

Bible Text: Colossians 4:2-5; Ephesians 5:15
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Colossians 4, I'd like for us to read together verse 5 and then we're going to go back over to Ephesians.

5 Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.

Now keep your place there, mark that and come over to Ephesians 5 and look with me, if you would, at verse 15. Ephesians 5:15, let's read that verse together. Ready?

15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,

Now I'm going to go on and read verse 16 and 17.

16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. 17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

I want to speak this morning on the subject "Walk In Wisdom," walking in wisdom.

Let's pray together and ask the Lord to challenge our hearts.

Father in heaven, we come to you with our Bibles open, Lord, and we believe with all our hearts that this is your word, you've given it to us, I believe you have a message for each and every one of us, myself included, from your word and so we ask that you would open our hearts and minds and that we would be receptive, we would be open for what you have to say to us. Lord, we want to grow in our faith, I believe I can speak for the believers here, we want to grow in our faith and our understanding of you and your will for our lives, and so we need your Holy Spirit to do that. So I pray your presence would be here, your Holy Spirit would be here, and that your Holy Spirit would fill me and speak through me, Lord. I yield my will, present my body anew for this message, and pray that you would just use me as a conduit to speak through my lips to each and every one of our hearts. Help us to make good decisions this morning, pray that lives would be changed, I pray that faith would grow and be strong, Lord, maybe some souls saved. So we're asking you to meet with us and do a supernatural work in our lives and in our church. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Two weeks ago I preached a message from Corinthians on walking by faith, "for we walk by faith not by sight," and we talked about the word "walk" has to do with our conduct, our lifestyle, us living our lives, and that we're to do that by faith. And if you remember, we said that walking by faith simply means this, that I trust God. I have faith in God and because of that, I follow his instructions. I believe the Lord. I trust him and I do what he instructs me to do. If we trust somebody, if we have faith in somebody, we'll listen to what they have to say and we'll follow their instructions.

Then last week we talked about walking in love, that my conduct, my lifestyle as I live my life, I do that in love and we pointed out from Ephesians, I believe it was, where that we are to pattern ourselves or mimic the love of our Lord Jesus Christ to us, we're to mimic that, follow that, and love others in that same fashion, after that same pattern. Again, the word "walk" there simply means how I live my life, how I conduct myself as I travel through life.

I didn't plan on doing a series on walking but a week or so ago, I was reading through Colossians there, studying of an evening and that phrase "walk in wisdom" stood out. Anybody here ever read your Bible, just read, you're just reading it and, boy, a statement comes out and just grabs you by the throat and shakes you? Anybody know what I'm talking about? I mean, slam you up against the wall, throw you on the ground? You're like, "Good night, God spoke to me." Well, I was reading that and I thought, you know, and the Lord kind of impressed on my heart, I thought today I want to speak about walking in wisdom. I didn't deliberately plan this as a series but I believe the Lord was leading.

Walk in wisdom, or as it's used there in Ephesians, walk circumspectly. Now, if you would, if you're there in Colossians and, again, we're going to go back and forth between these two passages a bit, they're very similar, they're parallel. It's interesting in these two books and actually most of the books of the Bible that were penned by Paul, they have a similar pattern. He will begin the first couple of chapters are very doctrinal. He'll teach about God and different truths and doctrines he'll give the first couple of chapters, then the second half of the book he'll get very practical and he'll say how does that affect my life? How should that affect the way I live? I believe the truths of the Bible ought to affect the pattern of our life or affect the way we live. I believe being a fundamentalist, we're fundamentalists, we believe the fundamentals of God's word, the truths of God's word, it ought to affect the way we live. So that's Paul's approach and in these two passages, Ephesians and Colossians, is very similar. He's in the practical aspect of living the Christian life.

