



LET NOT ANGER RULE

Bible Study on Ephesians

DANIEL PANFORD
FRANK WILLIAMS
ISAAC NEWTON

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Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version of the Bible unless otherwise indicated.

Bible Reading

Ephesians 4:25-32: Therefore putting away lying let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor for we are members of one another. Be angry and do not sin do not let the sun go down on your wrath. Neither give place to the devil. Let him who stole still no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands, that which is good that he may have something to give him who has need. Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice. And be kind to one another. tender-

hearted Forgiving one another. Even as God in Christ forgave you.

Prayer

And so Father, we thank you for this moment. We thank you for the opportunity of coming to your word. Thank you because your desire is that we live in the new man, that mankind will walk in the truth. That mankind will put on the righteousness of God. We pray, O Lord, that the purpose of the new man be realised on the earth in the name of Jesus. We pray, O Lord, that the love of God will radiate in all of the hearts of mankind, that there will be no room for anger or the devil, and that there will be no place for anything of the old nature, but the new life in Christ. For your glory, for your praise, here on this earth. In Jesus' name, we have prayed. Amen.

Introduction

In Ephesians 4:17-24, Paul is reminding the Ephesian believers that, as people in Christ, they are to put away their old way of life. It also includes their past feelings, such as uncleanness and greediness, which should be put away. Also, Paul used the metaphor of putting on clothes or taking off clothing. In other words, he was telling us to put off the old man, old clothes or old garments (old habits) and put on the new man, the redeemed personality. This is evident in chapter 4:17-24.

Now, coming to 25, to the end, Apostle Paul continued in the same vein because he is cautioning that believers should not grieve the Holy Spirit. So, he starts with verse 25, saying, “therefore”. The word “therefore”

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means there is something that has been said already. Hence, he says, therefore, putting away lying, which shows that he's continuing the same thought. This talks about the characteristics of the new man, which involves putting away the old manner of life. The question we should ask ourselves from that verse is, are we lying? Paul encourages us believers to speak truth with our neighbours, because we are members of one another. As a result, believers should put away falsehood and speak the truth.

Paul was also instructing all disciples and Christians concerning the specifics of the moral behaviour expected of those who are putting on the new man. I would want to say this: whatever God commands, He also supplies. And just as we have emphasised from the beginning, the Christian life is not

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to be lived in isolation from the Holy Spirit. It is a covenant between God and man. Therefore, our Lord Jesus used an analogy with the vine and the branches to signify the relationship between Christ and His believers. That He is the true vine, and we are the many branches. He went on to say in John 15:45 that apart from Him, we can do nothing. The greatest need, or the greatest reason for which He has called us, is that we must bear fruit.

It is in the fruit-bearing that the Father is glorified. And fruit bearing is not an independent thing or something that we can use our personal efforts to achieve. We saw that the children of Israel used their personal efforts to obey God's laws. However, we saw that they all failed, including Moses, the leader. Therefore, when we read the book of Ezekiel 11:19 and 36:26, God said, I will give

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you a new heart, a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you. Therefore, it is His Spirit who has come as a Helper so that God's people can walk in the strength of God. So, you see, you cannot do it all by yourself.

The Lord Jesus recommended in John 15 that, just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own, it is very important that the branch be connected to the vine. It is when one is connected to the vine through prayer, through the study of the word, through fellowshiping with other members of the body, and through obedience to the word, that there is an overflow. And then people will see and bear the testimony. Let me say this. It was also a common thing for the heathen teachers in those days to declare that a lie is better than the truth when it is profitable and more helpful. Today, we call

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them white lies. So, in such a loose system of morality, they needed such admonition from Paul. And he says that, putting away lying, let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. The one who has come to indwell us, our new life, Christ. The Bible says, He is the Truth. Now, when it comes to the body of Christ, believers have issues because we are not putting on the new man.

We are all members of one another. If you look at verse 25, you will see that LIE is opposed to TRUTH. You will also see the old man, which is referred to as the flesh versus the new man, and you will see the phrases put off and put on. This is Apostle John's absoluteness in his narration: no middle ground, no mixture, and no sitting on the fence.

