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C0508 -- Feb. 23, 2005 – Ephesians 4:29-32 – The New Lifestyle-Part 2

Two weeks ago we looked at Ephesians 4:25-28. This section falls in chapters 4-6, the practical section of Ephesians. The common theme that runs through chapters 4-6 is “A New Walk”, that is, a new way of conduct. Chapter 4 can be divided into two sections:

- 1) 4:1-16 Walking in Unity**
- 2) 4:17-32 Walking in Holiness.**

Chapter 5 begins a new section on Walking in Love and then Walking in Wisdom. Chapters 1-3 gave us the space-time historic doctrine and chapters 4-6 is the natural outgrowth of that doctrine. Right doctrine always precedes right conduct. It can never be the other way around. You can never bypass doctrine. To bypass doctrine is to bypass the mind. This is what all instant sanctification gimmicks are trying to do. They want to be like Jesus but they want to bypass the mind. They don't want to think. But you can never change if you don't take doctrine into your mind. See, everyone has doctrine. No one, believer or unbeliever doesn't have doctrine. And your doctrine naturally leads to a certain type of behavior. Your behavior reflects your doctrine. For example, a recent article on Evolution showed how an evolutionist should live in an evolutionary universe. The doctrine of Evolution basically teaches a “dog eat dog world”, “survival of the fittest”. It teaches that there are a limited amount of resources and we need these resources to survive. Therefore, the fittest individuals get those resources and survive and the weakest individuals die. Therefore, the fittest individuals procreate and the weakest individuals do not so that society is moving toward an advanced perfect society. We are getting better and better. Evolution is the way of salvation. This is what the great minds of the day would have us believe. In this recent article I discovered that many of these scientists are working out this hypothesis in practice. How should we evolutionists live in an evolutionary universe? One suggestion concerned sex. “Sex” is a limited resource and since men need sex to live then “rape” should be legalized. The doctrine of evolution logically leads to the view that women are just resources. Men are more powerful and should take what they please when

they please. So, you can see how one's doctrine affects one's lifestyle. The problem with this is that all non-Christian philosophies can never live consistently with their philosophies. The reason is because we don't live in a world that corresponds to any of those philosophies. So, the argument that Christianity is making is that only the Christian can live consistently with his doctrine. And the reason is because Christianity is true; Christianity corresponds with reality.

So, everyone has doctrine, no one is neutral, and out of our doctrine grows our lifestyle. But the doctrine of all non-Christian philosophies leads to absurd lifestyles; lifestyles that won't work in reality. The reason they don't work is because whether you are a Christian or not you still live in a Christian universe under the Christian God. This is why non-Christians can never live totally consistent with their philosophy. It doesn't fit the way things are.

Now let's turn to Christian doctrine. Christian doctrine is true, it fits reality. Therefore, the lifestyle that grows out of Christian doctrine is also true and can be lived out in reality. We can live consistent with our doctrine. Why don't all Christians live consistent with Christian doctrine? One of two things: 1) he doesn't know [ignorant] Christian doctrine. Therefore he's living according to some other pagan doctrine or 2) he doesn't believe the Christian doctrine. Therefore he really still believes some other pagan doctrine. He really believes the grass is green on the other side. So, to live consistently with Christian doctrine we first have to know the Christian doctrine and then we have to believe the doctrine. When we know it and believe it we live it! Ephesians 1-3 contains the doctrine. Ephesians 4-6 contains the lifestyle. All you have to do is believe the doctrine of 1-3 so you can live like chapters 4-6.