Now notice there in Colossians 4 and again in verse 5 he says, "Walk in wisdom." Now what is the definition of "wisdom"? That's one of those concepts where you kind of know what it is, you know what it means, but to define it, to explain it is a little challenging. Walk in wisdom. Now this is the best, this is my attempt at defining the word "wisdom." It has this idea of the correct application of knowledge. The correct application of information. In other words, it means that I have some knowledge, I've learned something about God, I've learned some truths about God and about life, about the future. I've

learned some truths about the reality of heaven and hell, the love of the Lord Jesus Christ for me, God is Creator of everything there is, is my Creator and my God. I learn these truths, I get this information about God and then wisdom is the ability to take that information and apply it to my life in a correct way. Everybody follow what I'm saying? The correct application of knowledge or information. Wisdom.

Sometimes the word "wisdom" as its used in the Bible also has to do with having a skill or an ability. Now I want to take just a brief little rabbit trail here and I want to introduce you to a fellow that fascinates me in the Old Testament. If you would, keep your place here in Ephesians and Colossians and go back to the book of Exodus, the second book of the Bible, all the way back in the beginning of the Old Testament, and I want to introduce you to a fellow here as I said that is an absolutely, I look forward to the day I get to meet Bezaleel, is his name. I don't know what they called him for short, Bezy maybe. I don't know what his wife called him, Bezy babe maybe. I don't know. But this guy is amazing, God and the Bible makes some interesting statements, God gives us some interesting information about this guy Bezaleel. How many people here ever heard of Bezaleel before? Anybody? If you read through your Bible you came across him. He's mentioned a number of times and the context here is God has given to Moses the instructions for building the tabernacle, all the skins that were to be involved and the furniture and all these types of things, and what Moses needs is a man or men that are able to take this pattern, this instruction, this blueprint, if you will, and then make it so, make it happen, build it, design it, put it together, and God has a man just for the job.

Look with me, if you would, in Exodus 36 and I want to read a few verses, the first few verses of Exodus 36. Now again, the second book of the Old Testament, Genesis, Exodus, chapter 36 and I'll begin reading in verse 1. Here we're introduced to this fellow. "Then wrought Bezaleel," there he is and he's got a partner, "Aholiab," and look at this, "Then wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every," what's that next word? "Every wise hearted man," there's that wise, wisdom, "in whom the LORD," look at this, look at the wording carefully, "in whom the LORD put wisdom and understanding," then he explains what he means, "to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that the LORD had commanded. And Moses called Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whose heart the LORD had put wisdom," I underscored that word "wisdom," "even every one whose heart stirred him up to come unto the work to do it: And they received of Moses all the offering, which the children of Israel had brought for the work," they had a building fund, did you get that? They had the offering for building and "the service of the sanctuary," by the way, we have a building fund, did I mention that? We have a building fund going on. "To make it withal." Look at this, "And they brought yet unto him free offerings every morning." Look at verse 4, "And all the," what? "Wise men, that wrought all the work of the sanctuary, came every man from his work which they made."

Now did you catch what he's saying there? He is saying God had given Bezaleel and Aholiab and others, he gave them wisdom to perform the work of assembling, building and assembling, and they had to make this from scratch. I mean, they're making, designing the metal and the furniture, all of this, and God gave them wisdom. God gave

them the ability to take the information they had and the materials they had and know how to put that together. Do you know it's possible to have information about something but not be able to use that information in a correct way? These guys were wise hearted. God put wisdom in there how to build. And as I was reading that, I couldn't help but think of various folks in our church, men and women, who God had given wisdom to them on the ability to take things and build things and repair things and put things together and do things for the cause of Christ and to advance the gospel. It's wisdom.

So what is wisdom? Wisdom is the ability to use some information or knowledge, to use it in a correct way that I can carry out the will of God. God says you and I are to walk in wisdom, to live our lives, conduct ourselves with wisdom, using the information God has given to us whether it's some gift and skill that God has given us, some ability we have to put things together and build things, or whether it's an ability to keep records and books and, you know, do all kinds of administrative type stuff, or whether it's the ability to teach others or just be able, the wisdom of being a good testimony out there, knowing how to live the Christian life so other people say... God says you and I are to live in wisdom, walk in wisdom.

Bezaleel here, he had a skill, he had ability, but did you notice he also had a right attitude? It says "whose heart stirred him up to come to the work." He didn't just know how to do it, he had the right attitude about it. He says, "I'm going to get after this. I'm going to get after it." And so it's possible to have knowledge without wisdom, without skill. It's possible to have information and not know what to do with that information correctly.

