

Book of Ephesians Bible Study

Rhema Worship Center

Verses 25 thru 32

Verse 25

**Therefore, putting away lying, each one speak truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another.**

Created in righteousness and true holiness, certain obligations are placed on the Christian. This verse begins a series of seven practical exhortations concerning the walk of the Christian. The admonition to put away falsehood and speak the truth is always very hard to keep, but is repeatedly commanded in the New Testament (4:15; 5:9). Since the general theme of this chapter is unity, speaking truth to one's neighbor is important. Speaking lies can destroy peace and harmony faster than anything else. Paul reminds the Ephesians that they are members of one another, and to lie to each other would be like one member of the body fighting another member of the body. God's people—of all people—ought to be able to trust one another. Remember, lying is one of the things that God hates (Proverbs 6:16,17).

God says don't lie to each other. Speaking the truth can be a fearful thing sometimes. Speaking the truth may cost you friends. Speaking the truth may cost you popularity. But it is better to endure the consequences of the truth than to prolong a lie, and have to deal with the destruction it causes.

A body can only function properly if it tells itself the truth. If your hand touches something hot but your hand tells your brain that the thing is cool, your hand will be severely burned. That's why telling the truth is so important, because **we are members of one another.**

*Question...what should your response be to someone who believes you have lied to them or on them, but you have not?*

*Question...can you really tell the truth to a person without hurting their feelings?*

## Verse 26

### **Be angry, and do not sin”: do not let the sun go down on your wrath**

This is a quote from Psalm 4:4. It is not a command to be angry, but a caution not to sin when angry. People often do things when they are angry that they would not normally do. While this is not a command to be angry, neither is it a prohibition of anger. Sometimes anger is necessary. Paul felt anger (Acts 13:9,10; 23:3) and so did Jesus (Mark 3:5). It would be impossible to live and never be stirred within one's emotions; however, the Christian must keep his emotions under control. While anger may be justified at times, it must be speedily cooled down. It should subside the same day it arises. When the sun goes down, our anger ought to be gone. If anger is held very long, it turns into malice, hatred, resentment, and the desire for revenge.

Remember, not all anger is sin. It's OK to get angry if we are angry at the correct things. There's a place for righteous indignation.

God gets angry; the bible says that he is angry at the wicked every day. God gets angry, and if God is living in us then whatever makes God angry should make us angry as well. Sin should make us angry. There is something wrong with us if we don't get angry at sin. We should hate sin, and be angry at sin because of what it does to God and because of the trouble it causes in this world.

26. In other words, don't let righteous anger turn into the sin of bitterness. It's very important for Christians to deal with righteous anger in a Biblical way. It's very important to release the energy involved in righteous anger in a way that lines up with scripture, in a way that honors God. So again this is a caution from God, deal with righteous anger in a Biblical way so that it doesn't fester into the sin of bitterness.

Righteous anger grieves over sin and evil, while fleshly anger allows the devil to take a foothold in our life and causes us to sink deeper in the sinful lusts of the flesh. Jesus gave an example of righteous anger in Matthew 21, where he turned over the table of the money-changers and those who were selling oxen, sheep and doves in the Temple court. He was also angry and grieved at the hardness of men's hearts in Mark 3 when He healed the man with a withered hand, on a Sabbath day.

Anger is not always a sin and not all anger is wrong, and there are times when Christians should express righteous anger, in a way that honors the Lord. But when any sort of anger is not addressed biblically, the enemy can turn righteous anger into a sin or escalate fleshly anger into a greater offence, which is why Paul continues with

the directive: "do not let the sun go down on your anger" -address ALL anger issues, quickly.

How important to keep a tight rein on every form of anger. Fleshly anger should be renounced before it has an opportunity to develop. As soon as an angry, jealous, vindictive, vengeful thought is conceived in the mind, it should be taken captive and given to Christ, so that it is not allowed to produce the fruit of unrighteousness, while righteous anger should not be permitted to develop into some sort of self-righteous attitude, which also gives the enemy a foothold in our life.