Now, we are in chapter 4:17-32, Walking in Holiness. The Christians walk is to be characterized by holiness. What is the doctrine we have to know in order to walk in holiness? First, the space-time resurrection of Jesus Christ. Why walk in holiness today if the founder of Christianity died and was buried in the 1st century? If He didn't rise from the dead then no one is watching and why walk in holiness? Second, the space-time ascension of Jesus Christ. If Christ did not ascend to the right hand of the Father and assume government of the universe then why walk in holiness? If it's not Christ's law then we may once again, do as we please. We get to make the rules. Why walk in holiness? Third, the space-time regeneration of the believer. How can you walk in holiness if you are a depraved sinner? Some real change had to take place in your human spirit if there is to be a change in your lifestyle. All three of these doctrines have been developed by Paul in Chapters 1-3. Turn to Ephesians **1:19b-23**. See the resurrection there and the bodily ascension. Now look

at 2:1-3. By nature we were depraved and under the wrath of God. But now look at **2:4-9**. You have been regenerated by the grace and power of God at the moment you trusted Christ. You were given a new nature and that new nature was designed to do one thing. That one thing is found in **2:10**. You are His *poiema*, His poetry, His work of art, created in Christ Jesus, not *by* good works but *for* good works. These good works have been prepared before the foundation of the world for you to walk into them. That's the doctrine behind this section Walking in Holiness (4:17-32). You are designed to walk in holiness.

Last week we looked at three specific commands. Each command has three aspects. Negative, don't do this, Positive, do this instead, and Motivation, this is the reason. This follows the Old Testament Wisdom Literature format. God never just tells us no, no, no. Simply refraining from some activity does NOT make one holy. Well, I don't drink or chew or go with the girls who do so I must be holy. Oh no, you haven't been reading God's word. To be holy you must not only refrain from some activities but you must follow his positive commands. And God graciously gives us a motivation, a reason for following his commands.

First, verse 25. Don't be **a liar**. That's the negative. When is a liar no longer a liar? Is it when he stops lying? No. A liar is no longer a liar when he is a truth teller. What's the motivation to be a truth teller? **We are members one of another**. We are united in the body of Christ. Your brother is necessary to your well-being. Why would you lie to him? It would be an act of pure stupidity to lie to a fellow brother in Christ or anyone for that matter. Liars think they are getting ahead but God keeps accounts of all.

Second, verse 26. **Be angry but do not sin**. This is the positive command. Anger is not inherently sinful. This word for angry is also used of God's anger. Therefore, it can't be inherently sinful because that would make God sinful. So, we can **be angry and not sin**. What's the negative command? **Do not let the sun go down on your anger**. In other words, if you get angry tonight then don't let that anger fester beyond sundown tomorrow. The day of anger should be the day of reconciliation. After that the devil is in your court. There are three responses to our anger. 1) **blow up** on the person who made you angry, 2) **clam up** so that resentment builds up between you and others. These are both wrong sinful extremes. There is a third solution that people struggle with. That solution is to 3) **re-direct** your anger toward the problem and solve it with the person within one day. This requires confrontation which is what those who clam up want to avoid. But God's word says we ought to be big enough boys and girls to confront one another in love (4:15). Our goal should be to construct a solution rather than destroy the other person. Why? What's the motivation for solving the problem in one day? v. 27 **so you will not give the devil an**

opportunity. Literally, so you will not give the devil a position of attack. You let anger boil for more than one day and you have just invited Satan himself to come in between your marriage, to come in to your children, and to come in between you and your fellow brothers in Christ. That is a very foolish thing to do. More churches have split over this issue than any other issue. They don't know how to handle anger. More marriages have been broken over this issue than any other issue. The partners don't know how to handle anger. And I suggest that what happened is they let the destroyer in. The devil himself is the one who tore that church or marriage apart. The devil isn't interested in you having a good time. He's called a destroyer. Tell me I'm a liar. So, when is an angry person not sinning? When he is solving the problem within one day.

Finally, verse 28. **The stealer must no longer steal.** When is a stealer no longer a stealer? Is it when he stops stealing? No. A stealer is no longer a stealer when he is **laboring with his own hands and sharing with others.** What is the motivation to no longer steal? So that he may share with others. Let the one of humble means share humbly; let the one of great means share greatly. God sees both as good and proper.

Two words on the new man and the old man; I want you to forget about the old man. From God's perspective you are a new man, a new creation, and I want you to forget about the old man. From your perspective he doesn't even exist. Now, why do I tell you this? Because I can assure you the old man has not forgotten about you. You may forget him but he will remember you. Therefore, forget about him. He's been laid aside. Think about yourself like God thinks of you. You have put off the old man and put on the new man at conversion. So, you're a new man, forget about the old. It's enough that he remembers you. This is the lofty way Paul wants you to think; the lofty calling to which you have been called.