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It is something similar to what is in Genesis chapter 3—the tree of the knowledge of good and evil versus the tree of life. So, we see that this is an instruction, a command. The word said, do not lie to your neighbour. Who is your neighbour? The word ‘neighbour’ means the other part, your other part, or another member of the body. Apostle Paul in 1st Corinthians 12:18 referred to believers as one body. Just as the heart is the neighbour to the lungs, the lung is also the neighbour to the kidney. As a result, the word neighbour is your other part. Do not lie, because as members of the body, we belong to one another. Lying is of the devil. In Genesis chapter 3, the devil said, Has God said? Any twist of the truth is a lie. A half-truth is a lie! Thus, we need one another, so we cannot lie to one another.

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The truth is one edge (Hebrews 4:12); it cuts through, and there's no other alternative route. So, put away lying. Speak every man truth with his neighbour. There is no reason to lie! If there's a lie (disconnect) between the heart and the kidney, then there's a problem in the body. Therefore, the word 'neighbour', your other part of the same body, must be in coordination, for we are members of one another according to Romans 12:5 and 1st Corinthians 12:12. As Christians, we must see one another as other parts of the body of Christ. Truly, we are members of the body. We are members of one another! Thus, when we say our neighbour, it means someone close to us, with whom we relate; that is, a fellow mankind—member of the body. Even your fellow human beings are your neighbours.

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All believers must know and accept the fact that we are partakers of that same divine light and the attendant enjoyment. The same new man (the redeemed spirit) is available to all who have received the Lord Jesus as their Saviour. So, we should not lie to one another. Lying is the nature of the devil. Lie is against the truth, which is the nature of God. We should speak the truth with one another, with our other parts. This is what Brother Paul is trying to say – don't you know we belong to one another? Don't we know we are part of the same body? Your neighbour is the other part of the same body. The day a part is having a problem, the whole body suffers. This truth must be spoken to one another. If you read the Beatitudes in Matthew chapter 5:22-25, it discusses the importance of loving one another to the point that we should not hurt

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one another. This is a matter of the heart, the conscience.

All believers in Christ should be meek. Meek people do not fight for themselves. May the Lord grant this desire not to speak lies to one another, but to speak the truth, for we are members of one another. The vision of the body is what Paul is also speaking about here. If we tell a lie or say something untrue, then we are damaging the body. Why? Because we belong to one another. We are members of the body. Truth must set us free. Jesus Christ said in John 8:32 that you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

In the parable of the good Samaritan, Luke chapter 10, when you come to verse 36, that is after the Lord had given the parable, He asked a question: Which of these three do

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you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?

This is because, according to scripture, our neighbour is not necessarily or always the person who lives next door. In Europe, for example, you might be living in the same block of flats or street but would not even know your next-door neighbours. In some cases, you may sometimes know them, but the way you live is not neighbourly, as seen in the case of the Good Samaritan.

This was what Paul referred to in verse 25:
²⁵ Therefore, putting away lying, “Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,” for we are members of one another.

My neighbour is the person with whom I behave honestly and sincerely. We are the

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body of Christ, and we are neighbours, members of one another.

If I am in fellowship with this brother or that sister, they are my neighbours. And as such, I treat the person as my neighbour. I do not lie or wilfully wrong that person.

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

Apostle Paul begins to address things that he does not want the believers to be doing. The Ephesian believers had come from a pagan background, and those pagan practices, which included lying, should no longer be tolerated now that they have become Christians.

Paul continues by saying I should not be angry with my neighbour because this can lead me to sin. But now, let us look at this

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closely, because the Lord Jesus Christ also became angry at a point in the temple with the temple merchants.

In Matthew 21:12-13, the Lord did not express an outburst of anger. The Lord knew what He was doing. He stopped buying and selling in the temple! He had total control over what He was doing. It wasn't an unrighteous anger where He was behaving in a way that could lead to sin. The Bible says that He took a whip and whipped them because He was so furious at what they were doing in the temple, distracting God's people by turning the house of God into a den of thieves rather than the house of prayer. He had left but later came back to deal with these traders in the house of God. So, the anger here is mainly that Jesus dealt with the negative practice.

