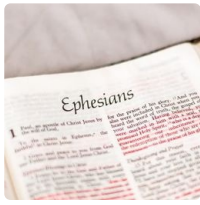


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Ephesians 4:11 - 4:32



Ephesians - Steve Gregg

In this discussion of Ephesians 4:11-32, speaker Steve Gregg emphasizes the idea that the work of ministry is not solely the responsibility of church leaders, but rather every member of the church should contribute to the building of the church as a whole. Gregg also discusses the concept of putting off old behaviors and putting on new ones, highlighting the importance of transformation and renewing oneself. He stresses the need for speech that is edifying and forgiving, following the example of God's forgiveness through Christ.

Transcript

We'll resume our treatment of Ephesians 4 now, and we left off before the sentence ended, for the simple reason that the sentence goes on and on and on, that begins in chapter 4 verse 11, which says, He himself gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers. As I said, I don't know that all of these offices continue in the church today. I have my doubts about apostles and prophets being around today, and it's not really because I have any problem with the supernatural, not at all.

I believe in the supernatural. I believe all the gifts of the spirit exist today. I'm just not sure that the church still has all of the same offices functioning, when in fact a couple of the offices, I believe, were largely for the purpose of laying the foundation, which was successfully and effectively laid.

And I can't think of anything the apostles or prophets did that cannot be perpetuated through the evangelists, pastors, and teachers, and other gifts. There are other gifts too. But in terms of church planting, sometimes a person today, if he plants churches, is called an apostle.

And maybe in some sense he is. I don't believe he's an apostle in the sense of the New Testament usage of the word, but if he's sent out by a church, I guess he's an apostle of that church, sent out one from that church. The office of the apostle in the early church, I believe, was a very special thing, where Jesus selected initially twelve, out of a much

larger group of people, of trusted followers, to be sent out with special authority from him, and to speak as his official agents.

Now, all Christians in one sense are to represent Christ to the world, and when we speak, we should speak in such a way as to represent his interests. But I believe that the word apostle carries the notion of somebody who speaks with the same authority as if Christ spoke himself. Now, we can do that when we're quoting Christ.

If we quote the word of God, we speak with the same authority as Christ. But the apostles went further than just quoting scripture or quoting Jesus. Paul would say, concerning virgins, I don't have anything from the Lord on this, but I'll give my judgment as one who has obtained mercy to be faithful, and he would give instructions that went beyond what Jesus in his lifetime had given.

And I believe those instructions were as authoritative as if Jesus had given them. So, that is my understanding of apostolic authority, and I don't know that anybody today has that kind of authority in the church. I'm not sure that the church needs people with that kind of authority today, although some would say we do.

And as far as prophets are concerned, my understanding from scripture of a prophet is a man who, when he speaks in the name of the Lord, he speaks infallibly. I don't know of anybody like that today. I do know there is a gift of prophecy, and I believe that in individual prophecies that are given may be in themselves infallible, they may be free from error, in other words.

If the Holy Spirit gives a legitimate prophecy to someone, that prophecy will be, of course, true and flawless and without error. But just because a person receives a true prophecy of God doesn't mean that the next time they prophesy, I'm not going to judge it and see that this one's true also. A real prophet of God always was right, always got it right when he spoke in the name of the Lord.

And I don't know that we have people with that degree of prophetic authority today. There is a movement that made a lot of, got a lot of attention, the charismatic movement a few years ago, about nine years ago, I guess, called the prophetic movement, the modern prophetic movement that was centered in Kansas City. And there are a number of persons in that movement who are regarded as prophets, including one, the most respected of all was a man named Paul Cain.

And he still is respected in that movement. And yet I never did hear any suggestion that he was 100% accurate in his prophecies. This prophetic movement suggested that people don't have to be 100% accurately prophets.

And I don't, I've heard amazing things about Paul Cain and his prophecies, and it does sound like he has a gift. But to give someone the name prophet in the Bible, I believe,

means that they are officially God's spokesmen. And when they speak, you can trust that it's God speaking.

And you can't do that with someone who's 99% accurate. Because if they're only 99% accurate, then any time they speak might be that 1% that they're not accurate for all anyone knows. In which case, you can't trust anything they say necessarily.

You can trust it in measure, but you can't trust it completely. That's not the case with the prophets of God in the scriptures. You can trust completely that what they say is true, because they are God's chosen mouthpieces that are, you know, they give it straight and they give it right.

Now evangelists and pastors and teachers are not the same as apostles and prophets. An evangelist is a preacher of the gospel. The term evangelist is only found three times in the Bible.

It is said of Philip, who had four daughters who were prophetesses, or who prophesied, I say. And he was simply called Philip the evangelist. He is the one who evangelized the Ethiopian eunuch and he evangelized in Samaria.

Originally, he was one of the seven deacons in Jerusalem, but later was called an evangelist. So that his role as a deacon was temporary. But his ongoing recognition in the church was as an evangelist.

And a person who preaches the gospel is an evangelist. The only other place besides that in Acts, which refers to Philip as the evangelist, and this here that talks about some evangelists, is where Paul tells Timothy to do the work of an evangelist, meaning evangelize. Evangelize comes from the Greek word for gospel.

Evangelion, which is anglicized as evangelion, or the evangel, is the gospel in Greek. And so an evangelist is a preacher of the gospel. Pastors and teachers, like the other officers mentioned, are mentioned in the plural.

And it's not clear whether pastors one thing and teachers another thing, or whether pastors and teachers are the same thing. It has been observed that he said he gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers. It doesn't say some pastors and some teachers, as if pastors and teachers are separate things, but some who were pastors and teachers.

There's at least one way that could be understood. Pastor just literally means shepherd. And it would appear that the shepherding and the teaching of the church in the first century were largely done by persons who were elders.

The elders of the church were those who shepherded the church and who pastored it and taught it. And therefore, it is probable that in mentioning pastors and teachers, or

shepherds and teachers, he has one kind of person in mind, too. And that would be the elders of the congregations who were the shepherds and the teachers there.

Now what are these people there for? Well, they were given by Christ for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry. Now, there are actually three clauses in verse 12. One is for the equipping of the saints.

Another is for the work of the ministry. And the last one is for the edifying of the body of Christ. Notice all three of those clauses begin with the word for.

He gave these gifts for, for, for. Now, the relationship of those three clauses to each other has been differed, that is, opinions about it have differed among different translators. The King James Version has rendered as if they're all individually stand-alone clauses, so that he gave these gifts for the equipping of the saints.

He also gave these gifts for the work of the ministry. He also gave these gifts for the edifying of the body of Christ. But modern translators usually see some kind of a subordination of these clauses, so that, as it says in the New King James, for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry.

That is, these leaders equip the saints so that the saints are equipped to do the work of the ministry. They are equipped for the work of the ministry. And that is possibly what Paul means, very probably.

But the equipping of the saints would mean that the teachers, the pastors, the apostles and prophets, they impart to the believers, what some would call the laymen, those who are not in the leadership, the gifts and the knowledge necessary for them to do the work of the ministry, so that the work of the ministry is not so much done by the leaders, it is done more by the persons in the church. The whole church is doing ministry. All the people in the church are ministers.