It seems to me that we have more information available to us than ever before in the history of the world. You can take your, if you've got a smartphone, you can take that smartphone and you can talk to that thing and say, "Hey, Google, tell me what camel hair is like." And boom it comes up and says it's nice and warm and soft and furry. It does, really. And you can get information. My dad a couple of years ago, we were watching baseball, I like baseball, we were watching baseball on television when he was over at the house and I was captivated by this phone, you know, it could tell me all this stuff. So dad just off the hand made this statement, he says, "I wonder how many baseballs they use in one ballgame? How many baseballs do they go through?" I said, "Give me a minute and I'll tell you. Hey, Google..." Found out they use about 90 baseballs in a baseball game. How about that? That's meaningless information, by the way, but the point I'm trying to make is this: we have more information, we have more knowledge available to us than perhaps ever in the history of the world but I want to suggest to you we probably have about as little wisdom in the world today than we've ever had, knowing how to properly use that, knowing how to apply that information to our lives.

So it's possible to have information, it's possible to have knowledge without having wisdom, not knowing how to use that information. Wisdom does not come from a book. You can read every book you want in the world, it doesn't necessarily mean you have wisdom. Wisdom doesn't come from some seminar we go to and, boy, walk out and say, "Boy, now I'm really wise." No, you can get information from a book, you can get

knowledge from a seminar, you can go to a college class and sit in a classroom and hear a lecture and get a lot of information and get a lot of knowledge but it does not equal having wisdom. Having wisdom, being able to use that and apply that in a way that brings glory to my God and fulfills God's purpose for my life. Wisdom. Wisdom.

I think we have some of the highest trained, highest educated preachers coming out of our seminaries and our Bible colleges perhaps in the history of the world. Highest educated, have the most information, have the most resources available to them and my question is this: where is the power of God? They're very educated, very knowledgeable preachers but where's the power of God? Where's the moving of the Holy Spirit like we had in years gone by when folks, some simple preacher that maybe wasn't highly educated but he knew God and he had some wisdom in his heart and mind and he preached with power and lives were changed and souls were saved and revival would come to a church and a community. One thing to be educated, it's another thing to be wise and have the power of God. Amen or not?

That's what we need, we need wisdom in our pulpits, in our Sunday school classes, in our homes, in our individual lives as we live the life out there, the Christian life in front of this wicked, dark, sinful world. We need the wisdom of God. Now I'm all for education, don't misunderstand. Pastor Matt and I have talked, I've talked to him many times, I've said this over and over and over over the years, I would like to see every one of our young people go at least one year to a Bible college and get a good Baptist Bible college, get in there and get some Bible. At least one year. But I'm saying this, just having education doesn't necessarily make a person a wise person. You can memorize verses all you want and I'm for it, we ought to, but that doesn't necessarily make me wise. Make we wise.

So wisdom, walk in wisdom. Walk in wisdom. Take your Bible, if you would, and turn with me to the book of Job. Now if you go right to the middle of your Bible, you'll probably hit the book of Psalms and then come to the beginning of your Bible a book and you run into Job. Most of us, I believe, are familiar with Job and his experience and the tragedy and the loss that God allowed him to go through. God was teaching him lessons and in the middle of the book, Job 28, Job is speaking. Now keep in mind he's lost his family, all his kids have been killed, all 10 kids have been killed, he's lost all of his possessions, his wife's turned against him, his friends have turned against him, they're just throwing accusations at him, and in Job 28:12, Job asks a question in this matter of wisdom. Notice verse 12, he says this, "But where shall wisdom be found?" That's a good question. Not necessarily get it in a book. You can go to five years of seminary and not necessarily get wisdom. It's not in a lecture seminar. "But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding?" He says, "Where do I go to to learn how to apply the information and knowledge that I have about life and about this world and our God? Where do I go to to learn how to apply that correctly to my life? Where is understanding to be found?"

Notice verse 13 he says, "Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living. The depth saith, It is not in me: and the sea saith, It is not with me."

