



## [Ephesians 5:14-17](#)

(14) Therefore He says:

"Awake, you who sleep,  
Arise from the dead,

And Christ will give you light." (15) See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, (16) redeeming the time, because the days are evil. (17) Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord *is*.

*New King James Version*

Notice the encouraging reason Paul gives to wake up and carefully mind how we live: "Christ will give you light." This is an outright promise that He will give us the help to do what we must do. Backed by this promise, we are to redeem the time "because the days are evil." If his days were evil, what would Paul think of ours?

This passage reveals how the early church regarded time as it applies to a Christian. For us, all days - every period in which God's people have had to live their lives by their God-given understanding, thus by [faith](#) - are evil. God's [truth](#) has always run counter to the course of [this world](#). Thus, the truth adds a peculiar, stressful difficulty to life regardless of when it is lived. Moreover, since each called-out individual has only one opportunity to lay hold on [eternal life](#), and must overcome, grow, and prove his loyalty to [God](#) during that time, he must make use of every experience.

[Galatians 1:3-4](#) confirms this perspective: "[Grace](#) to you and [peace](#) from God the Father and our Lord [Jesus Christ](#), who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father." In terms of growing and overcoming, living in a particular period in history gives a Christian no advantage. Every era, every age, is against him, and within it, he must make the most of his calling. The times have always been evil.

To the church, then, because it must operate responsibly toward God within a highly specialized understanding of life and its purpose, every age is full of the cyclical,

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frustrating, repetitious events that Solomon called futile vanities. Such events lead nowhere and produce a discouraging fatalism.

However, a Christian also knows that God is directing time and events to His desired end. Thus, the church's view of time is an elegant combination of both realities, realizing that it has a work to accomplish as an organization and that each individual Christian must grow and overcome within it. So, as Christians, we must face the evil of repetitious vanity produced by [sin](#), which history clearly records, with faith in the [hope](#) of a glorious victory for God's called-out ones, which God's Word prophesies.

Thus, Paul advises in [Ephesians 5:17](#), "Therefore . . . understand what the will of the Lord is." As we live our lives each day, we should never let what God says slip from our minds. His point is that we need to make the most of every opportunity because time is inexorably moving toward God's desired end, and it will not stop and wait for us. We do not want to be left behind! No occasion is too insignificant to do the right thing. Time is precious! We, like God, must take it very seriously.

We must not make the mistake of relegating Christian living to a mere couple of hours on the [Sabbath](#). Christianity involves *every* aspect of life. Personal study and [prayer](#) are times of clarifying [God's will](#). But we must not neglect the doing of His will as occasions arise - and they will arise every day. Woe to us if we disregard them, for they comprise the very circumstances that challenge us to overcome and grow in our seeking of God.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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