

Ephesians Chapter 4 Continued

Ephesians 4:15 "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, [even] Christ:"

“Speaking the truth in love” is a principle that applies to every aspect of Christian life and ministry. The verb translated “speaking the truth” is *aletheuo*, which means to speak, deal or act truthfully. Authentic, mature believers whose lives are marked by “love” will not be victims of false teaching (verse 14), but will be living authentically and proclaiming the true gospel to a deceived and deceiving world.

Evangelism is most effective when the truth is proclaimed in love. This can be accomplished only by the spiritually mature believer who is thoroughly equipped in sound doctrine. Without maturity, the truth can be cold and love little more than sentimentality.

“Grow up ... into him”: Christians are to be completely yielded and obedient to the Lord’s will, subject to His controlling power and Christlike in all areas of their lives (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21). “The Head”: Given the picture of the church as a body whose head is Christ, “head” is used in the sense of authoritative leader, not “source,” which would have required a different anatomical picture (see 1:22; 5:23).

Christ is the source of power for all functions. Human beings are declared officially dead when the EKG is flat, signifying brain death. As the brain is the control center of physical life, so the Lord Jesus Christ is the organic source of life and power to His body, the church.

In the last lesson, we were discussing how we must be grounded in the Word of God to keep from being carried away by false doctrine. There never was a time when more false doctrine has been taught than now. I believe the nearer we get to the end of the Gentile age and the coming of Christ, the more the false doctrine will be widespread.

We are warned that there will be false Christs who will bring all kinds of false doctrine.

Mark 13:22 "For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if [it were] possible, even the elect."

As we said in the previous lesson, the only way not to be taken in by all of this is to study your Bible and know it well. Jesus Christ is the head of the church. We Christians are the church. We should not believe a lie. We should be grounded in Truth.

Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. If we are truly in Him and Him in us, we will know and speak the Truth. Notice that we are to grow up in our Christian walk. We are not to stay a babe in Christ.

Ephesians 4:16 "From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

“From whom”: This refers to the Lord. Power for producing mature, equipped believers comes not from the effort of those believers alone but from their Head, the Lord Jesus Christ (Col. 2:19). Christ holds the body together and makes it function by that which every joint supply.

That is to say, the joints are points of constant, the joining together or union where the spiritual supply, resources and gifts of the Holy Spirit pass from one member to another, providing the flow of ministry that produces growth.

“Effectual working ... of every part”: Godly, biblical church growth results from every member of the body fully using his spiritual gift, in submission to the Holy Spirit and in cooperation with other believers (Col. 2:19).

“Fitly joined together and compacted:” As He unites Christians with Himself, Christ also brings them into a harmonious relationship with one another. This harmonious relationship is accomplished “by that which every joint supplieth” or, “by every supporting ligament.” The spiritual gifts mentioned (in verses 7-15), are figuratively likened to the various “ligaments” of a body.

Removing this figure, Christ joins believers together and unites them by the divinely ordained ministries of Christians who possess diverse spiritual gifts, which are exercised and used among believers for the common good. The church’s spiritual growth then, comes from Christ through the believers’ ministry to one another as they employ their spiritual gifts.

The church is the body of Christ. We cannot all be an arm, some must be a leg or even a big toe. God has chosen you to fit into the body at the place you will be of the most use. I like to think of the church as a great big board that a puzzle will fit into. Each part plays a vital part. The puzzle will not be complete, until each part takes its rightful place.

This is true of the body of Christ spoken of here as well. Until each part of the body takes its rightful place, you cannot have a completed body. Can you imagine what would happen if everyone wanted to be a hand? How could you walk? Just as the physical body is made up of a variety of parts, so is the body of Christ.

God chose each person to fulfill a unique part of the body that no one else can fill. You may not be the preacher, but what you do in the church is just as important. The body as a whole, is better off when each part functions properly. We should all love each other very much, since we are all part of the same body.

The proper working of each individual part recalls the importance of each believer’s gift (verse 7; 1 Cor. 12:12-27). The growth of the church is not a result of clever methods but of every member of the Body fully using his spiritual gift in close contact with other believers. The power

of the church flows from the Lord through individual believers and relationships between believers.

The physical body functions properly only as each member in union with every other member responds to the direction of the head to do exactly what it was designed to do.

