Ephesians 5:15-17 - 15 Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, 16 making the most of your time, because the days are evil. 17 So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

A. 15 Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, 16 making the most of your time, because the days are evil. – Here is the loud voice of wisdom calling to us….BE CAREFUL! Be “full of care” to obey God and walk in all His ways and to love Him and serve Him! Do not be like the lazy man or the sluggard, but like the diligent and wise man in the way you live your Christian life! In Deuteronomy, Moses warns Israel again and again to “be careful to follow all the words of this law so that it may go well with you.” Here is a list of references from Deuteronomy where this is said. (Deuteronomy 2:4,4:15,5:1,6:3,6:25,8:1,11:22,11:32:12:1,12:13,12:19,12:28,12:32,15:5,16:12,17:10,17:19,19:9,23:23,24:8,26:16,28:12,13:28:58,31:12,32:46)

With such a high and holy calling as ours, how could we Christians do anything less. We must BE VERY CAREFUL then how we live, what we do, what we say, what we think!

Proverbs 2:11 - 11 Discretion will guard you, Understanding will watch over you, NASB
Proverbs 4:26 - 26 Watch the path of your feet, And all your ways will be established. NASB

It is possible to be a Christian and live like a fool…v-15,v-17….Paul tells us “not as unwise men but as wise.” Here is yet another contrast of Paul’s, this between the life of wisdom and that of folly. Wisdom is supreme! It will guard our ways!

Proverbs 4:6-8 - 6 “Do not forsake her, and she will guard you; Love her, and she will watch over you. 7 ‘The beginning of wisdom is: Acquire wisdom; And with all your acquiring, get understanding. 8 ‘Prize her, and she will exalt you; She will honor you if you embrace her.

B. Here Paul tells how to be careful and wise, he says “making the most of your time.” Oh that we could regain those precious moments of time which have slipped out of our reach! This is imperative for Christians to heed, but all to often we waste our time and suffer for it! Hear the wisdom in Jonathon Edwards’ resolutions numbers 4-6…….

4. Resolved, never to do any manner of thing, whether in soul or body, less or more, but what tends to the glory of God; nor be, nor suffer it, if I can avoid it.
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.

We must “make the most of our time” in order that we do what is most beneficial for our lives and for the lives of our families. Here are things which can be done to make the most of time, a quote from Barnes…..

(1.) in gaining useful knowledge;
(2.) in doing good to others;
(3.) in employing it for the purpose of an honest livelihood for themselves and families;
(4.) in prayer and self-examination, to make the heart better;
(5.) in seeking salvation, and in endeavoring to do the will of God.

Paul also explains WHY we should do this, he says “because the days are evil.” Evil is all around us, tempting us to waste our time and squander it away in useless endeavors which bring no fruit at all. One main goal of Christian life is to be as effective and productive as possible. We should be effectively fulfilling the work of the ministry and producing fruit which glorifies God.

John 15:1-9 - 15:1 “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2 “Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit. 3 “You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4 “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the
vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me. 5 "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing. 6 "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you. 8 "By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. NASB

2 Peter 1:5-9 - 5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge; 6 and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness; 7 and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. 8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. NASB

C. 17 So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. – Again the exhortation against folly. The contrast here is to “be foolish” and to “understand what the will of the Lord is.” Obviously the call here is to “understanding” verses “foolish thinking.” We must have a thorough understanding of God’s will, (this is spiritual wisdom), in order that we can do it. This was Paul’s great desire for the church for which he continually prayed.

Ephesians 1:17-18 - 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. 18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, NASB

Philippians 1:8-11 - 9 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, 10 so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; 11 having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. NASB

Colossians 1:9-10 - 9 For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding. 10 so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; NASB

Because the days are evil, and our minds naturally tend toward the flesh and to folly, we must be in pursuit of spiritual wisdom and understanding. As the Proverbs tell us…..

Proverbs 4:5-7 - 5 Acquire wisdom! Acquire understanding! Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth. 6 "Do not forsake her, and she will guard you; Love her, and she will watch over you. 7 "The beginning of wisdom is: Acquire wisdom; And with all your acquiring, get understanding. NASB

Proverbs 23:23 - 23 Buy truth, and do not sell it, Get wisdom and instruction and understanding. NASB

Is the wisdom of God resident within you mind by nature? Do you know all of the treasures of God? Certainly you do not, therefore you must acquire it! Here again the exhortation of wisdom, it must be our chief pursuit!

Proverbs 2:1-7 – 1 My son, if you will receive my sayings, And treasure my commandments within you, 2 Make your ear attentive to wisdom, Incline your heart to understanding; 3 For if you cry for discernment, Lift your voice for understanding; 4 If you seek her as silver, And search for her as for hidden treasures; 5 Then you will discern the fear of the LORD, And discover the knowledge of God. 6 For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding. 7 He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk in integrity. NASB

Six things we are exhorted to do here to acquire wisdom.

- **TREASURE** my commandments within you,
- **2 MAKE YOUR EAR ATTENTIVE** to wisdom,
- **INCLINE YOUR HEART** to understanding;
• 3 For *IF YOU CRY* for discernment,
• *LIFT YOUR VOICE* for understanding; (that is to pray)
• 4 If you *SEEK* her as silver, And *SEARCH* for her as for hidden treasures;

God has clearly revealed His will to us in the scripture. More than this, He has given us the Holy Spirit to give us illumination of Himself and understanding of the truth. As Paul has said we are to “*try and learn what is pleasing to the Lord*” and to “*understand what the will of the Lord is.*” (John 16:7-15, 1 John 5:20, Col 2:1-3)