

**Series: Light in the Darkness**  
**“Watch Your Walk!”**  
**Part 2, Ephesians 5.16**

As many of you know, I love sports. Football, basketball, baseball. I enjoy them all and played them all. It's currently football season, which means that the NFL dominates sports broadcasting on Sundays.

So, an NFL football has four 15-minute quarters, or 60 total minutes of game time, and takes an average of just over 3 hours to complete. However, the Wall Street Journal discovered that, if you tally up the time when the ball is actually in play, the action amounts to a mere 11 minutes!

You see, unlike hockey or basketball, the game clock in football can run even when the ball is not in play. That means a lot of game time is spent standing around or huddling up before each play begins.

60 minutes on the clock, but only 11 minutes of action.

Eleven minutes of football action but approximately 20 commercial breaks that take up about an hour, or one-third, of the time the game is televised.

I wonder what kind of correlation we can make with our lives? Sixty years of life but only 11 months' worth of living that glorifies Christ? Twenty-four hours in a day but how much of that time is spent “watching commercials”—literally and figurately?

Ephesians 5.15-17 exhorts us to “walk circumspectly/carefully,” and then gives us three ways to “watch your walk,” three ways to “walk carefully.” The first we dealt with last week; the second will be our focus today.

**(1) DESIRE GOD'S WISDOM (15)**

*You and I need wisdom. We desperately need to know not just what to believe but how to behave.*

**(2) DISCIPLINE YOUR LIFE (16)**

**“redeeming the time”** — The word translated **“time”** here is not the term for clock time. He's not saying to “redeem the hour, redeem the next 12 hours, you're living in,” even though that is something we should do. The word he uses refers to a measured, allocated, fixed season or period of time.

The word **“redeem”** does mean to “buy back” or “purchase” in some contexts. But when you put the two concepts together—that of time being ‘redeemed’—the expression is a metaphorical way to speak of using time well.

Thus, “making the best use of the time” (ESV), or “making the most of every opportunity” (NIV, NLT) are two good translations. And **Colossians 4:5** echoes the same thought: “Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time.”

There's an obvious ‘sense of urgency’ that we as believers should have about living life. There's no way any disciple of Jesus can justify apathy, laziness or a pure wasting of time. To do so would be live life contrary to how Jesus lived his life. He lived life on mission. He stewarded his 30+ years of life with priorities and urgency.

***Four reasons to discipline your life...***

**Life passes quickly**

Of all the biblical truth I was taught growing up in church, the truth that is “truer” than I thought possible is the truth contained in **James 4.14** — “For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.”

On a cold enough day, you can see your breath when you exhale...it's like a vapor. By the time you breath in again, that exhaled breath disappears. It's gone. That's the imagery of Scripture for how quickly our lives pass by.

**Job 9:25–26** My days are swifter than a runner.... They go by like...an eagle swooping on the prey.

**Psalm 39:4** O Lord, make me know my end and what is the measure of my days; let me know how fleeting I am!

*So, if you're going to plan anything, James implies, plan on a short life. Because no matter how long you live, it's a short life.*

**Key takeaway: Don't waste your life!**

Treat laziness like the sinful plague that it is. Don't waste your life on social media! Can you justify the amount of time you spend on your phone as being a good steward of the short life you're living?

We must learn to distinguish between the trivial and the crucial. Sometimes it is helpful to ask: "What is going to matter when I stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ?"

It's often said that great leaders attribute their success, not to things they said "yes" to, but to the things they said "no" to. To what do you need to say "NO" to in order to not waste your life?

*Reasons to discipline your life...*

**Evil works tirelessly ("the days are evil")**

Paul is not naïve about the world. He says the days are evil. The age is evil because God gives Satan such a long leash that he can be called "the god of this age" (2 Cor. 4:4). The age is evil because God allows so much pride and wickedness in the human heart to go unrestrained for now.

Since "the days are evil" and since the Bible also teaches us that "evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3:13), shouldn't we be 'redeeming the time' to at least slow down the advancement of evil?

**Key takeaway: Don't hide your light!**

Letting your light shine was the emphasis in Eph. 5:8 – "Walk as children of light!" Spiritual darkness continues to permeate the culture. Evil continues to work tirelessly—and it will until the day Christ wraps up human history. You must do all you can to let your light shine brightly so that the 'spread of darkness' will not have free reign. So that evil will not advance uncontested.

If people work overtime to get their political candidates elected, shouldn't believers work similarly to get the gospel to the regions beyond? If people work hard to overturn bad legislation, should disciples of Jesus work even harder to turn people from darkness?

If your spiritual light was suddenly turned off completely, would those around you even notice? Let's shine brightly and discipline our lives while fighting against the darkness.

*Reasons to discipline your life...*

**Opportunities aren't open indefinitely**

Remember the translations I shared earlier — "making the most of every opportunity" (NIV, NLT).