Verses 17-19: In these verses, Paul gives 4 characteristics of the ungodly lifestyles which believers are to forsake.

Ephesians 4:17 "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,"

“Therefore”, joins the following passage with the preceding in a twofold manner. First, it resumes the thought begun (in verses 1-3), and continues to spell out what constitutes a worthy walk.

Second, since each Christian is divinely enabled with some spiritual gift, he must “walk not as other Gentiles walk”, lest his much-needed contribution to the church’s growth be sorely missed. Unbelieving Gentiles live “in the vanity of their mind,” without proper purpose, causing all their efforts to obtain happiness to end in failure.

“Walk not as other Gentiles”: “Walk” expresses daily conduct, and refers back to what Paul has said about the believer’s high calling in Christ Jesus (in verse 1). Because Christians are part of the body of Christ, have been spiritually gifted by the Holy Spirit, and are edified through other believers, they should not continue to live like the rest of the ungodly (1 John 2:6). We cannot accomplish the glorious work of Christ by continuing to live the way the world lives.

“Gentiles”: All ungodly, unregenerate pagan persons (1 Thess. 4:5 which defines them). Jews used the term in two common ways, first to distinguish all other people from Jews and second to distinguish all religions from Judaism. Gentiles therefore referred racially and ethnically to all non-Jews, and religiously to all pagans.

Gentiles here, is speaking of Gentiles who have not received Jesus as their Savior. Gentiles who have received Jesus as their Savior are really the spiritual house of Israel. Christians (whether Jew or Gentile), are in this world, but not of this world.

We are not to walk in a worldly fashion. We have given up our worldly mind and taken on the mind of Christ. Vanity of the mind should not be part of a Christian. Because unbelievers and Christians think differently they are therefore to act differently. As far as spiritual and moral issues are concerned, an unbeliever cannot think straight. His rational processes in those areas are warped and inadequate.

“The vanity of their mind”: First, unbelievers are intellectually unproductive. As far as spiritual and moral issues are concerned, their rational processes are distorted and inadequate, inevitably

failing to product godly understanding or moral living. Their life is empty, vain and without meaning. (Rom. 1:21-28; 1 Cor. 2:14; Col. 2:18). Because man's sinfulness flows out of his reprobate mind, the transformation must begin with the mind.

Ephesians 4:18 "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:"

“Alienated from the life of God”: Second, unbelievers are spiritually separated from God, thus ignorant of God's truth (1 Cor. 2:14). And their willing spiritual darkness and moral blindness is the result (Rom. 1:21-24; 2 Tim. 3:7). They are blind, or “hard” like a rock.

“The blindness of their heart” refers to the hardness of their will. Gentiles' obstinacy against the divine will has caused them to be separated from God's life. This characteristic of ungodly persons is ignorance of God's truth. Their thinking not only is futile but spiritually uninformed. The cause of their darkness, ignorance and separation from God is their willful determination to remain in sin. Then God blinds their minds.

Jesus said; seeing they do not see and hearing they do not hear. What He was really saying, is they were hearing words without understanding what those words meant. God has never been interested in a person accepting Him as his Savior because he understood salvation with his mind.

God wants our heart. We were walking through life in darkness, until the Light of Jesus shone forth in our heart. His Light does away with all darkness. The mind is an enemy of God, until it is converted into the mind of Christ. Faith in God does not come by being able to see something with your physical eyes.

Faith is believing in your heart things you cannot see with your eyes. Look, with me, at the next Scripture at a very good example of what happens to us when we encounter the Light of Jesus.

2 Peter 1:19 "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:"

We have a brand new heart, stayed upon God when the blessed Light of Jesus shines in our heart. We are like Paul when he encountered the Light of the world. We are never the same when the Light of Jesus Christ shines in us and on us.

When men choose to petrify their hearts by constant rejection of the light (John 12:35-36), they became darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that's in them, and of the hardness of their heart. That is the unspeakable tragedy of unbelief, the tragedy of the person who makes himself his own god.

Ephesians 4:19 "Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness."

“Being past feeling”: Third, unbelievers are morally insensitive. As they continue to sin and turn away from God, they become still more apathetic about moral and spiritual things (Romans 1:32). They reject all standards of righteousness and do not care about the consequences of their unrighteous thoughts and actions.

