

A scenic view of a forest with tall evergreen trees and a rocky foreground with wildflowers. The text is centered over the image.

SING TO ONE ANOTHER

Ephesians 5:15-20

ACTIVITY: Read [Ephesians 5:18b-20](#).
Singing is one part of worship.

Go on YouTube (kids) and search for songs. (Recommended searches: Go Fish, Jesus Loves Me, Seeds Family Worship)
When you find one you like play it and sing along as a family.

FOCUS: We can worship God by singing to Him.

STEP IT UP: What is your go to music app? Apple Music, Spotify, Pandora, Amazon? Go on your app and make a “FAMILY WORSHIP MIX”.
(if you are able to make more time in your week) Everyone in the family gets to pick a few songs to add to your play list. Now challenge your family to listen to this list when prepping dinner, driving in the car, or getting ready in the morning. Don’t have music apps? Go online and make a playlist on YouTube or bust out your old worship CD’s and put it on shuffle (do people do that anymore?). The point is to worship God together as a family.

GO DEEPER: Read [Ezra 2:1, 68-70; 3:1-13](#).
(have older kids or are just ready for more?) The people of Israel had been through a lot and although they were starting over they had much to praise God about.

Why were some people crying?

Although some were sad remembering the “old days” many declared, “The Lord is good. His faithful love to Israel continues forever.” [Ezra 3:11](#).

ADULT DEVOTIONALS WEEK 4: MONDAY

“Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.”

- Ephesians 5:15,16

Of course, who wouldn't want to live wisely? Except sometimes the wise way doesn't seem like as much fun. (I'll talk about this in a future devotional.) The Message states it very directly, "So watch your step. Use your head. Make the most of every chance you get. These are desperate times!"

To live wisely, we need to qualify what wisdom looks like. Human wisdom is tainted with fleshly desires. A wise business move to advance a career is not necessarily wrong but has self as the focus. Godly wisdom is to walk safely within God's counsel and function in His will and for His purposes. That He will provide this wisdom is one of the most direct and unrestricted promises. James 1:5 states, "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him." I love this scripture! I am so thankful that if I need wisdom, I just have to ask, without having to deal with all my faults first so that I qualify. After all, with His wisdom, I will be better equipped to deal with my faults—LOL! He does have one qualifier though, we have to believe He'll do it. He will.

When I look at Ephesians 5:15-16, I could let it make me feel fearful or legalistic. Days are evil! Desperate times! Better talk to everyone I see, or I will have failed or let the Lord down! But then wisdom steps in with discernment. Recognize the times, but fear not (Isaiah 41:10), speak to those whom the Lord lays on your heart, live your life in a way that represents to whom you belong. We live in a world that requires more of us than to spend 18 hours a day reading our Bibles and witnessing. We have jobs, families, friends, and neighbors. What do we look like to them on our jobs, at a ballgame, a neighborhood bar-b-que? Are we showing the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control?

Living like this is making the most of every opportunity on a daily basis, and when the door opens for more, walk through it.

ADULT DEVOTIONALS WEEK 4: TUESDAY

“Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.”

- Ephesians 5:17

This verse begins with the word *therefore*, which means it is connected to the previous verse. Again, we are looking at how we live. The word foolish can also be understood to be unwise.

As I read this verse, it seems to say that being foolish can be a result of not understanding the Lord's will. So how do we understand His will? I'm not relating this verse to seeking an answer for a specific instance, like looking for a new job. I see this as how we live our lives daily. The way to know how to do this is to know God's Word, the Bible. Between the Bible and the presence of the Holy Spirit, we can know how God desires us to live and represent Him. We have the Ten Commandments that tell us not to kill and steal, and the list of the gifts of the Spirit from Galatians 5, along with so much more throughout the book. The way to know His will is to know His Word.

If we call ourselves by His name, but then go out and live however we desire, are we not likely to be making our own determinations on what is ok or not ok based on our own desires or society's acceptances? Thus the warning about being foolish or unwise. It is the foolish person who assumes they can do whatever they want, claiming God's grace. Paul addressed this in Romans 6, "What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?" God's grace is an amazing and wonderful gift, something to be appreciated, not used as coverage for foolishness.

In this country, there are very few who do not, or could not, own their own Bible. For many, to just sit down and read and try to understand the Bible on their own is daunting. I encourage you to find a good Bible study to be involved in. No matter how wonderful your pastor's message may be on a Sunday morning, they have limited time in what they can teach us. It does take effort on our part, individually, to know God's Word and His will. There are churches and para-church organizations that offer great studies.

