

Text: Eph 4:25–5:2¹ Part. 1

Read through the following passage, asking God to open your eyes, so that you may behold wonderful things from His Word (Ps 119:18).

25Therefore, ^alaying aside falsehood, ^bSPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE of you WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, for we are ^cmembers of one another.

26^aBE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger,

27and do not ^agive the devil ¹an opportunity.

28He who steals must steal no longer; but rather ^ahe must labor, ^bperforming with his own hands what is good, ^cso that he will have *something* to share with ¹one who has need.

29Let no ^{1a}unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a *word* as is good for ^bedification ²according to the need of *the moment*, so that it will give grace to those who hear.

30^aDo not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, ¹by whom you were ^bsealed for the day of redemption.

31^aLet all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be ^bput away from you, along with all ^cmalice.

32^aBe kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, ^bjust as God in Christ also has forgiven ¹you.

Chapter 5

1^aTherefore be imitators of God, as beloved children;

2and ^awalk in love, just as Christ also ^bloved ¹you and ^cgave Himself up for us, an ^doffering and a sacrifice to God ²as a ^efragrant aroma.



4:25 laying aside falsehood. More than simply telling direct falsehoods, lying also includes exaggeration and adding fabrications to something that is true. Cheating, making foolish promises, betraying a confidence, and making false excuses are all forms of lying, with which Christians should have no part (cf. Jn 8:44; 1Co 6:9; Rev 21:8). **SPEAK TRUTH ... WITH HIS NEIGHBOR.** Quoted from Zec 8:16. God's work in the world is based on truth, and neither the church nor individual believers can be fit instruments for the Lord to use if they are not truthful.

4:26 BE ANGRY, AND ... DO NOT SIN Quoted from Ps 4:4. By NT standards, anger can be either good or bad, depending on motive and purpose. Paul may have been sanctioning righteous indignation, anger at evil. This type of anger hates injustice, immorality, ungodliness, and every other sin. When such anger is unselfish and based on love for God and others, it not only is permissible but commanded. Jesus expressed this righteous anger (see Mt 21:12; Mk 3:5; Jn 2:15). **sun go down.** Even righteous anger can turn to bitterness, so it should be set aside by the end of each day. If anger is prolonged, it may become hostile and violate the instruction of Ro 12:17–21.

4:28 steal no longer. Stealing in any form is a sin and has no part in the life of a Christian. Rather, let him work, producing what is beneficial (cf. Ex 20:15). The alternative to stealing is to provide for oneself, one's family, and others what is God-honoring through honest, honorable means (cf. 2Th 3:10, 11; 1Ti 5:8). **share with one who has need.** A Christian not only should harm no one but should continually endeavor to help those who are in need. See Lk 14:13, 14; Ac 20:33–35.

4:29 unwholesome word. The word for "unwholesome" refers to that which is foul or rotten, such as spoiled fruit or putrid meat. Foul language of any sort should never pass a Christian's lips, because it is totally out of character with his new life in Christ (see Col 3:8; Jas 3:6–8; cf. Ps 141:3). **good for edification.** The Christian's speech should be instructive, encouraging, uplifting, (even when it must be corrective), and suited for the moment (cf. Pr 15:23; 25:11; 24:26). **grace to those who hear.** Cf. Col 4:6. Because believers have been saved by grace and kept by grace, they should live and speak with grace. Our Lord set the standard (Lk 4:22).

4:30 Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God. God is grieved when His children refuse to change the old ways of sin for those righteous ways of the new life. It should be noted that such responses by the Holy Spirit indicate He is a person. His personhood is also indicated by personal pronouns (Jn 14:17; 16:13), His personal care of believers (Jn 14:16, 26; 15:26), His intellect (1Co 2:11), feelings (Ro 8:27), will (1Co 12:11), speaking (Ac 13:2), convicting (Jn 16:8–11), interceding (Ro 8:26), guiding (Jn 16:13), glorifying Christ (Jn 16:14), and serving God (Ac 16:6, 7). **sealed for the day of redemption.** The Holy Spirit is the guarantor of eternal redemption in Christ for those who believe in Him (see note on 1:13, 14).

4:31, 32 These verses summarize the changes in the life of a believer mentioned in vv. 17–30. "Bitterness" reflects a smoldering resentment. "Wrath" has to do with rage, the passion of a moment. "Anger" is a more internal, deep hostility. "Clamor" is the outcry of strife out of control. "Slander" is evil speaking. "Malice" is the general Gr. term for evil, the root of all vices.

4:32 just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. Those who have been forgiven so much by God should, of all people, forgive the relatively small offenses against them by others. The most graphic illustration of this truth is the parable of Mt 18:21–35.

5:1 be imitators of God. The Christian has no greater calling or purpose than that of imitating his Lord (see notes on 3:16, 19). That is the very purpose of sanctification, growing in likeness to the Lord while serving Him on earth (cf. Mt 5:48). The Christian life is designed to reproduce godliness as modeled by the Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ, in whose image believers have been recreated through the new birth (cf. Ro 8:29; 2Co 3:18; 1Pe 1:14–16). As God's dear children, believers are to become more and more like their heavenly Father (Mt 5:48; 1Pe 1:15, 16).

