase so cheaply again--what, in fact, we can never buy again at any price. The lesson is--use opportunity, and use it thoroughly while you have it. Go read the old weird myth of the Cumaean Sibyl. She wrote her predictions upon leaves, and laid them at the entrance of her cave. Those who consulted her were compelled to exercise the greatest care and caution, lest the wild wind should take up the leaves, and scatter and displace them, destroy their arrangement, break their connection, and turn the clear oracles into inexplicable enigmas. That was a mythological lesson on seizing opportunity. Again, according to the familiar Roman legend, a Sibyl came to the palace of Tarquin II bearing nine volumes, for which she demanded a high price. Her offer being declined, she went away, and burned three of the precious books. Returning, she offered the remaining six, but asked for them the same price which she had demanded for the nine. Again her proposition was rejected, and again she departed and committed to the flames three more volumes. Once more she came back, bearing the last three, and refusing any less sum for them than that by which all might once have been bought. Tarquin, startled by this strange conduct of the merciless Sibyl, advised with his augurs, and bought the books, which proved the invaluable "Sibylline Verses"; but the chance of purchasing those priceless sister volumes was forever lost. Buy up opportunity!" Your privileges will never be offered so cheaply again. Each time life's Sibyl comes to us her precious treasures are diminished in number, and relatively increased in value. Each time she has less to offer, and asks a higher price for each opportunity that remains. So comes Time's stern, relentless Sibyl, until she herself finally disappears, and Time and her opportunities are no more! (A. T. Pierson.)

[**Make It Count for More**](#)

Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. (Ephesians 5:15-16)

The whole is almost always worth more than its component pieces. In 1924, Dr. Charles H. Mayo estimated the value of the human body in a light hearted piece in the Northwestern Health Journal. He approximated the figure at 84 cents. Thomas Edison quipped, "From his neck down a man is worth a couple of dollars a day, from his neck up he is worth anything that his brain can produce." More recently, Wired Magazine estimated that the chemical parts of a human body are collectively worth \$17.18. But when those chemicals are combined into organs, marrow, and platelets, the value of the average human body sores to approximately \$45,618,575.82. Why? Because the whole is worth more than the sum of its parts.

In May of this year, Senator John McCain released his final memoir titled *The Restless Wave*. In this volume, he recounts the major events that defined the last decade of his national service, the last ten years of his natural life. In the opening paragraphs, he pauses to remember the sequence of his days, what he refers to as "Accumulated Memories." He summarizes the major events of his life, the impact of his grandfather and father, his military service and time as a POW, his political victories and defeats, and his countless friends on both sides of the political spectrum. Many of whom, he notes, are gone. Considering the death of these companions, Senator McCain wrote:

Other friends have left, too. I'm tempted to say, before their time, but that isn't the truth. What God and good luck provide we must accept with gratitude. Our time is our time. It's up to us to make the most of it, make it amount to more than the sum of our days.

The day after his passing, papers all across the globe announced "John McCain, dead at age 81." Had he lived till August 29, the headlines would have read 82. 29,935 days each one largely unimportant to itself, but collectively they were made to count for so much more than their sum. The impact of his life extends far past the boundaries of a dash between two dates.

The whole is worth more than its component pieces. A factory is more than its inventory, a book more than its index, a recipe more than its ingredients. And a life is more than its days. It's what one does with the component pieces that makes a thing live. It must become more than just the sum of its parts.

Senator McCain was right. No one dies "before their time." The component pieces of life are our days. Each one, a gift from God, and perhaps a smattering of good luck. The time we have is the time we have. We can only receive with gratitude what has been allotted to us and attempt to make it count for more than the sum of its parts.

Paul, writing under house arrest, recognized the looming weight of mortality and the limiting pressure of life's inevitable restraints. The days are malicious, wicked, tyrants. They are, in a word, evil. We must make an effort to redeem each moment for a greater purpose.

When we catalog our days, what will we find? Will it be a collection of moments lived to an end in themselves. Days whose purpose was to provide self-joy and self-happiness from moment to moment until we arrived safely at death. Or will our days rise above the level of inventory, index, and ingredients to a place of impact and influence? Will we make them amount to more?

As followers of Jesus, we have a chance to make an eternal impact. We can do more than affect our nation, we can advance God's kingdom. Through the power of the Gospel we can exert an influence that extends far past the boundaries of our natural life.

