

Making / Redeeming the Most of Your Time / Opportunity

Reading different Bible translations can be very helpful in understanding a passage. In this example, here are three examples comparing the NIV, NASB, and LSB's translation of Ephesians 5:15-16.

Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, **making the most of every opportunity**, because the days are evil. (Eph 5:15-16, **New International Version**)

So then, be careful how you walk, not as unwise people but as wise, **making the most of your time**, because the days are evil. (Eph 5:15-16, **New American Standard Bible**)

Therefore look carefully how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, **redeeming the time**, because the days are evil. (Eph 5:15-16, **Legacy Standard Bible**)

What is this about? Is it about a plan, a “bucket list,” of all the things you would like to do before you die? What is the Legacy Standard Bible’s “redeeming the time?” What is Paul talking about “because the days are evil?”

1. Ephesians 5:15-17 is part of a chiasm, which has been arranged for you to see. Share your observations of the literary patterns you see.

A. 10) as you try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

B. 11) Do not participate in the useless deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; 12) for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret.

C. 13) But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light.

X. 14) For this reason it says, “Awake, sleeper, And arise from the dead,

C'. And Christ will shine on you.”

B'. 15) So then, be careful how you walk, not as unwise people but as wise, 16) making the most of your time, because the days are evil.

A'. 17) Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. (Eph 5:10-17, NIV)

2. A good method of studying a chiasm is to compare the first half of the chiasm with its inverted parallel. What concepts do you observe of the pairing of each part of the chiasm? What do they contrast?

Comparison	Observations
<p>A. as you try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.</p> <p>A'. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.</p>	
<p>B. Do not participate in the useless deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret.</p> <p>B'. So then, be careful how you walk, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil.</p>	
<p>C. But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light.</p> <p>C'. And Christ will shine on you."</p>	
<p>What do these parallel ideas contrast?</p>	

3. What do you make of the inflection point, "For this reason it says, "Awake, sleeper, And arise from the dead?" Based on your observations, what is your conclusion of "making / redeeming the most of your time / opportunity?"

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Teacher Notes

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What is this about? Is it about a plan, a “bucket list,” of all the things you would like to do before you die? What is the Legacy Standard Bible’s “redeeming the time?” What is Paul talking about “because the days are evil?”

Ask the student: why are there so many Bible translations?

Bible translations are based on the particular set of ancient Hebrew and Greek manuscripts and the translation approach used with them such as translating literally, or translating to take into account the historical distance in time, or translating as a paraphrase to make it easier to understand.

1. Ephesians 5:15-17 is part of a chiasm, which has been arranged for you to see. Share your observations of the literary patterns you see.

A. 10) as you try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

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A chiasm is a Hebrew poetic device used to place an emphasis on an important idea. Identifying each part of the chiasm with A-A', B-B', C-C', and X makes it easier to see and understand. Here are some sample observations:

The structure of the chiasm does not respect verse number breaks.

The first half of the chiasm displays an order of concepts. The second half of the chiasm displays the corresponding concepts in a reverse order or as an inverted parallel. When these concepts are arranged by aligning the paired concepts, a pattern emerges forming an “x.”

The inflection point, where the reversal of concepts begins, is a statement that stands alone and does not share a parallel.

In the first half of the chiasm, the apostle Paul makes general exhortations. In the second half of the chiasm, he makes the exhortations personal.

2. A good method of studying a chiasm is to compare the first half of the chiasm with its inverted parallel. What concepts do you observe of the pairing of each part of the chiasm? What do they contrast?

Comparison	Observations
<p>A. as you try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.</p> <p>A'. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.</p>	<p>What is pleasing to the Lord is understanding what His will is.</p>
<p>B. Do not participate in the useless deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret.</p> <p>B'. So then, be careful how you walk, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil.</p>	<p>Be careful how you live. Note: Paul appears to suggest to avoid rebuking another (a non-Believer?) "for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret."</p> <p>Do not live as foolish people committing sinful deeds done in secret. Make the most of your remaining time living rightly, as an example that exposes wrong ways, because of evil all around.</p>
<p>C. But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light.</p> <p>C'. And Christ will shine on you."</p>	<p>All of us will be accountable for our actions when Jesus Christ judges at the end of time, so nothing in secret will be hidden.</p> <p>When you live by Christ, you will shine through Christ.</p>

What do these parallel ideas contrast?

Encourage the student to mark up the text to highlight the contrasts he observes. Here are **some** examples:

Try to learn what is **pleasing** to the Lord / **Do not be foolish**, but understand what the will of the Lord is

Do not participate in the **useless deeds of darkness** / Be careful how you walk, **not as unwise people but as wise**

All things become visible when they are **exposed by the light** / **Christ will shine on you**

To Believers, the apostle Paul emphasizes his positive encouragement of how they should live by using a negative contrast: **do** this and **don't be** foolish, useless, unwise, or do anything that cannot be exposed.

3. What do you make of the inflection point, “For this reason it says, “Awake, sleeper, And arise from the dead?” Based on your observations, what is your conclusion of “making / redeeming the most of your time / opportunity?”

Ask the student: from what the apostle Paul is saying, what are the Christians like at the church of Ephesus?

Similarly as to today, Believers are struggling to live out their faith in a world that lives with a different perspective and moral value: one with the God of the Bible and the other not.

Ask the student: how do you understand what the apostle Paul is saying at the inflection point, “Awake, sleeper, And arise from the dead, And Christ will shine on you?”

The metaphors “sleeper” and “arise from the dead” present an image of spiritually dead Christians.

While faith in Jesus Christ’s death of atonement saved Believers from the penalty of sin, Paul is exhorting Believers to liberate their time from the power of sin. The chiasm’s inflection point emphatically says, “Wake up! Jesus Christ has saved you from the penalty of sin; but, you must arise from the power of sin!”

The more successful a Believer can live like Jesus Christ, the more effective his testimony of Jesus’ light of salvation to the world.

Ask the student: at the conclusion of the chiasm (Eph 5:17), Paul states, “so then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” How do you understand the “will of the Lord?”

To “understand the will of the Lord” requires knowledge, which Paul is exhorts through Bible study, Christian fellowship, prayer and discipleship. Through this process, God provides wisdom and knowledge so that a Believer can discern His will (Eph 1:8-9).

God’s will for us is to be a holy people and instrument for His blessing to others requires time for study, practice and reflection.

Ask the student: what does it mean to “redeem the most of your time?”

This is a more advance question for the student. It requires knowledge of atonement and the concept of redemption – paying the price to redeem or buy back. Jesus Christ’s atonement paid the judicial price of sin and bought back the life of a Believer liberating him from the eternal prison for those who have do not believe in Jesus’ death of atonement for their sin.

Salvation is a process. Because of Jesus Christ’s atonement of redemption liberating Believers from sin, to abide in Christ is to buy back a Believer’s time from the power of sin by pursuing a life living rightly for God.