

Ephesians 5:15-17

WALK IN WISDOM IN A POLITICAL WORLD

We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven; we have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity; we have grown in numbers, wealth, and power as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us, and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us.

—Abraham Lincoln (March 30, 1863)

How do we live in this crazy, politically-polarized culture?

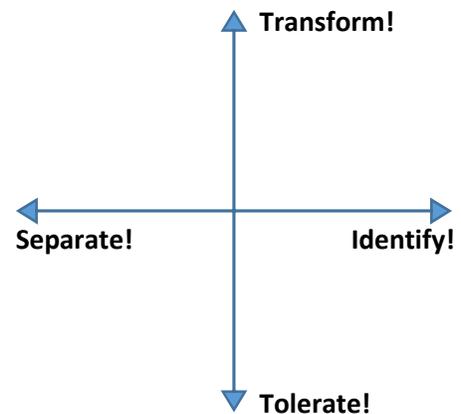
First, we must remember that our challenge is not new. Every generation of believers has struggled with knowing how to live in their culture. Even during Jesus' day, there was heated disagreement on how a Jew should respond to the Roman government. Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, Zealots, Essenes, and Hellenists all represented a different cultural/political philosophy and practice. Jesus had a way of rising above all these cultural/political debates.

Second, we must seek to follow the exhortation of Ephesians. Walk in unity. Walk in newness of life (holiness). Walk in love. Walk in the light. Walk in wisdom (the Spirit-led application of biblical knowledge to the everyday situations of life).

*See then that you walk circumspectly,
not as fools but as wise,
redeeming the time,
because the days are evil.*

*Therefore do not be unwise,
but understand what the will of the Lord is.*

1. Our world is _____.
2. Our time is _____.
3. Our calling is _____ (cf. 4:1).



Circumspectly. Greek, *akribos*, "characterized by exactness; looking, examining, investigating something with great care and alertness" (sermonindex.net).

Evil. Greek, *poneros*, "full of labors, annoyances, hardships; a time full of peril; of a bad nature or condition" (Thayer).

Redeeming. Greek, *exagorazo*, "to buy up for one's self; to make a wise and sacred use of every opportunity" (Thayer).

*So teach us to number our days
that we may gain a heart of
wisdom.* —Moses (Psalm 90:12)

*Nine-tenths of wisdom consists
in being wise in time.*

—Theodore Roosevelt

PRAY _____.

And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the Lord for it; for in its peace you will have peace.

—Jeremiah 29:7

First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all those who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good, and it pleases God our Savior, who wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

—1 Timothy 2:1-4

THINK _____.

Evil people and impostors will become worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed. You know those who taught you, and you know that from infancy you have known the sacred Scriptures, which are able to give you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

—2 Timothy 3:13-17

LIVE _____.

Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people.

—Titus 3:1-2

Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

—Romans 12:17-18

SPEAK _____.

Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

—Colossians 4:2-6

PRAISE _____!

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

—1 Peter 2:9

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!

—Philippians 4:4

Prayer is surrender—surrender to the will of God and cooperation with that will. If I throw out a boat hook from the boat and catch hold of the shore and pull, do I pull the shore to me, or do I pull myself to the shore? Prayer is not pulling God to my will, but the aligning of my will to the will of God.

—E. Stanley Jones

Prayer is the slender nerve that moves the muscle of omnipotence.

—Charles H. Spurgeon

Thinking Christianly is thinking about anything and everything in a consistently Christian way—in a manner that is shaped, directed, and restrained by the truth of God's Word and God's Spirit.

—Os Guinness

The entire idea of a representative democracy—a government of the people, by the people, and for the people—means that we are not just the “governed” in Romans 13 and 1 Peter 2; in a very real sense, we are also the “governing.” Our votes collectively shape our government. ... We have a responsibility before God and one another to steward our vote for the sake of good, God-glorifying governance.

—David Platt

When Christians become political, sinners become the enemy instead of the mission field.

—John F. MacArthur, Jr.

*Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth!
The LORD of hosts is with us;
The God of Jacob is our refuge.
Selah.*

—Psalm 46:10-11