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It is pertinent to note that anger itself is not a sin but is really close to sin. And that's why the Bible admonishes us to refrain from being angry. But as long as you can control that sinful nature, then it's up to you. However, I know that most of the time, I can't control my anger. So, through the discipline of the Holy Spirit, I would not allow anger to control me, because it could lead me to sin.

One can be angry for a just cause. The adjective righteous has made it not sinful. Though anger and sin lie side by side. The difference is that righteous anger does not lead to sin. You know, when David was going to fight Goliath, he was angry. His utterances reveal that there was anger present. He said, '... this Philistine (Goliath) is coming against me with spear, with javelin. I'm coming against him. In the name

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of the Lord of Israel, he defied'. That was righteous anger! There is another judge, one of the judges of Israel, called Ehud Barak. In Judges 3:21-22, he put a dagger under his clothing to kill Eglon, the king of Moab. His righteous anger was justified. Also, in Numbers 25:7-8, Phinehas used the javelin against the immoral man and woman whose behaviour brought plague upon Israel. That righteous anger intervention stopped it. But in Ephesians, what Paul is talking about here is unrighteous anger. That's why he said, 'Be angry, but do not sin.' So, we see anger and sin lying side by side.

And the Lord told Moses that the young man had won because he had avenged His anger. Therefore, God spared the entire congregation because of what Phinehas did. Therefore, righteous anger is possible. And so, Paul tells us in verses 26 and 27 of

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Ephesians 4. He said the Greek word here 'orgizo' which means 'to make angry' or 'to provoke to anger' or 'to irritate'. And the reference here is you being provoked to sin by Satan. But one must not yield to such provocation or give place to it in a place or opportunity. Let me add a verse from Ecclesiastes 7:9. It says, Do not be quick in your spirit to become angry, for anger lodges in the heart of fools.

If you read Genesis 4:5-8, when Cain and Abel offered to the Lord, it says, But unto Cain and to his offering, He(God) had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And the Lord said unto Cain, Why are you wroth? And why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and If thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over

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him. And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

‘The door’ mentioned here is the door of the heart. In verse 8, we can see how anger, the outburst of wrath, resulted in sin – murder! So, Paul is saying we shouldn't use our anger as a fuel for revenge because it can lead to sin, as seen in the case of Cain. Also, we should avoid going to bed angry, as it gives room for more evil. You see, the faculty to be angry is God-created and perfectly sinless in itself. What God condemns is the misuse of it, including all other emotions. Because God Himself has been angry many times, mainly due to sin, that is why the Apostle Paul says that you are right to be angry, but do not sin. When you read Mark 3:5, the gospel allows us to be angry but also says not to sin. In

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your anger, do not sin. In your anger, do not sin. There are people who destroy valuable assets and, indeed, other human beings in their anger.

People can pick up a whole television set and throw it away because they are angry. People do very harmful things to others when they get angry. Anger can even lead to murder. So, you can be angry, but you need to control yourself so that it doesn't get out of hand. Let me say this: when we allow anger, what happens is that we work against the Holy Spirit and give the enemy an advantage when we are unable to control our anger. Hence, bitterness can rule us. What is needed here is forgiveness, but when we are unforgiving, we shall be kept in bondage. It acts like an acid that burns deeper into the heart.

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So, the longer we harbour feelings of animosity against one another, the more devastating it becomes because it hinders the Holy Spirit from working in us. So, as believers, we must strive to control our anger, as anger is close to sin.

And so as much as possible, do not be angry unless there is a real righteous reason. Just like Paul said in Galatians 2:11-14, when Peter, in the early church, was trying to be divisive because some men had come from Jerusalem, he rebuked Peter to his face because he would not eat with the Gentiles. But as soon as the Jews came, he withdrew. Paul had to be firm because this was the beginning of the Church. That was a time when Paul rebuked Peter in the church. That's what the Bible says that, be angry but do not sin. And if these things were not put right, it could be bad; the Church would

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suffer. Apostle Peter, being a role model, should not do that because racism and the new birth cannot co-exist in the body.

I have noticed that some younger ones in the Church use that to rebuke older ones, but Paul rebuked Peter because he had the Apostolic authority. Do you have that authority? Let us allow the Holy Spirit among us.