Now the word ministry, of course, has to be understood in its original sense of service or servanthood. It is somebody in the ministry. Today we think of somebody who is a pastor or a missionary or an evangelist, but ministry just means service.

So the leaders are to equip those who are the saints to do whatever service needs to be done, with the result that the body of Christ will be built up, the building up of the body of Christ. Building up is a building metaphor, like a building being constructed. Paul has earlier used that metaphor in Ephesians chapter 2, where he said in verse 20, we have been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.

Verse 21, the whole building being joined together grows into a holy temple in the Lord. Verse 22, in whom you also are being built together for a habitation of God in the Spirit. The church as a whole is being built up like a building out of living components, living stones, Peter said in 1 Peter 2.5. And so the building project is being done by every

member of the church.

Every member of the church is involved in the corporate building up of the church. And how long does this go on? Well he says in verse 13, until we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Now there is a unity of the faith and a unity of the knowledge of the Son of God that we will all arrive at.

Now we already have a unity of the Spirit, Paul said in verse 3, and we are to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit. You keep something that you already have. In the Spirit we are one, whether we recognize it or not, whether we act like it or not.

But we do not always act like it. And there is a time coming that Paul anticipates when we will have that unity among ourselves, which is appropriate for those who are in the faith and who know the Son of God. And that unity is the coming unto a perfect man.

Now it says coming to, actually it says until we all come to, that word, that Greek word for come to, is used about eight times in the New Testament. It always has to do with usually a traveler arriving at his destination. So he is talking about the destination of our journey.

We are walking, he said earlier, we are on a walk, and we have a destination we are walking to. When we are done with this time, when the time has passed and our journey is over, we will have come to something. We will have reached the goal.

And the destination is that we will be in unity with all those who are in the faith and all those who know the Son of God. And this, corporately, will be seen as a perfect man. Now, unfortunately, there are some translations that say until we come to perfect manhood, which is obscure, because it raises the question, does it mean that I and every individual will be personally a perfect man? Or does it mean the church as a whole will be seen as a perfect man? But it says until we all come to perfect manhood, it might speak of individual maturity.

Perfect means mature in this case. Until we all come to a mature man. Now, notice, this is translated correctly here in the New King James.

You've got the plural, we, all, and the singular, a perfect or a mature man. Until we collectively become a mature man. That maturity is a reference to the same man that we read of in Ephesians 2 and verse 15, where it says, having abolished in his flesh the enmity that is the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in himself one new man from the two, thus making peace.

God made the body of Christ as a new man. But Paul says we are going to become a mature man. A new man is not necessarily a mature man.

And therefore the body of Christ, seen collectively as a body, as a man, needs to grow up into maturity. Now the maturity of the body is measured along the standard of unity. If you'll look at 1 Corinthians chapter 3, we can see that this is Paul's understanding of it.

1 Corinthians chapter 3, the opening verses of that chapter say, and I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people, but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. They're not a mature church, they're a baby church, immature church. They're babes in Christ.

I fed you with milk and not with solid food. He gave them baby food instead of adult food. For until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you're not still able to.

For you are all still carnal, which he uses as synonymous with babes. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? For when one says, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are you not carnal? Now notice, of course, in verse 1, carnal and babes are synonymous, are interchangeable. So it says you're still babes, you're still carnal.

Your immaturity is seen in the fact that you have division. Some are saying, I'm of Paul, and others are saying, I'm of Apollos. Isn't that the mark of a carnal, babe church, immature church? The maturity of the body of Christ is measured in its unity, among other things.

There are other factors, too, which we don't have time to get into. If you were interested in knowing more, I have two tapes at the end of our eschatology series, the series that's called When Shall These Things Be? The last two tapes in the series are called The Destiny of the Church. I believe that Paul anticipates a glorious destiny for the church.

The church has a state that it will be in, in the end of time, that God has predestined that it should, that it will be conformed into Christ's image. That image is measured in certain criteria. I don't have time right now to survey all the scriptures that talk about it, but if you're interested, we've got about three hours of teaching on it in those tapes called The Destiny of the Church.

Let me just say at this point that Paul anticipates a higher degree of unity as the mark of maturity of the body of Christ, in the end. That's when all these things are going to reach culmination, when we reach our destination. We will be unified to a greater degree and having reached a maturity corporately, the church will become a mature man, reaching to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Now, that the church needs to become Christ-like corporately is what Paul is getting at here, and we sometimes hear and read and think in terms of, I need to be like Jesus, I personally need to be more like Jesus. And that is true, the Bible says that. But we have to realize that the church as a whole needs to be like Jesus, needs to grow up corporately.

And while your own personal maturity may be measured in terms of, you know, getting over your bad habits or your bad attitudes or something like that, I mean, those are the things, you may know what it is that you need to mature in, the church has to mature in terms of its unity and its love in general. So that just as we individually are growing up, the church corporately is growing up. It's like we said in Ephesians 2, it's growing into a holy temple in the Lord.

The temple is under construction and it's seen as a temple. It's a building not yet completed. Seen as a body, it's a body not yet grown up, but maturing.

And when it is mature, it'll be in the image of Christ, to the fullness of the stature of the measure of Christ. He puts the words in different order, the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Now he says in verse 14, that we should no longer be children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, with the cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive.

Now, a mark of spiritual immaturity also is the doctrinal instability, being tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine. It's not just that people get deceived, but they get deceived repeatedly because they have no stability. Almost all people succumb to some measure of deception at one time or another in their life, but it's not so that all people are being tossed to and fro by every breeze of doctrinal fad that comes along.

There are people like that. There are whole churches like that. I have observed quite a few of the charismatic churches, and that's the only kind of church I've been in, for the most part, over the last 30 years, is kind of churches.

But many of the charismatic churches I've seen, not all, certainly would fit the description of being tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine. For a few years, they're into this fad, and then they're into another fad, and then another fad, and it seems like the thing that makes people susceptible to this being tossed to and fro is the mentality that exists among some that arose out of what was called the latter rain movement back in the 1940s and 50s, which taught what today is not called latter rain, but today it's called restoration movement. But the idea is that the church is going to be restored in the last days to what it was in the first century, that it underwent corruption after the time of the apostles, and for thousands of years now, almost thousands, it has been corrupt, but in the end times, God's going to restore it, bit by bit, one thing at a time, and eventually the church will have all the things restored to it that were there in the early church, including apostles and prophets and all those things.

Now, this mentality leads to the concept of the cutting edge of the spirit. If the spirit is restoring things to the church as part of his last days program, it follows that if you don't get with the program, your church will be left behind as an archaic, defunct, outdated, not with it kind of thing. If God is restoring to the church certain truths and certain functions that were there in the first century but have been gone since then, then

obviously the church that is on the cutting edge is the church that is hearing what the spirit is saying today, and moving into the new areas that the spirit is leading into.

And this whole mentality that God is restoring something in the last days, and there's a cutting edge of what the spirit is doing, and the churches that are on the cutting edge, of course, will be a part of God's last days programs. The ones that simply can't hear well or don't change or whatever, they simply won't be part of the last days program. There's a certain elitism in all of this, and I know well because I was in such a church and even was caught up in that spirit in my later 20s, in the 70s.

