

Church Unity/Building (4)

Conflict Resolution 5 Rules of Good Communication!

Ephesians 4:25-32

INTRO-

Introductory Illustration

- ***The only reliable evidence of a person’s being saved is NOT a person’s past experience or lip service of dedication to Christ; it’s not the church-attendance role nor is it the bible-knowledge winner.***
 - The only reliable evidence of a person’s being saved is the **present life that reflects Christ and godliness.** That’s it!
- ***1 John example...***
 - **1 John 1:6; 2:3-6, 29; 3:4-10, 24*; 4:20-21; 5:2-3, 18.**

Background to Eph 4:25ff

- **Paul** in exhorting the Church to live Godly lives in obedience to God (4:1) he told them how to live in the Church (4:11-16) and then he told them that they have to *put off* the old and *put on* the new (4:17-24).
- **Here are five practical examples/applications** that Paul provides.

****READ THE TEXT****

THESIS—I will provide you with “Five ‘How-Tos’” so you can reflect Christ in your walk.

God’s Word helps you recognize your sin and tells you how to get rid of it and what to replace it with to honor God!

The way each of these is organized is threefold: (1) the negative command; (2) followed by the positive command; (3) followed by the reason (Larkin, 95).

These are practical applications of how the new person in Christ is to walk day by day (Hoehner, 614).

I. HOW TO DESTROY DECEIT—BE HONEST! (25)

Dio- This is Paul's way of summing up *everything that has already been said* and now... here is the conclusion! Everything said before (vv.18-24) leads up to this.

These are Paul's practical scenarios for 'putting off' and 'putting on'.

a. What not to do (25a)

- i. Put off falsehood.
- ii. The believer is to place **all forms of falsehood** away from him, far behind him, way out of the reach to grasp it again.
 1. **Falsehood**- anything that is *untrue*; anything that is dishonest, untrue, unfaithful, deceptive, deceiving, expanding the truth, a 'white lie'.
 2. Remember that **Satan is the father of lies** (=falsehood) (**John 8:44**).
 3. No lie is of the truth (1 John 2:21, 27).
 4. Revelation 21:27; 22:15 states that **no one who practices falsehood will enter heaven**.

b. What to do (25b)

- i. **The command** is to speak truth
- ii. We are to speak truth *each person with his neighbor*—with everyone!
 1. Don't promise something that isn't true; don't promise someone more than what you can offer; don't tell someone that something is greater than it really is.
 2. ***I remember cheating my way through ONE English class my senior year of High School. It was Mr. O'Neal's English class. In so doing, I lied!***
 3. But when I got saved God convicted me and I called Mr. O'Neal and told him ***exactly what I had done***, how God had convicted and saved me, and how God had changed me.
 4. ***I wasn't content with just confessing the sin. I had to SPEAK truth to Him and make it RIGHT.***
- iii. **Jesus is the 'truth'** (John 14:6). God's word is truth (John 17:17); the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth (John 14:17).

c. The reason (25c)

- i. Because we are members of one another.
- ii. In other words, because all true believers are ***members of the same family in Christ*** (Eph 4:1-10) we are to be truthful with one another.
 1. ***For example***, 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**
- iii. **Being truthful requires:**
 1. **Humility**—

- 2. Willingness to be wrong—
- 3. Openness to suffer the consequences—
- iv. *In conclusion: “believers base their lifestyle on reality; there is no need to bring falsehood into any relationship whether with believers or unbelievers”*

II. HOW TO CONQUER ANGER—KEEP CURRENT! (26-27)

Proverbs 29:8 But wise men turn away anger.