May we learn to recognize the difference between true righteous anger and ungodly fleshly anger that causes us to sin. May we 'keep short accounts' when dealing with anger and be ready to address issues immediately so that we honor the Lord in thought, word, deed, motive, and emotions

*Question...how do we express anger that honors the Lord?*

*Question...what should Christians be angry about in our society today and what should that anger lead to?*

**Verse 27**

**Nor give place to the devil.**

All this, in turn, gives a place (opportunity) to the devil to lead us into transgression. And while there is definitely a connection between anger and giving place to the devil, there are also other ways we can give a place to the devil. Some examples would be: (1) meditating upon lustful things, (2) thinking on what we think is our unfair share of earthly riches, (3) reading books, watching television, or going to movies that undermine faith and morals.

The devil knows our fallen sin nature like a book. I'm convinced that his demons, of which there are probably multiplied billions, know what buttons to push to get us to act sinfully.

One thing Satan and his demons know how to use very skillfully is anger. If they notice anger they will pounce on it. The devil will use anger in a person as a springboard to other sins. Don't let the Devil win; do not let sin win.

When we take responsibility for our daily practice; clothe ourselves with the new nature of Christ, and apply the Word of God in everything we do, we will find we are walking in spirit and truth. When we clothe ourselves with Christ by putting on the whole armor of God, we are protected against spiritual wickedness and the devil has no opportunity to deceive our heart, shipwreck our soul and cause us to stumble in our Christian walk.

*Question...what specific areas in life can cause Christians to “give place to the devil?”*

*Question...do you think Christians underestimate the devil?*

### *Verse 28*

Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.

It may seem strange that Christians would have to be told not to steal. But stealing is not uncommon. Some folks who never think of themselves as thieves are actually involved in stealing. They cheat on taxes, drive hard bargains, misrepresent products, loaf on their employer's time, short an employee's time, cheat on examinations, etc. Paul says let him who stole—regardless of how he did it, or what he stole—steal no more. Of course, the best antidote for stealing is honest labor. Work is not just for selfish gain, but to help others. We do this not by stealing from the rich to give to the poor. We do this by being gainfully employed and sharing our bounty with those who are in need. This passage is not an authorization for Communism. This verse commands private generosity and assumes private ownership of property. If we don't own anything, we can't give it away. Communism, on the other hand, destroys private ownership and makes all things state property.

Stealing can be dressed up in lots of different ways and Paul is instructing us that this prohibition against theft is carried out in spirit and in truth - in every facet of life. Paul not only insists on a positive change in our outward behavior but demands that it flows from a changed heart that loves and honors the Lord and demonstrates a genuine care and concern for the well-being of others.

*Question...does this Scripture implicate that we should always help someone in need?*

*Question...If Christians have an obligation to help the poor (and we do), does that mean we are obligated to help everyone everywhere in the same way in any circumstance of need? How should we think about our responsibility to help the poor?*

*Question...should we help those who are Christians in need before the non-believer?*

## Verse 29

**Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.**

Christians must carefully control their speech at all times. Paul is warning the Ephesians not to let any speech that is rotten and corrupt go out of their mouths (cf. 5:4; Matthew 12:36,37). Words carry with them the personality and thoughts of the speaker. They can do evil or good. The Christian must use his words for good things, such as giving instruction, encouragement, and correction. God is saying don't speak words that corrupt others spiritually. Talk that isn't intended to make someone better or produce something good should be avoided altogether. We're better off not saying anything if that's the case.

We are to guard our tongue and not allow any corrupt communication to fall from our lips. The words we speak should flow from a heart that is centered on Christ and should minister timely words of grace and encouragement to others. This call to put off unwholesome words and engage in gracious speaking excludes all types of improper language; silly speech; coarse words and hurtful gestures. But is also includes spreading rumors; participating in gossip; circulating lies; boastful comments or engaging in scornful or blasphemous speech.

Unwholesome, worthless words are to be replaced by good and gracious speech for a reason... so that others are edified and encouraged by what we say. Ecclesiastes tells us that 'the words of a wise man's mouth are gracious' and the book of Proverbs reminds us that 'an appropriate answer brings joy to a person - and a well-timed word is a good thing'. When a word we have spoken has given encouragement to others, and meets a timely need, it is a joyful thing, it blesses others, and it honors the Lord.