I was caught up in that spirit a fair bit myself because our church felt that way. I've seen many churches like that since, having come out of it and not being in it anymore. I can't imagine how I ever tolerated the foulness of that egotism.

Here we have churches where people are not obeying Jesus anymore in these churches than in any others, but they think themselves to be superior because they're on the cutting edge of what the spirit is saying today. It never occurs to them that the spirit, if he would really speak to them today, would tell them to do what he said to do already. He's not going to give you any new assignments until you start doing the right thing that he's already said to do, and the Bible's full of that.

I haven't yet met a charismatic church where the people are being taught to obey everything Jesus said. I've not yet seen a charismatic church where people are systematically told and disciplined how to follow the commandments of Christ in their life day by day, but the cutting edge churches are all caught up with not what Jesus said, even though the people's lives are a wreck in the churches in many cases, and the marriages are a wreck, and the kids are a wreck, and the finances are unglorifying to God, and everything about their lifestyle is just as carnal as anyone else's, but this church is on the cutting edge of what the spirit is saying today. It's such a trap of the enemy, but people who fall into that trap are tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine because someone comes along and says, what God is saying to the church today is shepherding.

Everyone has to have a shepherd who has to come under the chain of command, and that becomes a big fad for a while. Eventually that proves to bear terrible fruit, and it gets thrown out with great embarrassment. The next thing you know, what God is saying today is deliverance ministry.

Everyone needs to get demons cast out of them, so there's a big rave about demons being cast out and deliverance and all that, and then there's a bunch of abuses of that, and eventually that's an embarrassment, and so that kind of gets shoved off into the corners, and mainstream Pentecostals avoid it. And then someone comes along and says, no, what the spirit is saying today is we all have these deep inner hurts and wounds, and we need depth therapy, inner healing, and so everyone needs inner

healing. So that's the next thing that comes down the pipe, and you've got everything coming on the heels of something else.

Some of these overlap. You've got the prophetic movement. You've got the word of faith movement.

You've got this and that and the other thing going on. Of course, more recently you've got the Toronto blessing. Even that is now passé, because now you've got what's going on down in Florida, and it's different in some ways than the Toronto blessing, although very similar.

And who knows what will be next? No one knows, but that's just the point. You've got to keep your ear to the ground. You've got to keep your finger on the pulse.

You've got to know what God's going to say next, because you don't want to miss the next move. The cloud might move, and if you're not on the cutting edge, you'll be left behind in deadness, and God will have gone on, and you'll have been left behind. I remember being in terror of that in my earlier ministry.

I remember hearing a preacher in that movement say, I prayed once to God, God, as you are moving in the earth, don't ever leave me behind. I thought, yeah, amen, amen. I don't want to be left behind.

That would be terrible. Not talking about being left behind, but rapture. Being left behind in the move of God for today.

It just seemed too disastrous. And because of that, this whole idea that God is doing something today that is somehow qualitatively different than what he did when Jesus was here, is an idea that the devil has charged with a great deal of instability in the people who accept it, because they say, well, there's no telling what God may do next. And someone comes along with a lively personality and a good talker, and they say, this is what God is saying today.

I've been traveling around the world, and I hear it all over the churches, and everyone's hearing the same word from the Spirit today. It's this. And then the next wind of doctrine comes through.

And the babies in the church keep getting blown here and there, and they're children. They never stabilize. Do you know why they never stabilize? Because there is a foundation for the church, and they're not rooted and grounded on it.

That foundation is Jesus Christ, and the writings of the apostles and prophets, the scriptures. But that's not so sensational, and it's not so entertaining. And therefore, some people, babies principally, just want to be entertained.

They want to be stimulated. Mature people say, well, let's get down to the hard work of doing what God said to do in the first place. That sounds so dull.

That sounds so boring. You mean like learning how to guide myself? Learning how to be a good steward of my time and my money? Learning how to get my family in order and my own life in order, vis-a-vis my husband or my wife or my children or my parents? Good heavens, that sounds like a drudgery. Let's go on to something more exciting.

Children always want something stimulating. Adults realize there's such a thing as responsibility. There's such a thing as the burdens of life that need to be borne.

And God gives his burdens to the immature to bear, and we bear one another's burdens. But there's a certain immaturity, and many Christians just want the next new thing, just like the Athenians. They got together for nothing else but to discuss whatever the new thing was.

A bunch of babies. God is not, as far as I understand scripture, God doesn't have any revelation superior to that which he gave in Jesus. God, who at sundry times, spake in times past to our fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken by his Son, who is the bright shining of his glory and expressed image of his person.

Doesn't get any better than that. And yet, so many people are bored by his Son and those hard things that he said to do. Much more fun to get drunk in the Spirit.

That's the new thing that God's doing. No, I won't. I'm teaching here.

If you disagree, you don't have to stay. I am not either. I am speaking what I believe to be true.

If you don't agree with it, you can listen or not listen, but I'm not going to stop saying it. I am sorry if it bothers you, but let me say this. Well, I hope it doesn't sound like arrogance.

It is frustration, I will say that. And I have seen only too much of it. I've been in it for years and years and years.

And I've seen it. Okay, well, how do we know the good from the bad? How do we know what's good and what's not good? If they speak not according to this word, it's because there's no light in them, the Bible says. If God hasn't given us a standard that we can determine the good from the bad with, then we're left with our hunches and our intuitions.

I don't want to either. No, and I won't ask you to. I'd like you to criticize what God's doing.

And I won't, I don't intend to criticize what God's doing either. I will say this, that if it's

not according to Scripture, then we don't have any sound reason to call it God's work. If somebody feels good about something and it happens in a church, that doesn't prove it's God's work.

Many will say, Lord, Lord, we prophesied in your name, and they'll say, I never knew you. And the only way we can know is if it is according to the word of God. And, of course, we have to believe that the same spirit that inspired the Scriptures would speak agreeably with the Scriptures and would show the same concerns today that he had then, especially if the needs are the same in the church.

It's not as if we live in a time where the church has now digested and appropriated and is now walking in all those things the Bible says, and so we need something new to do. So the Holy Spirit has to give us some new ideas. We are as far from obeying the Scriptures today as Christians were a generation ago or two generations ago, maybe even further.

It's very possible that the church is in more of an immature condition today than it was two generations ago. That is not progress. It's a cutting edge that is looking for something different than what Jesus said.

And it's true, my loyalty is to Jesus. My loyalty is not to some movement. And if people are truly blessed in some of these things, I've been in the shepherding movement.

I've seen some people saved there. I've seen the deliverance movement come and go. I've seen some people helped there.

I've seen people helped in a lot of movements that I have things I am concerned about in. But the fact that some people get some help is not how we determine whether a movement is of God or not. It's whether it's agreeable with what Jesus said.

He is the final word of God. His spirit still speaks to the church, but he doesn't speak contrary to what Jesus did. And Paul had something in mind when he said we should no longer be children tossed to and fro by everyone who doffered.

I'm certainly not pointing fingers at anyone here. In fact, I'm not pointing fingers at anyone in particular, anywhere. I'm saying that this is a phenomenon that is only too common today in the church, and I've seen it many times.

If the shoe fits, then a person can wear it. But if it doesn't fit, then it doesn't fit. It fits some people, and they're the ones I'm talking about.