Proverbs 30:33 “so stirring up anger produces strife.”

a. What not to do (26a)

- i. It is a given that in this life you will get angry and when you do *do not sin*. Fight against anger with all your might!
- ii. There is **righteous anger**—God-centered. It can quickly turn into **sinful** anger (self-centered, selfish, etc.)
- iii. But there is a kind of righteous anger. Indeed, there was an **English preacher** who met a certain man who was trying to lure a young girl into prostitution. The preacher was SO angry (and rightly so!) that he bit his lip until it bled! (MacArthur, 184).

b. What to do (26b)

- i. Don't let the sun go down on your anger.
- ii. **Principle:** *Keep current when things go wrong with other people!*
 - 1. **DO NOT** act as though something didn't happen; don't shove it under the rug; and certainly don't **hold a grudge** and grow bitter toward someone (=these are sinful!).
 - 2. Rather, swallow your pride, go up to the person and get things right **ASAP**.
 - 3. This verse calls for “speedy abandonment of anger!”.
 - 4. When anger festers for long periods of time it leads to angry outbursts.
- iii. *A pastor* once went to his study early one Sunday morning to review his notes that he left on his desk before the Church service. **However, the janitor arrived before the pastor and thought they were trash and he threw them in the dumpster.**
 - 1. *The pastor*, overtaken by anger, lashed out at the poor janitor and said some quite nasty things to him.
 - 2. The pastor then sat on the platform as the singing began hoping to preach from what he had remembered of his sermon notes.
 - 3. **Then he noticed the janitor sitting in the 2nd row. And the pastor said to himself: “I can't preach this sermon while this anger is going on.”**

4. So during the singing, the pastor went down, took the janitor outside and asked for forgiveness. ***Then he went and preached! That is NOT letting the sun go down on your anger!***
- c. **The reason (27)**
- i. The more you give into anger and the more you hold a grudge the more **Satan begins to have a foothold in your life.**
 1. Fight this with all violence!
 - ii. The more you wait, and put off, and overlook and deny your ‘anger’ against someone/something the more opportunities you give to Satan to manipulate the situation for his purposes
 - iii. ***Indeed***, don’t even give the devil a chance to exert his influence!

III. HOW TO STRANGLE STEALING—GIVE MUCH! (28)

When we think of stealing we often think of *bank-robbers*. But stealing is so much more **subtle** and **sneaky**. We all have stolen.

- a. **What not to do (28a)**
- i. The one who steals — The thief (the one who is characterized by stealing) **must NO LONGER steal.**
 1. No second chances; no grace; no mercy. If you’ve been stealing, **STOP IT!**
 2. ***In that time, people had to steal to live—the economy was bad. They had to steal to feed their families.***
 - ii. **Stealing can include:**
 1. Taking something that isn’t yours: cheating on homework, copying someone’s homework if you didn’t do it; copying on an exam, cheating; stealing money from someone including parents; taking more than what you ask them for; stealing something from a store (anything—even a pack of gum!)
 2. Moreover, we steal when we fail to worship God as we ought or when we set our own interests before God’s interests; we steal from God when we fail to honor him by our daily lives or fail to tell others of His saving love. You steal by borrowing money and not repaying.
- b. **What to do (28b)**
- i. Rather, the **thief** must NOT steal but let him work. The word here is a **command**: “let him **labor**”—work hard. **HOW?**
 1. working **good** with his own hands.
 2. The idea is instead of stealing, be willing to work **hard** for things—blood, sweat, toil, and tears.
 3. ***The easy road is often the sinful road. And the sinful road is the broad road that leads to hell.***

c. **The reason (28c)**

- i. Rather than stealing, the person must work so that he has something to **share**. So now he's not only STOPPED stealing but how he is GIVING to people in need!
- i. **Really, work has a number of positive benefits:**
 1. *First*, it provides for a person's material needs (\$\$)
 2. *Second*, it provides something useful to do (beneficial to oneself and others).
 3. *Third*, it enables one to materially help others who are in need (\$\$).
 - a. *Talk about a change!*

IV. HOW TO SWEETEN SPEECH—SPEAK USEFULLY! (29-30)

Matthew 12:34 For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.

You wanna know what your heart is like? Just listen to what comes out of your mouth!