There are many passages throughout Scripture that remind us that 'pleasant words are pure while the words of a worthless man are like a scorching fire'. Jesus is the

supreme example, whose words were pure, timely, holy, and honored God. We read in Luke, "all were speaking well of Him, and wondering at the gracious words which were falling from His lips" ... and can we ever forget the wonderful words of forgiveness Christ uttered on the cross?

We are not simply to know what Scripture says but are to act responsibly and obey the call of God to speak timely words of encouragement, which edify the Body; rejoices the heart; give grace to all those who hear them ... and honor our Father in heaven.

*Question...does this Scripture mean we should only speak words of edification and never correction?*

*Question...how would you define corrupt communication?*

*Question...If you find yourself in a situation where a gossip is spewing out putrid information about others, what is your responsibility? Should you simply be silent and let it go on uninterrupted, or would the Holy Spirit want you to take some other action?*

Verse 30

**And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.**

Israel grieved the Holy Spirit by their sins in the wilderness and in the land of Canaan (Isaiah 63:10). We grieve the Holy Spirit by wicked deeds and rotten speech. We grieve Him when we violate the commandments He has given us through the apostle Paul in this epistle. Holiness is always sensitive. Therefore, we should not be surprised to learn that the Holy Spirit by whom we were sealed is sensitive.

When the word "quench" is used in Scripture, it is speaking of suppressing fire. When believers put on the shield of faith, as part of their armor of God ([Ephesians 6:16](#)), they are extinguishing the power of the fiery darts from Satan. Christ described hell as a place where the fire would not be "quenched" ([Mark 9:44, 46, 48](#)). Likewise, the Holy Spirit is a fire dwelling in each believer. He wants to express Himself in our actions and attitudes. When believers do not allow the Spirit to be seen in our actions or we do what we know is wrong, we suppress or quench the Spirit ([1 Thessalonians 5:19](#)). We do not allow the Spirit to reveal Himself the way that He wants to.

To understand what it means to grieve the Spirit, we must first understand that this indicates the Spirit possesses personality. Only a person can be grieved; therefore, the Spirit must be a divine person in order to have this emotion. Once we understand this, we can better understand how He is grieved, mainly because we too are grieved. [Ephesians 4:30](#) tells us that we should not grieve the Spirit. We grieve the Spirit by living like the pagans (4:17-19), by lying (4:25), by being angry (4:26-27), by stealing (4:28), by cursing (4:29), by being bitter (4:31), by being unforgiving (4:32), and by being sexually immoral (5:3-5). To grieve the Spirit is to act out in a sinful manner, whether it is in thought only or in both thought and deed.

Both quenching and grieving the Spirit are similar in their effects. Both hinder a godly lifestyle. Both happen when a believer sins against God and follows his or her own worldly desires. The only correct road to follow is the road that leads the believer closer to God and purity, and farther away from the world and sin. Just as we do not like to be grieved, and just as we do not seek to quench what is good—we should not grieve or quench the Holy Spirit by refusing to follow His leading.

*Question...what makes the Holy Spirit grieve?*

### Verse 31

**Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.**

*Bitterness* is an evil attitude which refuses to forgive or be forgiven. It manifests itself in sharpness, harshness, spitefulness, and resentment. This sin closes all doors to reconciliation. The *wrath* and *anger* in this context represent an explosion of one's temper that is sinful, the kind that produces uncontrolled words and actions. *Clamor* is loud speaking, boasting, and quarrelling. With clamor there is no room for kindness. *Evil speaking* is from the Greek word *blasphemia*, and is often used to describe those who speak injuriously against God, as well as one's own fellowman. *Malice* is ill will, the desire to injure. Those who hold malice are wicked and depraved with a heart full of hatred. It is a sad situation when disciples of Christ exhibit these “old man” traits. We must work hard to put away from us these sins by being “renewed in the spirit of [our] minds” (4:23), putting on the “new man.” (4:24).

Wrath and anger are two sides of the same coin. Wrath is a quick hitting outburst that does a lot of damage real fast. Wrath is a nuclear bomb.