A few days ago, Jennifer was organizing the primary pantry in our kitchen. It has five pullout shelves for easier access. As she pulled out each shelf, we went through all the bottles, bags, cans, and containers to see if anything needed to be thrown away. So, what was the key factor in determining whether or not something was thrown away? *The expiration date.* With practically every food item we buy, there is a "window of opportunity" in which the food needs to be eaten. Otherwise, it will spoil and need to be thrown away.

Similarly, the opportunities of life often have "expiration dates." Granted, if you missed the opportunity to get on an elevator before its doors closed, you're almost always assured of another opportunity. But there are some doors that, when they close, the opportunity is forever gone. That opportunity will never come again over.

The doors of the Ark were open long enough for Noah and his family to enter. They were open long enough for all the specified animals to enter. If anyone outside of Noah's family had listened to his preaching, to his warnings of pending flood waters and judgment, they could have entered the door as well. But once God shut the door, that opportunity was forever gone.

Talk about wasted opportunity... Judas is a tragic example. He had a 3-year window of opportunity to be with none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, to be one of his disciples, and he blew it! And the consequences were eternal!

***Lesson to learn: Don't procrastinate!***

Don't procrastinate getting right with God!

Don't procrastinate getting saved!

The devil may or may not ever say to you, "There's no God." He may or may not ever say, "There's no hell." He may or may not ever say, "There's no heaven." But the devil will say to you, "There's no hurry! You can take care of all that religious stuff later! Live it up while you can!"

The very last gospel invitation you ever hear could be the one you're hearing right now.

*Christ stands at the door and knocks...but he will not stand there forever.*

**Isaiah 55:6** Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near.

The encouraging part of that is that the Lord can be found, and the Lord is near, but the scary part of that verse is that it clearly implies there is a time when he may not be found and there is a time when he won't be near. There is an opportune time for you to call upon the Lord to be saved and there is a time when that opportunity may be gone...forever.

Don't procrastinate sharing the gospel with your co-worker, family member, teammate or friend.

Don't procrastinate writing that letter to someone who needs to read of your love for their soul.

Don't procrastinate doing whatever it is that you know the Lord wants you to do.

**Galatians 6:10** So then, ***as we have opportunity***, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Stop dragging your feet. Stop making excuses. Stop being apathetic. Stop being lazy.

Outside of purposeful disobedience of God's Word, the most spiritually foolish thing a Christian can do is to waste time and opportunity, to fritter away his life in trivial pursuits and in half-hearted service of the Lord.

**One clarification about opportunities: *An opportunity does not equal an obligation.*** More opportunities present themselves to us than we are physically able to accomplish. Only wisdom can help us separate between the good, better, and best. If we fail to make the distinction, however, we will find ourselves overburdened and underequipped. What *God* gives us is sustainable. What we put on ourselves may be unbearable.

*Reasons to discipline your life...*

**Tomorrows are iffy**

**James 4:13–14a** Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit" —***yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring.***

**Proverbs 27:1** Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring.

Oh, folks, unfortunately, we had a tragic reminder of this just a couple of days ago. Glenn Wiley was having difficulty taking deep breaths. He had an x-ray done that showed he had a collapsed lung, a lung that needed to be drained of fluid and infection. Such a procedure is routine. Hospitals around the country do them all the

time. And yet, during that routine operation, a complication occurred that would lead to Glenn passing away right there in the operating room. *Tomorrows are iffy!*

This past Wednesday, during my sermon I mentioned a man named Tim Challies, a Canadian pastor and author whose son was attending Boice College on the campus of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his fiancé and his sister were playing some game when he suddenly collapsed and did not respond to any of the life-saving measures that were administered to him. He died. *Tomorrows are iffy!*

No one hearing my voice is promised tomorrow.

***Key takeaway: Don't be presumptuous!***

Again, James 4.13 warns those who are saying, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit," to not be presumptuous about those life plans. Do not be presumptuous about the amount of time you'll live in any city. Do not be presumptuous about the profit you plan to make with your business venture. *Don't be presumptuous!*

The warning in Proverbs 27:1 could not be clearer about not being presumptuous: "You do not know what a day may bring."

**Conclusion...**

So, how much time is left of the "game clock" of your life? 60 years? 60 months? 60 weeks? 60 days? 60 minutes? Only the Lord knows. But will you discipline your life and be a good steward of however many days or years you have left? Will you promise God right now to stop wasting your life "watching commercials" and living selfishly? Will you promise God to starting investing more time in the lives of others? Will you promise God to get up off the couch of life and make a difference for his kingdom?

The third verse and the chorus of "Only one life" are certainly worthy of your meditation...

The days pass so swiftly  
The months come and go  
The years melt away  
Like new falling snow.  
Spring turns to summer  
Then summer to fall  
Autumn brings winter  
Then death comes to call.

CHORUS

Only one life  
So soon it will pass  
Only what's done for Christ will last.  
Only one chance to do His will  
So give to Jesus all you days  
It's the only life that pays  
When you recall  
You have but one life.