“Lasciviousness ... uncleanness”: (the absence of all moral restraint, especially in the matter of sexual sins). Unbelievers are behaviorally depraved (Romans 1:28). As they willingly keep succumbing to sensuality and licentiousness, they increasingly lose moral restraint, especially in matters of sexual sins.

Impurity is inseparable from greediness, which is a form of idolatry (5:5; Col 3:5). That some souls may not reach the extremes of (verses 17-19), is due only to God’s common grace and the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit.

“Being past feeling” means “having become calloused.” These unbelievers have gone so deep in sin that they are insensitive to moral right and wrong.

People who live in the world are living in darkness. They are lost. Those who do not allow the Light of Jesus to transform them, are walking in darkness. There is no hope for them. They are caught up in the darkness committing every type of vile sin.

These hideous sins, mentioned here, are exactly what our society is caught up in today. A sin sick people are caught up in the sins mentioned. They are in darkness, and are not even aware there is a Light.

Those who are dying are desensitized to that which is killing them, because they choose it that way. Even when held up shamefully in full view of the world, their sins are not recognized as sinful or as the cause of increasing meaninglessness, hopelessness and despair (Romans 1:32).

Man is made for God, and designed according to His standards. When he rejects God and His standards he destroys himself in the process due to the result of personal choices based on principles that are specifically and purposely against God and His way.

The only cure for any of this is to repent of their sin and seek Jesus Christ the Light of the world. The only thing that does away with darkness is the Light. The things, here mentioned, are filthy sins. There is no cure for sin, except the Savior.

Verses 20-21: Learned ... heard ... taught”: Three figurative descriptions of salvation, the new birth.

Ephesians 4:20 "But ye have not so learned Christ;"

To learn “Christ” means to learn Christian teaching and is a direct reference to salvation. To learn Christ is to be saved. Christian doctrine has instructed the readers not to “so” live as do unbelievers described (in verses 17-19).

1 John 2:4 “He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”

1 John 2:15 “Love not the world, neither the things [that are] in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

The ways of God and the ways of the world are not compatible. The idea, promoted by some who claim to be evangelicals, that a Christian does not have to give up anything or change anything when he becomes a Christian is nothing less than diabolical.

That notion, under the pretense of elevating God’s grace and of protecting the gospel from works righteousness, will do nothing but send many confidently down the broad way that Jesus said leads to destruction (Matthew 7:13).

To hold on to sin is to refuse God, to scorn His grace and to nullify faith. No Christian is totally free from the presence of sin in this life, but in Christ he is willingly freed from his orientation to sin. He slips and falls many times, but the determined direction of his life is away from sin.

This scripture, in just a few words, says it all. Christ is the answer, and they have not learned of Him.

Ephesians 4:21 "If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:"

“As the truth is in Jesus”: The truth about salvation leads to the fullness of truth about God, man, creation, history, life, purpose, relationships, heaven, hell, judgment and everything else that is truly important. John summed this up in (1 John 5:20).

Instead of being ignorant of God’s truth, the Christian has heard Christ and is taught in Him. In this context referring to the time when the readers were taught and came to believe the gospel, here called the truth ... in Jesus. These moments describe the moment of salvation/conversion. When a person receives Christ as Savior and Lord, he comes into God’s truth.

To know Jesus and believe the Truth in Him sets you free from the desire to sin.

Verses 22-24: Christianity taught the addressees to

1. “Put off ... the old man,” to renounce their pre-conversion life and sins;
2. “Be renewed in ... your mind,” to be constantly changed, being brought more and more in line with God’s own viewpoint; and

3. "Put on the new man," that is, to assume a new nature (character), and conduct (life), at conversion.

Ephesians 4:22 "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;"

"Put off": To strip away, as in taking off old, filthy clothes. This describes repentance from sin and submission to God at the point of salvation. These are not human works required for divine salvation but inherent elements of the divine work of salvation. Paul's terms here are basically a description of repentance from sin and submission to God, so often taught as elements of regeneration.

This is in contrast to the unregenerate persons who continually resist and reject God and live in the sphere of dominating sin (the former manner of life), the Christian has heard the call to lay aside the old self.