On the other hand, sometimes, people take things out of context. I have seen a younger brother rebuking an older brother. How about 1st Timothy 5:1, which says, “Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, younger men as brothers”?

If you think that an older brother or sister had done something that was not right, you probably could have a better way of handling it. However, because you could not

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control your temper most of the time, there is always an outburst of anger that could lead to sin. The Bible says that anger lies in the bosom of fools. So, be careful how you get angry, and I believe this verse applies to all of us. One thing I love about the Western world is the control of anger. They are calmer. And I look at them, and I'm like, how do you people do this? In Africa, when we are angry, we don't behave in this manner. We would rather scream, shout, and throw things.

However, in the Western world, a person can be very angry and sometimes even wicked at the same time and yet act in a very calm way. It is not about being calm or loud; you should not sin in your anger. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself could be angry and not sin. But how about you and I? We need to be

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very careful lest we grieve the Holy Spirit and frustrate the move of God in the body.

In emphasising 1 Timothy chapter 5:1, it states, Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father, and the younger men as brothers. You know why we need to have this kind of relationship? So that we may respect God by keeping the order in the universe. If everybody is angry, there will be chaos on earth.

This is about action and reaction. If someone is angry, that's an action. Then my reaction most of the time is worse than the action. So, the Lord, through Paul, wants to establish an environment of harmony and love within the body, His Church, and even in the world, because we are still here. When we allow anger to settle, like the Bible said, anger lies

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in the bosom, waiting to strike the one who gave it room for expression.

In Ephesians 4:27, the believers were admonished not to give the devil a foothold. Here, a festering is going on like cancer eating up the place in one's heart. This admonition is very instructive because that's what the enemy is waiting for, to fuel it. The Bible states in 1st Peter 5:8 that the Devil is a roaring lion (that's what he is) and goes about seeking whom to devour. We should not give him that space because he's always there to cause havoc. Just like what happened in Genesis chapter 3:1, the serpent said, "Has God said?" It was waiting to hit. Therefore, we need to be sober and be vigilant because Satan, the adversary, is just going about prowling to strike at the vulnerable. We have had experiences of a little anger. A mother was angry with the

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child and just threw her hand, which hit a knife, and the knife entered the eye of the poor girl, which got her blinded. See what her anger did within just a snap of the finger, and the knife left the plate, straight into the eye! Oh dear, we shouldn't give Satan the step because he is always there, waiting to strike. Look at the conversation between the serpent and Eve concerning the eating of the forbidden fruit. The serpent, the adversary, asked subtly, '... Has God said?' Please know that Satan is always waiting to pounce and cause havoc. Many times, he uses anger, bitterness, ill feelings, etc.

Therefore, we shouldn't allow him to use us, as it could damage many things. Look at what the Lord asked Cain ... Why are you angry? Why is your countenance falling? Sin lies at the door. The door of your heart should not be opened to Satan's

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manipulation. Although this is easier said than done, we should all just commit all our emotions to the Lord. Anger is an emotion that the enemy used to cause damage to mankind. We should never give place to the devil, period!

It is easier to forgive or overlook if a brother or sister in another city or country offends me. It is easier because of the distance.

But for those of us who are married, within the marriage environment, sometimes we lose that fact and say our spouses should know better. If one's spouse is a Christian believer, we often take it for granted and lose the reverence and the respect we have for one another. Sometimes, we lose caution when we are with our spouses or even our children. Most times, this happens in the home. There are instances where angry

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husbands refuse to eat their wives' food and then go out, not returning home in time. Sometimes, even for days, weeks, months, or years, I have even heard of years. This could lead to divorce. Both husband and wife will keep malice and will not speak to each other.

Some of them sleep in different rooms. In these instances, what are they doing? They are giving the devil an opportunity to be happy and strong to destroy their relationship. During these periods, we attend church meetings, dressed nicely, with radiant faces, and deceiving the congregation. But when we come back home, the battle continues. I think in such instances when caution is jettisoned, it may even lead to divorce in some marriages. Uncontrollable anger brings "Cold Wars" in such circumstances, homes, relationships, and the environment at large.

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Nobody is talking to each other nor really saying or doing anything meaningful, but we all know that we are at loggerheads. We all remain quiet.

