

HOW TO LIVE OUT OUR NEW IDENTITY IN CHRIST IN DAILY RELATIONSHIPS

Ephesians 4:25-32

Christianity is sometimes considered too negative and all about “the Don’ts”. But real Christianity is about living a new life in positive practical ways in daily life relationships. *“Holiness is not just about saying No to sin, it is about saying Yes to God” – Tony Merida, Exalting Jesus in Ephesians.*

1. REPLACE LYING WITH TRUTH-TELLING – EPHESIANS 4:25

- Because we belong to Christ, we are to stop lying and speaking deceitful falsehoods. Instead we are to speak truth – Ephesians 4:15; Zechariah 8:16. The word “falsehood” is actually “the lie” and points to the works of the devil from the beginning. When you lie, you are imitating Satan – John 8:44.
- The theological reason to stop lying is because we are members of one another. We are a family and a new body in Christ. Lying hurts the family and others, not just yourself.

2. REPLACE SINFUL ANGER WITH RIGHTEOUS ANGER – EPHESIANS 4:26,27

- Because we belong to Christ, we are to not sin in our anger – Psalm 4:4. Not all anger is sin. Sinful anger leads to seeking revenge, holding grudges, and is selfish. For example, “I don’t get mad, I get even.” We are not to let our anger fester or carry over into the next day. We are to seek to settle it quickly.
- The theological reason for not letting our anger have free reign or fester is because of the Devil. Satan delights in unrighteous anger and will use it for a beachhead of operations against Christians, families, and the church. *“Don’t go to bed with unresolved conflict or else you will sleep with the devil” – anonymous.* This is especially applicable to married couples!
- May our anger be righteous indignation mixed with grief – like Jesus – Mark 3:1-5. May zeal for the glory of God consume us. *“There is something wrong with us if we are not angered by things that hurt and destroy and offend the heart of God.” – Richard Phillips, Ephesians.*

3. REPLACE STEALING WITH WORKING AND GIVING – EPHESIANS 4:28

- Because we belong to Christ, we are to not steal, but do honest work. Then we are to give!
- The theological reason for not stealing is the God honoring value of work and stewardship to help others! Work is not a result of the Fall into sin, but part of God’s original good creation – Genesis 2:15. We honor God by being good stewards of the resources He places in our hands. We honor God by doing good work for His glory – Ephesians 6:5-8; Colossians 3:23, 24.

4. REPLACE CORRUPT TALK WITH EDIFYING TALK – EPHESIANS 4:29-30

- Because we belong to Christ, we are to avoid corrupting talk. The word foul or corrupt is used elsewhere of rotting fruit or rotting fish! (talk about bad breath). Examples of rotten speech include lying, abusive angry language, vulgar references (see chapter 5!), vicious and unkind words, slander (verse 31), and gossip. Words matter – Matthew 12:34-37.
- The theological reason for not talking in destructive, filthy ways is the Holy Spirit! The Holy Spirit who sealed us and indwells us is personally hurt especially by our sins of speech. He can be lied to (see Acts 5), dishonored, offended, and disobeyed. We grieve God Himself by corrupt

talk. Instead, let us seek His power and control to live a life and speak in ways that honor Him! (see Ephesians 5 and 6).

- Let us seek to build others up when we speak. Let us be aware of the power of the tongue to wound or encourage. Not everything we think has to come out of our mouths! – Psalm 141:3. Augustine had a sign on his dining room wall: *“Whoever speaks evil of an absent man or woman is not welcome at this table.”*

5. REPLACE BITTERNESS WITH FORGIVENESS – EPHESIANS 4:31-32

- Because we belong to Christ, we are to avoid bitterness and divisive angry slander. Bitterness leads to the other sins in verse 31. Our fiery tongues can cause harm – James 3:5,6. Instead, we are to be kind to one another, tenderhearted, and forgiving.
- The theological reason for not being bitter is the CROSS of our Lord Jesus Christ and the forgiveness He gave us! If Jesus can and did forgive you, then how can you hold onto unforgiveness toward others? – Matthew 6:12, 14,15; 18:32,33. We must see the huge debt Jesus forgave us in order to forgive others. Go back to the cross. The measure of forgiveness is God forgiving us in Christ. Realize and confess your own wretched sinfulness. Then ask God for grace to forgive. Forgiveness is letting go of the right to punish or be right – Romans 12:18-21.

Concluding Applications:

- Are you sure you have been forgiven by Christ and belong to Him?
- Are you known as a kind, forgiving person or one full of anger, bitterness, and corrupt speech?
- How careful are you in your speech? – Psalm 19:14. Are you aware the glory of God is at stake in your words?
- Because you belong to Jesus, do you desire to honor God in your daily relationships? If we practiced these commands it would transform churches, families, and marriages!