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Redeeming the Time

"Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." Ephesians 5:16

The Old Year has passed and the New Year is now a reality. Certainly the final days of 2004 were most gripping as events unfolded in lands touched by the Indian Ocean and the December 26th tsunami. This closing event of the year speaks out to each of us "that our hold on what remains is so uncertain" and the Scripture calls us to redeem the time with true works of love and helpfulness in the Gospel mandate. How sobering the world situation is at year's end, and what a call before us to "redeem the time" in the New Year.

The apostle Paul gave the text at the head of this column to people in Ephesus who were redeemed by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul acknowledged first their living relationship and experience in the work of Jesus Christ upon the cross. Those who claim to be redeemed in the blood of Christ must then so live as to bear the fruit of redemption. Are you redeemed in the blood of Christ? As you enter in 2005, ask the following questions: Have I left the darkness of this world to live in God's light? Do I know that I am a child of the Lord (verses 2 and 8)? If so, then Paul is speaking to you and calling you to bear the appropriate fruit of being a Christian by redeeming the time which remains in your life.

Buy up each opportunity. In other words, make the most of each opportunity. Remember, no one has any more time than you! Each person is given twenty-four hours each day, and the real question is what we do with it. I believe there are four practical areas which follow from Paul's exhortation for Christians to "redeem the time." First, our time is really not our own – it is the Lord's. We need to submit our time to His will, not our will (verse 17). Second, wise Christians will want to use the remaining time of their lives under the correct influences (verse 18). What influences of our world and culture are negatively leading us into unproductive Christian lives? Paul states clearly here that wrong influences will waste valuable time in our Christian lives. Who or what is influencing you as you begin another year? Third, are we making time for worship and fellowship with the saints, and when we do give time to this, is it truly spiritual and from the heart (verse 19), not just rote "duty"? And fourth, a spirit of thanksgiving will make your use of time precious. A sure way to become ineffective with the use of our time is to have an attitude of grumbling and complaining – it will take the energy right out of you. Are you thankful to the Lord for His mercies?

The year 2004 ended with a very somber call. Our days are fleeting. Redeemed children in Jesus will desire to bear fruit by redeeming the time today.