Related Resources

- [Be Careful How You Live!](#) by Dan Nicksich
- [Learning the Seasons of the Soul](#)
- [Time, Our Most Precious Resource](#)

Tony Evans - The Stewardship of Time - EPHESIANS 5:15-17

God has given us three spheres in which we are to be His stewards. First, He has entrusted us with **time**. God is not limited by time. There is no time when He did not exist or when He will cease to be. He always has been and always will be. He is eternal. But time has a different meaning for us because we are limited by time. We have 24 hours in a day and 365 days in a year. We have a certain number of years to live, and we don't know how long that will be. The apostle Paul warns us to be careful and make the most of our time because the days are evil. Time is fleeting for all of us. Our days are in fact numbered. **Many people mistakenly define time in terms of its linear course, from point A to point B. But that's not the full definition of time. In God's viewpoint, time is the boundary of opportunity. Time must be maximized, not trivialized.** We should take advantage of it because we can never get it back. Paul tells us that to be good stewards of time, we must understand what the will of the Lord is. To use your time to its

utmost potential, use it to accomplish the will of God.

Tick, Tick, Tick- Do you have a clock or watch available with a secondhand on it? Stop and follow that hand as it ticks away 1 minute. Those seconds, of course, are the way we measure time, and time is the very essence of our lives. By the time you reach the age of 75, the clocks and watches of this world will have ticked away a total of nearly 2.5 billion seconds.

Bernard Berenson, an internationally famous art critic, had a zest for life. Even when he was in ill health, he cherished every moment. Shortly before he died at age 94, he said to a friend, "I would willingly stand at street corners, hat in hand, asking passersby to drop their unused minutes into it." Oh, that we would learn to appreciate the value of time!

We certainly don't want to be so time-conscious that we become driven workaholics, neglecting our families, never relaxing with our friends, too busy to smell the roses or admire a sunset. Yet Paul urged us to redeem the time (Ephesians 5:15-16), and Moses prayed, "Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom" (Psalm 90:12).

Let's ask the Lord to help us appreciate the value of time. May we wisely invest our seconds, minutes, hours, and days, realizing that beyond time lies eternity. —Vernon C Grounds ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

We do not know how long we have
Till time for us is past,
So let us live as if this day
Is going to be our last.
-DJD

**To spend time wisely,
invest it in eternity.**

Stay Within God's Limits- One of life's greatest enjoyments for Suzannah Worl is riding her Harley-Davidson motorcycle. In a devotional article for Covenant Publications, she wrote about cruising the streets of Chicago with her friends late one summer night. They were riding along the shore of Lake Michigan, enjoying the bright moonlight and gentle breeze off the water.

Suddenly the lead motorcyclist took off and several of the group went with him, reaching speeds of 100 miles an hour. Suzannah was tempted to join them—but she didn't. She knew it was not safe and it was against the law. So she held back, continuing at normal speed.

Sometimes the way others live seems far more attractive and exciting than our Christian life. We're tempted to disobey God's commands or compromise principles from His Word. But we are called to live each day with self-discipline and spiritual discernment. The apostle Paul said, "Walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise" (Ephesians 5:15).

We need to ask the Lord for His help so that we'll see situations through His eyes and make wise choices. As we obey Him and stay within His limits, we will find true joy and lasting satisfaction.—David C. Egner ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Living for Jesus a life that is true,
Striving to please Him in all that I do;
Yielding allegiance, glad-hearted and free,
This is the pathway of blessing for me.
—Chisholm

**The wise know God's limits—
fools know no bounds.**

Killing Time- A friend of mine was sitting on a park bench with his hands folded, staring into the distance. When I asked what he was doing, he replied, "Oh, just killing time."

What a cruel thing to do to something as valuable as time! Why kill it? Time is given to us to be cultivated, not murdered. Time should never be wasted but used to the best advantage.

Of course, there are times when we must relax and rest. Even Jesus said to His disciples, "Come aside . . . and rest a while" (Mark. 6:31). But that was not "killing time," it was using time for restoration. After they had rested, they would be able to use their time

more fruitfully and profitably.

If a fraction of the time we waste could be used to pray, read the Bible, witness to others, visit a friend in distress, or comfort someone who is grieving, what a difference it would make! Today, when you have leisure time, ask yourself how you can best improve those extra moments. You may think I am being narrow minded, but the Bible is clear—we are to be "wise, redeeming the time" (Eph. 5:16).

Today, see how much good you can do for God and others—not how little you can get by with. It is not true that we can "make up lost time." It is gone forever! —M R De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

God's people have so much to do
In serving Christ today
That they should use their precious time
To share, to love, to pray.
—JDB

Time—use it or lose it!

What Does God Like? - Some churches have become divided over styles of worship. One group may be insisting on a traditional service, while another is agitating for a more contemporary format.

We can all profit from a lesson a man learned on a business trip after attending a church service near his hotel. He talked with the pastor about how he had been blessed by the sermon, even though some of the worship time was not to his liking.

