

Ephesians 5:15-21

A Spirit-led Community

In today's rapidly changing world, where moral ambiguity and distractions abound, making it all the more difficult for believers to faithfully discern how God is calling us to live individually and in community with one another, Paul's words to the Ephesians are both timeless and timely. His guidance on living wisely, being filled with the Spirit, and nurturing a Spirit-led community provides us with a path for living a life that honors God individually and in community. This morning, we will explore how these biblical principles not only inform our daily choices but also shape our life together as followers of Christ. To do so we will answer three questions. How does one walk wisely? How does one become filled with the Spirit? What are the markers of a Spirit-led community?

First question. **How does one walk wisely? V15-17** ¹⁵See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, ¹⁶redeeming the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord *is*." So, how does one walk wisely? Faithful intentionality. **That is, we live according to God's standards, taking advantage of every opportunity for advancing God's kingdom, embracing our reality rather than seeking to escape it. In simple terms, walking wisely means we do not go along just to get along and we certainly do not look for a way out. But rather, we chart a path through life that brings glory to God, glory to Christ Jesus.** When we live this way, we are indeed redeeming the time. In order to live like this, we must be filled with the Holy Spirit. Faithful intentionality- that's how we walk wisely.

Proverbs 3:5-8 “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. ⁷ Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and depart from evil. ⁸ It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones.”

Gal 5:16-21 “¹⁶ I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, ²¹ envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

Second question. **How does one become filled with the Spirit? V18**

“¹⁸ And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.” It appears here that Paul is implying that just as one makes a conscious choice to over-indulge in strong drink, maybe in effort to escape one’s present situation, one can make the same conscious choice to be filled with God’s Holy Spirit leading to one making the most of opportunities to do good. And not only that, participate in the cultivation of Spirit-led community. So, what must one do? To become filled with the Holy Spirit one must over-indulge in spiritual things. Specifically, the study of God’s word and prayer. Everyone who professes faith in God’s Son, Jesus the Christ, has received the Holy Spirit. But I believe, only through the persistent

study of God's word and prayer does one become filled with the Holy Spirit. Which is to say the Holy Spirit becomes that person's guide in life and that person follows.

Psalm 1:1-3 "Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; ² But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night. ³ He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper."

Romans 8:4-5 "⁵ For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. ⁶ For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.

1 Cor 2:12-16 "¹² Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. ¹³ And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. ¹⁴ The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. ¹⁵ The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. ¹⁶ "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ." **ESV**

Luke 11:13 "¹³ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

Final question. **What are the markers of a Spirit-led community? V19-21** "¹⁹ speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, ²⁰ giving

thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ submitting to one another in the fear of God.” **A Spirit-led community is one marked by mutual encouragement.** That means, when we gather, as we do life together, no one person matters more than another. The term literally means to be coached together. We learn together and we grow into mature disciples together. **It is a community marked by worship of God that flows from the heart.** That means, there is genuine love and reverence for God, for Christ Jesus in the hearts of the members of that community. And because there is a genuine love and reverence for God, for Christ Jesus there is a genuine reverence and love for the word of God in that community. **It’s also a community marked by a lifestyle of thankfulness for all things.** No getting on soap boxes, no playing the world’s smallest violin, no crying me a river, but complete trust in the sovereignty of God and God’s good purposes in all things and so thankfulness is the culture of the community. **Finally, a Spirit-led community is one marked by mutual submission.** The Greek word here means to subject oneself, to obey. The idea is that everyone in the community is open to correction. No one is beyond reproach, and when it is clear according to the word of God that one is wrong one doesn’t reject correction from those in the community. A Spirit-led community. This is what we desire to be.

Colossians 3:15-17 “¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the

name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

ESV

Hebrews 10:23-25 “²³ Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise. ²⁴ Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. ²⁵ And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.” **NLT**

Church, we cannot make the aforementioned happen simply by our efforts. Only by the Holy Spirit are these things possible. Thus, reverence of God evidenced by faith in His Son, Jesus the Christ is the prerequisite. A Spirit-led community. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.