Look at verse 15, "It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof." What's he saying in verse 15? Talk to me, what's he saying? You can't, what? You can't buy wisdom. You can't buy wisdom. Now you can buy information, you can buy knowledge. I can go to pay for a class. I was looking, the community college here is offering a class in April I'm kind of interested in it, they're offering a class on the history of Deep Creek Lake. How many people think that's interesting? I think that would be a very interesting class. Two of us think that would be interesting. So I can pay the \$40 or whatever. Ah, I'm 60 years old now, it's not \$40, I get a discount. I can buy information, I can buy knowledge, books and videos and whatever, I can't buy wisdom. I can't buy wisdom. You know, there's some very very wealthy people that are pretty foolish. We see them all the time in the news.

So Job says, he's in incredible pain, he's lost everything, his heart is absolutely shattered and he says, "Where do I get wisdom?" He can't find it anywhere in this world. The depth doesn't have it. The sea doesn't have it. Money can't buy it. Come down with me, if you would, to verse 20, "Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding?" And he goes on and he says, "Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air. Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears. God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof." God knows where wisdom can be found. "For he looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven; To make the weight for the winds; and he weigheth the waters by measure. When he made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder: Then did he see it, and declare it; he prepared it, yea, and searched it out." Look with me, if you would, at verse 28, "And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding."

Do you know where wisdom is found? Wisdom is found in the fear of the Lord. The Lord gives wisdom. Listen to the Psalm, listen to Proverbs 2:6, "For the LORD giveth wisdom." James 1:5 says, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not." Do you know what the Bible is telling us? The Bible is telling us that every single one of us, we can have wisdom. We don't have to be foolish. We don't have to live foolish lives. If we'll come and fear God and humble ourselves before God and we'll say, "God, my understanding is corrupted, my knowledge is stained by sin. Lord, I need you to show me and lead me and direct me in my life so that I can make wise decisions and I can have understanding in the issues that come in my life and respond to them in a proper way." The Lord gives wisdom, out of his mouth cometh understanding. Ask of the Lord. Any of you lack wisdom? "Let him ask of God," listen to this, "that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not," he doesn't hold back.

I pray every single day, I'm telling you, I pray every single day, "God, give me wisdom to be able to live my life in a way so that when I stand before Jesus Christ at the judgment seat of Christ, I'll not be ashamed." How many people here, how many folks here you're saved and you know it, say amen? We're going to stand before Jesus Christ. I don't know about you but I sure would like to hear the Lord say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." Do you know what that requires? Wisdom. We can't be stupid. We can't be foolish.

Now I want to be careful when I say this because I made my share of foolish decisions over the years. Sometimes I look at some Christian lives and I look at how they're living their life as a Christian and I see the decisions they make and the actions they're taking and I think how foolish. How foolish, you're destroying yourself. You're going down a road and you're engaging in a behavior that's going to have horrendous consequences. We need wisdom.

The Bible says God tells us to walk in wisdom, the proper application of the information we have. Wisdom comes from God and so if I'm going to get this wisdom that I need so that I can walk in wisdom, I need to know God. Does that make sense? If wisdom comes from God, I'd better get to know God and there's only one way I can know God and that is through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Listen, Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto," what? "The Father but by me." Until you trust, I'm convinced of this, until you trust Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and you, through the Lord Jesus Christ, confessing my sin, forsaking, turn to Christ trusting what he did for me on that old cross and shed his blood to pay the judgment for my sin, take responsibility for all the sinful things I've said and thought and done, and he took responsibility for it, and he was judged of God for my sin, was buried, rose again, until I come and put my faith and trust personally, faith and trust in Jesus Christ, have my sins forgiven and cleansed and now I have access to God. Now I can know God. I'm his child and I can come to my heavenly Father as his child and I can say, "God, I need your wisdom. I need you to teach me and direct me and lead me every day to walk in wisdom." To walk in wisdom.

