

"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 (New International Version)

What does it mean that the “days are evil”?

Are we living in the “last days”? Is evil increasing in our world? Are our days now *more* evil? Is the “darkness” and pervasive evil unconquerable?

1. Last days? ____! The last days were inaugurated by Jesus’ ministry (Hebrews 1:1-2) and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon believers in Christ to form the Church (Acts 2:16-17). The wording “*last days*” (Acts 2:17; 2 Timothy 3:1; 2 Peter 3:3), “*last times*” (1 Timothy 4:1; 1 Peter 1:20; Jude 18), or “*last hour*” (1 John 2:18) all define the era between the coming and final return of Jesus, not the specific, _____ events leading up to His return.
2. Evil increasing? _____. Evil is as it always has been. Paul’s reference does not reveal that the days are *now* evil, they always have been (cf. Amos 5:12-13). There may be increased intensity because evil, and the evil one (Satan), are “on the clock.”

"We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one." – 1 John 5:19 (NIV)

3. Our days more evil? – _____. The coming of the light of Jesus into the world and the expansion of His kingdom has increased the _____ of evil (John 1:4-5; 3:19-21; Ephesians 5:13).
4. Unconquerable? ____! No matter the evil in the world or the darkness in your past Jesus has conquered the evil and His light can set you free.

"Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." – Galatians 1:3-4 (NIV)

What does it mean to live “unwisely”?

Since “*the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*” (Proverbs 9:10; Psalm 111:10), unwise living starts with ignoring God’s reality and truth and yielding instead to either self-_____ or following the wisdom of the world.

1. The latter choices are both _____ (v. 17).
 - a. Biblically, the term “_____” is used for all the misadventures of life outside of God’s will and wisdom. It is not necessarily sin, evil, or wickedness, but the poor choices inherent in pursuing folly often lead to them. It is “_____” (Proverbs 12:15).
 - b. It is that which is _____ of the “*Lord’s will*” (v. 17).
2. Remaining or _____ to the “*fruitless deeds of darkness*” (vv. 11-12).

- a. Deeds of darkness = “*carousing and drunkenness...sexual impurity and promiscuity...quarreling and jealousy*” (Romans 13:13 CSB)
- b. Done in _____ = unknown to others, but seen by God (Matthew 6:4,6,18).
- c. Disobedient = ignorant, immature, intentional?
- d. Shameful = The perpetration of that which, if known by others, would bring guilt, disfavor, dishonor, or disrespect. NOTE: Shame is upon the guilty, not the _____.

What does it mean to live wisely?

1. “*Live as children of light*” (v. 8) and produce the resulting fruit.
 - a. Goodness = Right, beneficial, helpful.
 - b. Righteousness = Deemed correct and _____ by God.
 - c. Truth = without falsehood, duplicity, lying.
2. “*Find out what pleases the Lord*” (v. 10) – takes time and intentionality.
3. “*Expose them*” (i.e. “*the fruitless deeds of darkness*” – vv. 11-14). This is letting the light apply first to the _____: conviction, confession, correction, and conformance to Jesus. Secondly, our role/work in the world.
4. “*Making the most of every opportunity*” (v. 16) - “There is no such thing as coincidence in the Kingdom of God.” (author unknown)
 - a. The question of the _____ between God’s sovereignty and human free will has long been debated. Only in eternity will we finally “*know fully*” (1 Corinthians 13:12).
 - b. God _____ our steps, but He does not necessarily _____ them.
 - c. We have the ability to receive or reject Jesus (John 1:12; 12:48), to be filled with or quench the Holy Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19), and to obey or disobey Jesus’ commands (John 14:23-24).
 - d. Integral to our being a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17) is that God directs us to countless opportunities to do good to _____ evil (Ephesians 2:10; Romans 12:21).
 - e. Remember what God did in saving you. Your rescue is your _____ (Revelation 12:11) and, quite possibly, the key to your _____ (2 Corinthians 1:3-5).
5. “*Be filled with Spirit*” (vv. 18-21).
 - a. Spiritual-mindedness requires _____-mindedness (v. 18).
 - b. _____ worship and teaching (v. 19)
 - c. Attitude and expression of _____ (v. 20).
 - d. Christ _____ in every relationship (v. 21; Philippians 2:3-4).