I encourage you to find a good study and grow in your knowledge and understanding of God's will.

ADULT DEVOTIONALS

WEEK 4: WEDNESDAY

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

- Ephesians 5:18

Right off the bat, let me tell you this will not be a message on whether or not Christians should drink. Not my call for you, it's between you and the Lord. So, moving on...

Debauchery is a pretty serious word. As a noun it means crazy partying and wild nights, usually accompanied by alcohol. As a verb, debauch means to lead astray, especially when referring to leading someone away from another person to whom he or she has an allegiance or duty. No wonder the warning is to instead be filled with the Spirit. We should want to be drawn closer to God, not be enticed away. But truthfully, that's not always the case. Sometimes, we would rather try to escape into some distraction than to avoid hearing what we don't want to hear or facing what we cannot face. Sometimes, we don't even know what we're running away from, and sometimes those distractions turn into addictions. We can prefer to bury and numb rather than let the Spirit reveal truth. We can use distractions to temporarily escape our prisons, but in so doing, we can create a whole new prison. In contrast, being filled with the Spirit creates freedom. We use addictions to hide, or we go to God to reveal and heal.

I do not mean this to sound like I think this is an easy subject. It is a whole lot easier to write than to live. I have been reading Seth Haines' (our Sunday guest speaker) book [Coming Clean](#). It is about his struggle from addiction to sobriety, the ghosts he had to face, and learning to let God restore and heal. He had many choices to make, as do we. Wisdom would call us to choose the Spirit first and avoid addictions. If already there, we can make the choice to seek help. Both choices involve others, because we are part of a body, a community of believers.

I encourage you to read [Coming Clean](#), whether for yourself or to better understand others. May we all desire to be filled (set aflame, KJV) with the Spirit and be free in Christ.

ADULT DEVOTIONALS

WEEK 4: THURSDAY

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

- Ephesians 5:19

There is nothing like a good old sing-a-long. It might be in church, around a campfire, or a happy birthday. There is a freedom and joy when singing to the Lord both corporately and individually. I recently heard an interview of a man who had taken recording equipment into a prison to record the prisoners' songs and stories. One prisoner spoke of the difference it made in his life to sing. He said that when he was singing, there were no walls. He would forget he was in prison. When he would stop singing, the walls would return.

When we sing corporately, we are a community, together in worship and praise. When we sing together, we are encouraged together, we sing words of truth about our Lord, our minds are taken off ourselves, and there is joy. We are also part of a much larger community, the whole body of Christ. Think what the sound must be in Heaven when praise and worship from all over the world rises to the ears of God, and we are all part of a heavenly choir.

There is also a place for individual song. There have been times as I sat out in my yard to read and pray, when a song appears in my heart, and I have to sing. (I publicly apologize to my neighbors.) Song can help settle my heart, direct my focus, and just give me a sense of peace and joy. Sometimes those songs are ones we sang on Sunday or favorites from my past. Even though I may be singing individually, in truth I'm sure I'm singing corporately as well because believers all over the world could be singing at that same time.

What about you? Are you like the prisoner who when he sings, his prison walls disappear? Have you forgotten what it is to feel the freedom to sing to the Lord? Sing to the Lord, let Him remove your prison walls and know His presence.

ADULT DEVOTIONALS

WEEK 4: FRIDAY

“Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”

- Ephesians 5:19b-20

As I read this challenging verse, I couldn't help but think of the movie Pollyanna. She was a girl who always looked for something for which to be thankful. Her father was a missionary and told her there were over 100 thankful Scriptures. She always believed this but then had a crisis of her own and had trouble holding onto that hope. Without realizing it, she had established that “thankfulness” mindset in those around her, and they were then able to remind her and walk through the crisis with her.

When we are in a crisis situation it can be extremely difficult to be thankful. Being thankful does not mean being happy and walking through it like it doesn't hurt or is no big deal. Just like Pollyanna, we need our community to walk through things with us. I remember when I was hospitalized during a pregnancy, and I told a friend I couldn't even pray. She told me not to be concerned, this was a time for everyone else to be praying for me. I was very encouraged by that. I had to look for what I was thankful for in that situation, but it was that I was pregnant, and I had others standing in the gap for me.

Being able to offer thanksgiving when in a hard place comes from having trust in the One we're thanking, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is always something to be thankful for: the sunrise, a bird's song, other's prayers, knowing God is always there even when you can't sense His presence and looking for what He will do in the midst of our pain. If you can't come up with something on your own, read the Psalms. David can give you the words out of his struggles. I wonder if God told us to do this because the very act of finding something to be thankful for gives us encouragement and hope.

