



**SERIES: LOOKING BACK – MOVING FORWARD**

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**Thursday, August 11, 2022**

**Scripture: Ephesians 5:15-20**

**TITLE: First Things First**

*First Things First.* That was Stephen Covey's book, where he challenged his readers to do things in the right way to maximize the opportunity presented. He did this with an experiment. If you had a jar and needed to fill it with sand, pebbles, and rocks, how would you do it? Some people start with the sand, then the pebbles, and then the rocks. The problem is you can't get them all in the jar. But if you start with the rocks, then the pebbles, and finally the sand, you maximize the space, and all fits perfectly.

Many of us today live our lives in second gear. We aren't maximizing the time and opportunities we have. We are content with okay when the best is just a few adjustments away. If you want to live your life to the fullest, listen to the words of Paul in Ephesians 5:15-20

So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do. Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts. And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul is continuing here in the best practices to live as children of the light. He says, "be careful" or "be watchful" in how you live. He says you can live like a fool, like a child of darkness or as wise – in the ways that please God.

But then, in verse 16, he says, "Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days." If Paul were a football coach, he'd say it this way: "Let's go! It's game time, and we've got 2 minutes left. We need to move this ball down the field. Every snap counts, so let's fire off quickly, and let's do this!"

Friend, the return of Christ is imminent. Jesus, in Luke 12, talks about being ready for the return of the Master.

This past week I needed to run some errands, so I told my boys, "I'm heading out. I need you to clean up your rooms and put away your clothes while I'm away. Do you understand?" They said, "yes." Well, when I came home, two of them were intentional with their time. They made the most of the opportunity. One did not.

Today, we have a choice to make: Live like fools, or live like wise people. If you want to be wise, live intentionally, maximizing every opportunity.

Here's my challenge for you today: Evaluate yourself and your living. Are you living for the things that matter, or are you living for yourself? Are you maximizing the opportunity to glorify God and to disciple the lost, or are you wasting the day on Netflix, Youtube, book clubs, and Candy Crush?

Take 10 minutes and look at how you've spent your time and your money over the past 2 weeks. Once you've assessed the information, be watchful and adjust your time, attention, and resources.

Maximize the time. Maximize the opportunity. Christ is coming any minute. Will you be ready?