

New Year – 2022

Making the Most of Every Opportunity

Ephesians 4:17–32 (NIV84)

¹⁷So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking.

¹⁸They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.

¹⁹Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.

²⁰You, however, did not come to know Christ that way.

²¹Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus.

²²You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires;

²³to be made new in the attitude of your minds;

²⁴and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

²⁵Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body.

²⁶“In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry,

²⁷and do not give the devil a foothold.

²⁸He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

²⁹Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

³⁰And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

³¹Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.

³²Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Ephesians 5:1–20 (NIV84)

¹Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children

²and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

³But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people.

⁴Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.

⁵For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

⁶Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God’s wrath comes on those who are disobedient.

⁷Therefore do not be partners with them.

⁸For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light

⁹(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth)

¹⁰and find out what pleases the Lord.

¹¹Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.

¹²For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret.

¹³But everything exposed by the light becomes visible,

¹⁴for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: “Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”

¹⁵Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise,

¹⁶making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

¹⁷Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.

¹⁸Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.

¹⁹Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord,

²⁰always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- v. 16, *making the most* = ἐξαγοράζω *exagorazō* = to redeem, buy off, to secure for one’s self or one’s own use; to rescue from loss or misapplication.¹

avoidance of anything that interferes with

¹ William D. Mounce, *Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 1146.

understanding of the Lord's will²

- *opportunity* = *καιρός Kairos* ≠ *chronos*, the term for *clock time*: the continuous time that is measured in hours, minutes, and seconds. *Kairos* denotes a measured, allocated, fixed season or epoch.³

Colossians 4:5–6 (NIV84)

⁵Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; **make the most of every opportunity**.

⁶Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

- V. 5, *make the most of every opportunity*. The context relates to opportunity for evangelism.⁴
- In our everyday behavior, we are being carefully watched by unbelievers. The world is more interested in our walk than in our talk.
Edgar Guest: "I'd rather see a sermon, than hear one, any day."
The Christian's walk should correspond with his talk. It should never be said of him, "High talk, low walk."⁵
- The average American will spend six months of his life waiting at red lights. People say, "I just don't have time to pray"—but what if they decided that at every red light they would pray for people in their fellowships, for people in their communities who don't know Jesus, for people in the world who have never heard His Name? Redeem the time!⁶

Psalm 90:10-12 (NIV84)

¹⁰The length of our days is seventy years—or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and **we fly away**.

- This verse, at first, appears depressing.
- Look at the last three words.

We fly away.

Our lives do not stop after our days on earth have quickly passed.

¹¹Who knows the power of your anger? For your wrath is as great as the fear that is due you.

- **Psalm 90:11 (AMP)**

¹¹Who knows the power of Your anger? [**Who worthily**

connects this brevity of life with Your recognition of sin?] And Your wrath, who connects it with the reverent *and* worshipful fear that is due You?

Who but Jesus Christ knows the power of God's anger.

Aaron and Moses experienced some.

The people of Israel had experience some.

- "Your [God's] wrath matches the fear that is due You." (HCSB)

¹²**Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.**

- This was the only Psalm that Moses wrote.
- It was written after Aaron, Moses' brother, died.
Aaron was 130, when he died; Moses was 120 at the time.
Moses may have been reflecting on God's judgment on Aaron and him, when he disobeyed God by striking the rock instead of speaking to it.
- *Teach us*, tells us that this is not something that comes to us naturally. We must be taught by the Lord to number our days aright, so that we can live a life that pleases God: that's wisdom.

Psalm 111:10 (NIV84)

¹⁰**The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;** all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise.

Proverbs 15:33 (NIV84)

³³**The fear of the LORD teaches a man wisdom,** and humility comes before honor.

1 Peter 2:9–3:1, 7 (NIV84)

⁹But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

¹⁰Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

¹¹**Dear friends,** I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to **abstain from sinful desires**, which war against your soul.

¹²Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

¹³**Submit yourselves** for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority,

² William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 343.

³ John F. MacArthur Jr., *Ephesians*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986), 221.

⁴ William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 343.

⁵ William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 2016.

⁶ Jon Courson, *Jon Courson's Application Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2003), 1326.

metaphor for spiritual conversion, as Isaiah did.⁸

- **Mark 2:15-17 (NIV84)**

¹⁵While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him.

¹⁶When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the "sinners" and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: "Why does he eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?"