The pastor simply asked, "What was it you think God didn't like?" The man had the grace to reply, "I don't suppose there was anything He didn't like. I was talking about my own reaction. But worship isn't really about me, is it?"

We are entitled to our own preferences, and we must hold firmly to our biblical convictions. But before we voice our fault-finding opinions, let's seriously try to understand God's viewpoint. Consider Ephesians 5 in the light of worship: We are to be filled with the Spirit, speak to each other in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, give thanks to God, and submit to one another (Eph 5:19,21).

Whatever the style of worship, as we express to God our praise for who He is and all He has done, we lift Him up and encourage others. That's what God likes.—Vernon C Grounds ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Let us celebrate together,
Lift our voice in one accord,
Singing of God's grace and mercy
And the goodness of the Lord. —Sper

**At the heart of worship is
worship from the heart.**

WHEN OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS - By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days (Hebrews 11:30).

As a sculptor showed a visitor some marble figures displayed in his studio, an unusual sculpture caught the guest's attention. It had two peculiar features. Where the statue's face normally would have been, the sculptor had chiseled a covering of hair, and on both feet were wings.

"What is the name of this one?" asked the visitor.

"Opportunity," the artist answered.

"Why is its face hidden?"

"Because," said the craftsman, "we seldom know opportunity when he comes to us."

"And why does he have wings on his feet?"

"Because he is soon gone, and once gone, he cannot be overtaken."

The apostle Paul spoke of the quickly passing nature of opportunity in Ephesians 5:16. The word time used in this verse can also be

translated "opportunity"—suggesting occasions for accomplishing high and noble purposes. But what are these opportunities? They are brief moments of personal contact—the passing incident, the turn of a conversation, or the "chance" meeting of an old acquaintance. Such times present golden opportunities for caring, for witnessing, for eternal good.

Alexander Maclaren, the noted Baptist preacher from England, said, "Every moment of life is granted us for one purpose: becoming like our dear Lord. That ultimate, all-embracing end is reached through a multitude of near and intermediate ones."

Like the young shepherd David, when our faith is strong we will have the wisdom and courage to see every obstacle as an opportunity. —P. R. Van Gorder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

To believe only possibilities, is not faith, but mere Philosophy.

—Sir Thomas Browne

The astronomer measures time by light-years, the geologist by vast cycles, the historian by epics and centuries, the industrialist by the fiscal year, the salaried person by the month, the laborer by the weekly paycheck, the child by the birthday party. But for most of us the common measure of time begins with the awkward motions of rising in the morning and the weary movements at night. In this dimension we determine our day. While the vast majority of the hours are predetermined, planned for us, we nevertheless have precious tidbits of time which we are free to use and which ultimately determine the quality of our character and the degree of our commitment. The Lord measures time in terms of responsible living.

The late Will Rogers had these lines engraved on a huge watch which he presented to David Rubinoff, the consummate violinist:

The Clock of Life is wound but once,
And no man has the power
To tell just when the hands will stop,
At late or early hour.

Now is the only time we own;
Love, life, toil with a will;
Do not wait until tomorrow,
For the Clock may then be still.

Making The Most Of Time- We tend to read Ephesians 5:16 as if Paul is calling believers to action because the days are short, but that's not what he meant. He said we are to make the most of time "because the days are evil."

Evil days are days of opportunity. The more evil our culture becomes, the more opportunities there will be to show and share our faith.

God controls human history—permitting the rise of nations, determining their geographical boundaries, and orchestrating their fall—so that men and women will "seek the Lord" (Acts 17:26, 27). History is "His story" of providing salvation for a lost world and pointing people to the Lord. Even the forces of evil are used in such a way that "all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the Lord, You alone" (Isaiah 37:20).

God may hold back His judgment for a time, allowing evil tyrants to have their day, upsetting people's well-ordered lives, presenting them with dilemmas beyond their understanding. Evil brings pain, but it is the genius of God to bring good out of evil (Ro 8:28+).

Evil times, therefore, are not to be feared. They are times of unparalleled opportunity. That's why we must make the most of them. —David H. Roper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord, help us to redeem the time
You give us every day,
To take each opportunity
To follow and obey. —Sper

God can turn any difficulty into an opportunity.

Don't Kill Time! - Author and lecturer John Erskine (1879-1951) declared that he learned the most valuable lesson of his life when he was 14 years old. His piano teacher asked him how much he practiced. He replied that he usually sat at the instrument for an

hour or more at a time.

