

Eph 4:25–32 (ESV) Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. ⁽²⁶⁾ Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ⁽²⁷⁾ and give no opportunity to the devil. ⁽²⁸⁾ Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. ⁽²⁹⁾ Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. ⁽³⁰⁾ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ⁽³¹⁾ Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ⁽³²⁾ Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

1. We continue with Paul's exhortation to the saved = it is simple - live like it

A. In v. 17-24 he said that the believer comes into the new life knowing they are to leave the old
1). They are to lay aside those old ways and put on the new

B. Now he moves from general to specific – this is the way that new life looks – the specifics

Thought: This also shows that just because we have a new nature – the Holy Spirit residing

A. Living out the new life is not automatic – it is a choice we are to make

I. THE CHRISTIAN IS TO PUT OFF LYING AND PUT ON TRUTH

Eph 4:25 (ESV) Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.

1. The importance of taking this seriously

Re 21:8 (ESV) But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, *and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.*

A. This doesn't mean a believer will never lie – we aren't perfect and do fail

1). It does mean a person who is a habitual liar can't be saved

2). Because it is so inconsistent with who we are and what we've become

a). We follow a Lord who is "The way, the *truth*, and the life" John 14:6

b). The God who indwells us is the "Spirit of *truth*" John 14:17

c). The word that guides us is the "Word of *truth*" John 17:17

B. Therefore the believer must choose to put any lying – in any form away from them

2. Instead we are to speak the truth with our neighbor

What this doesn't mean

A. Telling the truth doesn't require telling everything we know

1). Being truthful and keeping a confidence or legitimate secret is not in conflict

2). So we don't have to say everything – but everything we say is to be true

a). Our words should not deceive or mislead

B. Nor does truthfulness mean we unburden all our ill feelings – get it off our chest

This is an old psychological thing that was going around for awhile in the church

"You know...I don't really like you. Never have. Don't like the way you look, dress, smell. I hate your sense of humor.... Wow!.... That feels great. Like a weight lifted off my shoulder. See you!"

1). Probably best to just keep some of that to yourself

C. It also doesn't mean broadcasting the details of your sin – just being honest – bit on truth you know

1). There is a difference in admitting you're a sinner and giving the gory details

a). Paul said he was a sinner in Romans 7 – don't always do what I ought....

But didn't get into details of what that looked like

What this does mean

A. Like I said – you don't say everything – but when you speak it is truthful

B. It means having integrity – being somebody that people can trust – Your "Yes is a Yes"

- 1). When you say you're going to do something you do it
- C. It's being genuine

Transition: Paul tells us why this is so important

Eph 4:25 (ESV) Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you *speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.*

- A. Because we are members of one another – our words affect one another
 - 1). Just as a physical body – our brain starts sending false signals to our feet – we can't walk
 - 2). If our hands start sending false signals – we might scald ourselves thinking the object is cool
- B. For any body to function properly the communication must be right – it must be truthful
 - 1). If it's not the whole body will suffer - *Falsehood stifles unity; truth strengthens unity*

II. BE ANGRY BUT PUT OFF UNRIGHTEOUS ANGER

Eph 4:26–27 (ESV) Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ⁽²⁷⁾ and give no opportunity to the devil.

1. Notice that the Scripture does permit anger *“Be angry”*

- A. But it is a specific anger that has no sin in it – *“And do not sin”*
 - 1). Here we see that anger can be good but it can turn sinful very easily

2. The anger that is legitimate is a righteous anger – righteous indignation

- A. Most would say this is an indignation that arises in us when the Lord is being defamed
 - 1). No doubt this righteous anger led Jesus to cleanse the Temple of the money changers
- B. It would also be an anger when another is being harmed
 - 1). It reflects God's heart who hates injustice, immorality and ungodliness
 - 2). We should get angry when we think of human trafficking – I believe God does

3. Balance – But Jesus was not angry when he was harmed

1 Pe 2:23 (ESV) When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

- A. See this in it's purest colors on the cross – “Father forgive them”
- B. It's hard to hang back – stay silent when we feel abused – but that's what Jesus did
 - 1). Father I trust this is allowed by you – and will be used by you – thy will be done
 - 2). Rather than striking back I trust you to handle this situation

Transition: So there is a proper anger – but anger can also be sinful

4. Paul warns us about anger getting out of control

And Do Not Sin

- A. He's not giving permission to throw a fit – get even – dishonor God

Transition: Paul says righteous anger must be handled carefully – it can become sin – so he adds....