I'm convinced an unsaved person, a person that's never trusted Christ cannot have the wisdom of God because he has no access to God. No access to God. Our sins have separated us and so wisdom comes from God and to have genuine wisdom, I must have access to God. I must know the Lord. I must have a relationship with him. How foolish, how foolish to live a life, to live through life and never consider my Creator and if I have any responsibility to him, to ignore or neglect my eternal destiny. How many people agree with me it would be an awfully foolish thing to know that at the end of life you're going to end up in heaven or hell and then not do anything about it to make sure you go to heaven and not to hell, how many people agree with me that's pretty foolish just to neglect that?

Years ago, my wife was working downtown and a lady, it was her birthday, she was a very elderly lady and they got talking and if I remember she was about 100 years old if I remember correctly. It was her 100th birthday and Cathy got talking to her and just asked her, she said, "Ma'am, do you know for sure that when you die you go to heaven, not to hell?" She goes, "Well, I don't know. I hope so." Cathy said, "Let me show you." She took her Bible out, went through the plan of salvation, that 100 year old lady bowed her head, trusted Jesus Christ as Savior, calling on the Lord to be her Savior. And do you know what I thought? Phew. Cathy asked her a question, she goes, "Have you ever thought about this before?" Do you know what she said? She goes, "I did but I always just put it out of my mind. I wouldn't want to think about it." Now I don't want to make

any judgment on her or anything like that, I'm glad she got saved but I'm telling you, don't wait until your 100th birthday to give this thought. Do you follow what I'm saying?

Wisdom, wisdom is getting saved and getting saved right away. Today is the day. "Preacher, I know it's important. I know one of these days I'm going to get saved." Do you know what may happen? One of these days you may die and find yourself in hell. Today is the day of salvation. Now is the accepted time. How foolish, I put down in my notes, how foolish to neglect my eternal destiny, to not even consider my relationship and my responsibility to my God, my own spiritual well being. How foolish. And by the way, how foolish for a Christian to get saved and then not even consider how I ought to live my life as a Christian. How foolish. How foolish.

The Bible says walk in wisdom. The Bible says walk circumspectly. Come back to Ephesians with me, if you would read quickly. Ephesians 5. I hope you had it marked there. He words it a little differently in Ephesians than he does in Colossians. Colossians he says walk in wisdom, in Ephesians 5:15, he says walk, you see how he words it there, he says, "See then that ye walk circumspectly." Now there's a word we don't use a whole lot, circumspectly. It has this idea. I got studying that, it means to be watchful, to be very very careful. Walk circumspectly, to walk very carefully, watchfully, to be cautious. A couple of places that word's translated to be wise. I kind of took all these definitions and put it together on my own, came up with my own has this idea, to walk circumspectly has this idea, to watch where I'm stepping. To watch where I'm stepping, being very very careful, watch where I'm stepping. Be careful I don't step in a hole or get stuck in a trap or something.

To walk circumspectly means I live my life carefully. I conduct myself very cautiously and carefully and wisely. I put this down for a definition of circumspectly: to carefully, get this definition, everybody with me? Everybody all right? Everybody? You're glad you're here, say amen. Amen. All right, good. I put this down: to carefully and diligently – listen to this – consider the consequences of my actions. Anybody here ever do something or make a decision and afterward you thought, you said to yourself, "Boy, I wish I'd thought that through a little more"? Anybody know what I'm talking about? "Boy, I wish I'd thought that through a little bit." That circumspectly is thinking it through first. The ability, the ability to say, "You know, if I make this decision, that's what the consequences are going to be." I need to be careful and if conduct myself this way, I pay attention and look and see what will the consequences be. If I make this decision, if I react this way, if I indulge in this, what the consequences will be. Here's a foolish person. Here's a foolish person, "I'm just going to do what I want to do at this moment and not even think about what the consequences will be." Right? God says you live your life, the Bible tells you, you live your life as a Christian, you need to walk in wisdom, you need to walk circumspectly, you need to pay attention, think, watch where you're stepping, consider where it leads to, consequences of that are going to be.