1 John 4:20: If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?

It is a similar thing among us in the Church, where Christians gather in the house of God. We fight among ourselves, but we would say, "O, I love that brother or sister who is speaking on television every day". That is because he or she has not offended you; they have never stepped on your toes. That's why you don't have a problem with them. Anger has led to divisions upon divisions, problems upon problems in households, both of God and mankind.

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Verse 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.

The two verses, 27 and 28, are intertwined. It affirms that people should work with their hands, not other people's hands, so that they may have something to give to the one who has need. When you work and you make it, it's not all for yourself. You need to give something out and help those who are in need. Unfortunately, these days, we don't see that much of this giving.

The Bible says it is more blessed to give than to receive. Unfortunately, for some, it is all about me, myself, and I. Give me, give me, and give me.

The proportion which we even give to the Church is not because I have a million

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pounds; then I give ten pounds. And somebody has a hundred pounds and gives ten pounds. Proportionally, that person who has a hundred pounds has given more than the one who has a million pounds. The brother or sister with the hundred pounds gave their widow's mite. What Paul is saying here is to let everyone do an honest living and giving.

In the Book of Ephesians, the believers came from a pagan world, where lying and theft were problems. So, Paul tells them to be honest, do an honest job, and pursue honest work. Paul himself was not ashamed to say that his own hands ministered to his needs in Acts 20:34. He added, I have laboured with my own hands. Paul laboured for himself and shared it with his co-workers.

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In Genesis 2:15, we see that work came before the fall of man. Genesis 2:15: Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.

The command to work and tend the garden was before man fell. Work is something ordained by God from the beginning. It is not to punish mankind.

When God put man into the garden, He said he should cultivate it. Even further before the fall, there was still work—the work of creation. Therefore, it must be a rewarding and dignifying thing. Unfortunately, I see that there are people, in fact, Christians, who love to live on welfare. They don't want to work. The person who can work but chooses not to work deprives those who genuinely need help from the government and welfare system. So, the government becomes so

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serious and difficult because people are not being truthful about their situation. People are taking advantage and defrauding the government and the welfare system, which is there to help those who are truly in need. And sadly, sometimes, these individuals claim to be Christians.

If you read Psalm 104:23, Man goes forth into his labour until evening. That is an instruction. The Lord instructed Adam to tend the garden and take care of it because God Himself was a worker. You can't give what you don't have. The Bible says God rested. And that's why He gave out the Sabbath, which means rest. 'Rest' here is not the aftermath of tiredness but a state of satisfaction after completing a task, a state of fulfilment, or an enjoyable state. God did not rest because He was tired but because He was satisfied with His works, His creation.

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Rest, therefore, is not for a lazy person. Rest is for the labourer. Hence, why are you resting when you have not laboured? Rest is for those who have laboured. And one of the mottos of the Labour Pensioners Union worldwide is that rest is sweet after labour. But a lazy man, as the popular saying goes, is the devil's workshop. To steal is not to depend on God, nor look up to God. To steal is to take what does not belong to you. And one of the laws of the Ten Commandments states—Thou shalt not steal. To take what does not belong to you is to usurp; it is a sin.

Believers are enjoined to use what God has given them—the anointing, strength, capacity, education, skill, etc.—and labour with these gifts by endeavouring to go into a productive venture. Labour is a productive activity that attracts reward. I repeat, to labour is to put productivity into function,

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and that brings a reward. To labour is to have enough, not just for oneself but also for others. This is selflessness. Sharing with those who have need is the way to spread wealth. And I say this: God has made enough provision to meet the needs of mankind, but not his or her greed. Greed can never be satisfied, but need can be met. So, we see truth versus lie, or anger and sin. Now, it is stealing versus labour. They are always side by side. This is absoluteness—no middle ground. In Genesis 3, we see the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If we do not labour, then we will steal and do things worse or close to it. If we labour, then we will have enough for ourselves and to share with others. This is very instructive, and we must adhere to it.

I will read the portion of Galatians 5:13-14, which says, For you, brethren, have been

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called to liberty. Only do not use liberty as some opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word. Even in this, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. Theft or stealing is a psychological malfunction that manifests a lack of love for one's neighbour as oneself.

