

Intro: Dave Ramsey says, “Live like no one else now and later you will live like no one else.”

Live like no one else in terms of how you spend your money.

- Use cash – people will think I’m a drug dealer
- Drive a used car with no car payments – what, but my neighbor just got a Lexus, I must keep up.
- Get rid of your credit cards – but I get free airline miles
- Don’t try to keep up with the Jones’ – Acadia or Aruba?

I met the Millionaire Next Door

In the letter to the Ephesians Paul was calling them to live differently than their culture;

1. They worshiped Artemis the goddess of love. I don’t want to go into graphic detail of their practices and discretions but it was x-rated to say the least.
2. They worshiped idols. The silversmiths who manufactured these idols were the richest families in town.
3. Wine was the standard drink. Alcoholism and drunkenness were commonplace.

In summary; the Ephesians lived reckless lives

In looking at just these three parts of Ephesian culture and comparing them to our own here in Midlotopia you’d think we live in Ephesus:

1. We live in a sex crazed culture, without a doubt, you’d have to be blind, deaf and dumb not to see it and even then the advertisers would figure out a way to sell their product to you using sex.
2. We worship idols of cars, houses, and clothes. Did you know that Sears makes more money off of their credit card dept than they do selling products?
3. We live in a culture of alcoholism. I’ve seen it first hand in my own family and in my neighborhood by the way adults brag at the pool about their parties over the weekend.

In summary; we live reckless lives.

Broken families; divorce

Lost jobs due to our recklessness (not due to the economy)

Families with kids that are out of control

Reckless financial decisions

Disintegrating marriages because we don’t take care of them like we should

Personal shame because we know who we really are on the inside

We see patterns of reckless living in our culture, and if we are honest, in our own lives as well.

So how do we deal with a “Reckless Life”? This Ephesians passage is going to help us see how the Gospel can take a reckless life and bring it back to a life that is lived the way God created it.

1. Examine your life. Read v. 15-17.

Be very careful, then, how you live. Not as unwise, but as wise.”

Here are some diagnostic questions to ask yourself to examine your life and see how reckless and out of control it just might be:

- How busy is your life? How are you using your time? Schedule?
- How healthy are your finances? How much debt? Paycheck to paycheck?
- How healthy are your relationships? If poor then why?
- Are you intentionally spending time with your kids or hiding behind work and other hobbies?
- Are you a grateful and thankful person? Bitter? Never satisfied?
- Do you understand what the Lord’s will is for your life? Or even how to discern God’s will? Do you even care what God’s will is?
- What is the condition of your heart? Proudful, shameful, arrogant, stingy, lustful, jealous?

2. Be filled with the Spirit. v. 18

Paul makes this contrast of getting drunk on wine and getting drunk on the Holy Spirit. Here is the good news. God has come to save His people from themselves. God has come to help His people. Remember what the prophet Isaiah said regarding the coming Redeemer, Jesus Christ:

^{NIV} **Isaiah 9:6** For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

^{NIV} **Isaiah 49:8** This is what the LORD says: "In the time of my favor I will answer you, and in the day of salvation I will help you; I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people, to restore the land and to reassign its desolate inheritances, to say to the captives, 'Come out,' and to those in darkness, 'Be free!'

After Jesus had raised a widow’s dead boy back to life, here was the people’s response;

^{NIV} **Luke 7:16** They were all filled with awe and praised God. "A great prophet has appeared among us," they said. "God has come to help his people."

The Gospel changes everything. The gospel is God’s unconditional love in sending his Son Jesus down to earth to wipe out your sins and to give you a new life. In order for us to receive this love we have to believe in faith in Jesus and to hand Him our heart to show us how life is really supposed to be lives.

Simply put, we have made a wreck of our lives, and God has come to help us. Help is the beginning, then comes life transformation, which leads to eternal life with God in heaven.

When you believe in faith that Jesus died on the cross for your sins and you hand over your heart, God sends the Holy Spirit to come and live and dwell in your heart. You become the temple of God, where His presence resides. That’s powerful stuff.