Walk circumspectly. Too often we are reckless and careless and foolish in our actions. Too often we're reckless in our treatment of things that are so important. We're reckless and we're careless with our spiritual well being. Listen, you and I are more than just flesh

and blood. We are spiritual beings. We're going to spend eternity somewhere, either heaven or hell, and if we know Jesus Christ as Savior, we have a home in heaven and that gives us a tremendous responsibility to live as a Christian as God intends for me to live after what he's done for me.

Circumspectly, not being careless with my spiritual well being, not being careless with my relationship with the Lord, understanding. By the way, I've said this many many times, I believe with all my heart the most important relationship in my life is not with that woman right there, the most important relationship in my life is with my God and Savior. And if I have that relationship the way it ought to be, then this relationship will be the way it ought to be. Amen or not? I cannot neglect my relationship with my God, my Savior. How foolish. How careless we are. How negligent we are in maintaining and establishing and nurturing that relationship with my God.

That's what church is about. We've been saying this a lot this past year: church is essential. My daily Bible reading is essential. My prayer time is essential. My fear of God and humbling myself before God and letting him lead me is essential to live the Christian life.

Walk circumspectly, walk wisely, don't neglect, don't be reckless or careless, our spiritual well being, our walk with God, our responsibility to be a witness in this world. You can't neglect that. Walking in wisdom. Walking circumspectly.

Our life on earth is a journey from the womb to the tomb and as we walk this journey, as we go through there, then it leads, I'm born, I live my life, I die and I go out into eternity and God says as you live that life, as you walk that journey of life and eventually go out into eternity, you need to be wise. Don't be foolish. Here's the Dennis Leatherman version: don't be stupid, be wise. Be wise. Anybody here ever make a stupid decision? Yeah, we're all guilty and God says, "Don't do that. You be wise. Walk circumspectly."

A major part, now if you would, come to Colossians here again, if you would. Everybody with me? All right. If you're okay I'm going to keep plowing. If you'll look at the context here in Colossians 4, I started reading in verse 2. Now pay attention carefully here at what he's talking about, what the context is. He says, "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving," okay, "Withal praying also for us," now look, "that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: That I may make it manifest." The mystery of Christ, I'm going to mention this here in a minute, but the mystery of Christ you could say is the gospel of Christ, the message of Christ, the truth of Jesus Christ, how to be saved, what he did for us. And so the context here and then if you go to verse 5 he says, "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without," that's the unsaved, you can write in the margin of your Bible where it says "without," the unsaved. "Let your speech be always with grace so you know how you ought to answer every man." The whole context here is evangelism. The whole context here is being a witness to the unsaved, the message, the mystery of Christ to a world lost in sin and he says we need to walk in wisdom. That's the whole context. Listen, the major, the major aspect of my life as a Christian is being a witness to this whole world.

That is a huge responsibility God has given to us. That is a major, major part of the Christian life to be a light, being a witness to those who are lost in sin. And it requires wisdom. It requires wisdom. A major part of this walk through life, a high priority in this walk through life is reaching the lost for Christ, not just with my words but with how I live my life.

Now jot these down. I'll give them to you real quick and then we're going to end. How I can walk in wisdom. Let me give you three ways I see here. 1. Means I walk prayerfully. I walk prayerfully. Let me just put it this way: you're a foolish Christian if you don't pray. Any husband that doesn't pray for his wife is living foolishly. Amen or not? Any wife that doesn't pray for her husband is being foolish. Any parent that doesn't pray for his kids, her kids, her children. I had a guy, Isaac Brown, I led him to the Lord. He didn't hardly talk, he was in a nursing home and he was on hospice years ago. I said, "Isaac, you got any kids?" He said, "No, but I've got three children." Any mom or any dad that doesn't pray for their children is a foolish mother, foolish father.

If I'm going to walk in wisdom, if I'm going to walk circumspectly, I need to be prayerful. It means I walk prayerfully. A prayerless Christian is a foolish Christian. Prayer is a vital part of my spiritual well being. I put this down: a prayerless Christian is a defeated Christian. You and I cannot live the Christian life in our own ability, in our own power. We need to pray and have God help us live for him. What did Jesus say? "Without me ye can do nothing." A prayerless Christian is a defeated Christian.

