



15 Ephesians 4:25-32 and Ephesians 5:1-2  
Being Imitators of God

*<sup>25</sup> Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. <sup>26</sup> Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, <sup>27</sup> and give no opportunity to the devil. <sup>28</sup> 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. <sup>29</sup> 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. <sup>30</sup> And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. <sup>31</sup> Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. <sup>32</sup> Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. (Ephesians 4:25-32 ESV) Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; <sup>2</sup> and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. (Ephesians 5:1-2 NASB)*

Let us pray.

Remember Larry spoke on Sunday about the Old Self. It is the nature that was you before you were saved. Paul told us to TAKE IT OFF and he tells us to PUT ON the New Self. That is the process of being transformed into Christ-likeness. We will see in the first two verses of Chapter 5 that Paul tells us to be nothing less than "imitators of Christ".

On Wednesday we looked at the verses that follow the 22-24 which Pastor Larry covered in his message last week.

**V. 25 NO MORE LYING – Believers words need to be trustworthy**

Paul tells us to stop playing games with falsehoods and nonsense. We are to be people who keep our word. This means if you borrow money or promise to pay for something and you don't do it, you are lying. Your word doesn't mean much. Our yes should be yes and our no should be no. And Paul tells us why. It is because we are all members of one body. What one part does affects the other part. I said Wednesday this includes being careful about what we pass on as truth on Facebook etc.

**v. 26 DON'T BE ANGRY RESULTING IN SIN – believers are not to be hotheads**

Paul then tells us to be angry but do not sin. We know that anger isn't always a sin, but most of the time when we get angry it is sin. I have heard people say, "Well Jesus got angry at the people selling stuff in the Temple, and He turned over the tables." Well, the problem is you are not driving people out of the Temple and you're not Jesus. Paul tells us to be careful that our anger doesn't cause us to sin. Don't hold grudges. If you do, you are not putting on the New Man. Paul says this kind of unforgiveness will give the devil an opportunity to take a hold in your life.

#### **V. 27-28      DON'T BE STEALING – WORK SO YOU CAN BE GENEROUS!**

Paul then tells us to stay away from schemes and deceptions and just engage in honest work. What is honest work? It is doing a good job and getting paid for it. There is nothing wrong with hard work and being compensated properly for it. And Paul goes on to tell us to work and earn so that we can be generous with others.

We are not supposed to spend all that we get or make on ourselves. The purpose for getting is giving. *Proverbs 19 He that lends to the poor lends to the Lord.* That means when you help those less fortunate than you **YOU ARE LENDING IT TO THE LORD**, and as Sandy pointed out on Wednesday, God pays back what you lend Him!

#### **v. 29. Clean up your speech (no vulgarity-no coarse talk-no dirty jokes) – “Every human encounter you have is an opportunity for courtesy or conflict” – Choose courtesy**

When I was a young man I had a filthy mouth. I suppose I could blame it on the mining camps where I worked or something else, but the problem was me not them. Paul is telling us if we desire to put on the New Man get the cursing and foul language out of our hearts, minds, and mouth. I would add what my dad always said, "Every human contact is an opportunity for courtesy or conflict. Choose courtesy." Remember the words of James the brother of Jesus, "<sup>19</sup> You know this, my beloved brothers and sisters. Now everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger; <sup>20</sup> for a man's anger does not bring about the righteousness of God. (James 1:19-20 NASB)

#### **v. 30 Don't grieve the Holy Spirit**

When you accepted Christ, you received the Holy Spirit of God within you. He resides there and is aware of every thought, word, and deed that you generate. If it is not of God, it grieves the Holy Spirit. When we grieve the Holy Spirit we come under conviction. Develop a heart that listens to Him. You will begin to recognize when you grieve the Holy Spirit. As you come under conviction you can choose with immediacy to put back on the New Man! (start with 1 John 1:9 agreeing with God that you have a sin problem)

#### **V. 31 *Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you***

Bitterness is holding on to a grudge. When bitterness (prolonged unforgiveness) is in you, there is poison in your heart. There are 5 things listed here: Bitterness is anger that never found forgiveness. It is poisonous. It develops into hate and darkness.

In Acts chapter 8, Paul confronted Simon the Sorcerer. He wanted to pay money to be able to lay hands on people so that they would receive the Holy Spirit. I think it's interesting that he wanted to do the right thing for the wrong reason. He wanted power and prestige. For some reason he had a bitter heart. That led to the devil having a foothold in his heart.

*<sup>20</sup> Peter answered: "May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money!" <sup>21</sup> You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God. <sup>22</sup> Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord in the hope that he may forgive you for having such a thought in your heart. <sup>23</sup> **For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin.***

Paul then talks about wrath....that means RAGE. Clamor means someone who gets into it with everyone else. Don't be argumentative. That's not the New Man. Slander is when you use angry words that have the intent to drag someone through the mud.