And I personally believe that's the kind of people that Paul is talking about. People who, rather than growing up rooted and grounded in Christ, they keep disattached from any foundation, and they get blown around by everything that comes through. Now, Paul actually uses stronger words than I am, because he's talking about trickery of men, who in cunning craftiness lie in wait to deceive.

I haven't made those statements about any of the teachers I'm talking about. I've mentioned deliverance ministers, I've mentioned shepherding, I've mentioned throwing. I've not said anything about those ministers being tricky or deceitful.

I frankly think that most of the people who lead those ministers probably believe what they're teaching. So Paul's a little harsher with them than I am, or at least with people that he's referring to. There are people out there who can trick you if you don't have your roots there.

And so that is what Paul is warning about. The reason that God gave apostles and prophets and pastors and teachers and evangelists is so that we wouldn't be this way. And so if we would follow the teachings of the apostles and the prophets, and if evangelists and pastors and teachers are teaching faithfully what's there, then Paul says the result is that we should grow up, and we won't be children subject to these things.

You can call it criticizing the work of God. I'm not criticizing the work of God. I'm criticizing people's attitudes.

I'm criticizing childishness. And if there's no one here who has that attitude, then no one here needs to be offended. But I'm just saying that there are people like that.

And Paul's the one who tells us so. Paul's the one who says we need to stop being like that. And he says, we stop in that, this way, in verse 15, speaking the truth in love.

We may grow up in all things into him who is the head, Christ. Now, the growth comes by speaking the truth in love. And there's no reason why truth can't be spoken in love, even unpopular truth, even unflattering truth.

If we have to say, well, I won't criticize it even though it's unbiblical because I'm a loving person and I'm not a critical person, then we're not following Paul's example or Jesus's. Jesus and Paul were quite willing to criticize in love people that they loved. Paul certainly criticized the Galatians, whom he loved.

And he certainly criticized much in the Corinthian church, which he loved. But if he didn't criticize them, they'd never grow up. If he never corrected them.

It is said of David about one of his sons, Adonijah, that he never criticized his son. He never said so much as, why are you doing this to Adonijah? He never challenged him. And you know what? Adonijah never grew up.

He got big, but he never became a godly man. He just remained like a little kid, rivaled with his brothers for the kingship and stuff. I mean, just a person who never became the man his father was because his father never criticized him.

Now, criticism is not in itself unloving, and Paul says that. Paul has his many criticisms

that he makes. But that is, if the criticisms are true, there's every reason that they can be spoken in love.

And if spoken in love, that they will result in growth. The church will grow, mature, and stop being babies when the truth is spoken in love. Paul said.

And, therefore, it needs to be spoken in love, or else the growth doesn't occur. In verse 16, having mentioned Christ, we grow up into him who is the head. He says, from whom, that is, from Christ, the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effect of working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Now, every joint supplies something to this growth, he said. And every part effectively works to do its share. And that's what causes the growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

There's that phrase, in love again, which is frequently used in Ephesians. A joint, what is a joint in a body? A joint is where two parts of the body connect. It's a relationship between two parts of the body.

Your shoulder, your elbow, your knee, your wrist, these are all joints. They are connections between two parts of your body. They are a relationship where two parts have to work in harmony because they're connected.

And in the church, God has jointed the church a certain way. Every person has a system or series of relationships with other Christians. And those are joints where two parts of the body connect and are joined and are working cooperatively.

And it is in these relationships that there is a supply of service and an effect of working by which every part does its share. And these are the things that Paul says cause the growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love. So through Christ, the body is joined together.

And those joints in relationships cause service and effective working. And the body grows as a result. This is Paul's vision of the destiny of the body of Christ.

That it will grow up into Christ as we are engaged in receiving the ministries that God sends and doing the ministries that he gives us to do. As all the saints are equipped for the work of the ministry. According to verse 13.

Now Paul kind of turns the corner here in verse 17. Having gone off on something of an extended sentence about what the gifts of the spirit are for. What God is hoping to accomplish through them.

And giving his vision of a mature body of Christ. Growing up into Christ in all things. He

then talks more on the individual level.

Having been talking about the corporate body and its corporate growth. He talks now about the individual walk. Which is really what he started talking about in verse 1. I think that he got off on the subject of talking about the body.

Because the first thing he said about our individual walk. Is that we should endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace. That has to do with our individual activity in relationships to maintain unity.

But once he is talking about the unity. He starts talking about the body of Christ. Kind of inevitably.

Because it is the body of Christ that he hopes to seek. To retain the unity and he gets off into his vision for that. But then he comes back to the issue of what it means to walk worthy.

Which is what he exhorted to do in verse 1. In verse 17 he says this I say therefore and testify in the Lord. That you should no longer walk. As the rest of the Gentiles walk.

In the futility of their mind. Having their understanding darkened. Being alienated from the life of God.

Because of the ignorance that is in them. Because of the hardening of their heart. Who being past feeling.

Have given themselves over to licentiousness. To work all uncleanness with greediness. But you have not so learned Christ.

If indeed you have heard him and have been taught by him. As the truth is in Jesus. Now I am going to stop there although the sentence doesn't.

Because the sentence goes on quite a distance. And I want to say something about these words. He first describes the way Gentiles walk.

Now it says in verse 17. That you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk. Actually the term the rest of.

Is not found in some of the manuscripts. The more ancient manuscripts leave out the phrase the rest of the. So that it really reads in those manuscripts at least.

You should no longer walk as the Gentiles walk. If that is the correct reading. If that is what Paul originally wrote.

Then he is suggesting that although these people were Gentiles. They are not Gentiles anymore. They shouldn't walk like Gentiles walk.

They are now part of the Israel of God. They are part of the commonwealth of Israel. He had said earlier in chapter 2. That as Gentiles in their previous life.

They had been alienated from the commonwealth of Israel. But now of course they are made one body. And in the household of the Jewish saints.

They are now saints too. They are part of the new Israel. And so they no longer walk as Gentiles walk.

Now how do Gentiles walk? Well in the futility of their minds. Now most of what he has to say about the Gentiles here. At least initially in verses 17 and 18.

Has to do with their handicap. The Gentiles are handicapped by ignorance. Their minds, their understanding.

And their hearts. Are blinded or hardened or darkened. Or in futility.

They don't understand. They don't see. Their hearts don't grasp it.

This is all because they are. It says in verse 18. Alienated from the life of God.

Remember I said earlier. When we were talking about what it means to be dead. In trespasses and sins.

Back in chapter 2 verse 1. That he says we were dead. But I was discussing what that means. You know dead in the sense that you can't do anything.

Can't make any choices or not. Because some people suggest that. And I mentioned that being dead in trespasses and sins.

Just means alienated from God. Who is life. And that is what he says here about the Gentiles.

Who are not Christians here. He says they are alienated from the life of God. And therefore of course they are dead.

In trespasses and sins. He goes on after speaking about their ignorance. Of God.

And their separation from God. And blindness of their hearts and their minds. He says verse 19.

Who being past feeling. Have given themselves over to licentiousness. To work all uncleanness with greediness.

Now. This is not a very flattering description of. The pagans.

Here. He says their past feeling. Now it doesn't mean that.

Unsaved people don't have any feelings. He's not saying there's all stoics. Although some of the Greeks were stoics.