I hope if nothing else comes out of this stupid pandemic is that we've learned to pray. You learn to pray. Get ahold of God. I don't know about you, I want revival so bad. Our church and our community, I want to see our community turn to Christ. I mean, just sweep across. Bars shut down. Nasty stuff be shut down. I want to put the police out of business because of the moving of the Holy Spirit. I don't want to defund them, don't misunderstand what I'm saying here. [laughter] I'm toward fund them, fund them, fund them. But wouldn't it be something if the crime rate would drop because people are living for God? You say, "Preacher, you think that's gonna happen?" I don't know but I know this: it could happen. With God all things are.

Pray. A prayerless Christian is a defeated Christian. I tell you, you study your Bible, you get God's people start praying and revival comes not too far behind that whether it's just into an individual life or a home or a local church or a community. A prayerless Christian. Prayer is a matter of obedience to God. I put this down: a prayerless Christian is a disobedient Christian. A prayerless church is a disobedient church. God have mercy on churches, claim to be churches and they don't have prayer meeting. Amen. They don't have the biggest crowds at prayer meeting but I'll tell you, by God's grace with his help as long as I'm pastor, we're going to have prayer meeting at Mountain Lake Independent Baptist Church. We're going to pray. We've got men's prayer meeting. We've got ladies' prayer meeting. We've got prayer breakfasts. We'll have prayer lunch, prayer suppers, prayer snacks. We're going to have prayer everything.

Walking in wisdom means walking prayerfully. Prayer is a supernatural resource for all my needs. I put this down: prayerless Christians are needy Christians. Walking in wisdom means I make prayer a high priority in my life. I discipline myself to pray. I hope you have a prayer list and I hope you pray through it earnestly. We ought to have a place sometimes, somewhere where we get on our knees and we pray to a holy God and humble ourselves and ask him, "God, bless my family. Bless my spouse. God, bless my children, lead them and direct them, convict us of sin, gives us wisdom."

Walking in wisdom means walking prayerfully. 2. Walking in wisdom means walking responsibly. Look there in verse 3 of chapter 4 of Colossians. He says the last part of verse 3, "to speak the mystery of Christ, which I am also in bonds," look at this, "That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak." Look at the end of verse 6, "that ye know how ye ought to answer every man." That phrase "as I ought" means what I'm required to do, what I'm responsible for. He says in verse 5, "redeeming the time," not wasting my time with issues unrelated to what God has given me the responsibility to do. What is our responsibility? We call it the Great Commission, reaching the lost. You and I as believers are responsible to be a witness to this old sinful world and to communicate the gospel of Christ to this old sinful world. That is our responsibility and if we're walking in wisdom, we're going to walk responsibly, we're going to carry that out.

The Christian life is an evangelistic life. I think a lot of Christians wander through life aimlessly and make a couple of bucks, buy a few little toys, go through my life and die, and never fulfill my responsibility. Now don't answer this, please, not outwardly, answer it in your heart. When's the last time you shared the gospel with someone? Have you prayed for any unsaved people this past week? Have you given a gospel tract to anyone? Is it a major part of your life that is important to you to be a witness? God says that's our responsibility and it's a lifelong challenge. We have to work at it. This old flesh doesn't like it. This old world doesn't like it. But God's given us a responsibility to take the gospel to every creature.

Winning souls is wise. Proverbs 11:30 says, "He that winneth souls is wise." Why? Because God commands it. Because of the reality of heaven and hell. If heaven and hell are real, how foolish not to warn people about that. You're driving home this afternoon, God forbid you went by a house and you saw flames coming out of the windows and you knew, you saw somebody in there, would you agree with me it would be foolish just to drive by and not do something to try and somehow get those people out, amen or not? We live in a world that's doomed for hell, under the wrath and judgment of God. How foolish churches make no effort to try and get people saved, make no effort trying to get the gospel out. Christians. That's our responsibility.

