

## REDEEMING THE TIME

*“See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” (Ephesians 5:15-16).*

The New Year is finally upon us. Many are thinking of resolutions to make for the upcoming year. Perhaps it is to lose a few pounds or save a few bucks. Some will decide to read the Bible through in the next year, others may decide to preach a sermon or do more visiting. Another person may decide to climb a mountain or go sky-diving this year. All of these things are good and certainly have merit. In the Scripture quoted above, Paul directs us to take a specific course of action. It is a course that should be taken each day, but certainly would be a good launching point for our own New Year’s resolutions.

First of all, he tells us to “walk circumspectly”. The idea here is to be diligent and careful. As usual, Paul is writing about spiritual things, so we must understand this in that light. We must be diligent and careful to avoid sin. We need to guard against temptations and watch out for pitfalls. I think of it like a hiker in the mountains. One may enjoy the beautiful scenery, revel in the fresh air, and wonder at the intricacies of nature; but one always has to keep an eye on the ground watching for hazards such as snakes, loose rocks, and possibly hidden crevasses in the ice. The danger is always there no matter how nice the setting. So it is with us spiritually speaking; we must keep an eye on the path ahead in order to avoid problems.

Secondly Paul exhorts us to be wise. We have been taught what is right, what is spiritual, what is acceptable to God. Wisdom demands that we live that way. The world is a generally foolish place, and people get caught up in all kinds of foolishness and sinful behaviors. We must not be like everyone else. Let us look ahead and make wise decisions for ourselves, our families, and our church, considering first and foremost what God wants. We must avoid living simply for pleasure’s sake or just to indulge the appetites of the body. For all of his wisdom, wealth, and fame, Solomon figured out this one great truth: “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all.” (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

Finally, Paul tells us to redeem the time. To redeem something is to buy something back. We need to buy back our wasted time and efforts and put them into something more useful and beneficial. This is where the concept of a New Year’s resolution really fits in. The idea is that moving forward, let us be better stewards of our time with the ideas mentioned above: being circumspect and wise. We need to look back over the past year and see where we failed, where we didn’t act like we should, or didn’t use our time wisely. So, buy back all those hours wasted (especially in sinful pursuits), and do something positive. It is the nature of time that you cannot have any of it back, but you can use it better in the future.

To redeem or not to redeem, that is the question. It is a command, but what are you going to do about it? Are you going take a stock of your life and seek to improve it? Or, are you going to go on as before, doing the same old things, and get the same result? Even if the results were pretty good, couldn’t they be better? The power of change lies solely with you.

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