Do Not Let the Sun Go Down on Your Anger

Piper: This does not mean Eskimos at the North Pole may be angry and hold a grudge for six months while the sun is up

- A. This is simply saying – resolve things quickly – why?
 - 1). Because good anger can turn on you – it can be extremely destructive spiritually

Transition: Paul says in v. 27 how this happens

And Give No Opportunity to The Devil

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- A. When I cling to anger – failing to deal with the issues
 - 1). When I refuse to forgive or seek reconciliation
 - B. Satan is an expert at seeing the opportunity you are handing him
 - 1). He will take those seeds of anger and cause you to stew over it – turns to seething
 - a). You become bitter

The thoughts that used to be directed at the Lord are now about revenge – getting even

 - 1a). You try to pray – instead you find yourself plotting
 - 2a). Bitterness eats away at our spirituality and joy
 - C. Are you going through this right now – I know what it’s like
 - 1). I try to stop – think – Bill what is the Biblical response to this? What is Christlikeness?
 - a). Here is a good scripture memorize – this is what I’ll do – each time anger comes up

1 Pet 2:23 (NIV) When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

 - 1a). Lord – I’m not going to retaliate – plot – scheme – seek any kind of revenge
 - 2a). I entrust this to you – you have allowed this for a purpose – help me to grow
 - 2). These things don’t happen by accident – God is doing something good = Christlike character
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III. PUT OFF STEALING SO YOU CAN SHARE

Eph 4:28 (ESV) Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

1. We probably all stole as unbelievers – something exciting about it

- A. But believers are to be honest – in all that we do
 - 1). We don’t pad expense accounts – put more hours than we work – no petty theft
 - 2). We don’t pocket the change if a clerk overpays us - “Thank you Lord!” – not yours!
- B. The new life is a life that is characterized by honesty

2. Instead of stealing the believer is to be **working**

Eph 4:28 (ESV) Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor...

- A. This is God’s plan – we are to work hard – earn our daily bread

2 Th 3:10 (ESV) For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.

3. Paul writes - the work should be **honest work**

- A. IOW it is God-honoring work

Or at least nothing that demands a compromise of God’s standards – work that dishonors him

Transition: But notice what our mindset should be

Eph 4:28 (ESV) Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, *so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.*

1. We are responsible to work to provide for ourselves

- A. But we must also remain soft-hearted realizing that hard times hit responsible people
 - 1). We should be willing to help – to see ourselves as stewards of what God has given to us
- B. Christianity is always other-oriented – JOY – Jesus – Others - You
 - 1). It is to walk like Christ who sacrificed for others

In return God will reward that believer with great joy – it’s lining up with his will
 - 2). Piper tells us there are really three options regarding work:

You can steal to get, you can work to get for yourself, or you can work to get in order to give.

- a). Paul is obviously commending the third option
- 3). But ask any giver – they tell you the Lord keeps pouring it in – God pours it in they give it out
Prov 11:24 (NIV) One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty.
 - a). You really can't out give God

Thought: All these things lead to joy – God wants us to experience the abundant life

IV. PUT OFF CORRUPT TALK SO YOUR WORDS WILL BE EDIFYING

Eph 4:29 (ESV) Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

1. Our new Christianity allows cussing – I can't find that in the Scriptures

- A. Foul language should never **proceed from** the **mouth** of a Christian – Why? Because its totally out of character with their newness of life and the call to holiness
 - 1). Totally out of character with the Lord the claim to follow - Can you imagine Jesus saying that?
- B. Off-color jokes, profanity, dirty stories, vulgarity, double entendre, and every other form of corrupt talk should never cross our lips.

Col 3:8 (ESV) But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, *and obscene talk from your mouth.*

Transition: Paul says instead our words should build up– should fit the occasion – give grace

2. Should “build up”

- A. Our speech should be helpful, constructive, encouraging
 - 1). That doesn't mean it is never corrective – but correction should be to build up not tear down

3. It should be “as fits the occasion”

- A. Some people have no tact – they say things that don't fit the occasion – at the wrong time
 - 1). Things that offend – discourage - disappoint
 - 2). They may be true but they are better left unsaid

Transition: That's why Paul adds

4. Our words should “give grace to those who hear”

- A. The mature Christian not only speaks the truth but speaks it in love
 - 1). Grace is a willingness to love – to be kind when it isn't merited
 - a). The words reflect that – we don't go around backbiting – gouging – “They deserve it”
- B. We are to be like Christ – listen to what Luke said about his Words

Lk 4:22 (ESV) And all spoke well of him *and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth.*

Question: What do people think when they hear you speak? Do they hear grace? Kindness? Mercy?