Anger is like a ground war. It is slow, but persistent. Anger is not as noticeable as wrath but it is just as destructive and just as sinful. Anger destroys the soul of the one who is angry and anger causes people to do hurtful things to the one they don't like.

One of the most pervasive sins which too often feeds our fleshly attitudes and appetite is bitterness. Bitterness is often the root of many emotional outbursts and is too often birthed by a smothering resentment against the injustice or unfairness of another or due to problematic circumstances - some of which may be real while others may be perceived - some of which may have been avoidable and others unavoidable.

Bitterness is seen in this passage as a root that can morph into a number of other sinful attitudes and ungodly practices. It can smolder into deep-seated wrath or mushroom into explosive anger. It can be exhibited in slanderous speech, malicious gossip, or clamorous complaining.

But when bitterness is allowed to take root in our heart it can grow into a poisonous volcano that spews its toxic venom over all who pass by. Bitterness is also like a tree, which can branch into every area of our life and cause devastation, distress, and destruction - to ourselves and to others.

But we are instructed to get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. We are exhorted to be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ, God forgave you.

Kindness, compassion, forgiveness and grace were shown to us at the cross of Christ and they are the spiritual fruit that Paul tells us can halt and reverse the growth of bitterness in our heart.

The main component to annihilate bitterness in our heart and its ungodly sisters seems to be forgiveness. When genuine forgiveness is married to kindness, compassion and grace it deactivates bitterness and all its ruinous counterparts. When kindness, compassion, forgiveness, and grace is sprinkled over the root of bitterness it will shrivel away and allow us to love in the same way that Christ loved us and gave Himself for us.

Review handout on The Consequences of bitterness



## Verse 32

**And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you.**

The word *kind* is usually used to describe God. It describes one who is virtuous, good, mild, and pleasant. It manifests a tender attitude toward others to the point of being concerned and considerate toward their needs. Elsewhere Paul calls this “brotherly kindness” (II Peter 1:7). The word translated *forgiving* in this passage does not just mean to release from guilt. It also means to be gracious, kind, and benevolent. Someone might ask, “How can I be kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving toward one who has wronged me?” This is an “old man” question. The motive for Christian goodness and forgiveness is different from that of the world. Out in the world, people are good because “it pays.” They get something in return. The Christian is good and forgiving toward our fellow men because God *in Christ* has forgiven us. We realize how much we are indebted unto God; therefore, we forgive the small offenses our neighbors commit against us. Although there can be no greater motivation for kindness, tenderheartedness, and forgiveness than this, we must also recognize that if we don't forgive, we are committing spiritual suicide (Matthew 6:15).

The bible says that we Christians should forgive as God forgives. That means don't make someone beg for forgiveness, or pay for forgiveness. It also means do not delay forgiveness. It means don't bring up offenses that we say have been forgiven. When someone confesses their sin to God he forgives and in essence says, let's move forward and forget the past. If God does that with us then we should be that way toward others. Holding a grudge is not an option. The bible says if we don't forgive others than God will not forgive us.

Forgiveness was a matter that was dear to the heart of our compassionate God - and forgiveness paid a tremendous part in the redemption of mankind. Forgiveness of sin is what fallen man yearns for and yet is incapable of receiving, unless he comes to the foot of the cross and is washed clean by the blood of the Lamb, for there is no forgiveness of sins - except through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Forgiveness was also a theme that was close to the heart of our kind and gracious Lord Jesus and much of His teaching and training surrounds the principle of forgiveness - gracious, beautiful, unconditional forgiveness. Forgiveness was one of the final thoughts on the heart of our Messiah as He hung on the cross - and uttered those universe-shattering words, Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.

Forgiveness should be a subject to which we should also pay close attention for forgiveness is one of the godly garments with which we have been covered and clothed - and our call to kindness, compassion and forgiveness rests on the immeasurable forgiveness and mercy that each of us have received in Christ Jesus.

It seems to be the case that those who are not able to forgive have never come to an understanding how much they have been forgiven - for the more understanding we have of the grace that we have received the deeper our gratitude and the greater our capacity to forgive other people.

*End Ephesians Chapter 4 study*