Remember: Matthew 12:36 ³⁶ "But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment.

a. **What not to do (29a)**

- i. Every word that is corrupt/filthy/rotten must not come out of your mouth!
- ii. **filthy** - refers to bad/sour, rotten fruit (Matt 7:17) and a bad, sour fish (Matt 13:48). *Don't let your speech be like this!*
- iii. **It INCLUDES this kind of speech:**
 1. God's Name in Vain
 2. Make light of heavy things (trivialize heavy truths)
 3. Using sexual speech/innuendos
 4. Hateful speech/angry language

b. **What to do (29b)**

- i. Three phrases that get at the **heart (motive!)**:
 1. **Is this word good for building someone up?**
 2. **Is this word good for the need of the moment?**
 - a. **Proverbs 25:11** ¹¹ *Like apples of gold in settings of silver*
Is a word spoken in right circumstances (cf. 15:23).
 3. **Is this word good (profitable) for those who hear it?**

c. **The reason (29c)**

- i. You want your speech to give **grace** to those who hear.
- ii. *The fastest and easiest way you can destroy your Christian reputation is by your speech that is filled with rottenness.*
- iii. Don't let your speech **destroy your reputation.**

d. **The motivation (30)**

- i. One of the ways you can **grieve God** is by speaking in a way that dishonors Him!
- ii. ***If he saved you and sealed you and secured you why would you speak in a way that saddens God?***
- iii. NOTE: Bad speech is forbidden for 2 reasons:
 - 1. It hinders spiritual growth, and
 - 2. It grieves the Holy Spirit.
 - a. *How bad would it be if a believer behaved in a way that grieves the very God who saved them and who marked them as His own child .*
- iv. ***Indeed, Spurgeon rightly believes: “I think I now see the Spirit of God grieving, when you are sitting down to read a novel and there is your Bible unread. Perhaps you take down some book of travels, and you forget that you have got a more precious book of travels in the Acts of the Apostles, and in the story of your blessed Lord and Master. You have no time for prayer, but the Spirit sees you very active about worldly things, and having many hours to spare for relaxation and amusement. And then he is grieved because he sees that you love worldly things better than you love him.”***

V. HOW TO GLORIFY GOD—ACT! DON'T REACT! (31-32)

This is where you prepare *ahead of time* for what *will* inevitably come. ***Plan for hardships. Plan for disappointments. Plan for people to fail you. Plan for people to wrong you. Just plan for it... But how will you respond?***

Don't sinfully react! (31)

a. Bitterness

- i. **bitter** - to have a bitter or resentful attitude. This is the kind of attitude that has lasting anger; it is hard to reconcile; it just continues being bitter and resentful for a long time.
- ii. **Hebrews 12:15** ¹⁵ See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble.
- iii. ***Aristotle said: this*** is the resentful spirit that refuses reconciliation (Guzik).

b. Wrath

- i. this refers to a “passionate outburst of anger”

c. Anger

- i. lingering, settled animosity

d. Clamor

- i. This refers to the clamor of excited persons in quarreling and shouting
 - 1. This is the person who gets involved in “loud arguments and yelling at one another”

- e. **Blasphemy**
 - i. abusive language and cursing God; claiming to live for God yet in reality denying God is blasphemy.
- f. **Evil**
 - i. a summary, all-inclusive word for “badness” or “wickedness”

Do deliberately prepare! (32)

- g. **Kind**
 - i. - loving benevolence toward other people.
 - ii. **Luke 6:35** for [The Most High] Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil *men*.
- h. **Tender-hearted**
- i. **Forgiving/Be gracious**
 - i. usually translated as “forgive’ one another.
 - ii. How many times is the Lord gracious and forgiving to you? Ten times? 20 times? Thousands of times? Hundreds of thousands of sins? ***So you do likewise to each other!***

CONCL-

Concluding Illustration

- ***Speak the parable of the unforgiving servant (Matt 18)***
- **These are some practical ways that you can reflect Jesus Christ in your daily life.**