¹⁷On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

²⁵For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

^{3:1}Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives,

^{3:7}Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

- The context of these verses in 1 Peter was to live for God in righteousness and holiness, because of the stripes that Jesus bore *for our sins*.

By his wounds you have been healed is drawn from Isaiah 53:5. Peter here applies the words morally: *by Christ's wounds we have been 'healed' from sin*. Here again is the idea of the punishment of a substitute: the punishment deserved by us Christ took on himself and thus made us (spiritually and morally) well.⁹

- While we were in sin, we were dead to God and *unable* to live for Him in righteousness and holiness.

- 1 Peter 2:24 was not intended to be a verse that stressed faith to bless you, by believing that you have a *right* to claim healing for yourself due to the stripes that Jesus bore.

- These Scriptures emphasize a *submission* to authority and to God *in the same way* that Jesus entrusted Himself to God, the Father.

Dear friends, submit yourselves (2:11, 13)

Slaves, submit yourselves (2:18)

Wives, in the same way be submissive (3:1)

Husbands, in the same way be considerate (3:7)

⁸ Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), 1 Pe 2:24.

⁹ Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 17, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 140.

¹⁴or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right.

¹⁵For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men.

¹⁶Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God.

¹⁷Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king.

¹⁸Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh.

¹⁹For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God.

²⁰But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.

²¹To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

²²"He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."

²³When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

- *Entrusted* = παραδίδωμι (*paradidōmi*): Spoken of persons and things delivered over to the charge, care, or kindness of someone, in the general sense of giving up, committing, entrusting.⁷

²⁴He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds (*stripes*, κτυ) you have been healed.

- When this Scripture is quoted, the main emphasis and thought that most people stress is *by his stripes we have been healed*.

- The emphasis of this Scripture was not physical healing. It was *living for righteousness*.

- Some writers have cited the third part of this verse to support the non-biblical doctrine that Jesus by His death made healing from any physical ailment something that every Christian can claim in this life.

This is the belief that there is "healing in the atonement." The context of Isaiah 53 as well as the past tense "were healed" here implies spiritual healing from the fatal effects of sin rather than healing from present physical afflictions. Peter used healing as a

⁷ Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000).

- When a person takes 1 Peter 2:24 out of context, confessing and claiming a healing for themselves or someone else, they often stop living for righteousness and become disillusioned when they're not healed.
- Ask that person, how much time have they committed to believing and asking God for the ability to:
 - abstain from sinful desires* (2:11)
 - live good lives* among the pagans (2:12)
 - submit to every authority* for the Lord's sake (2:13)
 - submit* to their masters with all respect including those who are harsh (2:18)
 - suffer for doing good* and *endure it* (2:20)
 - follow in Jesus' steps* (2:21)
 - not retaliate* when insulted;
 - make no threats* when suffering for righteousness' sake (2:23)
 - die to sins* and *live for righteousness* (2:24)
 - be submissive* to their husbands (3:1)
 - be considerate* to their wives (3:7)

2 Corinthians 5:15 (NIV84)

¹⁵And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

- The message of the Gospel is to bless *others*.
- Scripture was not intended to be a make-up of formulas and incantations to move God to bless *us*.
- Scriptures were never intended to be used as a "self-centered" wish book, where gifts are claimed by picking and choosing various Scripture verses out of context and professing them in prayer or declaration.

Ephesians 2:10 (NIV84)

¹⁰For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

- A believer's sanctification and good works were ordained before time began.¹⁰

Colossians 1:9–10 (NIV84)

⁹For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

¹⁰And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,

- The Book of Colossians was written around 60 AD. It stressed that Christ was *sufficient* for all we needed for salvation and sanctification. We do not need to honor certain days, feasts, and diets to earn a right place with God, which were mandates encouraged by a false doctrine the Colossian Christians were being exposed to.

Paul never visited Colosse. The Colossian church was founded by Epaphras (1:7).

- When we are filled with the *knowledge of God's will*, we know what is required of us to live a life worthy of the Lord and on how to please Him. Without knowing God's will, we would only be guessing, at best, on what it takes to please God and live a life worthy of Him.

Knowledge of God is progressive; it is not attained at the new birth or later all at once.

- We must know God's will in order to live a life that pleases and honors God. The result will be fruitfulness in every good work.
- *Prayer request*: that God would fill you with the knowledge of His will in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and to live life that pleases him.

How? By bearing fruit in every good work.

- Some good works, although are good, do not end up being fruitful.
- Paul's prayer was that every good work that you do bear fruit.