"Don't do that," warned the teacher. "When you grow up, time won't come to you in long stretches like that. Practice in minutes wherever you can find them—5 or 10 before school, a few after lunch. Sandwich them in between chores. Spread the practice throughout the day, and music will become a part of your life."

Erskine stated later that by following this advice he was able to live a fulfilled life as a creative writer, in addition to his regular duties as an instructor. He wrote nearly all of *Helen of Troy*, his most famous work, on streetcars while commuting between his home and the university.

How can you make good use of your spare moments? Consider carrying a Bible or a devotional booklet with you. Use the time to read, or to pray, or to write a note of encouragement or admonition to some needy soul.

Beware of wasting the present. Instead of killing time, redeem your spare moments today. —H G Bosch [Our Daily Bread](#). Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Redeem the time! God only knows
How soon our little life may close,
With all its pleasures and its woes,
Redeem the time! —Anon.

Wasting the gift of time insults the giver of time.

REDEEMING THE TIME

Thomas Manton

First: In the duty there is the act and the object. Both must be explained.

1. The act, buying; or, as we render it, “redeeming.” Well, then, what is the meaning of “redeeming the time,” or buying the time? The term is proper to civil contracts, but is here applied morally.

(1) In buying there is some price paid; we part with one thing to obtain another; so we must part with anything less than it rather than lose time; as Pr 23:23,

Buy the truth, and sell it not.

As merchants stand upon no rate or price if they may get such wares into their hands as they may make benefit of, so time is such a precious commodity, and so useful to us in order to eternity, that we should not stand upon ease, carnal pleasures, and worldly conveniences, that we may purchase it.

(2) That which is bought belongs to the buyer; and so buy time to make it your own for spiritual advantages. But our translation uses the word “**redeem**,” which implies another metaphor — namely, the recovery of a mortgage, or the redeeming of what hath been lost or pawned out; and so it notes our former improvident poor use of time. We have, as it were, mortgaged it to Satan, to the world, and to vanity, and now should redeem it out of the hands of these engrossers (those who captivate our whole attention), and by future diligence recover our former neglect.

2. The object — “the time.” The word properly signifies the season and opportunity, but yet it is the usual word for time in Scripture, for to a Christian all time is season. Time in general is but short: “But this I say, brethren, the time is short” (1Co 7:29). But the season or opportunity, which is the flower of time, is shorter; therefore this must not be slipped: “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men” (Gal 6:10+).

Secondly: The reason by which this duty is enforced — “**Because the days are evil.**”

1. For the meaning of the phrase.

(1) It may be understood of the whole course or race of man's life: (Genesis 47:9). Time in itself is neither good nor evil, but in regard of the accidents of time, as it is encumbered with variety of vexations, cares, and miseries, so our days may be called evil. And in this sense we must take that of our Saviour (Mt 6:34+). Every day brings evil enough and sorrow enough to exercise us. Therefore you had need to lay up for a better life, for you have but sorry evil days here.

(2) More properly and specially it relates to the times the apostle wrote in, which were hard and calamitous, and full of danger, because of the wickedness of those among whom they lived. There were many enemies then, both to Christian verity and piety.

2. The force of the consequence.

(1) Because others vainly misspend time, Christians should be more careful to redeem it. The worse the times are, the better should we be, as fountain water is hottest in the coldest weather, and stars shine brightest in the darkest night.

(2) Adversity makes men serious.

(3) With relation to the heathen among whom they lived, he advised them to redeem the time (Colossians 4:5+).

(4) Some are so bad and froward (habitually disposed to disobedience and opposition), that they would take away liberty, estates, yea, life itself from you, and with it all occasions of doing and receiving good. You carry your own lives in your hands, and the lives of many of God's precious instruments are in danger; and therefore, before means and opportunities be wholly lost, redeem the time. That it is the duty of Christians to look to the due improvement of the time and season. I shall draw out the force of the apostle's exhortation in this method.

I. The commodity or thing to be bought.

The word signifies time and season, the general and particular opportunity.

1. Time.

(1) If you have not begun already by conversion, it must not be delayed and left to uncertainties. The sooner you begin to buy time, the better bargain you will have; for every man would have as much for his money as possibly he can, therefore take the market while it is at the best (Ecclesiastes 12:1).

(2) After you are once admitted into the evangelical estate, your whole time should be redeemed and spent for God (Luke 1:75; Romans 6:11+).

2. The season: buy it, whatever it cost you. The season of receiving good and of doing good.

II. The use we must put it to when we have gotten this commodity into our hands.

It is a precious commodity; you should never let it go but for something better than itself. There are two great ends, the glorifying of God, and the saving of our own souls.

Thirdly: I shall now proceed to the encouragements to the bargain to redeem time and season.