- C- Let no worthless word come out of your mouth**
- C+ but that which is good for the building up of that which is lacking,**
- M in order that it might give grace to those who hear.**
- C- And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.**

- C- Let every kind of bitterness and anger and wrath and shouting and abusive speech with all evil be put away from you.**
- C+ But become kind to one another, compassionate, being gracious to one another,**
- M just as also God in Christ was gracious to us.**

Greek Text 4:29 pas logos sarpos ek tou stomatos umon me ekporeuestho all ei tis agathos pros oikodomen tes chreias ina do charin tois akouousin

Translation 4:29 Let no worthless word come out of your mouth but that which is good for the building up of that which is lacking, in order that it might give grace to those who hear.

The first negative command is **let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth**. This speaks of “worthless” words. The emphasis here is on each **word**. The word here for **unwholesome** is *sapros* and refers to “dead, rotten fish”. Let no dead rotten **word come out of your mouth**. But the idea goes beyond “foul and putrid” words. It also implies any corrupt speech or message that does not profit others. Sometimes we use nice words but with evil intentions. That is condemned here. Jesus said “that which comes out of a persons heart defiles him” (Matt 15:11). You defile yourselves when rotten, corrupt words come out of your mouth. This is a present imperative meaning stop your present activity of running every body down with sour speech.

The positive command is let words come out of your mouth that are **good for edification**, words **which are good for the building up of that which is lacking**. Instead of using words that tear down people use words that build up people. Speak **good** words. The emphasis is that each word should be **good**, not just the overall message. As Christians we are to supply that which is lacking in other believers lives by speaking beneficial, words. This helps the spiritual growth of the body.

What’s the motivation or reason? **so that it will give grace to those who hear**. What is **grace**? **Grace** is “unmerited favor” or “enablement”. In this context it refers to “enablement”. Individuals in the body have many spiritual needs. When we speak beneficial words to one another we become conduits/channels of God’s grace. Our words contribute to individual’s growth and enable them to fill up whatever is lacking or needed. God’s grace is what enables us to believe and God’s grace is what enables us to grow!¹ Verse 28 spoke of sharing with others to help their physical needs. This verse is speaking of helping others spiritual needs. You can become a channel of God’s grace to others.

Greek Text 4:30 kai me lupeite to pneuma to agion tou theou en o esphragisthete eis hemeran apolutroseos

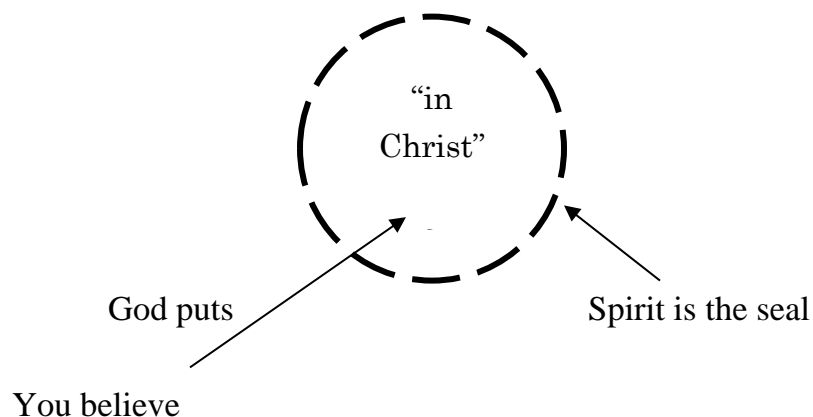
Translation 4:30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption

Literally, verse 30 begins with the word **and**. It should read **and do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God**. This is a second negative command. Do not speak any dead, rotten word and do not **grieve the Holy Spirit of God**. The word **grieve** (*lupeo*) has the basic idea of to cause sorrow. The Spirit has been mentioned before in Ephesians but this is the first time He is given His full title **Holy Spirit of God**. It is clear that the Holy Spirit is a person because only people can be grieved.

