

The Church, God's Plan for This Age: Living Out Your New Identity in Christ Among Fellow Believers by Replacing Dishonesty and Uncontrolled Anger

Ephesians 4:25-27

September 20, 2020

Since God has created the church to be a body of individual members who've been gifted for the growth of the body into Christlikeness, the development of Christlike social behaviors is extremely important for each member of the body. In this passage, we are commanded to put off the old ways of living that are detrimental to our relationships in the body and to replace those vices with virtues that build up the other members.

1. Replace Lying with Truthfulness (25).

- a. "Wherefore" – the following commands are rooted in our new identity, the new man (4:24).
- b. "Putting away lying" – this is a practical application of "putting off" the old man of verse 22.
 - i. God destroys those who speak falsehood (Psalm 5:6).
 - ii. Believers overcome the devil by speaking the truth (6:14).
 - iii. John 8:44 "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."
- c. "Speak...truth" – believers put away lying by cultivating honesty in communication.
 - i. "Every man" – honesty is the responsibility of every believer. When we tell lies to one another, we erode trust and relationships suffer; when we speak truth, we build trust and relationships flourish.
 - ii. "With his neighbor" – this verse is a quotation of Zechariah 8:16; When Christ returns to rule the world from Jerusalem, Jerusalem will be known as the city of truth, and every citizen will speak truth to his neighbor; since Christ indwells the believer and the church, we must be known by our honesty.
- d. "For we are members one of another"
 - i. Romans 12:5 "So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."
 - ii. Honesty is foundational to enduring relationships.
 - iii. Dishonesty is an act of warfare and has no place in the way we speak to fellow believers.
- e. Application:
 - i. Lying reveals that we don't understand our identity in Christ, and we're trying to create an alternate.
 - ii. Lying reveals that we value ourselves more than the one we are trying to deceive.

2. Replace Uncontrolled Anger with Controlled Anger (26-27).

- a. "Be ye angry, and sin not" – anger is an essential emotion, when it is directed properly.
 - i. If God is angered by sin, than we would do well to be angered by sin also.
 1. God is angered by the idolatry of His chosen people (Psalm 4).
 2. Christ was angered by hard hearts of the Pharisees (Mark 3:5).
 3. Our anger is often misdirected; we get angry when someone cuts us off in traffic, but we are not moved to anger when God's laws are broken.
 - ii. Christians must be very careful in their expression of anger.
 1. James 1:19-20 "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, **slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.**"
 2. Christians are to be know for patience, not a quick temper (Colossians 1:11; 3:12; Galatians 5:22).
- b. "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath" – allowing anger to fester over time is of great danger.
 - i. Uncontrolled anger can wreak havoc in the body of Christ.
 - ii. Anger should help us to take careful, decisive action to address the wrongdoing.
- c. "Neither give place to the devil" – refusing to deal with your anger biblically gives the devil the opportunity to exploit your anger for his own purposes.
 - i. Refusing to deal with anger biblically invites the devil into the relationship.
 - ii. An angry mind is easily influenced by the devil.
- d. Application:
 - i. Acknowledge your anger.

- ii. Evaluate the legitimacy of your anger in the light of your new identity in Christ and your relationship within the body of Christ.
- iii. Seek God for an appropriate response such as repentance or steps to address the cause.
- iv. Set your heart to extend forgiveness.
- v. Refuse to let your mind dwell on that which angers you (Philippians 4:8).

Conclusion:

1. What does your dishonesty reveal about your understanding of your identity in Christ?
2. What does your dishonesty reveal about your valuation of your church family?
3. What does your anger reveal about your understanding of your identity in Christ?
4. What does your anger reveal about your valuation of your church family?

3. Replace Stealing with Hard Work (28).

- a. "Let him that stole, steal no more" – theft destroys the unity and Christlikeness of the body of Christ.
 - i. Stealing violates the principles of personal property rights found in Scripture.
 - 1. Exodus 20:15 "Thou shalt not steal"
 - 2. Exodus 20:17 "Thou shalt not covet"
 - ii. Stealing identifies us with the old self, who is made after the image of the devil, the great usurper.
 - 1. The devil sought to take the very throne of God (Isaiah 14:13-14).
 - 2. Believers who steal do so out of a sense of entitlement.
 - 3. Believers who steal forget that they deserve God's judgment, and not His mercy.
 - 4. Believers who steal refuse to understand all that they have in Christ.
- b. "But rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good"
 - i. The new man, created in the image of God, is most like God when employed in industry.
 - ii. "Labour" has the idea of laboring to the point of weariness or exhaustion.
 - iii. The antidote to theft is hard work.
 - iv. The antidote to theft is discovering your gifts and then employing those gifts in producing goods and services for the benefit of society.
- c. "That he may have to give to him that needeth" – the greatest motivation for hard work is generosity.
 - i. The greatest blessings in this life are found in becoming rather than in taking.
 - ii. Acts 20:35 "I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the works of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."
- d.

4. Replace Filthy Talk with Edifying Talk (29-30).