Transition: Now Paul gives a reason why we need to be careful to obey these words

God Is Grieved When His Children Sin

Eph 4:30 (ESV) And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

1. The sin of God's children breaks his heart – he grieves

- A. When Christians lie instead of speak the truth
- When their lives are characterized by an unrighteous anger
- When they steal instead of share
- And speak corrupt words rather than gracious words

- 1). It obviously affects God – it grieves him like it would any loving parent with disobedient children
- 2. This grieving can lead to quenching the Spirit – 1 Thess 5:19**
 - A. That is when the Spirit withdraws his power and blessing from a life
 - 1). You find out what it's like to live on your own
 - 2). The only remedy for this is repentance

Transition: That brings us to the last thing we should put off and put on

V. PUT OFF NATURAL VICES SO GODLY VIRTUES WILL CHARACTERIZE YOUR LIFE

Eph 4:31 (ESV) Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

- 1. This shows a progression of sin – sin grows into greater sin**
 - A. **Bitterness** = a smoldering resentment – a brooding grudge
Can become **wrath** = a wild rage
If it doesn't become wrath it will become **anger** = an internal smoldering that eats at you
 - B. This eventually becomes **clamor** – you lose control – the anger breaks out into the public
Ort it can turn into **slander** – defaming someone else because your bitter
 - 1). You may not harm a person with violence but you destroy them with your words
 - C. Then he finishes **malice** – a general term for evil
 - 1). IOW all evil must be put off – the believer is not to toy with it

Point: Paul says the believer should not allow any of this into their heart – this must be put off
- 2. These are all sins that involve conflict between people**
 - A. Believers and unbelievers – but unfortunately believers with believers
 - 1). These sins break fellowship – destroy relationships – weaken the church
And mar its testimony in the world
 - 2). When an unbeliever sees Christians acting just like the rest of society
with their words –being impatient and unkind – slandering and backbiting
 - a). We hand the unbeliever another reason to reject the Gospel = hypocrites
 - B. Can I say – if you have a believer slander somebody else to you – tell them to stop!
 - 1). They are doing something that God considers an abomination
Don't be an enabler of their destruction – warn them – love them

Ps 101:5 (ESV) Whoever slanders his neighbor secretly **I will destroy.**

Transition: But what are we to do instead?

Eph 4:32 (ESV) Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

- 1. This is how God has treated us**
 - A. Now we are to turn around and treat others in the same way – that is Christlikeness
 - B. God did not love us, choose us, and redeem us because we were deserving, we weren't
Ro 5:8 (ESV) but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
Ro 5:10 (ESV) For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.
- 2. Being unconditionally KIND characterizes the Lord – Christlikeness - Godliness**

Lk 6:35 (ESV) But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, **for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil.**
- 3. TENDERHEARTED = compassionate - empathy**
 - A. It is an entering into another's pain – feeling it with them

See this in Christ: Mark 1:40-41 (NIV) A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean." (41) *Filled with compassion*, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!"

- 1). Jesus didn't see him as everybody else did – he didn't reject him like everybody else he entered into his pain – empathized – reached out to him
 - a). This is how the Christian is to be in this lost – brutal world - compassionate

4. **FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER as Christ has forgiven us**

- A. Want to know what the extent of your forgiveness towards others should be
 - 1). Just think about yourself – how much you were forgiven and treat others in the same way
 - 2). You've been forgiven an unpayable debt – the offenses against you can't compare
- B. Let's add this to our remedy against bitterness
 - 1). You respond like Christ did when others offended him

1 Pet 2:23 (NIV) When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.
 - 2). You respond like Christ did when YOU offended him

Eph 4:32 (ESV) ...forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Thought: The idea of forgiveness like this is for your joy – so you don't get bitter

- A. Do it for you – bitterness will destroy you – this liberates you so you can enjoy life

SUMMARY

1. **This is how the Christian is to walk – honest – hard workers – who edify one another rather than tear each other down**