**Lessons from a Lockdown**

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**Day 53**

**Ephesians 5:15-17**

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.

***Questions for Personal Reflection:***

1. What does “be careful” mean? What do I do when I am careful?
2. What does “making the most of every opportunity” mean? What can I do to obey this command?
3. Why did Paul say “the days are evil”? What does that have to do with making the most of every opportunity?
4. How do I feel about finding God’s will and doing it daily? How can I understand the Lord’s will more?
5. Have I ever struggled with doing God’s will? Why? What happened when I followed anyway?

***Insight:***

As Christians, we need to be careful how we live. We should not live our lives recklessly or negligently. What do we do when we are careful? We think and even plan before we act. We often ask advice or do our research first for important decisions. When we are careful, we try to anticipate the dangers and avoid them. When we are careful, we do not act in ways that may put ourselves at risk. Is this how we are living our lives each day or are we careless about certain aspects of our lives? What about our spiritual life? Do we think about or plan our times with God? Do we think about what or who we pray for or who we pray with? Shouldn’t we be most careful about our relationship with God?

To live carefully is to make the most out of every opportunity. We should not waste opportunities we are given. While the pandemic has taken things always from us, it has also given us opportunities. Not having to commute, we have the opportunity to allocate more time to pray and read our Bibles. More Christian online materials (e.g. quiet times, sermons, lessons, worship songs etc.) have been made available to us. With people staying at home we have the opportunity to build or repair our relationships with people there. Spouses have more opportunities to talk. Parents have more time to teach their children. Children have more opportunities to express to their parents. We have more reasons to learn new skills. The list goes on. The question is, how have we maximized our opportunities so far?

The days are evil. Things look bad in the world and it could get worse. We need to get ready. We should not panic. Instead, we need to prepare in case the situation gets worse. First and foremost, we need to prepare ourselves spiritually. We need to be strengthened in our relationship with God. We need to grow in our walk with God to thrive even under bigger challenges in the future. Our faith must increase to meet more difficult challenges. Are we getting stronger spiritually? Second, we need to prepare mentally and emotionally. We need to protect our mental and emotional health. We need to guard our hearts and minds from influences that may weaken us or distract us. We need to stay connected to good friends and strengthen our network of relationships. Third, we need to prepare physically. We need to stay healthy or be healthier than we are now. We need to have self-control over what and how much we eat. We need to be disciplined to have enough sleep and exercise.

During this pandemic, we also need to prepare financially. If we are still receiving income is it enough to pay for all our expenses? If not, how do we reduce our expenses? Is there a way for us to earn more income (e.g. by learning a new skill, diversifying our business, getting an online job etc.) If we are relying on savings, how long will it last? How can we make it last longer?

We cannot afford to be foolish and not understand the Lord’s will. Do we understand God’s will for us? This is particularly true during times of great difficulty like what we have now.

Sometimes finding God’s will is easy, but sometimes it takes serious effort. We need to be willing to invest the time, energy and resources to know God’s will. Often it requires us to focus more on Bible study. Other times it requires offering to God loud cries and tears. Sometimes it requires asking for godly advice from mature disciples. Whatever it is, we need to do whatever it takes to know God’s will. Otherwise, all our efforts will be meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

Sometimes we are hesitant to know God’s will because it may mean surrendering what we want. Our nature is that we want to do things our way all the time. We don’t like it when another person tells us what to do, even if that person is God. But we need to remember that God is wiser than we are and has more information than we do. We should trust God’s plan more than our own.

Let us make the most out of every opportunity presented to us by this lockdown by knowing God’s will.