He's not referring to that. He's speaking of past. The point of spiritual sensitivity.

That they. Their hearts. Are so numb to moral issues.

That they have no warmth of feeling toward God. And they have no regret or sorrow over sin. And they live as if they are morally.

Neutral because they are amoral creatures. Because they don't have any sense of conviction. About their unlawful deeds.

And he says they've. They've given themselves over. To licentiousness.

Obviously has. As its root. The same root as our word license.

Which means permission. And licentiousness means basically. Sexual license or unbridled.

Sexual activity. Unbridled lust. Is what licentiousness is.

It's giving yourself permission to do whatever you want to do. And particularly with reference to lust. Licentiousness is usually listed in.

Lists of sins that are mostly of a sexual nature. And he says. And they work all uncleanness with greediness.

Now. Greediness might mean in its normal sense. Of being covetous and wanting money and possessions.

But it might also just mean that they're greedy for more uncleanness. That they're. They can't get enough sin.

It could be taken either way. The word allows that. But he says you have not so learned Christ.

It's interesting that he doesn't say you have not so learned from Christ. Because he goes on to say. Assuming you have heard from him.

If indeed you have heard him. And have been taught by him. As the truth is in Jesus.

So he assumes. That they have heard from Jesus. They've been taught by Jesus.

Whether he's referring to. The fact that they've heard the teachings of Jesus. Because the apostles do teach the teachings of Jesus to the churches.

And therefore they've been taught by Jesus. Through. The preachers preaching what

Jesus said.

Or whether it means that Jesus personally has been teaching them. The Bible says. And Jesus said this.

That they shall all be taught by God. And that God. Speaks to all of his people individually.

And he may be speaking that way. But the point is that if you have. Heard from Jesus.

If you have been taught by Jesus. You do not. You are not taught to live that way.

You're not taught to live like the Gentiles. But. Interestingly in verse 20.

He doesn't say you have not so learned from Christ. He says you have not so learned. Christ.

He talks about. He used the word Christ. Almost the way you'd.

You'd speak of a skill. Or a. Or of a vocation. You learn carpentry or you learn.

Plumbing or you learn. Public speaking but. Or you learn Christ.

It's almost like Christ here is being used. As a vocation or as. A skill to be learned.

Apparently Paul means. That our learning is to be. Essentially.

Christ as it were the body of Christ. We are to. We are to live out our role as Christ.

On the earth his flesh and his bones here. And we we don't do that. When we are walking as the Gentiles walk.

We have learned differently from Jesus about that. Now in verse 22 he comes to one of his. Peculiar expressions not.

I mean they're familiar to us. But they're not very often used in scripture and Paul uses it probably more than. Other writers in the scripture the idea of putting off and putting on.

He says in verse 22 that you put off. Concerning your former conduct. The old man.

Which grows corrupt according to deceitful lusts. And be renewed in the spirit of your mind. And that you put on the new man.

Which was created according to God. In righteousness. And through holiness now you've got the putting off.

Of. The old former conduct and the old man. You've got the putting on of the new man here we need to.

Understand what Paul means by the old man and the new man and to my mind. I know I was taught a lot of things about this growing up that I don't think are. Are quite biblical I always.

Was taught. In my in my youth. That the new man in the old man.

Are a new nature in an old nature. In fact I think. That there are some.

Translations that render that I'm pretty sure there are I think that. I think some of the modern translations actually so that you put off the old nature. And you put on the new nature.

Now that's very misleading. Because the word man. Anthropos in both of these cases the new Anthropos and the old Anthropos.

Speak specifically of an old man and a new man. Not an old nature. And a new nature the difference is simply this.

If it is new nature and old nature is speaking of he's talking about. Two aspects of me. I put off one aspect of me and put on another aspect of me.

My old nature and my new nature the way it's usually portrayed. Is that each of us has two natures. The old carnal nature.

And the new nature which is the divine nature that's been given to us in Christ. And by the way so far I believe that's true. I don't differ from that.

That picture that we have. We have our human nature and we also have the divine nature given to us. But the idea is generally taught that Paul is here saying we need to put off.

Our old nature somehow. Now that's never quite explained how you put off your nature. How do you get rid of your nature.

Well sometimes terms are used well you need to crucify the flesh. You need to die to the old nature or whatever. And those sound like very biblical terms.

But it's really hard to know what that really means in real life. What does it mean about putting off my old nature. How do I do that.

Is there some technique. Is there some procedure. What does that all mean.

I was quite I must say frustrated in some of this in my early life. Because I was under the impression that Paul's telling me to put off my old nature and put on a new nature. Now maybe he is but I don't think he is because he uses a different term than that.

He doesn't say an old nature in a new nature. He says an old man and a new man. And

the fact is that put it off and put it on which of course is a metaphor of clothing.

Suggest something external not internal. The old man is something I take off like clothing. The new man is something I put on like clothing and clothing is something external.

Whereas nature is something internal. If I had the old nature in the new nature that he was talking about here. That's something internal.

And the metaphor Paul uses is something that I am in not something that is in me. I am in the old man until I put it off and take it off like a garment. And then I am in the new man when I put it on.

One thing that's interesting is that Paul in Colossians 3 also talks about this this dichotomy of the old man and the new man. But what he does here strangely enough is he talks as if we have already put off the old man. And put on the new man in the book of Colossians.

I'm looking for the specific place where he makes this use of this language. Well verse 9 Colossians 3 9 through 11 says do not lie to one another. Since you have put off the old man with his deeds and have put on the new man.

Who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of him who created him. Where there is neither Greek nor Jew circumcised nor uncircumcised barbarian civilian slave nor free. But Christ is all and in all.

Now here again he talks about putting off the old man and putting on the new. But notice he says in Colossians that you have done this. You have put off the old man.

With his deeds it says in verse 9 and verse 10 you have put on the new man. And yet in Ephesians he exhorts us to put off the old and put on the new. So the question is this something that has been done or something that needs to be done.

In Romans chapter 13 and verse 14 Paul says but put on the Lord Jesus Christ. And make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lust. So we are told to put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

And yet in Galatians 3.27 Paul says for as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Now notice he says if you were baptized into Christ you have put on Christ. But in Romans 13 and 14 he tells us to put on Christ.

In Colossians he tells us we have put on the new man. But in Ephesians he says we must put on the new man. I would like to suggest to you first of all that Christ and the new man are synonyms.

In Paul's thinking here. And putting on Christ is in terms of putting on the corporate Christ. The church, the body of Christ as it were.

The reason I say this is because of Paul's choice of words. Both in Ephesians and in Colossians. If you will note in Ephesians 4 where he talks about putting on and putting off.

He says in Ephesians 4.24 that you put on. This is an exhortation to do so. That you put on the new man.

Which was created according to God in righteousness and true holiness. Earlier Paul has said what was created by God is the new man. The church.

See Paul mentioned the new man back in Ephesians 2.15. Having abolished in his flesh the enemy. That is the law of commandments contained in the oranges. So as to create in him one new man.

So making peace. That new man we saw was the body of Christ made up of Jew and Gentile. God created a new man which is the church.

Now in Ephesians 4.24 Paul talks about that new man again. The church which God has created. The creation of the new man was mentioned in 2.15. And it was mentioned again in chapter 4.24. There is every reason to believe that the new man.