But what does it mean to **grieve the Holy Spirit**? To grieve the Holy Spirit is to rebel against God (cf. **Isa 63:10**). Therefore, dead, rotten words are forbidden because it keeps others from growing spiritually and rebellion against God is forbidden because it **grieves the Holy Spirit**.

by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Now, we've already looked at the sealing of the Holy Spirit in Ephesians. Can anyone remember what chapter and verse? Chapter 1:13-14. The same thing was taught there. The sealing is accomplished entirely by God. And 2 Cor. 1:22 indicates that the seal is none other than the Holy Spirit Himself, ***“who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.”*** The Holy Spirit is given as the “token of what will be brought to its conclusion at the day of redemption.”ⁱⁱ So, God is the one who seals us and the Holy Spirit is the seal Himself. This might be likened to what happens at the moment of conception.

The Sealing of the Holy Spirit corresponds to the Seal of Conception. Let's explain this Seal of Conception. As a biologist you can study the physiology of conception. Conception is the moment when the sperm and egg unite. This moment constitutes what we call “physical life”. So, “physical life” begins at the moment of conception. Interestingly, the moment the sperm penetrates through the outer layer of the egg a chemical reaction occurs that forms an impenetrable barrier that keeps all other sperm from entering the egg. That is, the egg is sealed, secure from any outside agents. You believe, God puts you “in Christ” and God seals you with the Holy Spirit.



you. First, **bitterness** (*pikria*). This word is used of the “bitter waters of Marah” in Exod 15:23. Like the people could not drink the water because of its bitterness so when you are bitter toward others the church can’t grow. So, **bitterness** is the attitude of “resentment”. Put your resentment toward others aside so we can grow.

Second and third, **let every form of...anger and wrath...be put away from you.** The words **anger and wrath** are being used as synonyms here. The word **anger** here (*thumos*) translates from the Hebrew root for “nose” from which we get the verb “to snort, to be angry”. Homer said *thumos* was the seat of anger or anger itself. It is the kind of anger that leads to murder and rage. The second word here, **wrath** (*orge*) is a synonym for *thumos*. If there is any distinction between these words it is that **anger** emphasizes passion and temporary anger whereas *orge* emphasizes a settled and long lasting anger.

I should note here that **anger** is not always sinful. Remember, the command in verse 26 is “Be angry and do not sin”. But at the end of this verse the **anger and wrath** referred to here is characterized by **malice**. This kind of **anger and wrath** are malicious. And that is why it should be **put away**.

Fourth, **let every form of...clamor...be put away from you.** The word for **clamor** (*krauge*) means “shouting”. **let every form of...shouting...be put away from you.** Why do people shout at others? We shout because we have a weak argument. An increase in volume is supposed to bolster our argument. **Shouting** is a good sign of irrationalism. I’m right; you’re wrong so shut up and hear me out! **Shouting** at other members of the body of Christ or your wife or your children is unacceptable behavior. There will be no more shouting in the New Heavens and the New Earth (Rev 21:4).

Fifth, **let every form of...slander...be put away from you.** The word for **slander** is *blasphemia*. It refers to abusive speech. Jesus was accused of blasphemy when He claimed to be the Son of God. It refers to evil words, cursing and abusive tone.

“To summarize, first noun “bitterness” in verse 31 deals with attitude. The next two nouns “anger and wrath” deal with disposition, and the last two “shouting and abusive” refer to the manner of speech.”ⁱⁱⁱ

The last phrase, **be put away from you, along with all malice** is unique and very important. Up till now the commands in verses 25-30 have been in the present tense. But **be put away** is an *aorist imperative*. What this denotes is that a change of behavior is expected. You say, “oh, I’m a believer and I’m safe in Christ so what does it matter if I

sin?” This tense denotes an urgent change of behavior. Change is expected. But, it is *passive* in voice. This means that you can’t change your behavior but must depend on the power of the Holy Spirit with whom you are sealed!

