

## Living a Surrendered Life

Ephesians 4:25-32

We have discussed much in recent weeks regarding the obligations and responsibilities of believers within the body of Christ. Paul has painted a detailed picture of how the church should look and the witness presented unto a watching world. While the previous passages have been informative, they have also been convicting. In fact, the biblical standard Paul revealed, fully expecting the church to uphold, is impossible apart from the guidance and assistance of the Spirit.

Beginning with the text we have read, and continuing through the remainder of the Ephesian letter, Paul offers detailed instructions for how we are to live and conduct ourselves within our communities and circles of influence. Having discussed what is expected of believers, Paul now challenges the church to live-out what they possess within. Having died to the old nature, being resurrected a new creation in Christ, our lives ought to reveal the transformation we encountered. It is easy to state that one is a believer and follower of Christ; it is an entirely different matter to live in such a way that others can see evidence of the professed relationship with Christ.

As we examine the [admonitions](#) within the text for every believer, I want to consider: [Living a Surrendered Life](#).

**I. An Honorable Personal Life (25-27)** – In the opening verses of our text, Paul addresses the way believers are to live their personal lives. He speaks of:

**A. Our Tongue (25)** – [Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another](#). Paul offers basic instruction for Christian living, being inspired by the Spirit to admonish believers not to tell lies, spreading falsehood, but to speak truth with one's neighbor. While this is foundational Christian doctrine, it is a matter that must be addressed. We live in a culture where truth is often passed over in order to receive a lie. Many today take a liberal approach to truth, seeing no harm in bending the truth a bit if it aids in one's pursuits. Simply, believers must be a people who embrace and proclaim truth, regardless of the consequences.

- Paul revealed an interesting aspect of this matter of speaking truth – we are members one of another. Sharing lies and inaccuracies has a detrimental effect on the entire body. If you or I lie about a brother or sister in Christ, it not only hurts them; in reality, it hurts us and the entire body of Christ as well. We must be a people committed to telling the truth.

**B. Our Temper** (26) – [Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath.](#) Paul does not admonish the church about being angry. No doubt, there were times when Paul was angry with a righteous anger. We know Jesus was as well. However, we are admonished to guard our anger to prevent sin in the process. It is okay to be angry, but it is not pleasing to the Lord for our anger to lead to sin. We must not dwell on our anger, allowing it to consume our thoughts and actions. Righteous anger should never lead to unrighteous behavior. We are expected to deal with our anger in a manner pleasing unto the Lord rather than taking it to bed in the evening and rising with it on our minds in the morning. We should address the issue that caused our anger, settling the matter as soon as possible.

**C. Our Temptations** (27) – [Neither give place to the devil.](#) We must guard against the temptations associated with neglecting the truth and unrighteous anger. These behaviors provide an open door for the enemy to attack and gain a foot-hold in our lives. We must not provide any opportunity for the devil, the slanderer and accuser of the brethren, to gain any ground in our lives. The spreading of falsehood or unjust anger can create a situation ripe for the devil to gain advantage and create division within the church. We are obligated to stand firm in the Spirit, resisting the devil and his attempts to enter in and create division and damage.

**II. An Honest Social Life** (28-29) – Paul also addressed the manner in which believers are to live their social lives, being upright and honest in their words and their deeds. He speaks of:

**A. Our Employment** (28a) – [Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good.](#) This is simple instruction, but it reveals a social problem that has existed throughout time. In fact, the command not to steal is among the Ten Commandments. Not unlike our day, Paul admonished the believer to engage in fruitful labor, working with one's hands, turning from the old desires and sinful ways. No doubt, there were those among the church who previously had been guilty of stealing from others.

- While this may be a simple truth, I am convinced it needs to be emphasized in our day. We now live in a culture that advocates for social entitlement. Many have no desire for profitable labor, seeking ways to take advantage of others for their own personal gain. It cannot be denied that hard work built this nation, and the need for those who are willing to put in an honest day's work for an honest day's pay is still needed.

**B. Our Investment** (28b) – [Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.](#) Paul declares our hard work

and financial gain is not to be kept solely for our personal benefit. The church is admonished to work so she can provide for those in need. Paul says we are to work so we may have to give to those in need. In essence, we are to have compassion on the less fortunate, being willing to provide assistance in times of need.

- It has been said, “The only things we will take to heaven are those things we have given away.” That statement is true in regard to the principle Paul teaches here. James also affirms this truth. [James 2:15-16 – If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,<sup>16</sup> and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?](#)

**C. Our Encouragement** (29) – [Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.](#) Believers must also be mindful of what they say. Our communication must be free of corruption, seeking to ensure we always speak in a manner that edifies, building up and encouraging, ministering grace to those who hear our words. [Isaiah 50:4a – The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary.](#) Many believers have damaged their testimony due to harsh or off-color communication. May we always speak to the edification of others in a manner that reflects the transformation that has taken place in our lives through Christ!

**III. A Holy Spiritual Life** (30-32) – In the closing verses of our text, Paul addressed the spiritual life of believers. We discover that he encouraged:

**A. A Guarded Life** (30) – [And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.](#) Paul cautioned against grieving the Holy Spirit, literally “*to offend or vex.*” We know the Spirit indwells believers at the moment of conversion. He is ever-present in our lives, seeing and knowing every action, thought, and desire. We are sealed by the Spirit, kept by Him, until the Lord calls us into His presence.

- Any behavior, thought, or attitude that is contrary to the will of God, His Word, or His purposes for our lives can and does grieve the Spirit. This is a very sobering admonition from the Apostle. We must guard our lives so as not to grieve the Spirit and our Lord.

**B. A Gentle Life** (31) – [Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.](#) We are also called to live a peaceful, gentle life among the world in which we live, being called to represent Christ through our lives. Paul admonished the believer to

put away all **bitterness** (*smoldering resentment*; a root cause of division in our day), **wrath** (*deep-seated anger*), **anger**, **clamour** (*tumult or controversy, crying aloud in strife*), **evil speaking** (*false-witness, slander, wounding of another's reputation*), and all **malice** (*a desire for evil against another*). Our lives must be lived in a way that others see Christ in us. If we behave no differently than the world, we will not be an effective witness, causing harm to the Kingdom work.

**C. A Gracious Life** (32) – **And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.** Paul declared the believer is to be tenderhearted, showing genuine compassion, and forgiving of others. We have been forgiven much of our Lord and we are commanded to offer forgiveness to others. These two characteristics would go a long way in bringing healing and reconciliation in a lot of conflicting situations. It is hard to be angry and have ill feelings toward those whom we have compassion. In light of the forgiveness we have all received, considering our sin and condemnation prior to the forgiveness of Christ, what could we endure that would warrant a lack of forgiveness? I know that isn't always easy, but it is expected of those who have been saved by grace and granted abundant forgiveness.

**Conclusion:** This has been a very practical study, easy to discern and apply to our everyday lives. The application may be easily understood, but often difficult to put into practice. I pray that we will all consider our personal lives, our social lives, and our spiritual lives. If there are needs, and the Holy Spirit has spoken, I urge you to respond to His leading and bring your needs unto the Lord.

Paul spoke of the believer being willing to forgive in response to the forgiveness we have received. Have you responded to the call of Christ in repentance and faith unto salvation? If not, your sins have not been forgiven. You remain accountable to God for your sin. I urge you to believe the gospel and respond to its call today!