In chapter 4.24 is the same new man. That was in chapter 2.15. Which is the church. The corporate body of Christ is the new man.

Likewise in Colossians 3 where we saw that. It is confirmed if you check that out. Because it says.

In Colossians 3.10 and 11. You have put on the new man. Who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of him who created him.

There again the creation of the new man is alluded to. Where? Verse 11. That is in the new man.

There is neither Greek nor Jew. Circumcised nor uncircumcised. That is in the body of Christ.

In the church there is neither Greek nor Jew. Circumcised or uncircumcised. But Christ is all in it all.

So the new man is that sphere in which there is no Jew or Gentile. No slave or free. But Christ is in all.

In the new man. The new man is created. And the new man was created from the Jew and the Gentile in Christ.

Obviously the new man must be then essentially Christ corporate. The body of Christ is

the new man. So when Paul elsewhere says you have put on Christ.

Or exhorts us to put on Christ. He means put on as it were those robes that come with being part of the body of Christ. Put on that behavior that is part of being in the body of Christ.

If you will notice back in Galatians 3.27 and 28. Paul's words are very similar to what we just read in Colossians. But different enough to show us the identity of the thought.

In Galatians 3.27 we read. That for as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. But verse 20 says there is neither Jew nor Greek.

Neither slave nor free. Neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Now we have put on Christ. We are in Christ. And he says there is no Jew or Greek.

And all that same stuff he said in Colossians about being in the new man. The new man there is no Jew or Greek either. Same idea different words.

Colossians he uses the word the new man. But we usually use the word Jesus Christ. And we are one in the new man.

In Christ. The new man is not something in me. The new man is something I am in.

What about the old man then? What is the old man I am supposed to put on? If the new man is Christ. The corporate Christ. That I am in.

What then is the old man? Well. That is never explained for us clearly in scripture. But it does seem like Romans 6. Is the first place Paul ever mentions the old man.

And in the context we may in fact have. The answer to the question what is the old man? In Romans 6 and verse 6. Romans 6. Paul says knowing this that our old man. Was crucified with him.

That the body of sin might be done away with. That we should no longer be slaves of sin. Notice our old man was crucified.

Now Paul has never previous to this in his writings. Mentioned anything about the old man. Yet he expects.

The readers of Romans know exactly what he means. When he says our old man. Now again some translations will change that to our old nature.

But that is misleading. He didn't say our old nature he said our old man. What is the old man? Well.

We might reasonably look for the explanation of the term. In the previous chapters of

Romans. In fact in the previous chapters of Romans.

In fact those that are nearest to this statement. At the end of chapter 5. There is probably the answer. If you look at Romans 5.12. It says therefore.

Justice through one man. Sin entered the world. And death through sin.

And thus death spread to all men. Because all sin. And then he gets kind of tangled up in a long parenthesis.

But he comes back to it again. Where does he do so? Back in verse 17. For as by one man's offense.

Death reigned through the one. Much more those who receive abundance of grace. And of the gift of righteousness.

Will reign through the life of one. That is one man. Jesus Christ.

Therefore. As through one man's offense. Judgment came to all men.

Resulting in condemnation. Even so through one man's righteous act. The free gift came.

To all men. Resulting in justification of life. Verse 19.

For as by one man's disobedience. Many were made sinners. So by one man's obedience.

Many will be made righteous. Now notice in those closing verses of chapter 5. There is one man. And another one man.

There is two men. There is no question. It is their identity.

In fact. The second man in verse 17. Is identified as Jesus Christ.

The last words of verse 17 of Romans 5. Through one. Jesus Christ. So Jesus is one of the two men.

Who is the other man? Well that is also clear from the context. Adam is the first man. Now there are two men.

There is Adam. And there is Christ. One came earlier in history.

It would be the older. Christ came later. He was the new man.

He is the second Adam. Or the last Adam. Adam therefore apparently is the old man.

Now when Paul says. Our old man was crucified with Christ. And tells us elsewhere.

To put off the old man. And we have put off the old man. And we need to put on the new man.

And we have done that. Obviously Paul is talking about something. That needs to happen.

Experientially. As far as God is concerned. We have been.

We have been. We have unclothed ourselves. From the corporate humanity in Adam.

And we have reclothed. In the new humanity. In Christ.

And it should be also pointed out. That the word Anthropos. Man.

Is the same word that means mankind. Or humanity. He is not talking about a particular individual.

He is talking about man as a race. Humanity. Mankind.

Likewise the word Anthropos. Which Paul uses. Can be read that way too.

It means that in the old humanity. The old mankind. And the new mankind.

We have put off the old humanity. And put on the new humanity. Christ is the new mankind.

He is the head of a corporate race. Adam is the head of a corporate race. And all people are in one or the other.

All people are either in Adam. The old man. Or they are in Christ.

The new man. Thus the old man and the new man. Are not to Paul two things inside of me.

They are two races. And I am in one or I am in the other. The old has been crucified with Christ.

As it were the old Adam has been slain. In other words the old Adam. Has been condemned.

And the new is resurrected. So that we have a newness of life. In the new man.

In the new humanity. Now I am not going to pretend like this concept. Is a real simple one to grasp.

Because it is not perhaps common for us. To in our own speaking. Most of the time.

To talk as Paul does. About groups of people as if they were a man. An individual.

But that is not too uncommon in scripture. Even in the old testament. Israel the whole nation of Israel.

Was called God's son. You may recall. And the church as a whole.

Is considered to be a body. The body of Christ. Or one new man.

So if it is an awkward concept for us. It is only the distance culturally. Or we just do not talk that way normally.

But Paul did. We can get used to that. The bible talks that way.

About races of people as if they were individuals. In fact when we call the nation of Israel. Israel.

We are doing just that. And you might recall that. Before there was ever a nation called Israel.

There were just the children of Israel. In fact the children of Israel were called Israel. In fact when Dinah.

The daughter of Jacob. Was mistreated. In Shechem.

Sexually. It says that the brothers of Dinah were furious. Because such a thing should not have been done in Israel.

What a strange comment. There was no nation of Israel. There was no race of Israel.

There was just Jacob the man whose name was Israel. And what was done to his kid. Was done to him.

His children were part of the solidarity of Israel. It is interesting that the writer of Hebrews. Talks about Levi.

Paying tithes to Melchizedek. In Abraham. Because Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek.

It says in a sense that Levi in Abraham did it. The idea of a solidarity. Of a family or a race.

Being treated as an individual. For consideration purposes. Is a common thing in the scripture.

Even the Amalekites. Are sometimes called Amalek. Who is simply the name.

Amalek is just the name. Of the guy. After whom the king of Amalek.

Or the king of the Amalekites. He is probably the father. He is probably the patriarch of the people.

Or the Moabites. Are sometimes just called Moab. Or the Amalekites are sometimes called Ammon.

As you read the Old Testament. Or Amalek. Those are really the names of a guy.

Just like Israel is the name of a guy. But the people, the family, or the race of that person. Take the identity.

And are treated as if they were that individual himself. Now. Strange as that may seem to us.

It helps to prepare us for the idea. That Paul speaks of Adam. As the old man.

One man. And yet all people are part of Adam. Until they die.

