

Eph Ch 4 vs25-32

We're right in the middle of this section whereby the Holy Spirit via Paul the apostle is instructing us and exhorting us concerning how it is that the positional turns into the practical. Remember the 1st 3 chapters in this book are positional, what is yours and what you have in Christ; they are doctrine, the lay foundation. The last 3 chapters are practical they are the application of the foundation, now that we know and have somewhat of an understanding of what it is that we have in Christ, and all of the resources of heaven that we have to draw from in order to live our lives; this is the way that we're to live. Because of what God has done for each of us, we are to respond by the power of the Holy Spirit in this manner, 1st in living in loving unity one with another as the body of Christ, building up one another, equipping one another, edifying one another so that we might grow up. So that we might mature spiritually growing more and more Christ-like so that we might emulate Christ accurately to the world around us; and in order to do that it's important that we no longer walk or progress through this life as the rest of the world walks, or leads their lives. Why, because you've been given a new nature in Christ, the old one is dead having been crucified with Christ, again 2 Cor 5:17 *"if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."*

Remember we mentioned this last week; it's not that you're given something new, it's that you become something new all together, you're given a new nature, it doesn't slip over the old one; it replaces it. and It's our place to believe that, to receive that, and to walk in that truth, and a new nature demands new behavior. So as believers we're not to pattern our lives after non-believers, they are dead in sins and trespasses, you've been made alive in Christ, your life is no longer futile, but purposeful, your mind and understanding aren't darkened, but rather filled with the light of the word of God. Your heart isn't hard or calloused, but it's sensitive to the things of the Spirit, has no desire to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, and you're not alienated from the life of God but rather filled with all the fullness of God's life. The Christian is not to give him, or herself over to sin for the satisfaction of their own selfish lusts, but they give their bodies over to God as instruments of righteousness. Before you were in Christ you were dead to God and alive to sin but in Christ the bible tells us that we're to reckon ourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Therefore (Romans tells us,) do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. You have not so learned Christ. That is (Vs 21 read), what does that mean? It means that if you're being disciplined by Christ you won't be learning that Vs 17-19 lifestyle, because the truth is in Jesus, which means it will be in you as well, therefore you can't practice that same old lifestyle of deceit and lies.

Again 1 John 2:3-4, “*Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. (If we’re obedient to those things that He is teaching us.) He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and (listen) the truth is not in him.*” Why, because if the truth was in him, his life would be reflecting the Lord, not the heathen. Because His truth is impacting us and influencing us, and changing us and freeing us from those old lies and the old life, and again what is it that Jesus teaches His disciples as it pertains specifically to this text? (Read vs 22-24) Repentance from sin and submission or surrender to God, put off that old man, the former you, don’t let sin reign in your mortal body.

Vs23

This goes beyond the initial renewing that happens upon conversion, this is speaking of a continual renewing that needs to be taking place in the spirit of our minds. Or the focus or general attitude of our minds, there are all kinds of “spirit of the mind” mindsets. Some people’s mindset is just to be skeptical of everything, including God; they don’t want to be convinced or persuaded to anything, that’s their mindset. Others maybe open to hearing about God, but they’re not ready to commit, still other’s maybe open about everything. They’re just as open to hearing about Buddhism as they are about Christianity, and there are those who believe that Jesus exists, and that He’s God’s Son but everything else is off limits, I don’t want to talk about any of it to anyone. and There are those who love the Lord, who are seeking Him with their whole hearts and they’re open to being directed, no holds barred as to what it takes to lead an effective Christian life, that’s pleasing to their heavenly Father, that’s their mindset, that’s the spirit of their mind.

We’re to be constantly renewed in the spirit of our minds, no doubt one way is through the study of the word of God, which unfolds the mind of Christ. and As we’re in the word of God, and in communion with God through prayer, we learn to get God’s perspective more and more on *all* the issues of life, meanwhile crucifying our own opinions, or as J.B. put it, we decrease, so that He might increase in our lives. So we’re to be renewed in the spirit of our minds, and we looked at some correlative scriptures for that last week, Rom 12:2 tells us that God changes our lives by renewing our minds.

Believe me when I tell you there was a time in my life when you couldn’t have convinced me that I’d ever be doing what I’m doing today, teaching the word of God to the people of God. I had my own plans, I had it in mind to make life a much more lucrative career in the secular music scene, I was chasing a dream; I wanted money, influence, and the praise of man.

