

Walking in Wisdom as Spirit-filled Worshipers

Introduction

- At one time, we were destined for hell, but now are predestined to adoption as sons!
- At one time, we were children of wrath, but now we are children of grace!
- At one time, we were far off, but now we are brought near by the blood of Christ!

- At one time, we lost our identity, but now we are being recreated into the likeness of God.
- If we've been changed by the gospel, we're called to *embody* the gospel with our lives.
- That's why we must be imitators of God, walk in love, and walk in light (Eph 5:1, 2, 8).

- *Q. But how? What does it look like to walk with Jesus in a time when the days are evil?*
- **Simply put: we must be a people who walk in wisdom and are filled with the Spirit.**

Esther Ahn Kim (1939–1945) [as told by Francis Chan in *Forgotten God*, 97–99]

- During WWII, when the Japanese occupied Korea, Esther was imprisoned for six years.
- She refused to bow down to the shrines set up in every corner of her country. So ...
- She prepared herself *spiritually*: memorized 100+ verses/hymns, fasted and prayed.

- She prepared herself *physically*: she disciplined herself to eat rotten food.
- When in prison, a Chinese woman convicted of killing her husband was brought in.
- So Esther served her. She kept her feet warm, gave the woman her food for 3 days.

- The woman began to respond. She believed in Jesus, then was executed for her crime.
- Esther simply walked with Jesus, asking, “Who do you want me to love for you today?”
- Esther's story illustrates a woman who walked in wisdom and was marked by the Spirit.

BIG IDEA

In the same way, if we are to walk in love and light in a time when the days are evil, we need to walk in wisdom as a Spirit-filled community of worshipers.

- First, to walk in love and light as beloved children of God, we must ...

I. Walk in Wisdom

Read Ephesians 5:15–17.

- “Walk” (7x) is one of Paul’s favorite metaphors for what you center your life on.
- We once centered our life around sin (2:2) and the course of this world (4:17).
- But Christ changed all of that. As we center our life on Jesus, now ...
- We walk in good works (2:10), walk in love (5:1), and walk in light (5:8). But ...

- Walking with Jesus isn’t easy. So we need to pay attention to *how* we walk.
- We shouldn’t be unwise, *but wise*. Listen to Proverbs 3:5–7:

5 Trust in the Lord with *all your heart*,
and *do not lean on your own understanding*.

6 In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths.

7 *Be not wise in your own eyes;*
fear the Lord, and turn away from evil.

- A wise person trusts in God, relies on God, fears God, and turns away from evil.
- But a fool trusts in himself, is self-reliant, is prideful and runs toward evil.
- So Paul says, “Don’t be foolish, but understand the Lord’s will” (5:17; cf. 5:10).

- *Q. But how do we walk in wisdom?* Paul says, “Making the best use of the time.”
- Or “redeem the time.” Money can’t buy time. But wisdom can.
- Wisdom is the currency to invest in every moment and redeem every opportunity.

- *Q. Why should we redeem the time?* Paul’s reason: “b/c the days are evil” (5:15).
- This is actually a *warning*. **If you don’t redeem the time, you’ll waste your life.**
- Satan uses two tactics to threaten us: 1) Distraction, and 2) Busyness.

Tactic #1: Distraction

- The sure path to hell isn’t merely a reckless life, but a *distracted* life (Lewis).
- In his book, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, John Mark Comer writes:

‘A recent study found that the average iPhone user touches his or her phone 2,617 times *a day*. Each user is on his or her phone for two and a half hours over seventy-six sessions. ... Another study on millennials put the number at twice that. ... As one summary of the report put it, ‘If you grow dependent on your smartphone, it becomes a magical device that silently shouts your name at your brain at all times’” (Comer 36–37).

- *Sound familiar?* Add internet, social media, email, gaming, bingeing shows, etc.
- If Comer is right, then that means all of us to some degree are *distracted*.
- And if we’re distracted, we’re *disconnecting* ourselves from God, others, and life.

Tactic #2: Busyness

- Corrie ten Boom said, “If the devil can’t make you sin, he’ll make you busy.”
- Busyness is the norm—even a virtue. After all, everyone’s busy, right?
- The truth is, a busy life prevents us from loving people well (time, sacrifice).
- And a busy life, *disconnects us from God and his kingdom*. Walter Adams writes,

“To walk with Jesus is to walk with a slow, unhurried pace. Hurry is the death of prayer and only impedes and spoils our work. It never advances it.”

Diagnostic Questions (from Comer, Ruthless Elimination 48–51)

- Irritability: *Q. Are you easily irritated when life is slow (traffic, register, people)?*
- Restlessness: *Q. Do you get bored easily? Is it hard to focus? How’s your sleep?*
- Workaholism: *Q. Do you know how to clock out? When home, are you present?*
- Escapism: *Q. Where do you turn to forget your problems (food, shows, device)?*
- Spiritual Disciplines: *Q. Does it feel like you have no time to pray/read/meditate?*
- Isolation: *Q. Do you feel disconnected from God, others, self?*

- *Q. What’s the remedy for a distracted/busy life?* It’s not more time, but a *Person*.
- Come to Jesus. Be still and know that he is God. Sit at his feet. Gaze upon him.
- He can declutter your heart. He can give you rest if you come to him.

