

Candlelight Christian Fellowship

Ephesians 4:25-5:21

Ephesians 4:25–5:21 – Part 1

Ephesians 4:25-32 (NKJV)

“25 Therefore, putting away lying, “Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,” for we are members of one another. 26 “Be angry, and do not sin”: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, 27 nor give place to the devil. 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. 29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.”

Ephesians 5:1-21 (NKJV)

“1 Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. 3 But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; 4 neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. 5 For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. 7 Therefore do not be partakers with them.

8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), 10 finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. 11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. 12 For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. 13 But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. 14 Therefore He says: “Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.”

15 See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, 16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

17 Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. 18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, 20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 21 submitting to one another in the fear of God.”

Verse and Chapter Breaks

There are times when those who formatted our Bibles made a decision to put a verse or chapter break in an inappropriate place. This is one of those times! The continuity of thought flows from Ephesians chapter 4 verse 17 and on through chapter 5 verse 21. Therefore, in these lessons we will examine the passage in continuity but broken into 4 parts.

Specific Sin - Put it Away

“25 Therefore, putting away lying, ‘Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,’ for we are members of one another. 26 ‘Be angry, and do not sin’: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, 27 nor give place to the devil. 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. 29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.”

We learned in the previous section that believers are clothed in the righteousness of Jesus. Therefore, we are called to *“put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”* (vs. 24) We are new creations in Christ! We have been made the righteousness of God. We have been set apart unto the Lord for His purpose and glory.

As Paul breaks down the putting off of our old man (the past behavior), he highlights several practical areas for change. By the power of the Holy Spirit we have been made new in Christ from within. The inner change warrants outward change and submission to the will of God.

In this section Paul says we should, *“[put] away lying, ‘Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,’ for we are members of one another.”* (vs. 25) Believers who value the relationships provided in the Church are called to tell the truth. Truth is the representation of that which is original. Many have failed to understand this simple definition. Even Pilate antagonistically asked Jesus, “What is truth?” To his question Jesus gave no reply. However, earlier in Jesus’ ministry He did address the subject and provided us with insight.

Truth is the absolute replication of the authentic or original. Truth in no way distorts or alters what is actual, factual and authentic. For this reason Jesus could say *“I am...the truth...”* (John 14:16) He Himself is the Original, the Creator, the Beginning and the End!

The truth sets us (and others) free. Telling the truth will provide those around us with the information they need to make good decisions. When we tell the truth to one another we represent what is right without subversion, dilution, or perversion. Lies and deception are perversions and will bring hurt and destruction.

Some may believe that telling the truth to *“one another,”* may lack wisdom. However, the Scriptures tell us otherwise. In the proverbs we read, *“He who speaks truth declares righteousness... The truthful lip shall be established forever... Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, but those who deal truthfully are His delight.”* Proverbs 12:17–22 (NKJV)

Earlier in this chapter Paul reminded the Ephesians to *“speaking the truth in love.”* (vs. 15) In John’s first epistle we read, *“My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.”* 1 John 3:18 (NKJV) Therefore, as believers we are called to love one another by speaking the truth. As we walk in truth and as we represent the truth, our love is manifested for those with whom we communicate.

Anything less than truthfulness is a misrepresentation of who we are in Christ. Admittedly, not all want to hear the truth and therefore some will lessen, weaken, or diminish the truth in order to gain favor with those who are less apt to hear. However, as members of the body of Christ we show

sincere love for one another, maintain the unity of the Spirit, and enhance genuine growth when we tell the truth.

We should note that truth must be presented in love and meekness. Truth must always be presented in clarity and with the focus on how anything less prejudices those to whom we communicate. If we diminish and modify the truth in order to make it more appealing to those who are its recipients, we are pre-assuming and therefore pre-judging those with whom we intend to communicate. This act in itself is less than true love. However, if we are aware that there will be a lack of receptivity in the one(s) to whom we wish to communicate, we have instruction on how to deal with it. The methods range from Church discipline to a refrain from communicating at all. (See Matthew 18:15-17, Matthew 7:6, and Revelation 22:11) Even in cases such as these we are not to diminish or distort the truth.