But this passage says, “Be filled with the Spirit.” The Greek word for “be filled” is describing a “pattern of life”. God wants our pattern of life to be filled with the Spirit that already lives in

us, God wants us to respond positively and obediently to His Holy Spirit that is in those who believe in Jesus.

If you have God's Spirit living in you then you know when the Spirit is prompting you to do things:

Like avoid temptation, or not give into it, there is always a way out

To speak a kind word to someone

To admit when you are wrong

I don't know about your relationship with your spouse but our petty grievances tend to center around the bathroom:

- Why can't you pick your towel and underwear up off the floor and put it on the hanger?
- Why do you have to have so many hair brushes?

Accusing Julie of taking my towel and leaving hers on the floor, I was actually the culprit!

But the Holy Spirit was prompting me to suck up my pride, admit I was wrong, and face the wrathful consequences.

The ESV Study Bible note on this verse says,

"... wine can control the mind and ruin one's judgment and sense of propriety, leading to debauchery, in contrast with this, being "filled with the Spirit" leads to self-control along with the other fruits of "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness and gentleness."

One fruit, the fruit of the vine can lead to a reckless life while another fruit, the fruit of the Spirit leads to a self-controlled life that glorifies God.

3. Make the most of Every Opportunity

Why? Because "the days are evil" and God does not want us to live "reckless lives", it's not how He intended life to be lived.

Look, the days are evil, "the devil prowls around like a lion waiting for someone to devour."

BUT

"The eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to Him."(Read II Chron. 16:9)

You need to Make the most of every opportunity by applying the strength of the Holy Spirit to your life . Here are three key areas:

1. Your Mind: set your mind on godly thoughts. It's hard, and grueling at times to focus away from worldly things and onto godly things.

There are a lot of new cars on the road, so when you are driving you begin to wonder what it would be like to drive a new car. But then you can think about how that person driving their new car is probably drowning in debt and how free you are to drive your used car with no car payment.

Advertisements entice men to think sexual thoughts. Fight it with Scripture, memorize Scripture, look away, think instead about the wonderful relationship you have with your own wife.

When your mind and thought life is getting out of control play this game. So you have a desire for something you see and your mind starts to fantasize about it. Maybe you saw a commercial for a cruise vacation and you start desiring that. Stop and begin to think about what you should be desiring instead. God wants us to find our rest and satisfaction in Him not in a vacation, God wants us to desire deep meaningful relationships with family and friends. Play the game of replacing “worldly desires” with “godly desires.”

2. Make the most of your Time. Look at those diagnostic questions, where are you spending most large blocks of time. Are you working too much? On the computer or watching tv too much? Are any of your hobbies taking time away from you being with your wife and kids, they really need you and want you to spend time with them. My hobby of websites and having to curb it.

Make the most of your workout time, listen to worship music or a sermon.

Quit watching so much tv and watch a great message on youtube or get off the computer and read a good book. If you took just 15 minutes a night before bed to read a great, encouraging book, you could read one a month, 12 a year, 120 great books in the next ten years.

3. Make the most of your Relationships. We are not going to live forever. Are kids are not going to be with us forever. I know those with young kids think that might be the case but we are facing two more years with Taylor till he's gone, then college. Wow, we need to make the most of every opportunity with him now and have no regrets later. Make the most of your relationship with your spouse. I know it's tough with little kids but God has given you that as your most important earthly relationship, you need to nurture it, take care of it. Don't just think that you will have all the time in the world when your kids are gone, if you wait that long to develop your relationship there won't be much of a relationship left when the kids are gone. Make the most of your relationships with friends. God has given us tremendous gifts of friendship to sharpen each other, hold each other accountable, to challenge each other, the care for each other and help each other fight through these evil days. These relationships need to be nurtured as well.

Conclusion:

I know of a man who lived a life of debauchery, a reckless life,
he drank too much

he got his girlfriend pregnant before they could get married

he got his family into way too much debt

he took stupid risks with shady business decisions and it ruined him financially

he did not care or nurture his relationship with his wife.

He died divorced, destitute, homeless and friendless all by the age of 58. His name was Tommy Fletcher, my dad, it was not pretty to watch and live through. So I suggest you examine your life, allow God to take it over and then live a life like no one else in our culture, a life devoted to glorifying God.