"The old man": The worn out, useless and unconverted sinful nature corrupted by deceit. Salvation is a spiritual union with Jesus Christ that is described as the death plus burial of the old self and the resurrection of the new self, walking in newness of life. This transformation is Paul's theme (in Romans 6:2-8).

The flesh of man and the desires thereof is where the problem arises. That old man of flesh has to be crucified (put to death), that the man of the Spirit may live. John the Baptist said, you must be born again, and it is a true statement.

John 3:5-6 "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and [of] the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

We must bury that old man of flesh and the filthy lust of the flesh and live in the Spirit, if we are Christ's. The gospel invitation is to lay the old self aside in repentance from sin that includes not just sorrow about sin but a turning from sin to God.

Ephesians 4:23 "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;"

"Be renewed in the spirit of your mind": Salvation involves the mind, which is the center of thought, understanding and belief, as well as of motive and action (Col. 3:1-2, 10). When a person becomes a Christian, God gives him a completely new spiritual and moral capability that a mind apart from Christ could never achieve. (1 Cor. 2:9-16).

This is just saying, get rid of that old carnal mind and take on the mind of Christ. God is a Spirit. The mind of Christ is Spirit. The mind of Christ that we take on is Spirit.

The renewed spirit of the believer's mind is a corollary to putting on the new self, which is the new creation made in the very likeness of God and has been created in righteousness and

holiness of the truth. That which was once darkened, ignorant, hardened, calloused, sensual, impure and greedy is now enlightened, learned in the truth, sensitive to sin, pure and generous.

A computer can bring out only what you program into it. The mind is a giant computer. Erase all of those bad things in your mind by washing them away in the blood of Jesus. Reprogram your mind with the things of God. Fill your mind with the Word of God.

Ephesians 4:24 "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

“Put on the new man”: The renewal of the mind in salvation brings not simply a renovation of character, but transformation of the old to the new self (2 Cor. 5:17).

“Righteousness” relates to our fellow men and reflects the second table of the law (Exodus 20:12-17).

“Holiness” (sacred observance of all duties to God) relates to God and reflects the first table (Exodus 20:3-11).

There is still sin in the believer’s unredeemed human flesh, but he now possesses a new nature, a new self, a holy and righteous inner person fit for the presence of God. This is the believer’s truest self.

“Which after God is created”: In Christ, the old self no longer exists as it had in the past. The new self is created in the very likeness of God (Gal. 2:20).

When you receive Christ as your Savior, and are baptized, you bury that old man in the watery grave, and rise a new creature in Christ Jesus.

You are washed in the blood of the Lamb, and are wearing His righteousness. He took your sin on His body on the cross, and clothed you in His righteousness.

We are new, but not yet all new. We are righteous and holy, but not yet perfectly righteous and holy. But understanding the genuine reality of our transforming salvation is essential if we are to know how to live as Christians in the Body of Christ to which we belong.

Verses 4:25 – 5:2: This section gives practical guidelines as to how “the old man” (verse 22), can be laid aside and how “the new man”, verse 24, can be assumed in daily living. The passage specifies five sins to be discarded, the virtues that are to replace them, and the motive for such an exchange:

1. Lying is to be replaced by truth telling, since Christians are fellow members (verse 25).

2. Sinful anger is to be replaced by (briefly held), righteous indignation, that the Devil may not be given opportunity (verses 26, 27).
3. Theft is to be replaced by honest work, in order that one may have the means to meet the needs of others (verse 28).
4. Foul language is to be replaced by gracious speech, that it may edify others and not grieve the Spirit (verses 29-30).
5. Resentment and wrath are to give way to kindness and forgiveness, since God has forgiven us (verses 31-32).

Ephesians 4:25 "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another."

The only reliable evidence of a person being saved is not a past experience of receiving Christ but a present life that reflects Christ. New creatures act like new creatures. God is not progressively making new creations out of believers; believers are those whom He has already made new creations. "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come" (2 Cor. 5:17).

Although God sovereignty makes us new creatures, He also commands us in the strength of the Spirit to subdue our unredeemed humanness (1 Cor. 9:27), which still resides in us. And to live as new creatures in submission to Christ our new Master. The new paradox of the Christian life is that both God's sovereignty and man's will are at work. The faithful believer responds positively to God's sovereign declarations and commands.

