

Colossians 4:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.

Analysis

Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Paul shifts to believers' witness to unbelievers. "Walk in wisdom" (en sophia peripateite, ἐν σοφίᾳ περιπατεῖτε) commands conducting life wisely. "Toward them that are without" (pros tous exō, πρὸς τοὺς ἔξω) means outsiders, non-Christians. Believers' conduct toward unbelievers requires special wisdom—maintaining holiness without self-righteous separation, engaging culture without compromise.

"Redeeming the time" (ton kairon exagorazomenoi, τὸν καιρὸν ἐξαγοραζόμενοι) literally means "buying up the opportunity." Kairos (καιρός) refers to strategic moment, opportune time. Believers must recognize and seize gospel opportunities, using time wisely since days are evil (Ephesians 5:16). This requires spiritual alertness, recognizing divine appointments in daily providence, and prioritizing eternal impact over temporal triviality.

Historical Context

Early Christians lived as minority in pagan society, requiring wisdom to maintain witness without unnecessary offense. They avoided pagan worship and immorality but participated in civic life where possible. Their distinctive conduct—sexual purity, honest business, care for poor, love across social boundaries—attracted curiosity and sometimes hostility. Wise engagement opened doors; foolish conduct closed them. Believers redeemed time by maximizing witness opportunities in hostile culture.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How wisely do you engage unbelievers—maintaining Christian distinction while avoiding unnecessary offense?
2. What gospel opportunities are you missing through spiritual inattentiveness or misplaced priorities?
3. How can you redeem time more effectively, maximizing eternal impact in temporary existence?

Interlinear Text

'Εν	σοφίᾳ	περιπατεῖτε	πρὸς	τοὺς	ἐξω	τὸν
in	wisdom	Walk	toward	G3588	them that are without	G3588
G1722	G4678	G4043	G4314		G1854	
καιρὸν	ἐξαγοραζόμενοι					
the time	redeeming					
G2540	G1805					

Additional Cross-References

1 Thessalonians 4:12 (Parallel theme): That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.

James 3:13 (Parallel theme): Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.

Romans 16:19 (Parallel theme): For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.

Matthew 10:16 (Parallel theme): Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

1 Timothy 3:7 (Parallel theme): Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

James 3:17 (Parallel theme): But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

Colossians 3:16 (Parallel theme): Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Mark 4:11 (Parallel theme): And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables:

James 1:5 (Parallel theme): If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

1 Peter 3:1 (Parallel theme): Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;