Walk wisely means I walk prayerfully, it means I walk responsibly, I fulfill the responsibility God has given to me. Jesus is the only way to have sins forgiven. How foolish not to share that. The clock is ticking. We need to share the gospel. And then last of all I put this down: to walk in wisdom means to walk with integrity. Integrity. He says in verse 6, "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt." Tony Dungy, a great Christian coach, football coach, he made this statement, he said, "Integrity is

choosing what is right rather than what is convenient." I tell you, we have a convenient Christianity today. It doesn't matter if it's right or wrong, if it's inconvenient I'm not interested. If it's going to require some effort, if I change my schedule, if I have to sacrifice something I enjoy, well, it'll have to wait. Integrity is doing what's right not necessarily what's convenient.

It means to be completely honest, to be reliable. I put this down: integrity is listening to what God says is right and then doing it regardless of consequences or popularity. I'm telling you, living by this book in this day and age is not going to be popular. I'm telling you, we are living in a society and we are living in a nation that those who believe this book and those us that try and live by this book, we are being considered enemies of the state and if we're going to be the Christian God intends for us to be, and if we're going to be the witness God intends for us to be, we're going to need some integrity in our Christian life and say we're going to do right regardless of however this world responds to it. Amen or not? That's walking in wisdom. That's doing what's right regardless if it's popular, doing what's right regardless of what the consequences, doing what God says regardless of how this world responds. Doing right.

Walking in wisdom means walking prayerfully, saturate my life in prayer, begin the day. David said, "Morning, noon and night will I pray and cry aloud." Jesus Christ saturated his life with prayer while he was here on this earth. Prayer. Walking responsibly, being a witness to this old world as God has instructed us to do. And then living and walking in integrity, doing what is right.

I got thinking studying that integrity there, you know who I thought of? Integrity. I thought of old Joseph back in the Old Testament in Genesis. You talk about integrity. He went from a pit, to a prison, to a palace and there's not one record of him directly disobeying God. Brothers threw him in the pit, he did what was right. Egyptians falsely accused him with Potiphar. By the way, Joseph thought his integrity was more important than indulging Potiphar's wife. He said, "No!" Went to prison for it. In prison he did right. They trusted him, elevated him to be head over the prison as a prisoner. And I'm telling you, God honors integrity. He became second in command living in the palace. Now he didn't do right so that he could get to the palace. He got to the palace because he did right.

Now whether you and I end up in a palace or a prison, we ought to do right. That's wisdom. Wisdom. Do you know who the foolish young person is? It's one that runs with the world, gets in sin. Do you know who the foolish adult is? One that loves the world and carries on, runs around drinking, carrying on, dancing, rock and rolling and whatever, rapping, country westerning. I know what I'm saying. I know who I'm talking to. I'm saying I want to do right. I'm saying this: we ought to do right in every area of our life. Every area. That's walking in wisdom. Joseph.

Let's pray.

Father in heaven, Lord, we need your Holy Spirit to challenge us and convict us. We've had it awfully easy in this old world, Lord, we admit that. I'm afraid we get careless, we get a little negligent and I pray you'd stir us and challenge us and convict us not to be foolish, help us to pray, help us to be a witness, help us to do right in our homes, our entertainment, our interaction on the job, our parking place. I pray your Holy Spirit challenge and convict us.

I wonder with our heads bowed and eyes closed, I wonder how many Christians would join me in saying this, "Preacher, I don't want to be a foolish Christian. I don't want to be foolish. I need wisdom. I need God's wisdom." Is there any like that? My hand is raised. I need it. I need it.

Now let me ask you this, how many of us here say, "Preacher, my prayer life needs attention. It's not what it ought to be. I've neglected that. I want to get that and make that a major part of my life." Any like that? "Preacher, my prayer life needs attention." Sure, my hand is raised.

I wonder how many would say my responsibility to be a witness, I really need to take that more seriously and put some effort in that. Any like that, uplifted hand? I need to be a better witness. I need to work on that.

How about doing right? Now sometimes this strikes a little personal intimate, doing right. How many would say, "Preacher, I need God to help me to live a life of integrity and do right." Any like that, uplifted hand? I need God to help me. That's walking in wisdom.

*Father, bless our invitation. Help us to respond in faith and humility. In Jesus' name.
Amen.*