"Putting away lying": More than simply telling direct falsehoods, lying also includes exaggeration and adding fabrications to something that is true. Cheating, making foolish promises, betraying a confidence, and making false excuses are all forms of lying, with which Christians should have no part (John 8:44; 1 Cor. 6:9; Rev. 21:8).

"Speak truth ... with his neighbor" (quoted from Zech. 8:16). God's work in the world is based on truth; and neither the church nor individual believers can be fit instruments for the Lord to use if they are not truthful.

Satan is the Father of lies. To be a liar would indicate that you belonged to Satan. God is Truth. We would not want to deceive members of our own body. Liars will not inherit the kingdom of God.

A believer can fall into lying just as he can fall into any sin, but if his life is a habitual flow of lies that proceed from a heart that seeks to deceive, he has no biblical basis for believing he is a Christian. The person who continually lies as a regular part of his daily living shows himself to be a child of Satan not of God (John 8:44).

Ever since the fall, lying has been a common characteristic of unregenerate mankind. Our society today is so dependent on lying that if it suddenly turned to telling the truth our way of life would collapse. If world leaders began speaking only the truth, World War III would certainly ensue.

Cheating in school and on income tax returns is a form of lying. Making foolish promises, betraying a confidence, flattery and making excuses are all forms of lying. When a person becomes a believer, he steps out of the domain of falsehood into the domain of truth, and every form of lying is utterly inconsistent with his new self.

God's economy if based on truth, and His people, either as individual believers or as the corporate church, cannot be fit instruments for His work unless they live in truthfulness. We are to speak truth to everyone and in every situation, but we have a special motive to be truthful with other believers, because we are fellow members of Christ's body, the church, and therefore members of one another.

Ephesians 4:26 "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:"

"Be ye angry ... and sin not" (quoted from Psalm 4:4). By New Testament standards, anger can be either good or bad, depending on motive and purpose. Paul may have been sanctioning righteous indignation, anger at evil. This type of anger hates injustice, immorality, ungodliness and every other sin.

When such anger is unselfish and based on love for God and others, it not only is permissible but commanded. Jesus expresses this righteous anger (see Matthew 21:12; Mark 3:5; John 2:15).

Even Jesus got angry; the sin is not in the anger. Do not be angry without a cause. We must not hold a grudge. We must forgive. If we were still angry at the end of the day, it would indicate that we were holding a grudge. We must be quick to forgive.

Jesus was always angered when the Father was maligned or when others were mistreated, but He was never selfishly angry at what was done against Him. That is the measure of righteous anger.

Anger is sin, is anger that is self defensive and self serving. On the other hand, that is resentful of what is done against oneself. It is the anger that leads to murder and to God's judgment (Matthew 5:21-22).

Anger that is selfish, undisciplined and vindictive is sinful and has no place even temporarily in the Christian life. But anger that is unselfish and is based on love for God and concern for others not only is permissible but commanded. Genuine love cannot help being angered at that which injures the object of that love.

God will not forgive us, if we do not forgive our fellowman. If we do not quickly forgive, we will become bitter. Bitterness is a sin.

The church cannot function properly if its members shade the truth with one another or fail to work together honestly and lovingly. We cannot effectively minister to each other or with each other if we do not speak "the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15), especially among our fellow believers.

"Sun go down": Even righteous anger can turn to bitterness, so it should be set aside by the end of each day. If anger is prolonged, it may become hostile and violate the instruction of (Romans

12:17-21). Even the best motivated anger can sour, and we are therefore to put it aside at the end of the day.

Ephesians 4:27 "Neither give place to the devil."

Even righteous anger can easily turn to bitterness, resentment, and self righteousness. Consequently, Paul goes on to say, do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity.

Even the best motivated anger can sour, and we are therefore to put it aside at the end of the day. Taken to bed, it is likely to give the devil an opportunity to use it for his purposes. If anger is prolonged, one may begin to seek vengeance and thereby violate the principle taught (in Romans 12:17-21).

This is just saying; do not allow the devil to use you. Do not give him any room in your life at all. Do not allow him to consume your thoughts. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Ephesians 4:28 "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with [his] hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth."

