

**Being a light
in the world**

Verse 13 is still continuing this theme of being a light to the world. 'The light' is the light of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Christian is 'in the Lord'; so like Jesus he or she is a light in the world. The Christian, when he is rejoicing in the Lord and living as he should, exposes the world. '*And all things become visible when exposed to the light...*' says Paul, '*for everything that is illuminated becomes light.*' The first part of the sentence means that the Christian's light makes visible the spiritual situation around him. Sin is seen as sin. Righteousness is seen as righteousness. Christ is seen as the Saviour. The Christian makes everything visible. 'All things become visible when exposed to the light'. 'I am the light of the world' said Jesus. 'He that follows me shall not walk in darkness'. Christians are lights in the world when they follow Jesus. Light shines out of them in what they do and what they say. It has the effect of revealing the world to be what it is: dark, sinful, gloomy, boring, dreary in its endless quest for pleasures, rebellious against God, hateful towards others. When the Christian is what he ought to be, it is like flashing a bright beam into the darkness. The point of the next clause ('*for everything that is illuminated becomes light*') is that light turns the thing it shines on into light also. Brightness makes other things bright. The Christian's light brings the dark world into the light also; we see it as it is. The darkness of the world becomes light in the sense that it no longer remains hidden once the light of the Christian draws near.

**Wake-up –
the
Christian
call to a
sleeping
world**

If we are following Paul's trend of thought, verse 14 will be a summary of the Christian's message to the world.

*'For this reason, it says,
wake, sleeper,
and arise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you'* ^{¶1}.

¶1 5:14

A piece of poetry is quoted. It is probably three lines of a Christian hymn. The Christian knows the world is deep in the sleep of spiritual death. Yet the Christian calls to the world in what he says and how he lives. 'Wake up!', say the Christians to the world. 'You are in the sleep of spiritual death. You are in danger. Believe in Jesus. Arise from your spiritual death. And Christ will shine on you'.

**• Walking in
wisdom**

Verse 15 moves on. If verses 8–14 were a call to walk as children of light, then verses 15–17 call them to walk as children of wisdom. Verse 15 puts the basic appeal. '*Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise people but as wise people...*' ^{¶1}. Then verses 16 and 17 spell out what is involved: '*... as wise people* ^{¶2}, *making the most of the time for the days are evil* ^{¶3}. *So then, do not become foolish but understanding what is the will of the Lord* ^{¶4}.

¶1 5:15

¶2 5:15

¶3 5:16

¶4 5:17

**Wisdom –
skill at living****• Foolish living
is...****Wise living
is...**

The Christian is 'light in the Lord', so he or she has the ability to be wise. Wisdom is skill at living. It is not the same as knowledge. One can have a lot of knowledge and yet be a fool. There are plenty of people who know a lot yet are not skilful in the way they live. The Christian also knows a lot but – more important – is able to be skilful in the way in which he lives. **Foolishness** is being governed by desires and impulses, hates and loves. It is short-term impulsiveness. **Wisdom** is the exact opposite. It thinks. It takes time. It gets down to consider the situation. It considers consequences. It takes a long view. It considers the end from the beginning. It looks at the whole as well as the parts. It takes everything

into consideration; it has a kind of all-roundedness, and looks at things from every side. Be careful how you walk, says Paul. It means that we take time considering what we are doing. We spend time with the Lord seeking His blessing and His presence. Then we weigh our actions and our attitudes in the presence of the Lord.

• **Practical advice for developing wise use of time**

We are to 'make the most of the time for the days are evil' (5:16). We should use our time wisely. Most Christians need a kind of 'structure' to their lives. It does not have to be rigid or legalistic. It should take into account our physical nature (some people can hardly get moving in the mornings; others are bursting with energy at the crack of dawn). Our hobbies should be ones that are truly helpful to us. Recreations should re-create! We do not throw away the day on foolish trivial things. For myself as a pastor-preacher I have a simple structure, which fits the way I'm made, and fits the way we do things in the Kenyan churches. The structure of most people will be different from mine! You find your own!

- The secret of 'making the most of the time' is
- (i) keeping to a basic structure. In many kinds of work it is structured for you! I don't easily let anything interrupt my mornings, when I want to be praying, meditating, writing.
 - (ii) Making sure you block out chunks of your time for work, for meditation and prayer, for family and friends, for relaxation, and for the calling God has laid upon your life.
 - (iii) Grabbing opportunities to speak for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then I have a different lay-out of my time for when I am travelling, and another one for when I take a more restful day or am on a short holiday. It does not have to be legalistic. There is room for sudden changes. I can still follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. But we have to 'make the most of the time'. The days in which we live are evil – all of them until the second coming of Jesus! I don't mind how you do it. Do it your own way, but make the most of the time! The days are evil.

• **Know God's will**

'So then, do not become foolish but understanding what is the will of the Lord' ¹. In the way you spend your time, stay in touch with the Lord. Know His will. Pray without ceasing. And – I assume you have come to salvation in Christ – your life will be a fruitful one I promise.

¹ 5:17

	<p>Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His <i>Preaching Through The Bible</i> (PTTB) books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.</p>	
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