- Spiritual fruit is the by-product of a righteous life. Some examples of spiritual fruit are:

leading people to Christ (1Co 16:15),
praising God (Heb 13:15),
giving money (Ro 15:26–28),
living a godly life (Heb 12:11), and
displaying holy attitudes (Gal 5:22, 23).¹¹

1 Thessalonians 4:1–8 (NIV84)

¹Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more.

²For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.

³It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality;

⁴that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable,

¹⁰ John F. MacArthur Jr., *The MacArthur Study Bible: New American Standard Bible*. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006), Eph 2:10.

¹¹ John F. MacArthur Jr., *The MacArthur Study Bible: New American Standard Bible*. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006), Col 1:10.

⁵not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God;

⁶and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you.

⁷For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.

⁸Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.

- It is God's will that you should be sanctified.

Sanctification: The work of the Holy Spirit that separates believers in Jesus from the world; at the time of saving faith in Jesus, the believer is made a saint; therefore, all believers are saints. The believer participates with the Spirit in a process of transformation that continues until glorification. The goal of sanctification is progressive conformity to the image of Jesus Christ.¹²

- **How are we to be sanctified?**
- V. 3, *Avoid sexual immorality*, which entails learning to control your own body in a way that is *holy* and *honorable*, not in passionate lust, which could be used as means to wrong or take advantage of other Christians.

Holy (*Sanctification*, κτν) means to be set apart from sin to God.

Honor is the result of separation from sin.

- V. 6, Don't wrong or take advantage of another Christian by *showing respect for their bodies* as temples of the (Holy) Spirit and instruments of service to Christ.

Any sexual activity that deviates from the monogamous relationship between a husband and a wife is immoral by God's standard.¹³

Hebrews 13:4 (NIV84)

⁴Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.

1 Thessalonians 4:6 (NASB)

⁶and that **no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter** because the Lord is *the avenger* in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you.

- *Transgress* means "to sin against," which includes the concept of stepping over the line and exceeding the

lawful limits. In some modern Scripture translations, such as the *New King James Version* and the *New International Version*, the translators provide further insight by rendering *transgress*, "take advantage of."

- *Defraud* means to selfishly, greedily take something for personal gain and pleasure at someone else's expense. The definition **includes the notion of taking advantage of someone in the matter of sexual sin.**

Whenever believers seek to satisfy their physical desires and gain sexual pleasure at the expense of another believer, they have violated this command.¹⁴

- This has become an increasing concern in churches today that have embraced the liberal ideology of tolerance without any absolutes concerning moral purity. It's more about God's *love* and not His *holiness*.

2 Corinthians 5:6–10 (NIV84)

⁶Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord.

⁷We live by faith, not by sight.

⁸We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

⁹So **we make it our goal to please him**, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.

¹⁰For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

- If your goal in life is to please God, you must know what pleases Him. In fact, God commands us to find out what pleases Him (Ephesians 5:10).

1 Timothy 2:1–4 (NIV84)

¹I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—

²for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.

³This is good, and pleases God our Savior,

⁴**who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.**

- Pray that our leaders may be saved. This is good, and pleases God our Savior.
- As we go through this year, may the Lord give you His grace to resist the temptation to murmur, complain, mock and ridicule your leaders, especially the ones that you do not approve of. Instead, may the Lord bless

¹² *The Holy Bible: Holman Christian Standard Version*. (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2009).

¹³ John F. MacArthur Jr., *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 2002), 108, 104.

¹⁴ John F. MacArthur Jr., *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 2002), 109-110.

you with His grace to pray for your leaders that they may be saved like the Apostle Paul, who was traveling on the road to Damascus to persecute and execute Christians, was miraculously saved.

1 Peter 3:8–12 (NIV84)

⁸Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble.

⁹Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.

¹⁰For, “Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech.

¹¹He must turn from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it.

¹²For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

- V. 10, *must keep* = *let him refrain* (κην) = παύω παιῶ the translation of a word which speaks of a natural tendency towards evil and deceitful speech, “Let him stop the tendency of his tongue from evil.”¹⁵
- Let’s stop the natural tendency of our tongues to spew out evil (complaints, murmuring, criticisms, etc.) and put into practice praying and asking God to bless those that we do not care about.
- What a change this will wrought in our lives in the coming year!

¹⁵ Kenneth S. Wuest, [*Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*](#), vol. 11 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 86–87.