Until the old man is crucified. For them. And they are resurrected.

In the new man. And the new man is Christ. Who is corporately.

Consists of his body. His flesh and his bones on earth. And so when Paul talks.

About putting off the old. And putting on the new. He sometimes speaks of it as something that is a done deal.

You have put on Christ. You have put on the old man. On the new man.

And that is something that happens at regeneration. You change loyalties. You change associations.

You are no longer in Adam. Essentially you are in Christ. But when we are told.

To currently put on the new man. And put off the old man. The assumption is.

That there are behaviors. That are Adam behaviors. And there are behaviors that are Christ behaviors.

And although we have now come. Positionally to be associated. And identified in Christ.

In Adam. Our behaviors have not all caught up with us. That reality has not yet.

Not yet found expression. In everything we do. And think and say.

And so forth. And so we are told to continually put on. The new man.

To continually put on Christ. And what that means is. As we are walking step by step.

In this walk worthy of God. And not walking as the Gentiles walked. Not walking in Adam.

But we say the expression walking in Christ. Is found in Colossians 2.6. Colossians 2.6

says. As you have therefore received Christ Jesus.

The Lord. So walk in him. We walk.

In Christ. We used to walk in Adam. We used to walk as the Gentiles.

Who don't know God. But we don't walk any longer as the Gentiles. Who don't know God.

We walk differently. We put on the behaviors. Associated with the old humanity.

Which is Adam. And we put on the behaviors. That are associated with the new humanity.

Which is Christ. This idea is. Mysterious.

But once. Once you compare the scriptures. You can see that that's exactly where Paul is coming from.

And it shouldn't surprise us. That Paul would have some lofty. And even bordering on mystical.

Concepts that are. Concerning in light of these. Background observations.

In Ephesians 4. He says. In verse 22 that you should put off. Concerning your former conduct.

The old humanity. The old man. Adam which grows corrupt.

According to deceitful lusts. There is a conduct. The former conduct.

You did before you're safe. Which is the conduct associated with the old humanity. That conduct has to be put off.

And put on. The new man. Which reasonably means the conduct.

Associated with the new man. The conduct that is. Consistent with being in.

A new humanity. Or that belongs to that new humanity. Which is created according to God.

In righteousness and true holiness. Now in between those two statements. About putting off and putting on.

You have verse 23 where it says. And be renewed in the spirit of your mind. So it's not just an external thing.

You can put on a garment and put on another garment. But this is only done successfully. If there's a change in the mind.

A change in the spirit. A renewing. The expression there in verse 23.

Be renewed in the spirit of your mind. Probably reminds you. Of Romans 12 2. Where Paul said do not be conformed to this world.

But be transformed by the renewing of your mind. And so the renewing of the mind. Is mentioned there as well.

Here it's renewed in the spirit of your mind. In the intellect of your thinking. Not just your intellect.

But in your spiritual perception. In your spiritual man. In your spiritual thought life.

There needs to be a transformation. A renewing. Because you can.

And many people do. Put off the deeds of the old man. As it were.

It's somewhat. I mean no one successfully takes them all off. But people without Christ.

Or even people who have Christ. But still trusting largely in the flesh. Often do succeed in getting rid of some old corrupt habits.

But one cannot really walk in Christ. Unless there's been a change in the spirit of the mind too. The inward.

Now. The idea of putting on and putting off. Old behavior and new behavior.

Is really what Paul is talking about. When he talks about the old man and the new man. The behavior associated with Adam.

And the behavior associated with the new humanity in Christ. There's two categories of behavior. One is associated with Adam.

One with Christ. To describe them as if they were garments. That you put off and put on.

Is not entirely a new idea either. Because in the Old Testament. A person's behavior.

Is sometimes. Equated or. Spoken metaphorically as a garment.

As when for example. We read of all of our righteousness. As filthy rags.

In God's sight. Or in the New Testament. In Revelation chapter 19.

Where it says that the bride is clothed in. Fine linen clean and bright. And the fine linen is the righteous deeds.

Of the saints. That's in Revelation 19. The righteous deeds are compared with clothing.

Why? Because when people look at you. They don't see your naked body. You cover your naked body with your clothing.

The clothing is the part of you. That you present to the world that's visible. Inside your clothing.

You may have any number of. Blemishes that are concealed. And the idea of being clothed.

Or being naked. Are metaphors that the Bible sometimes uses. Even Adam and Eve.

Covered themselves when they felt sinful. They want to conceal. Their guiltiness.

They want to conceal who they really were. And put up a false front. That all things are naked.

And open to him with whom we have to do. But before people. We're not totally naked.

We wear clothing. The part of us that people see. Is our clothing.

Our naked bodies are generally not revealed. So also our behavior. Is the part of our life.

That people see. They can't see our hearts. They can't see the hidden part.

They can't see the motives. God sees that. But we clothe ourselves.

In the public. With deeds. And the only part of us that people can see.

Of us is what we do. And so behavior is like clothing. The church is clothed.

In fine linen. Which is the righteous deeds of the saints. That's Revelation 19.

And. So it's not uncommon. For the scriptures to use.

The metaphor of clothing. When speaking of behaviors. And deeds.

And that's what Paul has in mind. You put off your former conduct. The old man.

Which conduct grows more corrupt. All the time. But you need to be renewed in the spirit of your mind.

And put on the deeds. Associated with the new man. The deeds.

Which Christ. Approves and teaches. And lived.

Now the rest of chapter four. Is actually. Expansion on these two things.

Putting off the old man. And putting on the new. Throughout the remainder of this chapter.

He basically tells us what things to put off. Particular behaviors. And which things to put on in their place.

Let me just read the verses. Then I'll go through. And point out the specific.

Thoughts. Verse 25 is therefore putting away lying. Let each one speak truth with his neighbor.

For we are members. Of one another. Be angry and do not sin.

Do not let the sun go down on your wrath. Nor give place to the devil. Let him who stole.

Steal no longer. But rather let him labor. Working with his hands.

What is good. That he may have something to give. To him who has need.

Let no corrupt communication. Proceed out of your mouth. But what is good for necessary edification.

That it may impart grace to the hearers. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God. By whom you were sealed.

For the day of redemption. Let all bitterness. Wrath anger clamor.

And evil speaking be put away from you. With all malice. And be kind to one another.

Tenderhearted forgiving. One another just as God in Christ. Also forgave you.

Now. Seen in the context of the unpacking. Of the general command.

To put off the old man. You can see there's several specific behaviors. Of the old man.

That he specifically says stop doing those. And certain behaviors associated with the new man. That you still start doing.

For example. Stop lying. Put away lying.

That's part of the old man. What do you do in its place? You put on the new man. You speak the truth.

Likewise anger. There is an anger that is not sinful. And there is a place for being angry.

You can foster wrath in your heart. The world might. But that gives place to the devil.

He says and of course. Anger therefore. Of a sinful sort must be put off.

That's part of the old man. Stealing in verse 28 is another thing of the old man. And whoever stole should steal no longer.

That's putting off the old man. But he has to put on the new. Rather let him labor.

Working with his hands what is good. That he may have something to give. Him who has need.

It's one thing to stand. And just tell everyone they shouldn't do. You know stop doing this.

And stop doing that. But the problem is that in the old man. That is in your.