Today, take some time to remember who God is and how He has already proven Himself faithful many times over. Maybe it will enable us to be able to sing once again.



MAIN POINT

Allowing the Holy Spirit to direct our behavior will result in fruitful ministry and good relationships with other people.

INTRODUCTION

Charles Spurgeon said, "When home is ruled according to God's Word, angels might be asked to stay with us and they would not find themselves out of their element." Sadly, many homes are not ruled according to the Word of God, even those who identify themselves as Christians. As a result, there is a good deal of strife and friction among families, friends, and even church members. But Christians are called to have good relationships with other people.

So what's the solution? Only through the power of the Holy Spirit can believers live in consistent harmony with other people. In today's passage, Paul instructs believers on the role the Holy Spirit plays in our relationships.

What are some common challenges people face in relationships?

How in tune are you to the needs of other people in your life?

How would you rate the quality of your relationships with family, friends, and colleagues?

UNDERSTANDING

> READ EPHESIANS 5:15-17.

According to verses 15-16, what does Paul instruct his audience to pay close attention to?

What do you think it means to live wisely? In contrast, can you give an example of what it looks like to live unwisely?

Why do you think Paul instructs believers to make good use of their time? In what areas are you prone to waste time?

Paul instructs Christ followers to pay close attention to how we live and use our time wisely. If we aren't mindful of how we live, it's easy to coast aimlessly from one week to the next with no real focus. If we aren't intentional about living wisely, we will likely make foolish decisions. It is God's will for us to live wisely and for our lifestyle to be in alignment with Scripture.

> READ EPHESIANS 5:18-20.

According to Paul, what should believers avoid?

Glance back at verse 18. What does Paul instruct believers to be filled with?

Ephesus was a center of pagan worship and ritual. The Ephesian culture worshipped Bacchus, the god of wine and drunken orgies. The people in Ephesus believed that to commune with Bacchus and be led by him, they had to be drunk, and only in a state of drunkenness could they determine the will of their god and how best to serve him. Paul, on the other hand, was teaching how to commune with the God of heaven, and how to live for Him. With the God of heaven, you do not get drunk with wine, but rather, you are to be filled with the Holy Spirit. To get drunk with wine would lead to immorality, but in being filled with the Spirit, you can determine God's will and serve Him faithfully.

Practically speaking, what do you think it means to be "filled with the Spirit"?

How does being filled with the Spirit assist us in our relationships? What kinds of things are believers capable of when we are influenced by the power of the Holy Spirit?

Have you ever relied on the power of the Holy Spirit within you to do something you couldn't do in your own strength? If so, what was it? How would you describe it?

To be filled with the Spirit means to be directed, influenced, and controlled by the Holy Spirit. To "be filled with the Spirit" is God's command, and He expects us to obey. Joy is one of the fruits of the Spirit. Being filled with the Spirit results in joyful praise

and song. It is not difficult to be around people who are controlled by the Holy Spirit because they are kind, compassionate, and enjoyable to be around.

How would you summarize verse 19 in a word or two? What would be the opposite attitude or behavior of what Paul encouraged his readers to do?

What do you think Paul meant when he wrote that we should speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs? How do we do that as we meet together for worship as a church? How do we do it when we meet one-on-one?

When we are filled with the Spirit, we desire to serve others and God. One of the ways we do so is by reminding one another of the things we believe about God. When we participate in singing and making music, we serve God by praising Him. Singing together also expresses our unity and fellowship. Our singing affirms the biblical truths we believe, along with the convictions that the Holy Spirit brings in our lives.

We know singing is important to the body of Christ because of how often we are encouraged to do so throughout Scripture. Have individuals read the following verses and point out what that verse reveals about why we sing: 2 Samuel 22:15; 1 Chronicles 16:23; Psalm 47:7; Psalm 51:14; Psalm 57:5; Psalm 66:2; Psalm 71:22; and Psalm 145:7.

> READ GALATIANS 5:22-23.

What would our relationships look like if we consistently displayed the fruits of the Spirit?

Do you know someone in your faith community who regularly displays the fruits of the Spirit? How does he or she stand out from other people?

In direct contrast to behavior that comes from “the flesh,” those who are obedient to the promptings of the Holy Spirit produce beautiful character and spiritual fruit. It’s notable that these are the “fruits of the Spirit” and not the “fruits of self-effort.” To live this way, we must learn to rely on the Holy Spirit and move forward in faith, trusting He will empower us to live in a manner that is pleasing to God.

