

Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church
2080 West Grand Blvd.
Detroit, Michigan 48208
Nathan Johnson, D.D., Senior Pastor

Lesson 15: “Walk Circumspectly”
Scripture: Ephesians 5:8-20

Goal: To embrace and fulfill our covenant relationship with God and one another.

Objective: To have a clear understanding of what it means to “walk circumspectly in the world.”

To understand why our walk as a Christian community ought to be a witness to the world.”

Church Covenant Segment: “To walk circumspectly”

Introduction:

“See then that you walk circumspectly not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil [Ephesians 5: 15-16].

Why would it be important for the church (the covenant community) to walk circumspectly in the world? First, walking circumspectly means that we move under the unction and power of the Holy Ghost. We redeem the time we spend on this earth when we live as vessels of honor. Our lives ought not to be in any way, shape or form, like that of the world. To walk circumspectly means to live wisely, morally and cautiously. Our Christian life should be one of simplicity, soberness, faith, and praise. As members of the Christian community, our obedience to God’s commandment ought to be evident in our behaviors and relationships.

Making the most profitable use of our time demonstrates to an unbelieving world our commitment to fulfill God’s purpose for us. When we observe the state of affairs in the world today, it calls us to be wise and abstain from evil at all times. Galatians 1: 3-4 reads, “*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.*”¹ (NJKV). In order to walk circumspectly, it is essential that we as Christians study God’s Word and continue to seek His will for our lives. We must be awakened spiritually in order to respond to the needs of the people among us and ensure that our ministry is effective.²

¹ John MacArthur Study Bible. Thomas Nelson, Inc: Nashville, Tenn. 1997

² Turner, William C. (2002). *A Journey through the Church Covenant.* Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press. Pg. 82.

Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church
2080 West Grand Blvd.
Detroit, Michigan 48208
Nathan Johnson, D.D., Senior Pastor
Dialogue Web ~ Interactive Bible Lesson
“Walk Circumspectly”

We are called to live “peculiar” lives, guided and directed by God. Because we have been blessed to be representatives of a living and powerful God, we must be awake to every opportunity to demonstrate through the way we live that God is alive and present. God is here and inviting the world into relationship with Him through Jesus Christ. A church that is asleep is insensitive to the many ways in which they can respond to the spiritual needs of those within and without the church.³

Everyday is a new opportunity to live life in a way that glorifies God. Walking circumspectly captures the concept. A person who walks circumspectly is one who is careful, prudent, watchful, and tries to avoid error or danger. Paul reiterated the message when he wrote to the Colossians, “Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.” Paul said further; *Let your speech be always seasoned with grace, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man*” [Colossians. 4: 4-5]. Our circumspect walk in the world, on the job, in church, and at home, may be the very reason others are compelled to come to Christ seeking salvation. As long as the Spirit of God controls our lives, we can manifest the fruit of the Spirit; love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. Walking circumspectly allows the life and the light of Christ to reflect through us.

As Christians we are in the world, but we are not of the world. Therefore, we ought to walk circumspectly in the world. We must redeem the time and diligently live according to the Word of God. Scripture says that we are *“living epistles.”* We may be the only epistle or word of God that some in the world read. How we conduct our lives, react to situations, and how we speak to others determines the kind of epistle we will be!

<i>Guiding Questions</i>	<i>What the Scripture Says</i>	<i>Class Discovery Points</i>
1. What are some of the standards for a Christian to walk circumspectly? 2. Why should a Christian want to walk circumspectly in the world? 3. What does <i>“redeeming the time”</i> mean for us a Christian Community?	1. Eph. 5:15-20 2. I John 2: 15-17 I John 3: 3-6 3. Colossians 4:5,6 1 Peter 3:15,16	Application (s) to the church. 1. 2. 3. 4.

³ Turner, William C. (2002). *A Journey through the Church Covenant.* Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press. Pg. 82.

Class Summary Statement

Walking circumspectly is essential because...

Lesson Summary:

The church community must be vigilant about how we use the time God has given us to do the work of ministry. This is particularly important for the church today. If we had, in this moment in time, to give an account to God for the ways we are using the time He has given, I wonder if our present state would stand as glaring evidence against us. Indeed, we find many churches preoccupied with “in house” politics, self-aggrandizing power plays, and propagating prosperity theology. God holds the church accountable for our corporate lives, our witness, and our actions (or inaction) to fulfill the mission He has given to the church! William Turner captures it accurately when he states, “God gives us this moment, in which we can act wisely by the grace that has been given or in which we can waste time backtracking, repairing, and mending.”⁴ How much of our time is spent trying to “keep the peace” and the focus on Jesus?

Finally, the church must know where the power for ministry lies. The Holy Spirit is the power source. A quick journey through the book of Acts demonstrates that He (the Holy Spirit) is the ONLY Source. We often get in our own way when we rely on ourselves, not the grace, mercy and power of the Holy Spirit to do the work of ministry. Therefore, it is essential that we are filled with the power source. We must be filled with the Spirit of God—then and only then, can we be sensitive to the opportunities for ministry, wisely use the time God has given, and remain energized to complete the work of this marvelous ministry of reconciliation.

Going Deeper (Journal Writing)

1. How might walking circumspectly related to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances?
2. Where in your life are you challenged to walk circumspectly?

Closing Prayer:

⁴ Turner, William C. (2002). *A Journey through the Church Covenant.* Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press. Pg. 82.

Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church
2080 West Grand Blvd.
Detroit, Michigan 48208
Nathan Johnson, D.D., Senior Pastor

Where we are in the Church Covenant... *

HAVING BEEN LED, AS WE BELIEVE, BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior; and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now in the presence of God, angels and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge and holiness; to give it a place in our affections, prayers, and services above every organization of human origin; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrine; to contribute cheerfully and regularly, as God has prospered us, towards its expenses, for the support of a faithful and evangelical ministry among us, the relief of the poor and the spread of the Gospel throughout the world. In case of difference of opinion in the church, we will strive to avoid a contentious spirit, and if we cannot unanimously agree, we will cheerfully recognize the right of the majority to govern.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotion; to study diligently the word of God; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintance; *to walk circumspectly in the world*; to be kind and just to those in our employ, and faithful in the service we promise others; endeavoring in the purity of heart and good will towards all men to exemplify and commend our holy faith.

We further engage to watch over, to pray for, to exhort and stir up each other unto every good word and work; to guard each other's reputation, not needlessly exposing the infirmities of others; to participate in each other's joys, and with tender sympathy bear one another's burdens and sorrows; to cultivate Christian courtesy; to be slow to give or take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, being mindful of the rules of the Savior in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, to secure it without delay; and through life, amid evil report, and good report, to seek to live to the glory of God, who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.

When we remove from this place, we engage as soon as possible to unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's word.

Each month we will include a copy of the Church Covenant and highlight the current lesson. It is our hope that this will give the larger context for the passage being studied.