

CLOTHED WITH A NEW IDENTITY

Ephesians 4:25-32

INTRODUCTION: After Paul reminds the Ephesians of who they once were before they knew Jesus, he then begins to encourage them to live according to their new identity. He gives them examples of old destructive patterns that are to no longer be part of their lives as he encourages them to take up Spirit-led words, actions and attitudes that build up the body.

I. WALK IN TRUTHFUL COMMUNITY v.25-27

A. Put away falsehood. v.25

1. We now reject dishonesty, recognizing that it is part of our old life.
 - a. What are some the reasons that we lie? Pride. Fear of judgement or punishment. For reasons of greed or personal gain.
 - b. Jesus called Satan the Father of lies.
John 8:44
 - c. When we lie, we are imitating Satan. When we tell the truth we are imitating God and living according to our new nature.
2. We recognize that falsehood affects not only us, but also other members of the church. v.25
 - a. I've often said that we're all in this thing together.

- b. Being honest, usually means a willingness to be vulnerable and that vulnerability often serves to encourage others.
 - c. Pastor who admitted his struggle with pornography before stepping into his Pastoral role. It helped other men come forward to admit their own struggle.
- 3. Speaking truth is an act of love for one another.
 - a. Earlier in this chapter Paul said that we are to speak the truth in love. **v.15**
 - b. This means we are honest with one another.
 - c. If someone is doing something that is harmful to themselves or others, out of love, not judgement, we let them know.

B. Speak truth with your neighbor. **v.25**

- 1. Speaking truth is the responsibility for each member of the body, not just leaders.
 - a. This isn't just about honesty, but about speaking the truth of the Word of God.
 - b. There are times when we hear others speaking doubt and not in the truth of the word.

- c. Sometimes people get offended when you're speaking the promises and blessings of God's word.
- 2. Speaking truth is relational as it is directed toward our neighbor.
 - a. "Neighbor" Greek – (πλησίον) plēsion = one who is close by.
 - b. So it's not just talking about the person who lives next store.
 - c. It's talking about everyone who is around us.
1 Thessalonians 5:14
- 3. This is why it is so important for us to devote ourselves to the truth of the Word. **2 Timothy 2:15**
 - a. How many of us have been part of a church or ministry that wasn't speaking the truth of the Word and it hindered us in our walk with Jesus?
 - b. For me personally, I wasn't taught at a young age about grace and faith. It was only guilt and condemnation and doubt.
 - c. As a younger Pastor I was tell people that they had to do the right things in order to be righteous.

C. Handle anger without sin. **vv.26-27**

1. Anger itself is not forbidden, but sin accompanied by anger should be avoided. *Psalm 4:4*
 - a. When we look at Jesus, we see there were certain things that angered Him, such as hypocrisy, those who had hardness of heart, the ones who wrongly took advantage of others.
 - b. There should be a holy anger within us against the tactics of the devil, and his weapons of sickness, poverty, deception...
 - c. George Foreman said that he would intentionally develop a hatred toward his opponent.
2. Any anger experienced should be resolved quickly and not allowed to linger. *v.26*
 - a. Studies on anger show that the physiological effects only last 90 seconds. (Adrenaline and cortisol in the bloodstream)
 - b. The only way it can last longer is when we feed it with our thoughts, replaying over and over again the cause of that anger.
 - c. If it lasts for days, months or years it turns into a deep seeded grudge and resentment.

3. Any unresolved anger gives the devil an opportunity to bring division and resentment. **v.27**
 - a. Have you ever done something really stupid as the result of anger and quickly regretted it?
 - b. This is why we must focus our thoughts on the good things of God. **Philippians 4:8**
 - c. Satan wants people mad each other so they're focus is turned away from him.

II. WALK IN RIGHTEOUS CONDUCT **vv.28-30**

A. Replace stealing with honest labor. **v.28**

1. We no longer take things which do not belong to us.
 - a. Apparently it was a normal aspect of society, that once you were out of work, you began to steal or con money from others in order to survive.
 - b. When Zacchaeus had an encounter with Jesus, it changed His heart. **Luke 19:8**
 - c. "Steal" Greek – (κλέπτω) kleptō = to steal something of small value in a sneaky way.
2. Instead, we now have the mindset of working diligently to provide for our own needs. **v.28**

- a. In our society, there is a mindset that others should be supplying our needs.
 - b. The person unwilling to work is considered a brother of Satan. **Proverbs 18:9**
 - c. Whatever we put our hand to, we do it diligently as unto the Lord, knowing He ultimately supplies all our needs.
3. This diligence enables us to begin helping others who might be in need. **v.28**
- a. See how the focus shifts from us looking to others to give us something, to us looking for someone to help.
 - b. The ones who remain in a place where their hand is out, only looking for someone else to give them something, never rises above that place of poverty.
 - c. The reason why there are so many homeless people in California is because they can be.

