Ephesians 5
*Redeeming the Time*

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**Subject:** “Redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:16 NKJV)

**Instructional Setting:** This study is perfect for local groups and should be in an area that accommodates discussion.

**Number of Students:** As many as the facility will accommodate

**Time:** One hour

**Objective:**
For Christian firefighter or first responders to fully understand the importance of redeeming their time and making the most of every opportunity.

**Bible References:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For Christian firefighter or first responders to fully understand the importance of redeeming their time and making the most of every opportunity.</th>
<th>Primary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ephesians 5</strong></td>
<td>Additional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ephesians 5:3-7</td>
<td>Galatians 5:16-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippians 2:2</td>
<td>Colossians 4:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalm 90:12</td>
<td>II Timothy 4:10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Writer:** The Apostle Paul wrote the book of Ephesians

**Theme:** Redeeming the Time

**Life Principle:** Making the most of every opportunity.
Introduction:
“In a moment,” “within seconds,” and “before anyone knew conditions had changed” are all words that firefighters used to describe what had happened. When I arrived at the hospital firefighters were obviously shaken. The incident had started off like so many others, but quickly took a terrible turn. Two long tones came across the vocal with the list of companies responding on the box. As Engine Company 26 arrived on the scene, they located the closest hydrant and laid a supply line to the front of the building. The officer reported a two-story ordinarily constructed row house with smoke showing on side “A.” A handline was stretched inside the building, and the firefighters began the process of locating the seat of the fire. The companies assigned to the rear of the building also reported “smoke showing” and began to follow their assignments. Engine Company 10 stretched a handline from their engine which was assigned to supply the first due engine company. Then the unthinkable happened. By the time others recognized what had happened, two firefighters were dead, and a third was critically injured and would spend months in the hospital.

These scenarios, along with countless others that have a similar outcome, have been played out at thousands of firegrounds over the years. If there is anyone who should understand the principle that life is short and provides no guarantees, it should be first responders. First responders are called upon every day to respond to emergencies that suddenly and unexpectedly take the lives of people. We have been to way too many incidents where a life has slipped away in front of us despite our best efforts to prevent it.

The fire service is very time oriented. We have been trained on the golden hour and the importance of getting our patients to the hospital within that time frame. We are very aware that building materials will fail in a matter of time when exposed to the destructive power of fire. Most firefighters have been taught that the quicker they can put the fire out the safer everyone will be, and the quicker everyone can go home. Incident commanders are very aware of the dangers faced by those inside the hazard zone and typically will change tactics if the desired progress is not achieved within a certain time. Time is important, and first responders need to value every second that is given to them.

To ensure everyone’s safety, one of our departments battalion chiefs began utilizing the CAN report. After a predetermined amount of time, if he had not heard from company officers in the hot zone, he would always ask for a CAN report. This simple phrase would prompt us to report our current conditions, what actions we were currently engaged in, and what we needed to handle the situation. As we begin to study this Biblical principle of “redeeming the time,” I would like to consider the CAN report. This simple prompt will help us to understand better what we are currently engaged in for the kingdom of God.
Lesson: - Redeeming the Time

Ephesians 5:3-16 NKJV

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says:

“Awake, you who sleep, 
Arise from the dead, 
And Christ will give you light.”
Walk in Wisdom

See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

Looking Closer:

- The section of Scripture we are looking at begins the thought in verse three and contains a caution or warning against all sorts of uncleanness. The list includes fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, filthiness, foolish talking, and jesting. We are encouraged rather to give thanks. This section also gives the remedies for the ungodly actions, and we would be wise to make them a part of our everyday life.
Ephesians 5:3-7 NKJV – “But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them.”

- Christians should not engage in these sinful acts, and their character should not reflect this rebellious conduct. We are reminded that there is no place in the kingdom of Christ for these types of actions (verse 5).
- We have undergone a great change (verse 8) when we became a Christian, and it is unacceptable for us to continue walking in the same manner as before our salvation.
- These evil works produce no fruit (verse 11). Nothing good ever comes out of a life that is not obeying the truths of the Bible. Ultimately these actions lead people to death and destruction. Christian firefighters and first responders should have no fellowship with those who regularly practice them.
- Christian firefighters and first responders should not speak or joke about the things the ungodly do (verse 12). It would be to our shame.

Note: How do you handle a dirty joke or another firefighter talking crudely about someone from the opposite sex? Paul tells us not to simply to walk away, but to correct the erring person. We all want to fit in, but the Bible is clear that we need to deal with the situation and share why we believe it is inappropriate use of our tongue.

- The light exposes everything that is in the dark (verse 13). Christian firefighters and first responders are designed to walk in the light.
- Paul shouts for Christians to awake (verse 14). There are so many Christian firefighters and first responders who could be making a difference for the kingdom and turn the fire service upside down. They are unable to accomplish that task because spiritually speaking they are sound asleep, no good to the Master.
Walk in Wisdom – The main point of this passage is that we would walk cautiously and prudent on our journey as a Christian. Look around us, the days are obviously evil, and we can easily fall prey to the devil’s schemes if we are not careful.

Note: It is sad that many of today’s Christian firefighters and first responders are not redeeming the time. We see many folks who act one way at church on Sundays and a different way at the firehouse. Paul would encourage us to change our ways before it is too late.

Remember the CAN report? Let’s look at the passage in Ephesians with this acronym in mind.

What are the conditions?
The days are evil. As we can easily see there are two types of people, those walking in darkness and those walking in the light. Paul encourages us to walk in the light. We are reminded that we once walked in darkness, but now our actions and attitudes should be going in a different direction.

What are the actions?
We can check to make sure our actions are acceptable to God by looking at the fruit of the Spirit (all goodness, righteousness, and truth). Check out Galatians 5: 16-22 for more ideas. We can also match our actions by Biblical principles to ensure that they are acceptable to the Lord. Are you redeeming the time? Are you walking in light? Or do you still have fellowship with darkness? Our actions will tell where our heart is.

What are our needs?
It is always good to evaluate our needs. When we find areas that do not square up to Scripture, we should pray for forgiveness and that God, through the Holy Spirit, would give us victory. Do we need to read and study our Bibles more? Do we need to change our friends? Or do we need to engage with the church body more? These are needs that we can go to our heavenly Father with, and He will provide for us what we have need of.

Related Verses:
Colossians 4:5 – “Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time.” ESV

Psalm 90:12 – “So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.” ESV

II Timothy 4:10 – “For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.” ESV

Application for First Responders:
What are you currently doing for Christ right now? We are not promised tomorrow, but we can serve the cause of Christ where we are at this moment. God has given each of us abilities that we can use to serve our fellow firefighters and first responders in the department that God has called us to. Let’s resolve not to waste our time on foolish or vain activities. The idea of redemption is to buy back. Let’s buy back our desire to serve God faithfully, with passion, and with every breath that God gives us.

**Discussion Questions:**

- In what areas do you need to change to better walk in the light?

- Why is it such a struggle to live for God in the fire service?

- Will walking in darkness damage my Christian testimony? How?

**Bible Memorization:**

“Complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.” (Philippians 2:2)

**Prayer Requests:**

That I might be willing to follow God and obey the truths that are contained in the Bible.

**Notes:**

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6