These are ALL part of the old life. SO WHAT DO WE DO WHEN SOMEONE ELSE HURTS US? We talk to the Lord. That is what we do. Don't talk to others. Malice – means the intention to do harm to another. PUT THESE THINGS AWAY.

v. 32 <sup>32</sup> *Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*

WOW! Let me tell you something about my marriage. It is easier to love my wife than to be kind to my wife. It is easier for me to love each of you than it is sometimes to be kind to you. God has been working on me lately to make me kinder to each of you. As a pastor, I sometimes get fed up with people and situations. His Holy Spirit is teaching me to be kind in those moments. I've asked the Lord to help me be a kinder, gentler soul. He is doing that. That's what the Holy Spirit does.

JUST LIKE YOU HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN.

Forgiving others is one of the greatest ways you can put on the New Man. When you carry unforgiveness within yourself it will destroy you and make you bitter from the inside out. People will hurt us that never will admit it to themselves. FORGET ABOUT IT. DON'T WAIT FOR THEM TO BE REMORSEFUL AND TO FORGIVE. You forgive and be healed. God has forgiven you for all you have ever done, so extend that forgiveness to others. It will cleanse you and set you free. I have printed this scripture in your bulletin, but it is written in a personal prayer way. Perhaps you could develop the discipline to

put it in your kitchen and read it with your first cup of coffee each morning this next week.

*<sup>25</sup> Lord, because I am a new creation, I put on the New Man. Lord, today I will speak truth. I will do what I say I will do. I will not gossip or talk about anyone else. <sup>26</sup>Lord, when I become angry because I am human, take that anger from me quickly lest I sin. God I renounce right now my right to hold a grudge because <sup>27</sup> I will not give any opportunity to the devil to destroy my life. <sup>28</sup> Lord, help me today to be industrious, and to get off of my backside to do some honest work with my hands so that I may have something to share with anyone in need. <sup>29</sup> Lord, put a clamp on my mouth so that no corrupt talk will come out of me. Guard me from gossip or slander. <sup>30</sup> Holy Spirit let nothing I think, say, or do grieve you. You have sealed me for the day of redemption. <sup>31</sup> I set aside all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and slander and I place it before your throne. <sup>32</sup> Lord, turn my heart to be kind and tender. Help me to forgive all others, if for no other reason because you have forgiven me of so much. I love you my Lord and my God.*

Let's now take a close look at Chapter 5 verses 1-2. *Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children;<sup>2</sup> and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. (Ephesians 5:1-2 NASB)*

Paul tells us here to be "imitators" of God. That's a pretty big order isn't it? Paul was focused in on these Ephesians who were primarily Gentile converts who were expected to change their former pagan behavior when they became Christians. Dr. House in his visual study Bible reminds us that "Paul's exhortation is essentially 'Live this way because you are a Christian,' not 'Live this way so that you may become a Christian'."<sup>1</sup>

Paul began the dialogue of this chapter exhorting them to "live in a manner worthy of the calling with which you are called."

So how can we be imitators of God? You do this by letting the Holy Spirit have control. This is taking off the Old Man and Putting on the New Man.

It is letting the Holy Spirit produce fruit in our lives. What are those characteristics?

**Love** - *<sup>34</sup> I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, that you also love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this all people will know that you are My disciples: if you have love for one another."* (John 13:34-35 NASB)

**Joy** - *<sup>16</sup> Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup> pray without ceasing, <sup>18</sup> in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 NASB)*

**Peace** - *<sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:7 NASB)*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://hvsb.app/WEB/EPH/5/doc/5jiXLJK59cxOIUOf7YTH>

**Longsuffering** - <sup>2</sup> Consider it all joy, my brothers and sisters, when you encounter various trials, <sup>3</sup> knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. <sup>4</sup> And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. (James 1:2-4 NASB)

**Gentleness** - <sup>5</sup> Let your gentle spirit be known to all people. The Lord is near. (Philippians 4:5 NASB)

**Goodness** - <sup>9</sup> Let's not become discouraged in doing good, for in due time we will reap, if we do not become weary. <sup>10</sup> So then, while we have opportunity, let's do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith. (Gal 6:10 NASB)

**Faithfulness** - πίστις (pistis) being reliable, trustworthy

**Meekness** - πραΰτης (prautes) pleasant, soothing, calming

**Self-Control** - ἐγκράτεια (enkrateia) Having factual or spiritual power over

Take a look at the Sermon on the Mount. Ask God to produce these attributes in you. (Matt Chapter 5 NASB)

*Now when Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. <sup>2</sup> And He opened His mouth and began to teach them, saying,*

<sup>3</sup> *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

<sup>4</sup> *"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*

<sup>5</sup> *"Blessed are the gentle, for they will inherit the earth.*

<sup>6</sup> *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.*

<sup>7</sup> *"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.*

<sup>8</sup> *"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.*

<sup>9</sup> *"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.*

<sup>10</sup> *"Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

<sup>13</sup> *"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by people.*

<sup>14</sup> *"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; <sup>15</sup> nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. <sup>16</sup> Your light must shine before people in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.*

I close today, giving you two pieces of advice: 1) Take off the Old Man, and 2) Put on the New Man. Let us pray.