First: Let me press you to redeem the time.

1. Too much time hath been spent already (1Peter 4:3+).

2. We are to be accountable to God for time.

3. That time is only yours which is spent well, in pleasing God, and doing good; for that time is bought and redeemed which otherwise is lost to you. We lose all that time which is not spent in the love and service of God.

4. Time is not ours to dispose of at pleasure. A Christian, when he gives up himself to God, he gives up everything that is his to God. My time is not mine, but Christ's. It is sacrilege to rob God of what is consecrated to Him.

5. Time is a precious commodity, worth the looking after. The devil values it; if he can cheat you of your time, he can cheat you of your souls; for when conviction is strong, and all your prejudices are borne down, and his outworks taken, excuses and self-flatteries vanish. The last thing that he is loath to let go is time; his game is to cheat you of today, and so of the next day. God saith, "Today" (Hebrews 3:13+); and the devil saith, Not today, but at a more convenient season; as Felix put off Paul (Acts 24:25).

6. The present time is the best:

"I made haste, and delayed not to keep Thy commandments" (Ps119:60+).

Ludovicus Cappellus tells us of a Jewish rabbin, who being asked when a man should repent, answered, One day before his death; that is, presently, this day; it may be your last in the world: "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2Corinthians 6:2).

7. You have no time but what may be serviceable for some good use. There is no time wherein thou dost not enjoy some blessing

to provoke thee to thankfulness, or hast not some sin to be mortified, or some good work to be done. We have a great deal of work to do in a short time.

8. We have much work to do, therefore let us spend it in matters that most concern us. We all complain of the shortness of time, and yet everyone hath more time than he uses well. We should rather complain of the loss of time than the want of time. In the general, use time well. If it be short, do not make it shorter by your negligence and improvident misspending of it. A thing that is hired for a while, it is a loss to us if it be not used and employed; as a horse that is bargained for if he be kept idle, or money taken up at interest. So it is with time lent us by God for a while; we pay dear for it if we use it not, and improve it not for God. It is good to see what advantage we make of time daily. One could say when he heard the clock strike, Now I have another hour to answer for.

9. The slight price we are to give for time. You part with nothing but what is better lost than kept; with a little ease of the flesh, vain pleasure which passes away as the wind, a little worldly profit, which at death will be of no use to thee. Now these are of no worth in comparison of time.

10. The necessity should quicken us, because there are many things which are apt to steal away and engross our time, and therefore must be redeemed; as —

(1) Sloth and idleness.

(2) Vain and sinful pleasures, and carnal sports.

(3) Worldly distractions.

(4) Vain company; they steal a jewel from us they can never restore, which is our precious time.

Secondly: Why we must redeem the season.

1. Because all things are beautiful in their season. It is said that the good man “is like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth his fruit in his season” (Psalm 1:3+). Now, fruit in its season is a carriage answerable to all providences (Matthew 9:15).

2. Because the season may soon slip out of our hands (Galatians 6:10+). Take and seek all occasions of doing good. To take the season relates to the necessities of others; to seek the season relates to our own capacity and ability; both together bind the duty stronger on us. We must not defer a benefit. Some are like hogs, good for nothing till they are dead; they will not part with anything till they are incapable of the use of it any longer. So for exhorting (Hebrews 3:13+). So for serving public good (Acts 13:36). They that mind to do good in the world engage themselves in a warfare, and the loss of our season is no small part of the enemy’s conquest.

3. This is wisdom. Some are wise in time, others too late; as the foolish virgins; they saw a necessity of getting oil into their vessels, but it was too late (Matthew 25:10). But the godly make much of time before it is lost.

4. The foresight and provision of the creatures may shame us. God will not only teach careless men by His prophets and messengers, but by His creatures. There is a great deal of morality lies hid in the bosom of nature if we had the skill to find it out. In this business of redeeming the time we are sent to the pismire (Proverbs 6:6, 7, 8).

5. Most of the calamities of the world come for not observing and improving the season (Ecclesiastes 8:6).

I. Reproof of several sorts of men.

1. Of them that willfully spend their time vainly, either in doing nothing, or doing what they should not, or in doing evil.

2. It reproves them that delay their conversion and return to God; as those invited to the marriage supper did not deny, but delay (Matthew 22:1-14).

3. Reproof to fallen believers, who do not take the next advantage of recovering themselves by repentance. The longer sin continues unmortified or unpardoned, the more dangerous is your case. A candle, as soon as the flame is blown out, sucks light and is re-enkindled; but when it is grown cold and stiff, it requires more ado.

4. It reproves those that withstand the special seasons of grace, when God’s arms are most open to receive us. (T. Manton, D. D.)