So why am I here, because God changed my mind, He has transformed my life by the renewing of my mind, I don't think about those things the way I used to. Now I don't want the praise of man but as Rom 2:29 puts it, I want the praise of God. I want to hear, "*Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.*" I don't want to be a man pleaser, I want to be a God pleaser and God has caused me to gain eternal perspective, how? By the renewing of the mind, and we're to put on (Vs24) the new man, which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

Now how do we do this, well it can be likened to many things probably the most popular being that of Lazarus, you remember when he died and was wrapped in grave clothes, that which identified him with death. and The Lord came and gave him new life, resurrected him from the dead and he said loose him and let him go, he's no longer dead, so get out of that which identifies you with the dead, and start walking in the newness of life. and That's a good illustration, but we need more than that, how do we do that, well, it goes back to the fact that in Christ you're a new creation, and you're to believe that and receive that and walk in that by faith, as it is written, *the just shall live by faith.*

Now Paul in this next little section of scripture begins to contrast specific attributes that distinguish the old man from the new. In vs 17-24 we had a general exhortation, not to walk as the rest of the world walks, to put off the old way of living, and put on or walk in the new nature that we've been given, that we not be enslaved to the flesh, but surrendered to the Spirit. and Vs25-32 are what the characteristics of the new man are to be in our lives, these are the things that we're to emulate, and how we're to interact or relate to each other.

Vs25

What is the 1st thing that Paul draws our attention to; the fact that people are liars, Num 23:19 says that, "*God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent.*" The implication being that mankind lies, again, Rom 3:4, "*let God be true but every man a liar.*" In Ps 116:11 David said, "*I said in my haste, "All men are liars."*" Now one fellow said, you know I've had a long time to think it over and I still agree with David, and so do I, you show me someone who's never lied, and I'll show you a liar.

But again if you've heard Christ and have been taught by Him, then lying should no longer characterize your life as the *truth* is in Him. Col 3:9 says, "*Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds.*" You see lying is a chief characteristic of the old life, and the bible tells us that, "*the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.*"

Paul says that as new creations in Christ we're to put away lying, why, because it's of Satanic influence, as we've already learned the truth is in Jesus, but John 8:44 says in regards to Satan that, "*there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.*" You see, he's the father of lies, the lie originated with him, therefore when we lie, we exhibit his influence in our lives.

Now I'm not trying to insinuate that lying is the unpardonable sin, because a believer can fall into the sin of lying just as easily as he can any other sin. But if our lives are characterized by a habitual flow of lies that seek to deceive, then we really have no biblical right to consider ourselves Christians, because what is it, or really who is it then in that case who is governing our lives, Satan is a liar, but the truth is in Jesus (you see). and Lying includes much more than the telling of direct falsehoods, it also includes exaggeration, adding falsehood to that which begins as true.

I read the story of a Christian man who some years back became widely known for his powerful and moving testimony. But after several years of sharing it the man stopped and when asked why he said, "Over the years I embellished the story so much that I no longer knew what was true and what was not." Lying could be cheating in school, cheating on your income tax return, or betraying a confidence, the lie comes with many different faces but deceit is always at it's root. Paul says if you've learned Christ, then put away lying, you see the Christian is to be characterized by the putting away of falsehood, as we seen in vs 15, that we speak the truth in love.

This word that's been translated "putting away" has to do with discarding, stripping off, or casting aside it's the same word that Luke used when he spoke of the Jewish leaders who "*laid down (or laid aside) their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.*" When they were stoning Stephen, they laid aside their outer garments so that they might be free to do their wicked work. The Christian is to lay aside or put away lying so that we might be free to do the righteous work that God calls us to.

So you see here in vs 25 in contrast to lying we're to speak the truth with our neighbor (which is simply to say our fellowman) or in the specific text with our brothers and sisters in Christ. We're to speak the truth to everyone but here Paul is making a point as it relates to body life, now remember that truth is to be balanced in love, you don't have to vent all of your ill feelings or doubts or hatreds on people you don't like just because it's the truth concerning your position towards them. Don't just walk up to someone and say you know I've just got to tell you the truth, and then just puke all over them.

Prov 29:11 says, “*A fool vents all his feelings, But a wise man holds them back.*” It would be better for you to repent for harboring those types of feelings anyway and ask God to deal with the sinfulness of your heart, because it’s not wise to hate or disdain the one for whom Christ died, because God loves them. Now we can hate the sin and we are to do that, but we’re to love the sinners. But here we read that we’re to speak truthfully to one another, why, well the given is because it’s sin against God to lie but also here because we are members of one another.

