

Prohibition
Ephesians 4:25-32

INTRO: There are some things that are prohibited to the Christian. There are things the believer is not to do, places he is not to go, and words he is not to say. Here in verses 25-32, Paul returns to the prohibitions he began in verse 17 where the child of God is admonished to “walk not as other Gentiles walk.” “Putting away” in verse 25 means to “lay aside, rid yourself of, to make a clean sweep, banish.” As I said there are things that are prohibited or off limits to the Christian.

I. VS. 25, TO LIE OR TO TELL THE TRUTH

- A. Here is the first of the exhortations in this passage.
- B. Negative- “Putting away lying.”
 - 1. Sweep out lying; get rid of it!
 - 2. We lie when we make a statement that is contrary to fact with the intent to deceive. Proverbs 6:16-17 tells us of six things God hates, among them, lying.
 - 3. Lying is of the Devil. He is the father of it (John 8:44). You surely don’t want to fall in with the Devil.
 - a. The Devil wants us to lie, and he wants you to believe that God is a liar. A classic lie of the Devil is found in Genesis 3:1: “Yea, hath God said?”
 - b. E. Y. Mullins said, “Whatever is false in character is to be put away.”
- C. Positive- “Speak every man truth with his neighbor.”
 - 1. Paul reaches back to Zechariah 8:16 where Zechariah says: “These are the things that ye should do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbor. . . .” This is assuring us that Christianity does not abolish the moral law. It actually deepens it and broadens it.
 - 2. “The best way to kill the lie is by telling the truth” (Hendriksen 217). Be committed to the truth.
 - 3. Believers are to tell the truth, and they are to tell it in love (Vs 15).
 - a. We are to practice the truth having put away falsehood. To have fellowship with God, we

must be truthful. For husbands and wives to have real fellowship there must be a commitment to truth, no lies, no cover ups. For parents and children, brothers and sisters and friends to have fellowship there has to be truthfulness. Without truth fellowship is hampered.

b. Those who speak the truth are also, trustworthy, dependable, reputable, and credible, people of integrity.

D. "For we are members one of another." Here's the reason for telling the truth.

1. Speaking the truth in love would go a long way.
2. Telling the truth keeps down friction, trouble, and disunity in the body.

II. VSS. 26-27, TO SIN OR NOT TO SIN

A. The Bible says: "Be angry."

1. Not all anger is sinful. God gets angry at sin (Deut. 9:8, 20). The term, "the anger of the Lord" is found in the Old Testament (Num. 25:4; Jer. 4:8; 12:13).

2. "Be angry and sin not."

a. Because of His holiness, God must be angry with sin.

b. When Jesus cleansed the temple, it was being angry and sinning not-- righteous indignation (Matt. 21:12-13).

3. Every believer needs to be angry at times.

a. We need a lot less apathy and a bunch more "righteous indignation" against the sins that are destroying our nation.

b. Christians are not to be neutral in the battle against sin. There are times when we must get angry, when we must take a stand against sin, when we must stand flat-footed and look the Devil in the eye and stand for right.

B. "Let not the sun go down on your wrath."

1. The word wrath goes beyond anger.

- a. The Devil desires to take the Christian's righteous anger against sin, intensify it, and cause it to become sin itself.
 - b. Righteous indignation never commits unrighteous acts such as killing abortionists or gays.
 - 2. Before the day is out, if you sin in anger, get it right.
 - a. The Jewish day is from evening to the next evening.
 - b. Any angry attitude or unforgiving spirit is to be settled before the sun sets.
 - c. If Christians act in an unchristian way in opposing evil, by doing so they stoop to evil themselves.
- C. In verse 27, we are told not to give the Devil a foothold in our lives.
 - 1. The Devil will take an unforgiving spirit, a grudge and turn it into bitterness. Forgiveness will keep you out of a lot of trouble.
 - 2. The Devil wants you to give up ground to him.
 - a. The Devil is not to be given living room or a place to work in the life of a Christian.
 - b. The Devil uses all types of methods to destroy the testimony of Christians. Don't give him ground.
 - 3. When the Devil takes ground in your life, take it back with spiritual weapons (II Cor. 10:4-5).

III. VS. 28, TO STEAL OR NOT TO STEAL

- A. Christians are not to steal. They are to work in order to give to the needy.
 - 1. A thief takes others property for his own benefit
 - 2. A believer is to work so that he can help in:
 - a. Benevolence,
 - b. Missions,
 - c. Church ministry.
 - d. Stealing is wrong in all civilizations, a timeless universal value. Stealing is wrong whether it be time, property or money.

B. Work provides for the material needs of a Christian, gives him something useful to do, and gives him an opportunity to help others.

1. Work is the Christian way. Work is a good thing.
2. If a man will not work, he ought not eat.

IV. VSS. 29-30, TO CORRUPT OR TO EDIFY

A. Vs. 29, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth."

1. "Corrupt communication."
 - a. Corrupt speech is the Greek *sapros* meaning "rotten and putrid." Some lie because they are jealous
 - b. It is speech that is defiling and injurious. Such as lying to ruin a relationship between others.
2. "That which is good to the use of edifying."
 - a. The word for good is *agathos* meaning "helpful and beneficial."
 - b. "Edifying" means to build up. That's the kind of words we need to speak.
 - c. We are to speak words of grace that will minister to folks. Words that will enable them to keep going. Words that will benefit. "Words have power! Words hurt; words heal. Words guide; words lead astray. Words build up; words tear down." (Anders 133)

B. Vs. 30, The Holy Spirit can be grieved by our speech.

1. The Spirit helps guard the believer's speech.
2. He seals us unto the day we receive our new body, with a new tongue and it grieves Him when we do wrong and speak wrong.

V. VSS. 31-32, TO RID OR NOT TO RID YOURSELF OF VICE.

A. Vs. 31, Believers are to get rid of, to sweep out, to banish, these six vices:

1. Bitterness- an irritable state of mind producing hard and harsh opinions of others. Unforgiving people get bitter. Bitterness is anger turned inward.
2. Wrath- Greek, *thymos*, outburst of passion. Explosions on the outside of feelings on the inside.

3. Anger- an abiding deposition of wrath.
 4. Clamour- the loud outcry that grows out of wrath and anger. Fistfighting.
 5. Evil speaking - means blasphemy, abusive, insulting, slanderous speech.
 6. Malice- spite, intending to harm.
- B. Vs. 32, Here are wonderful positive Christian virtues.
1. Kindness- thoughtful, considerate, gentleness even toward evil doers.
 2. Tenderhearted- compassion, warmth, sympathetic love, T.L.C.
 3. Forgiving- speaks of God's forgiveness by grace. Each Christian has received the grace of forgiveness, so we are to forgive and keep on forgiving like Christ does.

CONCLUSION: God's prohibitions bring God's blessings.

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