

## 06–16–2020 Ephesians 4:25–32 Bible Study

**Read Ephesians 4:25–32 in your favorite translation. I will print the NET–2 translation.**

25 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.

### COMMENTS:

The moral exhortations in this section are especially appropriate for maintaining unity within the body of Christ. The vices mentioned are destructive to Christian fellowship; the virtues promote the corporate unity of believers.

But though the apostle may consciously have selected these qualities to strengthen his central thesis, it should be noted that his teaching has a wider application and is appropriate for people outside the church as well.

Basically, this section includes the vices and virtues that belong to the old and the new life. Consequently, whenever the author lists a vice that is to be “put off,” he substitutes a virtue that promotes human relationships.

Lying is replaced by truth (4:25); anger is removed by reconciliation (4:26); a person who once robbed goes to work (4:27); harmful words give way to helpful ones (4:29); bitterness, passion, anger, and insults give way to tender-heartedness, forgiveness, and love (4:31–32).

Today Paul starts us off with the reminder stop lying and to speak the truth when with those close to us. The common conscience of humans shows us that it is not just Christians and other religious groups which condemn lying and theft, malice etc. They were also denounced with eloquence by heathen moralists.

But the ethics of the New Testament differed in many respects from the best moral philosophy: 1. There is a direct appeal to the conscience. 2. Human failure is traced to the heart’s alienation from God. 3. But the greatest difference is that the remedy is the new principle of faith in Christ.

In v. 26 we are warned to be cautious about anger. If we are not careful it get out of control and leads to sin. Sin and unrighteousness should make us angry. Anything which pains or damages others makes God angry, but it does not lead God into sin. We are warned that anger gives the devil an opportunity.

I love the reason God gives us in verse 28 that we are to produce money in order to have money to help those in need. It is not just so we can have honorable resources. We are to be concerned with the plight of others. This is a different motivation than most morality teachers.

Paul agrees with James that the mouth can be a big indicator of who is in control of your life. For many years I was a fan of the Saturday Evening Post feature, The Perfect Squelch. But then God

convicted me I should not delight in people being put down. We are to focus on building people up, not putting them in their place.

We are to be grace givers as God is. Grace gives us the blessing and favor of God. Mercy means we do not get the punishment we deserve. If we act in this way we will not grieve the Holy Spirit.

Vs. 31 & 32 show us the contrast between the old man and the new man created in Christ Jesus. God's plan is always to move us to be more like him.

**REFLECTION QUESTION:** The call for us to grow in Christ is simply this, become more and more like Jesus. We need to recognize this is an impossible task if we try to do this on our own. The good news is that Jesus and the Holy Spirit are always working in us to accomplish this. You are not operating on your own steam or power. The power of God is working in you and through you.