In the old humanity. Just like in the new. There are habits.

There are patterns of life. And to stop doing something. Isn't all that easy for one thing.

And also once you stop doing it. You still have the same time on your hands. That you used to spend doing that bad thing.

You still have free time. What are you going to do instead? God doesn't just tell us to stop doing certain things. He wants us to replace.

Certain things with other things. He wants us to replace. The garment of the old man.

With the garment of the new man. The behavior of the old. With the behavior of the new.

And so he specifies. Don't just stop lying. But proactively.

Be truthful. Go out of your way to tell the truth. That's when it's not loving.

To tell certain truths. Or not very peacemaking. To tell certain truths.

There are some truths. That are left. You know.

People don't need to know them. There are some things that are true. But inappropriate.

But when you speak. Make sure that what you speak is true. There may be truths that you don't state.

Now when you swear in court. To tell the truth. There's going to be no truth.

That you withhold. But when you're not under oath. Like that.

There's no obligation. To tell everything you know. You may know some very unflattering.

Or damaging things about another person. And they're true. But it would be gossip.

For you to tell them. There may be some secret thoughts. You've had that are very corrupt.

And for you to speak them. Though they are true. They're good for people.

There are truths. There are things that are true. That need not be spoken.

But there are no lies that you should speak. When you stop lying. A habit of lying needs to be replaced.

With a habit of being truthful. And that when you speak. Just make sure that what you say.

Is the truth. Because it offends God. When we lie.

It is Adamic. It's not Christian. But it's a motivation.

For not lying to each other. Because we're members of one another. We're members of Christ.

We know that. Because we're of his flesh. And of his bones.

In fact in another place. In 1 Corinthians chapter 6. He specifically said. You are members of Christ.

And he gave that as a. As an incentive for. Remaining sexually pure. He says in 1 Corinthians 6.15. members of Christ.

Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not. So, your bodies are members of Christ because they're members of the body of Christ, and the body of Christ and Christ are interchangeable terms in some usages, some contexts. Likewise, though, just as my fingers and my toes are members of me, they are also members of each other.

And they all share joint interests, as it were. That if the body is healthy, the fingers and the toes will be healthy. If one member suffers, all will suffer.

So, we're all members of each other. And therefore, to lie to each other is to ignore this fact that that person that you're lying to, assuming it's a Christian, and that's what he's assuming here, because we're members of each other, that person is being wronged by your lie. That person is being deprived of the truth that perhaps they should hear.

And you hurt them, but you hurt yourself, too, because we're members of each other. When he says, be angry and do not sin, he does not specify what kind of anger is not sin. Although, certainly a hint is given when he says, do not let the sun go down on your wrath.

Perhaps an anger that has persisted in too long becomes sin, even if it was righteous in the first place. There is some cause to be angry at times. And Jesus himself is said to

have been angry at least once in Scripture.

He's declared to have been angry. And there must, therefore, be an anger that isn't sinful, and Paul acknowledges that here. Be angry, but don't sin.

Now, he's not actually given a command to be angry. He is quoting from Psalm 4 in verse 4, which says, be angry and don't sin. He's quoting the psalm in order to say there is such a thing as anger that may not be sin, but you better make sure that you don't sin with your anger.

And in particular, nursing a grudge or anger or resentment, allowing the sun to go down on your wrath is one of those things that would render anger a sinful thing. He indicates in verse 27 that such behavior may give place to the devil in your life, or maybe in the church. It's possible that he means generally in the church, if there are members of the church angry at each other, continuing to bear grudges against each other, that the devil can use that as a wedge and find a place to do damage in the church.

But it's also possible that being angry gives the devil an opportunity to do damage in you. Remember what Jesus said about the servant who was forgiven, and then he wouldn't forgive his fellow servant, and his master gave him over to tormentors. And Jesus said, that's what my father will do to you if you don't forgive every man his brother from the heart.

So, to retain a grudge and resentment and anger may well allow you to be given over to the devil. And it's not because Jesus doesn't protect from the devil, he does, but you can give yourself over, you can give place to the devil by your behavior. Now, on the stealing matter, he says a person who stole should stop stealing and should replace stealing with a new pattern, namely working.

Working, supporting oneself, and giving to others. The character trait that leads a person to steal is twofold. One is greed, the desire to possess something that he doesn't have, and that isn't his.

So, it's greed coupled with laziness. Laziness, or at least impatience, which is another aspect of laziness here, because if there's something you don't have, and don't own, but would like to acquire it, you could work, earn the money, and buy it. People who steal don't want to do that.

They want to get it now, they don't want to wait, and they don't want to work for it. And so, greed and laziness, or slothfulness, and impatience are those character traits that lie behind a lifestyle of theft. But Paul addresses those, and he says, well, you need to get a job, work with your hands, and that'll address the slothfulness aspect, and earn what you need, and have something to give to others.

Now, giving to others is addressing the greed problem. I believe that the Bible suggests

that if you have greed, or covetousness in your life, that the cure for that is giving. And so, Paul says, you put off the old man, stealing is the old man.

Giving, and working, and being honest, providing for yourself, that's the new man, that's godly. Also, he turns to the subject of speech. There's a certain manner of speaking that's associated with Adam, and a certain manner that's associated with Christ.

Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth is putting off the old man, the old corrupt patterns of speech. But putting on the new man is beginning to speak what is good, for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. So, you can administer grace to people through your speech, if your speech is with grace.

Paul said in Colossians 4, 6, let your speech be with grace, seasoned with salt. Colossians 4, 6. So, your speech can be filled with grace. It says in Luke chapter 4, that when Jesus spoke in the synagogue of Nazareth, the people marveled at the words of grace that proceeded out of his mouth.

And so, Jesus, when he speaks, he ministers grace to his hearers. Adam, his communication is corrupt. And so, we put off the old behavior and communication, the corrupt communication, and only put on what is good for necessary edification, to impart grace to hearers.

Don't grieve the Holy Spirit by which you were sealed for the day of redemption. It's not specifically said what behavior is that, but it seems to be associated with speech. Apparently, certain corrupt speech grieves the Holy Spirit.

It brings pain to his heart to hear people talk a certain way. Then, there's a long list of things in verse 31 that are essentially to be put off. They are bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, evil speaking, and malice.

He says, let all these be put away from you, or put these things off. And then, in verse 32, he lists the things that are to be put on in their place. Be kind to one another.

That's instead of bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil speaking. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you. So, these are the attitudes and behaviors that Paul says need to be put off and put on as part of putting on the new man and putting off the old man.

This is what it is to walk, not as the Gentiles walk, but to walk worthy of the calling. When we come to chapter 5, he's still talking about walking. He says, therefore, be followers of God as dear children and walk in love.

So, this whole section is about how to walk, to walk worthy. One must walk no longer as the Gentiles do. You need to put off those old man patterns.

And you need to walk in love. That requires putting on the new man patterns. And also, you walk in the light, in chapter 5, verse 8. So, there's more walking in chapter 5, verse 15.

See that you walk circumspectly. So, obviously, this section of Ephesians is concerned entirely with our walking, walking worthy of that calling that he describes in those earlier chapters. And we'll pick up chapter 5 next time and may even spill over to chapter 6 next time.

We'll see.