“Steal no more”: Stealing in any form is a sin and has no part in the life of a Christian. Rather, let him work, producing what is beneficial (Exodus 20:15). The alternative to stealing is to provide for oneself, one’s family, and others what is God honoring through honest, honorable means (2 Thess. 3:10-11; 1 Tim. 5:8).

Grand larceny, petty theft, taking some of your dad’s money off the dresser, renegeing on a debt, not paying fair wages or pocketing what a clerk overpays in change are all stealing. There is simply no end to ways we can steal, and whatever the ways are and whatever the chances for being caught, stealing is sin and has no part in the new walk of the new man in Christ.

“Give to him that needeth”: A Christian not only should harm no one but should continually endeavor to help those who are in need (see Luke 14:13-14; Acts 20:33-35). a Christian’s desire to earn more should be for the purpose of being able to give more and help more. Beyond providing for his own and family basic needs, he gains so he can give.

The alternative to stealing is to labor, in order to share with him who has need. It is God’s plan for everyone to work who is able to do so.

“If anyone will not work, neither let him eat. For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all” (2 Thess. 3:10-11).

The Christian who does not work and “provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Tim. 5:8).

It is very disturbing to me to see someone who proclaims Christianity, who is not honest in his business dealings. Stealing is a sin. We should have lost the desire to steal, when we buried the old man of flesh. The new man in Christ, has no desire to steal or commit any sin.

A Christian should never be involved in a job, profession, work or business that demands compromise of God's standards, that dishonors Him, violates His holy commands, or misleads or harms others in any way.

The Scripture above says to get you an honest job and make a living working and not by stealing.

Ephesians 4:29 "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."

“Corrupt communication”: (or unwholesome communication), the word for unwholesome refers to that which is foul or rotten, such as spoiled fruit or putrid meat. Foul language of any sort should never pass a Christian's lips, because it is totally out of character with his new life in Christ (see Col. 3:8; James 3:6-8; Psalm 141:3).

Off color jokes, profanity, dirty stories, vulgarity, double entendre, and every other form of corrupt talk should never cross our lips.

“Good to the use of edifying”: The Christian's speech should be instructive, encouraging, uplifting, (even if it must be corrective), and suited for the moment (Prov. 15:23; 25:11; 24:26).

“Grace unto the hearers”: (Col. 4:6). Because believers have been saved by grace and kept by grace, they should live and speak with grace. Our Lord set the standard (Luke 4:22).

Out of the issue of the heart, the mouth speaketh. If evil communication comes out of your mouth, you have an evil heart. A heart stayed upon God will say good things that will build up the person you are speaking to, and not tear them down.

The tongue is exceedingly difficult to control. It is “a fire,” James says, “the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell. For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed, and has been tamed by the human race. But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison” (James 3:6-8).

A powerful motivation for putting off unwholesome talk is that not to do so will grieve the Holy Spirit of God. All sin is painful to God, but sin in His children breaks His heart. When His children refuse to change the ways of the old life for the ways of the new, God grieves. The Holy Spirit of God weeps, as it were, when he sees Christians lying instead of speaking the truth. Becoming unrighteously rather than righteously angry. Stealing instead of sharing and speaking corrupt instead of uplifting and gracious words.

Let Jesus wash your heart in His blood and cleanse you. Christians must speak things that build up Christ and the one they are speaking to.

Ephesians 4:30 "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

“Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God”: God is grieved when His children refuse to change the old ways of sin for those righteous ways of the new life. It should be noted that such responses by the Holy Spirit indicate He is a person.

Paul asks, in effect, “How can we do that which is so displeasing to the One by whom we have been sealed for the day of redemption?” The Holy Spirit is God’s personal mark of authenticity on us, His stamp of divine approval.

How can we grieve the One who is our Helper, Comforter, Teacher, Advocate, Divine Resident of our hearts and guarantor of our eternal redemption? How can we ungraciously grieve God’s infinitely gracious Holy Spirit? He has done so much for us that, out of gratitude, we ought not to grieve Him.

His personhood is also indicated by personal pronouns (John 14:17; 16:13), His personal care of believers (John 14:16, 26; 15:26), His intellect (1 Corinthians 2:11), feelings (Romans 8:27), will (1 Cor. 12:11), speaking (Acts 13:2), convicting (John 16:8-11), interceding (Romans 8:26), guiding (John 16:13), glorifying Christ (John 16:14), and serving God (Acts 16:6-7).