It should also be noted that Paul's specific reference herein is that we, "*speak truth with [our] neighbor, for we are members of one another.*" (vs. 25) His primary focus in this passage is therefore not related to evangelism or dealings with those outside. He is specifically dealing with the inner workings of the Church. For this reason Paul specifies "*neighbor.*"

Much could be said about discerning who your "*neighbor*" actually is. Paul shows us his definition in the text: "*members*" of the body of Christ. Discernment becomes necessary when identifying an enemy. For example, those who hid the Jews during the holocaust "*lied*" to those who came in aggression against those being protected. Rahab the harlot "*lied*" to those who questioned her about the spies who had come in to Jericho in order to take the land. (See Joshua 2) The midwives of Egypt "*lied*" to the Pharaoh about the births of Israelite children after they had been instructed to kill them. (See Exodus 1) However, all these "*lies*" were motivated by true love for the others and for the greater good of those one might be called to protect. Therefore, in these rare occasions, God justified the "*misrepresentations*" of those who were thus motivated.

Secondly, one might suggest that the withholding of certain details or information might be necessary when protecting others or when the information is beyond the proper processing of those who might obtain it. For example, if revealing information about certain activities or decisions would bring harm to those uninvolved, unassociated, or below the proper level of maturity, maintaining silence may prove critical. One example would be the revealing of information gained through a confession or personal request for prayer. The Bible tells us that discretion is virtuous. "*My son, pay attention to my wisdom; lend your ear to my understanding, that you may preserve discretion, and your lips may keep knowledge.*" Proverbs 5:1-2 (NKJV) "*As a ring of gold in a swine's snout, so is a lovely woman who lacks discretion.*" Proverbs 11:22 (NKJV)

Finally, Paul says that we are to "*let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*" (vss. 29-30) We are those who are called to speak the truth and guard against the corruption of those things we communicate. Corrupt communications are distortions of truth, things that may be belittling, or those things that originate in gossip. Gossip is destructive and only serves to harm others. Our "*speaking*" should only be of those things that are "*good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.*" (vs. 29)

And Put Away...

Paul goes on to say that we should *“Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.”* (vs. 31) Therefore, those things that originate from a bitter spirit, the desire for the destruction of others, or unrighteous and selfish anger should be put away. We are called to *“be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.”* (vs. 32) We have been treated with grace, mercy, and forgiveness. We are likewise to offer others the same treatment we have received and desire from the Lord.

Do Not Sin

When Paul says, *“ ‘Be angry, and do not sin’: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil.”* (vs. 26-27) it is an exhortation to proper communications that remove the darkness our adversary traffics. Often things that are left uncommunicated and unresolved will give room for greater division and harm. Therefore, believers are called to patiently listen, communicate, and work toward the resolution of those things that may have inspired pain and/or anger.

There is a righteous anger that believers may experience. However, if not handled correctly that anger can turn to unrighteousness. We are called to *“be angry”* at those things that stand against righteousness and truth. But, we must learn that there are right and wrong ways to be angry. There is a wrong way to be right! Furthermore, there is a right way to be wrong. When we are in the wrong, we are called to be humble, teachable, and to seek forgiveness and restoration.

Do Not Steal

Paul says, *“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.”* (vs. 28) When we covet what others have, or worse – take from them those things that don’t belong to us, we error! We should be thankful for what we have, celebrate the joys others have in that which they possess, and mind our own responsibilities. Moreover, as the Lord prospers us, we are enabled to give to those who may need what they lack. Our stewardship before the Lord is to work with the resources He has given us, not only so that we may obtain those things we need, but that we might *“have something to give him who has need.”*

True or False: We are called to represent the truth.

True or False: Truth is the representation of that which is original.

True or False: Truth must be presented in love and meekness.

True or False: The withholding of certain details or information might be necessary when protecting others or when information is beyond the proper processing of those who might obtain it.

True or False: Paul only cares about our truthfulness in the body of Christ. It is always ok to lie to an unbeliever.

True or False: There is a wrong way to be right! Furthermore, there is a right way to be wrong. When we are in the wrong we are called to be humble, teachable, and to seek forgiveness and restoration.

True or False: We should be thankful for what we have, celebrate the joys others have in that which they possess, and mind our own responsibilities.