



[Ephesians 5:15-20](#)

(15) Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, (16) making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. (17) Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. (18) Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. (19) Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, (20) always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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"[Joy](#)" does not appear in this passage, but Paul's purpose is to instruct us how to produce the sustained sense of well-being that should mark a Christian's life. When a person feels good about life, about who and what he is, what he is doing with his life, and where it is headed, a sense of joy is always present. Paul's instructions are timeless in producing this.

"Walk circumspectly" indicates keeping the commandments. Paul advises us to make the most profitable use of our time, considering the state of [this world](#). He warns us not to be foolish, and always to consider, search for, and focus upon the purpose [God](#) is working out. Then in verse 18 he makes an interesting contrast that directly involves producing the joy that should accompany the life of anyone heeding these instructions.

The verse contains a play on words. It is no accident that alcohol is associated with "Spirit." Paul's counsel is not to seek joy in the sensuous, self-centered, worldly ways that produce dissipation or debauchery, but rather to be filled with the Spirit, singing and meditating on God's Word as we give thanks in all circumstances. This formula is guaranteed to produce a sustained sense of well-being because it removes the natural self-seeking from our lives and replaces it with a God-centered way of glorifying Him. This allows joy to be the fruit, the blessing of the Almighty, rather than the direct object of our pursuit.

The Berean: Daily Verse and Commentary for Ephesians 5:15-20 (<http://www.theberean.org>)
— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:
[The Fruit of the Spirit: Joy](#)

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