Referring back to the analogy that we’ve seen so much in this epistle, of us being likened to the individual members of a body, and if the members of your body lied to one another you could not function effectively and it would ultimately be detrimental to your well being. If your brain was to suddenly send false signals to your feet, you’d begin to stumble and fall, or you’d walk out in front of a truck instead of stopping at the curb. If your nerves told you that the shower water was freezing when in reality it was boiling you’d scald yourself. If your hands and feet never told your brain that injury was occurring then your feet could be mangled or your hands could be frost bitten or burned with out you even knowing it, or you may bleed to death and never even know you were cut. That’s the danger of leprosy; injuries, disease and other afflictions devastate the body because nerves fail to send the danger signals of pain. You see the church cannot function properly and effectively if it’s members are lying to one another or always shading the truth; we need to be honest, speaking the truth in love. It’s interesting that the 1st sin that was judged in the early church was that of lying, and you can read of that in Acts ch 5.

Vs26-27

Be angry and do not sin, the point being that there are a couple of types of anger, the new man may get angry, but not in sin. The wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God, that’s fleshy anger, selfish anger, vindictive anger, and that’s sin, but there is anger that’s not sin, you may often hear it referred to as “righteous indignation” a godly anger. It’s that anger that abhors injustice, immorality, and ungodliness;

Jesus expressed this type of anger on a number of occasions. When He drove the moneychangers out of the temple, maybe you remember when Jesus entered a certain synagogue on the Sabbath and there was a certain man there with a withered hand. and The Pharisees were watching to see what He would do because if it were up to them they would prohibit this man from receiving the healing work of God in his life because of what day of the week it was. and The bible says in Marks Gospel that after Jesus had the man stand forward that He looked upon the Pharisees with anger, and He was grieved because of the hardness of their hearts.

Jesus was always angered when the Father was slandered, or when others were mistreated, but He was never selfishly angry at what was done against Himself, or else He would've never gone to the cross and we would all die in our sins, because Him going to the cross was totally mistreating to Himself, He did nothing to deserve it, and you see that's the difference, that's the measure of righteous anger. When Jesus was mistreated, He forgave Luke 23:33-34, "*And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."*

That's the point here, forgiveness, do not let the sun go down on your wrath. Be able to forgive; don't allow hatred and bitterness to seethe in your heart. Because even righteous anger can turn sour through self-righteousness or pride or vengeance, and then we're in violation of Rom 12:17-21 (look at it later). So resolve it in your heart between you and the Lord before your head hits the pillow, because the implication here or the inference is that festering carnal anger gives room to the enemy to immobilize people spiritually.

Vs28

Another attribute of the old man, stealing, thievery, something that is with in the boundaries of the heart of us all. and Stealing isn't limited to grand larceny, or petty theft, it can be as simple as taking some change off of mom and dads dresser with out permission, it can be not paying laborer the wage that's worthy, it can be pocketing the extra change that the clerk over pays you in the check out stand. Again it can be cheating of the income tax returns, and these are the things that are not becoming nor are they acceptable in the life of the believer, we're to put these things away. We're not to write down more hours on our time card then we actually worked, we're not to take things from our employers because they don't pay us enough as it is.

I read somewhere that of the 8 billion dollars that inventory shortages cost department stores every year, of those losses 10% is due to clerical error. 30% is due to shoplifting, and an overwhelming 60% (16 million dollars a day) is due to theft by employees. One of the 10 commandments is thou shalt not steal.

The bible says that Satan is a liar and murderer and a thief. He turned Judas into a thief, and he wants to do the same thing to you, he turned Eve into a thief by causing her to take of the fruit that God had expressly forbidden. In turn Adam became a thief, so the 1st Adam was a thief, and he was cast out of paradise, but in contrast the last Adam (Jesus Christ) while on the cross turned to a thief and said, "*Today you shall be with me in paradise.*"

We're to put away stealing, and instead we're to work with our hands what is good, we're to earn an honest days wage, the bible says that if a man won't work then neither will he eat. and What's the point of laboring, is it simply to amass wealth unto ourselves, oh sure we're to provide for our family the bible teaches that and we read in Prov 13:22 that, "*A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children.*" But it goes beyond that, it's much more profound than that, a Christians desire to earn more should be for the purpose of being able to give more and to help more. Jesus said, it's more blessed to give than to receive, and if you see a brother or a sister in need and you have the means to help then you're to do it.