Transition

- To walk in love and light, we need to walk in wisdom with Jesus. But, also, we need to,

II. Be Filled with the Spirit

Read Ephesians 5:18–21.

- At first, the command to not get drunk with wine seems to come from left field.
- But there's a link between wisdom and drunkenness in the Bible:

Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it *is not wise* (Prov 20:1).

- To be clear, Paul prohibits the *abuse* of alcohol, but its use. The reason why:
- Drunkenness is reckless. It can destroy you. It has no place in the life of believers.
- *Q. So what is the remedy to drunkenness and excessive indulgence?*
- Abstinence? Drinking in moderation? Surprisingly, that's not where Paul goes.

- In fact, the emphasis isn't so much about *avoiding intoxication*.
- **It's about *being* intoxicated with *someone* else: the Holy Spirit himself!**
- When you surrender all to Jesus, the Spirit controls, influences, empowers you.

- **It is when we say, "Lord, I come empty, so fill me, enrich me, and revive me."**
- To be filled with the Spirit is to let him invade and dominate your whole being.
- The command to be filled with the Spirit is ongoing, so it concerns *sanctification*.

- **Jesus says that the Spirit overflows in us like a river (John 7:38)!**
- The more we drink from Jesus, the more the Spirit will quench our soul's thirst.
- When we are filled with the Spirit as a church, something beautiful happens:
- We become a community of worshipers, resulting in these four characteristics:

#1 We Speak the Gospel to One Another (5:19a)
- Without the Spirit, we won't speak the truth in love. We will slander others.
- We'll speak foolishly and with crude joking (cf. Eph 4:25, 29, 31; 5:4).
- **But a Spirit-filled church speaks the gospel to one another.**

- **Worship is a conversation with the triune God and with one another.**

- Our Father speaks to us in the incarnate Word, Jesus Christ.
- The Spirit opens our hearts to receive and enjoy Jesus and what he did at Calvary.
- God speaks and we respond. That's why we speak in *Psalms* to one another:

I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul makes its boast in the LORD; let the humble hear and be glad. *Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together* (Pss 34:1–3)!

- We also speak the gospel in ancient *hymns* that Christians wrote in the past:

Jesus paid it all! All to him I owe!
Sin had left a crimson stain. He washed it white as snow.

- We speak the gospel in *Spirit-inspired modern songs* Christians are writing today:

So when I fight, I'll fight on my knees.
With my hands lifted high. Oh God, the battle belongs to you
And ev'ry fear I lay at your feet. I'll sing through the night.
Oh God, the battle belongs to you

#2 *We Sing to the Lord with the Heart* (5:19b)

- **Without the Spirit, we have no song to sing. Just think about that.**
- **But a Spirit-filled church sings! We sing, b/c God first sings to us** (Zeph 3:17):

The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save;
he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love;
he will exult over you with *loud singing*.

- **Jesus tells us that if we don't sing, the rocks will cry out (Luke 19:40)!**
- *Q. How should we sing? We should sing with our hearts* (passion, joy, desire).
- *Q. What happens when we sing?* Here are three ways singing shapes us.
- Singing *unifies* us. When we sing together we become one harmonious voice.

- Singing *propels* us. It propels us to join God’s mission in redeeming all peoples.
- Singing *prepares us for heaven*. Singing gives us a foretaste of the world to come.

#3 We Give Thanks to God the Father (5:20)

- **If we aren’t Spirit-filled, we will only grumble and complain.**
- But a Spirit-filled church *gives thanks*. **Notice the frequency: *always!***
- In times of joy or sorrow, *give thanks*. In times of peace or chaos, *give thanks*.

- *Q. What should we give thanks for? **Everything!** Everything* we have is a gift:
- Our life, family, friends, jobs, homes. *Even* trials that refine us and sanctify us.
- Every good and perfect gift comes from God our Father (Jas 1:17) ...
- In the name of Jesus, who purchased every blessing at the cross (cf. Gal 6:14).

#4 We Submit to One Another (5:21)

- If we aren’t Spirit-filled, we’ll be prideful or put ourselves above others.
- **But a Spirit-filled church yields to one another in humility.**
- The reason we submit to one another is because Christ submitted to his Father.

- **Look at Christ! The highest King of all became the lowliest servant of all.**
- In Gethsemane, he cried, “Not my will, but your will be done.”
- **He considered *you* above himself to the point of death—even on a cross.**
- In light of this, we submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Reiterate Points

- *Speaking/singing the gospel, giving thanks, submitting: marks of a Spirit-filled church.*

Conclusion

- If we walk in wisdom as Spirit-filled worshipers, we will walk in love and light.
- As wise people, let’s walk carefully and ask, “How can I please you today, Lord?”
- As Spirit-filled people, let’s walk and ask, “Who do you want me to love today, Lord?”