

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

How Can I Be an Effective Witness?

Ephesians 5:15-20

1 How can I be an effective witness?

Have you ever been frustrated about the effectiveness of your witnessing? Have you ever wondered if the Lord is pleased with how you represent Him? When you see fireball Christians around you who are effective with their witnessing, do you feel like a spiritual wimp? I do!

How can I be an effective witness? Today's Bible passage from Ephesians, chapter 5, verses 15 through 20, may help answer that question. 2

Be very careful, then, how you live — not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish but understand what the Lord's will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. 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.

In this passage let's focus on the following concepts. ³

You can be an effective witness . . .

I. By Conducting Yourself in the Right Way -

v15-16

By conducting yourself in the right way. ⁴

Verse 15 tells us to **be very careful . . . how you live.**

How do you conduct yourself carefully? ⁵

The word “careful” in the original language ¹ means to be accurate. We are to be accurate as the Lord's ambassadors. ⁶ Second Corinthians, chapter 5, verse 20, says, **We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.** ⁷

As the Lord's ambassadors, you need to represent Him as accurately as you can. ⁸ You need to be aware and sensitive to what other people think of your character. This doesn't mean be paranoid or worry

¹ ἀκριβῶς.

yourself sick about it. But it does mean to be genuinely you; a spiritually transformed you! 9

Verse 16 continues by elaborating on how to do it. Conduct yourself wisely by using your time efficiently.

² 10

**“I have only just a minute,
Only sixty seconds in it;
Forced upon me - can't refuse it.
Give account if I abuse it;
Just a tiny little minute,
But eternity is in it!” 11**

So how do you put your time to the best use? Oral Roberts, in each of his television programs, would quote, “Today is the first day of the rest of your life!” Now is the time to act for God. Yesterday is past and tomorrow may not come!

“Picture a mad man hurling twenty-dollar bills into the ocean or an idiot throwing diamonds into a swamp, and you will have a good idea of how we are misusing the golden nuggets of time that God places in our

² Ephesians 5: 16 - . . . making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

hands each sunrise. The average age of a Christian is seventy-five years. In general, he spends six months in worship, six years in eating, nine years in amusement, seven and a half years in dressing, six years in traveling, nineteen years in working and twenty-three years in sleeping. Yet sometimes we may say, 'I wish I had time to read my Bible and pray and witness.' You have it! Each morning, twenty-four hours are presented to you!"³₁₂

In a lifetime you really don't have a lot of time to use. We will all probably die sooner than we'd like. So, time is a premium!

Years ago I was involved in a weeklong revival/evangelistic meeting in East Tennessee. The following day the pastor and I visited those who came forward to rededicate their lives or to make their initial lifetime commitment to the Lord.

One of those people was the husband of the church organist. All their married life she was faithfully

³ "Redeeming the Time", Ephesians 5:8-17, Our Daily Bread.

involved with the church while he stayed at home pretty much involved in the world. He respected her for her faith but didn't want anything to do with her "religious stuff". He came to the meetings that week just to please her, but God's word convicted him.

As we sat in his living room, he acknowledged his disbelief that God would actually accept him. He was now a retiree, having wasted all his productive life dabbling in Satan's culture, ignoring the Lord. How could God forgive him for that?

The Lord's story about the workers being hired in the late afternoon but being paid the same as everyone else, seemed to register with him. ⁴ He still had trouble understanding how the Lord could accept and still love him in his older years, but he sure appreciated it!

You don't want to be ashamed of the wasted time in your life. Use the precious time you have been given to accurately represent the Lord as His ambassador! ¹³

⁴ Matthew 20:1-16.

The second concept in this passage for being an effective witness is . . .

II. By Seeking for Yourself the Right Understanding - v17

By seeking for yourself the right understanding. Notice verse 17. **Therefore do not be foolish but understand what the Lord's will is.** ¹⁴

Why is right understanding important?

You can't drive a car without a basic understanding of how it works. A football team can't win a game without the right understanding of the coach's plays. A Christian can't function effectively without a right understanding of God's will! ¹⁵

The right source for your understanding is also important. ¹⁶ To get educated you go to school. You learn math, science, and literature. You get some understanding from that. But you get a lot of the secular world from school too. ¹⁷

To get spiritual understanding you go to church! You're taught, encouraged and worship together with others. But you also get men's opinions along with God's word. ¹⁸

To get spiritual understanding to accurately represent the Lord, you must go to the original source on your own; God's word. If you want the right understanding of a math problem you don't go to another student, you go to the teacher. If you want the most accurate understanding of God's will, you go directly to where it's found; the Bible. ¹⁹

The last concept in this passage for being an effective witness is . . .

III. By Being Filled with the Right Spirit -

v18-20

By being filled with the right Spirit. ²⁰

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

There are spirits you could fill yourself with that could lead you away from God; alcoholic spirits. ²¹

The word “debauchery” is not a word we use today. In the original language ⁵ it meant recklessness, wildness, being out of control, excessive, wasteful. ²² This leads in the opposite direction of what God wants in your life! ²³

A drunk is anti social. A Christian needs fellowship for growth and encouragement. ²⁴

A drunk is arrogant. **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentle-ness and self-control.** ⁶ ²⁵

A drunk is boastful and bold. A Christian is to be humble and meek because he realizes where his true strength comes from. ²⁶

Instead, be filled with the Spirit. (Verse 18) This Spirit leads you to God! ²⁷ It results in a Holy Spirit oriented life! ²⁸

⁵ ἄσωτία.

⁶ Galatians 5:22-23.

What are the characteristics of a Spirit oriented life? ²⁹

By speaking to one another; having a sociable spirit.

Verse 19 tells us, Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. 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. ³⁰

In ancient days this could be expressed by singing Hebrew psalms. These were songs sung accompanied by plucking an instrument. ³¹

This was also accomplished by singing Greek hymns. These were songs addressed to God as prayers. ³²

In addition, Christians sang spiritual songs in their hearts silently to the Lord. ³³

Filling yourself with the right Spirit also having the faith to thank God for everything in all circumstances.

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

Matthew Henry, a popular Bible commentator, was a very godly man who considered everything he had as coming from the hand of God. One day he was robbed. That night he wrote in his diary: “Let me be thankful; first, because I was never robbed before; second, although he took my purse, he did not take my life; third, although he took all I possessed, it was not much; fourth, it was I who was robbed, and not I who robbed.”⁷ ₃₄

Effective witnessing means accurately representing the Lord’s character: by having the right behavior, by having the right understanding, and by being filled with the right Spirit!

<http://biblelifemessages.org/>

⁷ “Thankfulness Unlimited”, Ephesians 5:15-21, Our Daily Bread.