B. Replace corrupt speech with edifying speech. **v.29**

- 1. We are to set aside any words which may serve to tear others down.
 - a. Death and life are in the power of the tongue.
Proverbs 18:21

- b. In my years of ministry, I've spent a great deal of time helping people get passed the negative words that were spoken into their lives.
 - c. The old saying, "Sticks and stones will break my bones, but words will never hurt me" is a lie.
- 2. Instead, we are to choose words that bless and encourage others. **v.29**
 - a. We've been talking about the gifts of the Holy Spirit on Sunday and the purpose of the gifts is to build others up.
 - b. Remember, there is power in your words and you can make all the difference in the world simply with what you say.
 - c. What you say to others has everything to do with what you think about them. **Philippians 2:3**
- 3. We are to look for opportunities to speak words of blessing in every occasion. **v.29**
 - a. Fanny does this all the time. It doesn't matter if we're at church or in an elevator.
 - b. 3x5 card challenge: What did I say today that blessed someone else?

- c. It “gives grace” – opposite is work or burden, so giving grace alleviates the load upon a person’s life.

C. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit. **v.30**

1. Remember the Holy Spirit is not an “it”, but a “Him” who can be grieved.
 - a. “Grieve” Greek – (λυπέω) lupeō = to bring into a state of emotional pain, worry or suffering.
 - b. This all comes back to identity as the Holy Spirit is reminding us of our righteousness.
 - c. We do not grieve the Holy Spirit when we are walking in step with Him. When we’re not, it’s as if He is strenuously pleading for us to partner with Him.
2. We should never lose sight of the fact that the Holy Spirit is the one who sealed us into our eternal relationship with God.
2 Corinthians 1:21-22
 - a. The Holy Spirit is present in your life and has your best interest in mind.
 - b. He truly is our helper who will be with us every step of every moment in our lives. **John 14:26**

- c. Even with my parents' shortcomings, I never questioned whether or not they had my best interest in mind. I never questioned their love.
- 3. We are to live in a manner that brings honor to the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.
 - a. He guides us into all truth. He doesn't drag us.
John 16:13
 - b. We honor Him by following His lead.
 - c. Our son Carlos wears a military uniform. There's no mistaking his identity as a soldier. When we came to Jesus we put on a new uniform. **Luke 24:49**

III. WALK IN CHRIST-LIKE LOVE AND FORGIVENESS

vv.31-32

A. Put away destructive attitudes. **v.31**

- 1. There are times when we should exam ourselves to see if there is any resentment we are holding toward others. **Hebrews 12:15**
 - a. The root of bitterness grows a bitter tree that produces the opposite of the fruit of the Spirit.
 - b. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

- c. The opposite is hatred, sorrow, chaos, impatience, cruelty, wickedness, treachery, harshness, impulsiveness.
- 2. By dealing with resentment, we remove the outward flow of hostility.
 - a. If we're fighting with people in our minds we will fight with them in the natural.
 - b. If we're slanderously speaking evil of people, we will eventually speak evil to them.
 - c. If we're hoping for bad things to happen to other people, we will eventually be that carrier of bad things into their lives.
- 3. Destructive and malicious speech are incompatible with who we are in Christ. **1 Peter 3:9**
 - a. Again, that old uniform no longer fits.
 - b. "Called" Greek – (καλέω) kaleō = invitation to receive a new name and identity.
 - c. Years ago, I began to examine my heart daily to see if there was any bitterness I was holding in my heart toward others. **Matthew 6:12**

B. Put on kindness and tenderness. **v.32**

- 1. Kindness reflects the true heart and character of Christ who now dwells in us. **2 Corinthians 5:17**

- a. We now walk according to the new creation we have become.
 - b. We are to clothe ourselves with Jesus, by the Holy Spirit. **Romans 13:14**
 - c. I've lost over 50 pounds. I have clothes I can put on, but they no longer fit.
2. Being tenderhearted reveals our Christ-like sensitivity to those who are around us. **v.32**
- a. Even when it's someone who is acting up and not doing the right things.
 - b. I remember when my dad and I were going across the lake in his custom bass boat and I spoke negatively about people fishing from the shore. He quickly let me know that they were enjoying themselves.
 - c. Remember, we are to consider others better than ourselves.
3. This is a true demonstration of our love for others in the church.
- a. If I love a fellow believer, I see the awesome story of God's grace in their lives.
 - b. I recognize that they are no more or no less righteous than I am.

- c. I also see that they are on the same team as I am.

C. Forgive as God forgave you. v.32

1. As we recognize the forgiveness extended to us by God through Christ, we in turn extend it to others.
 - a. Being reminded of the extent that Jesus went to in order to forgive me, helps me to extend forgiveness to others.
 - b. I'm not having to crawl up on a cross to be crucified in order to forgive others.
 - c. Sometimes it can be a process for us, as it was for me to forgive my dad of something he once said to me.
2. Forgiveness releases any debt we might feel is owed to us.
 - a. I remember the time I loaned my cousin \$5 and I let it get to me, because he wasn't mentioning it.
 - b. Sometimes we think people need to apologize to us before we will forgive and it eats at us.
 - c. No, forgive before they ever say a word.

3. Forgiveness preserves unity and freedom within the church.
 - a. Nothing brings destruction to a church more quickly than unforgiveness running amuck in the congregation. **Mark 3:25**
 - b. The enemy loves this because the focus is on others and not him.
 - c. We have a new identity. We have put on Christ and when we do we put on forgiveness.

CONCLUSION: In Christ, we have been clothed with a new identity. The old ways no longer fit. As we walk in truth, righteousness, love, and forgiveness, we reflect Jesus, honor the Holy Spirit, and build up one another as His body.