

### Commentary and Questions | Ephesians 4:25-32 | part 10

Ephesians 4:25-32\_New Life Part 2

#### Commentary:

Christians are not called to try and become something that they are not, but to become what they already are. Evidence that one is a believer is not so much a past experience of conversion but a present life that reflects it. This is exactly what Paul is arguing for in this passage (Eph. 4:17-32). In verses 17-19 he states this in a negative way by exhorting Christians to walk not as the Gentiles do. Just as any sane person would be expected to act like a human and not an animal, Christians are called to live a righteous life because God views them as righteous. Humans have certain characteristics that set them apart from the rest of the created order, just as Christians are set apart from Gentiles.

After stating in a negative way that Christians are called to act differently, Paul states it positively, "...put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness (v. 24)." If the chapter closed with this statement, one would be left wondering how to apply this in life. What does it mean to put on the new self? However, Paul moves to the passage this week in order to specify exactly what he means by putting on the new self. Ephesians 4:25-32 contains four examples of what it means to put off the old self and to put on the new self. All of these examples are extremely practical so read them carefully and with the intent to analyze where you are.

Before we describe the four examples of putting off the old self and on the new self, remember this: these examples are not isolated from the Gospel (Ephesians 1-3)! For Paul and throughout the rest of the Bible, believing right things and living rightly are not separated but are merged with one another. It is always tempting to just want to know what to do and how to live (cf. The Rich Young Ruler in Mark 10:17-31). However, for Paul, knowing, believing and loving the Gospel plays a definite role in right living (he spent half of the book, chapters 1-3, describing it!). The challenge then is to ask how the Gospel affects our speech, anger, greed, and virtues. What is it about the Gospel that causes us to speak truthfully rather than lie? What is it about the Gospel that transforms our anger from unrighteous to righteous? In other words, let us not confuse legalism with joyfully obeying because obedience glorifies Jesus and brings us joy!

- 1.** The Gospel affects anger: All people experience the feeling or emotion of anger. Anger expresses itself in a variety of forms. While the Gospel does not change the fact that Christians get angry, it does change the object of anger. In other words, are you angry for right reasons (i.e. injustice, sin, temptations, etc.) or for unrighteous reasons (selfish motives, lashing out at people)?
- 2.** The Gospel affects possessions: Underneath the sin of stealing is the idol of possessions or money. Conversely, when Jesus becomes someone's greatest treasure, their view of possessions radically changes. Possessions and money become a way to provide for and bless others.
- 3.** The Gospel affects our words: For a believer to have unwholesome talk flow forth from the mouth is absolutely inconsistent with the new nature! Rather, our speech should be aimed at building up, not tearing down.
- 4.** Human vices to Godly virtues: Humans have a natural tendency to be bitter, slander others and become angry in an unrighteous way. However, the Gospel has a radical effect on these vices. The Gospel produces a deep love for Jesus and a desire to live like him.

# EPHESIANS

## GRACE & GLORY

The last phrase of the chapter is so crucial in connecting the Gospel and right living, “as God in Christ forgave you.” Read this slowly and try to wrap your mind around the fact that God has forgiven you because of what Jesus has done! This is one of the beautiful ways that the Gospel affects our life. If Christians really believe that God forgives them, surely Christians would desire to forgive others!

### Questions:

1. Read Ephesians 4:25-32. Write down any thoughts, questions or insights that you have from the text.
2. Read verse 25. What is the first thing Paul calls Christians to do? Why would this one be the first on his list?
3. Read verses 26-27. Describe in your own words the difference between unrighteous anger and righteous anger and give examples of each.
4. Interpretation question: Paul says in verse 26b to not let the sun go down on your anger. Should Christians interpret this literally so that it is a strict rule to be followed or as more of a general principle (do not let anger remain in you for a lengthy amount of time)?
5. In your own words, explain how the Gospel changes a Christians' view of possessions and money. How does this affect the desire to steal and the desire to share?
6. Read Ephesians 1:11-14 and Ephesians 4:30. Why would unwholesome talk grieve the Holy Spirit?
7. Read verses 30-31. Do any of the vices in verse 30 appear in your life and need to be repented of? Which ones?
8. How can you practice kindness and tenderheartedness towards someone this week?
9. Read the last phrase of the chapter and explain why Paul would add this at the end? How does this phrase connect the Gospel and right living?