5:2 Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us. The Lord is the supreme example in His self-sacrificing love for lost sinners (4:32; Ro 5:8–10). He took human sin upon Himself and gave up His very life that men might be redeemed from their sin, receive a new and holy nature, and inherit eternal life (see note on 2Co 5:21). They are henceforth to be imitators of His great love in the newness and power of the Holy Spirit, who enables them to demonstrate divine love. **a fragrant aroma.** Christ's offering of Himself for fallen man pleased and glorified His heavenly Father, because it demonstrated in the most complete and perfect way God's sovereign, perfect, unconditional, and divine kind of love. Leviticus describes 5 offerings commanded by God for Israel. The first 3 were: 1) the burnt offering (Lv 1:1–17), depicting Christ's perfection; 2) the grain offering (Lv 2:1–16), depicting Christ's total devotion to God in giving His life to please the Father; and 3) the peace offering (Lv 3:1–17), depicting His peacemaking between God and man. All 3 of these were a "soothing aroma to the LORD" (Lv 1:9, 13, 17; 2:2, 9, 12; 3:5, 16). The other two offerings, the sin offering (Lv 4:1–5:13) and the guilt, or trespass, offering (Lv 5:14–6:7), were repulsive to God because, though they depicted Christ, they depicted Him as bearing sin (cf. Mt 27:46). In the end, when redemption was accomplished, the whole work pleased God completely.



Context:

In verses 20–24 we saw Paul’s plan for a practical pursuit of sanctification (cf. Col 3:1–17).

Paul’s plan includes a simple three-step process:

- i) Put off sin (“lay aside the old self”).
- ii) Renew your mind (“be renewed in the spirit of your mind”).
- iii) Put on righteousness (“put on the new self”).

We also saw that this pursuit of sanctification involves a lifelong process of divine cooperation.

We fight with the strength that God Himself supplies (Col 1:9–12, 28–29).

This week, as we come to Eph 4:25ff, Paul is going to show us what this process looks like in practice.

1. Eph 4:25–5:2 naturally divides into two sections. Where is that division, and what is the difference in emphasis between the two sections?

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Exploring the Text:

As you answer the following questions, please take the time to read all the cross references (provided in parenthesis) at the end of each question. These cross references are provided to enrich your study process.

2. What are the four examples of sin that are to be ‘laid aside,’ in vv25–29?

(i) e.g. The sin of lying

(ii)

(iii)

(iv)

3. What are the corresponding acts of righteousness that we are to ‘put on’ for each of the above sins?
Note that the second “put on” action (in v26) comes by way of implication.

(i) e.g. Speaking the truth

(ii)

(iii)

(iv)

4. What is the implied doctrinal truth that is meant to renew our minds each case?

(i) e.g. We are fellow members of the body of Christ, and as such we are meant to build up one another by speaking the ‘truth in love’ (cf. 4:15)

(ii)



(iii).....

(iv).....

- 5. What do sins #1 and #4 have in common? What is the implication behind this repeated theme? (cf. Pr 10:11–14; Matt 12:34–37; Jas 1:26, 3:1–12)

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Cross Reference: Sin #1

- 6. **Read:** John 8:39–45

Where does Jesus say deception comes from? What do Jesus' imply about liars? (cf. Ps 15:1–2; Pr 6:16–19 [note that deception makes it onto this list twice], 12:22; 1Tim 1:10; Rev 21:8, 22:15)

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Cross Reference: Sin #2

- 7. **Read:** Rom 12:17–21; James 1:19–20

When does God use our human anger to achieve His righteous purposes?

Be warned, it's been a while since I've had the opportunity to ask a trick question 😊

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- 8. If the "anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God," what then does Paul mean when he says: "be angry and do not sin?" Is it possibly to have a kind of anger that is not sinful? What is a distinguishing mark of such anger? (cf. Jn 2:13–17, see esp. v17)

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Aside... A sure way to tell whether your anger is righteous or sinful is to ask yourself these questions: "Am I angry over something that has been done to me (or someone that I love), or am I angry over something that has been done to God?"

"Am I able to love the person involved, despite the anger that I feel?"

The answer to these questions will usually reveal to you whether your anger is something that pleases God, or something that He despises.



9. What "opportunity for the devil" is Paul talking about in Eph 4:27? (cf. Jn 10:10; 2Cor 2:5-11; Heb 12:14-17)

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10. What is the implication of the time limitation in Eph 4:26b?

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Cross Reference: Sin #3

11. **Read:** Acts 20:33-35; 2Thess 3:10, 11; 1Tim 5:8

Most of us are unlikely to knowingly take the possessions of another, but that does not mean we are immune to temptation of this sin. How might you be tempted to steal at in your workplace? (hint... Think: 'time').

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12. Malachi 3 was written to a people who lived within the covenant framework of the Mosaic Covenant. This covenant came with very specific obligations and incentives, which means that we are careful not to misapply words that were written to people who lived 2500 years ago. Nevertheless, do the words of Mal 3:8-10 hold any implications for how we might steal from God, the things that we mistakenly believe belongs to us?

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Cross Reference: Sin #4

13. **Read:** Ps 37:30; Pr 14:1-4, 7 (In fact it might be useful to read all of Proverbs! 🤔); Eph 5:3-4

When it comes to sins of speech, most of us tend to think only of foul language, but Paul sets the bar much higher. How does Paul define sinful speech?

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14. What is supposed to be (i) the *basis* for and (ii) the *character* of our conversations? (cf. Eph 4:11-16)

(i).....
(ii).....



For Further Reflection:

15. Are you ever tempted to lie? What are some of the more subtle forms of lying that we might become guilty of? What is the underlying sinful attitude that leads to your lies (i.e. pride, or fear of man)?

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16. Do you ever justify your sinful anger by referring to it as "frustration" or other

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17. Do you commit theft in ways that have become socially acceptable (i.e. internet pirating, etc.)?

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18. How can you apply the principle of Eph 4:29 to your speech during the coming week?

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Notes:

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MacArthur, John F., Jr. The MacArthur Study Bible: New American Standard Bible. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006.