“Sealed unto the day of redemption”: The Holy Spirit is the guarantor of eternal redemption in Christ for those who believe in Him.

We must first figure out what would grieve the Holy Spirit. It seems to me that to commit sin, after the Holy Spirit has taken up His abode in you, would be including the Holy Spirit in your sin. I also believe, that the Holy Spirit teaches us all Truth.

To reject Truth and believe a lie, then would grieve Him. We know that the Holy Spirit is the earnest of the Spirit, until the redemption of our body. To turn loose of the salvation that we received would be something that would grieve Him terribly. To turn away from God would be the ultimate thing to grieve Him.

Verses 31-32: These verses summarize the changes in the life of a believer mentioned (in verses 17-30). “Bitterness” reflects a smoldering resentment. “Wrath” has to do with rage, the passion of a moment. “Anger” is a more internal, deep hostility. “Clamor” is the outcry of strife out of control. “Slander” is evil speaking. “Malice” is the general Greek term for evil, the root of all vices.

Ephesians 4:31 "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:"

The final change Paul mentions is from natural vices to supernatural virtues and amount to a summary of the other changes. Man’s natural tendency is to sin and the natural tendency of sin is

to grow into greater sin. And a Christian's sin will grow just like that of an unbeliever. If not checked, our inner sins of bitterness and wrath and anger will inevitably lead to the outwards sins of clamor, slander and other such manifestations of malice.

“Bitterness” reflects a smoldering resentment, a brooding grudge filled attitude. It is the spirit of irritability that keeps a person in perpetual animosity, making him sour and venomous.

Anger is a more internal smoldering. Clamor is the shout or outcry of strife and reflects the public outburst that reveals loss of control. Slander (blasphemia), from which we get blasphemy), is the ongoing defamation of someone that rises from a bitter heart. Malice is the general term for evil that is the root of all vices. These he says, must be put away from you.

These sins involve conflict between person and person, believer and unbeliever and worst still, between believer and believer. These are the sins that break fellowship and destroy relationships that weaken the church and mar its testimony before the world.

All the above-mentioned things are attributes of those who are still operating in the flesh. We must get the flesh and all its bitterness, anger, clamor, and evil speaking under the control of the Spirit of God.

Ephesians 4:32 "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

“God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. While we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son” (Romans 5:8, 10). If God is so gracious to us, how much more then, should we be kind, tender-hearted, and forgiving to fellow sinners, especially to one another.

In this, we see the actions of someone who has gotten rid of the sin of the flesh and is living for God. We might even say, allowed God to live through him. These things (in verse 32), are signs that follow those who are dead to the flesh and alive to the spirit.

“Even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you”: Those who have been forgiven so much by God should, of all people, forgive the relatively small offenses against them by others. The most graphic illustration of this truth is the parable of (Matthew 18:21-35).

If we expect God to forgive our trespasses, we must forgive one another. We must pattern our life after Christ, if we are His followers. As He is tenderhearted, therefore we must be tenderhearted. Do it for Christ.

Ephesians Chapter 4 Continued

1. Who is the head of the church?

2. What helps us not believe a false doctrine?
3. Who is the church?
4. What causes us to speak Truth?
5. What does the author compare the church parts to?
6. Just as the physical body is made up of a variety of parts, _____.
7. What is Gentiles, in verse 17, speaking of?
8. Who are Gentiles who have received Jesus really?
9. Why is vanity of the mind not part of a Christian?
10. What was Jesus meaning, when He said, seeing they do not see?
11. We were walking through life in darkness, until what happened?
12. What had the sinner given himself over to in verse 19?
13. What is the only cure for our sin sick society?
14. What is the only thing that does away with darkness?
15. Verse 20, says who is the answer?
16. The Truth is in _____.
17. We must put off the old _____.
18. Get rid of the old carnal mind, and take on the mind of _____.
19. We bury the old man in the watery grave at baptism and rise a _____ in _____.
20. Who is the father of lies?
21. Be ye angry, and _____.
22. If we do not quickly forgive, we will become _____.
23. Why should no corrupt communication come from our mouth?
24. How are some of the ways the Holy Spirit is grieved?
25. How does a Christian act differently than those of the world?