Paul here gave two solutions to address the problem of theft. One, he said, Christians must work to correct this negative mentality. Let me read his own life example. In 1 Thessalonians 4:10-11, he says, And indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more; that you also ask her to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, to work with your own hands as we commanded you. Sometimes, the problem is that we steal and rationalise. We

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steal from our companies, government, and employers, and we rationalise it. We say, "Oh, the guy doesn't pay me well". That is an excuse for not trusting God and a combination of sheer laziness and indiscipline. People say the government's salary is too small and offer various excuses. In parts of the world today, some individuals have turned to internet fraud, and they rationalise their stealing behaviour or activity with all kinds of excuses, but they are stealing from their fellow men. No Christian can be a thief, because Christians have committed themselves to loving their neighbour as themselves. Therefore, if you truly and genuinely love your neighbour as yourself, you will not steal from your neighbour. You'd rather work with your hands. Apostle Paul strongly encouraged everybody to work to earn a proper living.

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Apostle Paul further says he who does not work should not eat. If you cannot take care of your own household, how can you take care of the household of God?

Ephesians 4:29-30 - 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.

The 'corrupt word' here means rotten, or stinking. Imagine something rotten or foul coming out of your mouth. It's not ideal for a Christian, but what is good is necessary for edification. May our words edify one another, build one another up, encourage one another, and exhort one another, that it may impart grace to those who hear us.

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So it is not good to talk just for the sake of talking; this is why we must be careful of what we say. If we just talk a lot and loosely, you will probably unknowingly offend people you don't even know. You begin to say things that are not wise. The Bible says in James chapter 3:5-6, that we need to be careful because with the same mouth we use to bless, we also use the same mouth to curse. It's a small thing, but it kindles like wildfire. Our speech should therefore always be seasoned with salt. And we should not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom we were sealed for the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30).

The mouth of a believer is connected to his or her redeemed spirit. It's the same mouth we used to pray for blessings, as James said in chapter 3:10-12, that we use to curse. This creates an unruly, ungodly world—a very

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disorderly one. It's like a forest sparked and set on fire. There is a forest fire in every part of the mouth, and especially when you are angry, a lot comes out. Like we said, they are often rotten, corrupt communication, unwholesome talk, foul, abusive, polluting, and damaging language. We have witnessed many abuses and misuses here. A lot of CONTRASTS—we see truth versus lie, and stealing versus labour. We are now seeing a contrast between corrupt speech and benevolent seasoned speech.

It is with the same mouth we minister blessings. Let's consider what Jesus said in Matthew 15:11: Not that which goes into the mouth that defies a man, but that which comes out of the mouth, that defies a man. It is what comes out. Also, Psalm 34:13 instructs us to guard our mouths and lips. These things are easier said than done, but

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when we put on the new man, it is possible. I've seen someone correcting somebody: "Oh, you are talkative; you talk too much". But in the correction, she said a lot and too much. So, between the wounding and the wounded one, who is righteous? I've heard someone say, "Silly boy, don't insult him". I mean, what is that? We should not allow our good morals to be corrupted.

What Paul is saying is that we should not grieve the Holy Spirit with the words of our mouths, because our mouths are so slippery that we can pray and do the exact opposite. I was in a fellowship where, during prayer, a fight broke out. Look at the Pharisees. What kind of statement is the Pharisee making in the temple as seen in Luke 18:11-12? The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men — extortioners, unjust, adulterers,

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or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' Is that a prayer? With the same 'praying' mouth, he was already judging his neighbour. We talked about a neighbour, my other part of the body. That is exactly the definition of a neighbour, my other part of the body of humanity, because we belong to one another. So, when we begin to use abusive, polluted, or corrupt language against one another, we are damaging the body, even the universe.

In short, the relationship is damaged. There is no building. You can not build with one whom you have damaged. The Lord wanted to restore fellowship after Adam and Eve fell by extending it to their children (Cain and Abel) in Genesis chapter 4. But look at what happened – anger and bitterness erupted,

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and it led to murder. And that relationship with God and one another was damaged.

Therefore, we must not grieve the Holy Spirit, because we have been sealed, marked, and branded by Him according to 2nd Corinthians 1:22. We have been secured as God's own. That is our guarantee on the day of redemption. Amen.

