

“Therefore be careful . . .”

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Read Ephesians 5:15-21

Throughout the Book of Ephesians, a contrast is created between those who accept Jesus Christ as the Lord of Glory and those who reject Him as Lord and Savior. The contrast is sharp. There is neither a co-mingling nor confusing of the two. It is the difference between obedience and disobedience, darkness and light, life and death. No one confuses the one with the other.

The one is a product of the flesh and the other the fruit of the Holy Spirit. The flesh can never manufacture the fruit of the Spirit. Such fruit is only possible as the full Tri-unity of God engages to the saving of sinners. Ephesians tells us as much.

Although we fully affirm the will of man to act and choose freely, he cannot apart from God's intervention and involvement fabricate fruit. To the glory of God, He works in such ways as to make the unwilling willing to will His desires and doings. It is the mystery incapable of unraveling. Here in our current text (Eph. 5:15-21) we find ourselves engulfed by numerous commands. Each describes for us what those who are **in Christ** and **indwelt by the Holy Spirit** “look/act” like.

His people live lives of deliberation. They are careful to rest in His work and not go about establishing their own. Such a life makes the most of the shadow. His people live in a competing and combative world temporally set against the light. The singularly defining thought is found in the Holy Spirit taking up permanent residency within the people of God. This indwelling is compatible with His baptizing work through which the body of Christ is created. The one only exists in the mutual work of the other.

The only reason we are called upon to speak, sing, give thanks and submit is because of who we are in Christ. The careful life lives within these four descriptive acts. No one who is not indwelt can genuinely and sincerely carry out these four functions. Such effort on the part of the unbelieving is nothing but fake fruit. It might look like life, but it smells of death. It might look like obedience, but is nothing but rebellion. Yet a word of caution, the ideas noted in verses 15-21 are suggestive, not exhaustive. They are as diverse as personality and as infinite as God. To make the four participles mandatory turns something beautiful into bondage. The “do” of will is one of yielding and resting in the “done” of God. It is as I live in light of the cross that I rest in His finished work and trust God to do in me and through me what only He is able to do. My “doing” is working to will so that I want what God desires and designs.

O how my heart aches for the body of Christ at large and our own community of faith to celebrate the fullness of God as Trinity. It is only God who can heal broken hearts and redeem the sin soaked slave. It is only God alone and only who is to be the first

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and best of beings. May we love Him so much that we are willing and working to set aside and destroy every idol of our hearts. May His Spirit continue to pull and compel us to live the victory of the slain and risen Lamb of God. Oh, may we never relent and turn to the left or right in our protection against sin and pursuit of the most holy and awe causing God. To Him be glory in the Church world without end, Amen.

Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in the Storyline of the Bible. She is determined by design to have a God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching focused on personal discipleship through intentional and systematic instruction; a Global-impacting mission that resolves to be a church planting church; and a Grace-based fellowship where disciples are invited to live under a reigning grace characterized by a Gospel-driven sanctification that celebrates a divine monergism to the Christian life.