When we obey the Holy Spirit, our relationships will be better for it. Even when things are difficult, it’s natural for believers to be filled with gratitude and joy when they operate under the influence of the Spirit. When Paul and Silas were in a Philippian

jail, they were still able to sing praises to God because they were directly influenced by the Holy Spirit (Acts 16:25). As Christ followers in biblical community, we need to constantly remind one another what we know to be true about God. Being directed by the power of the Holy Spirit empowers us to live in this manner.

APPLICATION

Describe a specific way you have been encouraged and strengthened when singing to one another at our worship gatherings.

What can we do to open ourselves up to being continually governed by the Holy Spirit?

Think for a moment about your most challenging relationship. What steps can you take to depend on the Holy Spirit's influence in the midst of your most difficult relationships?

What is one thing you can do this week to promote harmony in your family and your faith community?

PRAY

Father, we thank You that You have not left us as orphans, but You have gifted us with the Holy Spirit to reside within us. We pray that we will be people who are quick to obey His promptings and direction. We pray we will rely minute by minute on the Holy Spirit to live in a way that pleases You and blesses those around us.

MEMORIZE

Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. – Ephesians 5:18b-20

COMMENTARY

EPHESIANS 5:15-20

5:15-17. The world in which we live is filled with dangers and deceptions. It is not always easy to live an enlightened life even when we want to. We can get tripped up or ambushed by events and people without even being aware of the danger. We must be very careful to live our life rooted in wisdom, using our time wisely. Not to do so would be foolish. The will of the Lord is that we live carefully, cautiously, always matching our lifestyle with the teachings of Scripture.

5:18. Ephesus was a center of pagan worship and ritual. The Ephesian culture worshiped Bacchus, the god of wine and drunken orgies. They believed that to commune with their god and to be led by him, they had to be drunk. In this drunken state, they could determine the will of their god and determine how best to serve and obey him.

Paul was talking about how to commune with the God of heaven, how to live for Him, how to serve and obey Him, how to determine His will. It was natural for Him to draw the contrast between how the god of Ephesus is served and how the God of heaven is served. With the God of heaven, you do not get drunk with wine. Rather, you are filled with the Spirit. Being drunk with wine leads to the sexual sins and immorality of darkness described above. By being filled with the Spirit, you can determine God's will and serve Him faithfully in moral living.

What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit? Some interpreters equate this command with instances of being filled with the Spirit in the Book of Acts in which miraculous things happened: people spoke in tongues; prophecies and visions were given; people were healed. "Be filled" in this verse is not the same word as the one used in the Book of Acts, nor are the consequences the same. Rather than understanding this command in verse 18 to have anything to do with miraculous or extraordinary happenings, it is better to understand it in context. In this ethical context, it means directed, influenced, and ultimately governed by the Holy Spirit. This filling, then, is best understood, as a command for the believer to yield himself to the illuminating, convicting, and empowering work of the Holy Spirit. As He works in our hearts through His Word, our lives are brought into conformity with the will of God (v. 17).

5:19-21. Four Greek participles—"speak, make music" (melodying), "giving thanks" (thanking), and "submit" (subjecting)—in verses 19-21 modify the verb "be filled" of verse 18, describing the person filled with the Holy Spirit. The first two participles suggest the importance of music and Scripture in being filled with the Spirit. An attitude of gratitude is a third characteristic of being filled with the Spirit. Finally, an attitude of mutual submission among believers is a characteristic of being filled with the Spirit.

GALATIANS 5:22-23

Paul contrasted the fruit of the Spirit to the works of the flesh. The word "fruit" refers to virtues only the Spirit can cultivate and bring to full growth in believers' lives. Human nature apart from God can perform works; only the Spirit can produce

fruit. For purposes of study, we can place the virtues in three groups: Christian, social, and personal conduct. The first three virtues in the cluster of the fruit of the Spirit show that only God can generate and maintain His desired harvest in the lives of believers. The second group of virtues in the cluster of Spirit-produced fruit pertains to believers' relationships with others—their social virtues. The third group of virtues is made up of qualities that believers exhibit in personal conduct. Where the fruit of the Spirit is present, no law is necessary. One purpose of the law was to prevent evil, but Spirit-empowered Christians not only fulfill the law in principle but go far beyond what it requires. The presence of the fruit of the Spirit removes the need for the law's restraints.