In verse 30 of Ephesians chapter 4. Paul referred to Isaiah 63:10, which reads: ¹⁰ But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; So He turned Himself against them as an enemy, And He fought against them.

The above verse says, but they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit. The people of Israel rebelled and grieved God's Holy Spirit. So, He turned Himself against them as an enemy and fought against them. Paul's reference here was made to the children of

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Israel rebelling against God's instructions. Thus, from the context of the Book of Isaiah, there is the interpretation that to grieve the Holy Spirit is what we as Christians do when we rebel against God's word. All that Paul mentions from Ephesians 4:25, up to chapter 5:5, are all instructions on holiness and righteousness. These are all required characteristics that should emanate and be expressed in the new man. Therefore, when we act contrary to this, we are grieving the Holy Spirit of God.

Anytime we despise the preaching of the truth and, as Christians, we disobey God, then we are grieving the Holy Spirit. The Bible says that out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. Yes, the mouth speaks. If, as believers, we give ourselves diligently to read, study, and meditate upon the word of God, you will see from your

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experience that whenever you are in that atmosphere, anytime you open your mouth, what comes out is the word of God. And I will add, sometimes not only corrupt words come out of our mouths, but also obscene words. We should also ask ourselves, do our words encourage people? When we look at the children of Israel in the book of Numbers 13:32-33, 12 spies were sent to spy on the land and return. Ten of them came and gave a bad, discouraging report. It means that most people (over 80 percent) will say things to discourage you, while only a few will encourage you.

And we all saw the consequences that it had on the children of Israel. As believers, we must make every effort to control our tongues. If sometimes you have nothing to say, just be silent and stay quiet. Proverbs say that even a fool is considered wise when

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he remains silent. There are times when someone is bereaved, and your presence is enough. Don't say anything. The presence of Job's three friends at the time of his need was enough.

For seven days, they did not speak a word. They erred only when they started speaking.

Sometimes, we say certain things that, are the very opposite of the Lord's expectation. What is in that verse that grieved or vexed God? Do you know if Satan is angry against a man, that such a man can run to God? However, when you vex the Holy Spirit, to whom do you run? In the context of Isaiah 63, you can see that in there, God Himself became the enemy. May the Lord not become our enemy. Amen! He should be our perfect, true friend always, even in the days of adversity. When God begins to fight

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against a man like Cain, he has to cry out, and God has to show a little mercy, as seen in Genesis 4:13-15. So that anybody who sees Cain will not kill him or destroy him. We must not allow God Himself, our Father, to become our enemy. Don't, because once He's angry, even the devil, as wicked as he is, is afraid of God's anger. The day of the Lord is reserved for those who have refused His mercy. We must not be those who attract God's anger. Rather, we must attract His blessing. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God. Amen.

Verses 31 and 32:

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.

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What is malice? Malice is that deep-seated, hidden emotion that nobody knows how to handle. We often say, "I do not like that person, because he or she stepped on my toe". The person who stepped on your toe does not even know that you have harboured that negative feeling. But it's there, and you are just waiting for the day he or she steps on your toes again; then that bitterness in your heart will burst out in wrath, anger, and clamour. You open your mouth, and you say rotten things. And then, from there, we get to verse 32, where he speaks about positive things. So, we have addressed all the negatives; now let's focus on the positives - And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you. We should be examples of Jesus Christ. He was the tender-hearted one. He was the one

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who forgave. The Father God sent His only begotten Son to come and die for us. Why don't you want to know Him and receive Him this day? He's kind towards us. If God wants to deal with us in our unrighteous state, no one will survive.