The word **malice** colors all five words that preceded it. We might say Paul is saying **let every form of malicious bitterness, malicious anger and wrath, malicious shouting and abusive speech be put away from you!**

Greek Text 4:32 ginesthe de eis allelous chrestoi eusplagchnoi charizomenoi eautois kathos kai o theos en Christo echarisato emin

Translation 4:32 But become kind to one another, compassionate, being gracious to one another, just as also God in Christ was gracious to us.

Finally, verse 32. In contrast to the malicious actions of v. 31 here we are given the positive command and the motivation. Minus verse 31, plus verse 32. Instead of bitterness, anger, wrath, shouting and slander **become kind to one another, compassionate, and gracious.** Principle of replacement. You are to become what you are not at this time. You are not **kind** but you are to **become kind** and remain kind. That is the force of the present imperative. Who should we be kind to? Everyone, but in the context it says to **one another**. To other members of the body of Christ. This is mutual and reciprocal kindness. **Kindness** is a fruit of the Spirit in Gal 5:22. Therefore we cannot make ourselves kind. It is only as we rely on the Spirit who sealed us that it becomes possible to **become kind to one another**.

Second, we are to be **tender-hearted**. This is the word for **compassionate**. The word is *eusplagchnon*. We touched the root of this word in 1 John 3:17. It refers to the “heart” or the “bowels”. It is the seat of emotions and feelings. We have a built in response mechanism in our bowels. Our bowels are often hardened however because we turn off the response mechanism. We refuse to help people in need. We don’t have compassion for them. The NT records Jesus’ compassion for others four times (Matt. 15:32; 20:34; Mk. 1:41; 6:34). We are to be like Christ; sensitive, **compassionate**, and easily touched by the needs and pains of others. We are not to be callous toward others but **tender-hearted!**

Third, most translations say we are to **forgive one another**. But the Greek word is the word **grace** (*charisomai*). **being gracious to one another**. In this context it means “unmerited favor”. Show unmerited favor **to one another**. Every instance of this word in the LXX and the NT has this sense. For example in the book of Esther. When King Ahasuerus gave

Esther the house of Haman this word is used. Ahaseurus was gracious to Esther. Graciousness is the opposite of the bitterness, anger, wrath, shouting and abusive speech! Additionally, to be **gracious to one another** includes the idea of forgiveness. When we are **gracious** we are forgiving.

Finally, the motivation is given. Why should we put away the five things in verse 31 and put on the three things of v. 32? **Because God in Christ also has been gracious to us** [not **you** NA-Text]. Again, this word is not **forgive** but **gracious**. Sure God has forgiven us but He forgave us because of His graciousness. Grace is a larger concept than forgiveness. The **just as** should be read **because of** as in Eph 1:4. We should be **kind, compassionate, and gracious to one another** **BECAUSE God in Christ has been gracious to us**.

In conclusion, Paul says, I taught you to learn Christ. The person of Christ. I want you to know Him. I also taught you that your old man was laid aside at conversion like an old dirty garment and you put on a new man at conversion, a new clean garment. You are a new creation. Forget about the old man and keep in remembrance the new man that you are! Old things have gone new things have come. Now live your lifestyle in accordance with the new man. Paul gave us five basic commands. First with a negative, then with a positive, and followed by a motivation or reason to follow the command. Replace the old actions with new actions. Old actions come from the old man. Forget about him because that's no longer who you are in Christ! You are a new man and new actions come from the new man. The principles of change are given in this important passage. By way of conclusion we have a number of contrasts given here.

Old Man

Liar

Sinful Anger

Stealing

Corrupt Speech

Malicious Bitterness

Malicious Anger

Malicious Wrath

Malicious Shouting

Malicious Abusive Speech

New Man

Truth-teller

Sinless Anger

Working

Edifying Speech

Kindness, Compassion, Graciousness



ⁱ Salvation and sanctification are dependent on God's grace. You are saved by grace through faith and you live by grace through faith. This is what I call Efficacious Grace because it is effective to bring about a desired result.

ⁱⁱ Walvoord, John F. *The Holy Spirit*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991), 157.

ⁱⁱⁱ Hoehner, Harold, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 636.

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