Verse 31 is negative, while 32 is positive. We are seeing the same thing unfolding. The tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil, darkness and light, death and life. We see lying versus truth, stealing versus working. They are all side by side. What the apostle is saying is that we carry these two natures within us. We have our spirit regenerated, but our fallen nature is not regenerated. Our flesh is never born again. We need to know this truth. That was what the Lord told Moses in Exodus 4:4-7. He said, put your hand into your bosom. He put it, it was leprous, He told him to put it back,

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and it was restored. So, it's there. There is a leprous part of the fallen nature. It's just there. That's why Paul said, 'Neither give place to the devil in verse 27 of Ephesians. The fallen nature is just there, waiting to strike. Bad temper, bitterness, indignation, wrath, passion, rage, resentment, anger, brawling, and abuse—all these things are from the nature that has fallen from grace, sinful and prone to sin. The word 'malice' means ill will. Why should we have ill will against one another? Why should this be? This is not what the Lord wants. He said be tender-hearted. This is Christ—be useful, helpful, and kind to one another. I love the words loving kindness and tender mercies. Who can explain loving kindness, tender mercies? When you are even merciful, then you are to be tender.

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What is the apostle saying here? We should just put on the new man, the redeemed nature in life and living. We should just put on Christ. He's the only one who can exhibit the new nature. He's the one who will do it. In Deuteronomy chapter 30, from verse 15 to 16. He said, See, I have set before thee life and good, death, and evil. I love the way Ephesians chapter 4 ended. It ended on a very good note: Be tender-hearted, kind to one another. All the behaviour in the new man is new, pure, holy, and righteous. We should forgive one another. Know that nobody can forgive one another except in Christ Jesus. Forgiveness is the very nature of Christ. He was the one who said on the cross in Luke 23:24, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do". May the nature that we are given in Christ Jesus be

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constantly activated in our daily living. Amen.

Verse 31 is about putting off or setting aside, and verse 32 is putting on. Thus, 31 is the old nature, the old self, and 32 is the new nature. Therefore, when we put on the new man, we can put away bitterness, uncontrolled anger, anger itself, harsh words, evil speaking, and malice when conflict does come our way. It will come in any case; in the home, in the church, at the workplace, or wherever we find ourselves, because we are human beings.

Conflict will come, but our example and strength should be the Lord Jesus Christ. In Luke 23:34, while He was on the cross with all that He went through, Jesus asked the Father to forgive His killers.

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All He went through at the hands of men, the very people He fed, raised their children from the dead, and healed their sicknesses. The same people stood against Him. But on the cross, He said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing". This is humanly impossible, but when He is our strength, the source of our strength, and we are dependent on Him, it is possible. There is a song the Presbyterians sing. They say that when you are at a crossroads, you ask yourself, What would Jesus do? He is our example. And we can forgive because He is in us. And He's changing the way we think and act toward one another.

Therefore, in verse 32, God admonishes us that we should be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another. Even as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven you. And this indeed is the new life. If you

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appreciate what God has done for you through Christ Jesus, you will be willing to forgive your fellow brother or neighbour. What a positive note to end on: "Forgive one another as God in Christ forgave you". Has someone offended you? Drop it; drop that stone! Don't hold bitterness or a grudge against anyone.

There are people who hold bitterness against a family member, such as a brother, a sister, a father, a mother, or a work colleague. Drop it for Christ's sake. The only person who suffers when you go through bitterness and anger is you. Because many times, the other person does not even know that you are angry or embittered.

The other person does know and care, but you are angry, allowing that anger to rest in your heart. And that is why sometimes you

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get angry with somebody, have a quarrel with them, and then you leave. And then you are thinking, "Ah, this person, I should have said this to the person. I should have done this. It's long gone." And you are still sitting down, moaning over it. Drop that stone! And if it is you that have offended somebody, say sorry. Deal with your pride, but this happens only in Christ.

If you know the Lord Jesus Christ, it makes it easier for you to handle challenges when somebody has offended you bitterly and you don't know what to do. I say leave it all to the Lord. And I encourage you to give your life to the Lord Jesus Christ if you do not know Him.

Let us pray

“Father, thank you for today. Thank you to everyone who is reading. We pray that you help us deal with every outburst of anger within us.

Lord, have great mercy. Bind the enemy, bind Satan. We are humans, and sometimes, we just can not control the pain and the hurt. We pray for supply from above.

Make us those who will work with our own hands. Save us from laziness. We lift all our laziness unto you. Make everyone a better, diligent person, to labour with their own hands.

We bring those who do not know you unto you, that you will touch their hearts through

this message, reading, and Bible study. We pray that they will be given fully unto you.

Thank you, Lord, for hearing us. In your mighty name, we have prayed. Amen”.