

April 11, 2003

## Walking in Righteousness

### Ephesians 4:25-32

25 Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one [of you] with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. 26 Be angry, and [yet] do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and do not give the devil an opportunity. 28 He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have [something] to share with one who has need. 29 Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such [a word] as is good for edification according to the need [of the moment], so that it will give grace to those who hear. 30 Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Last week we examined Paul's exhortation to the Ephesian believers to walk in righteousness and holiness of truth rather than walking as the unbelieving Gentiles.

- **How were the unbelieving Gentiles walking/living? (cf. 4:17-19)**

1-They were living in intellectual futility (in the futility of their mind; being darkened in their understanding; vs. 17-18a).

2-They were living in separation from God (excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; vs. 18b).

3-They were living in spiritual and moral depravity (and they having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness; vs. 19)

- **What was Paul's reason as to why the Ephesian believers were not to walk/live as the unbelieving Gentiles? (cf. 4:20-24)**

-Because a transformation has taken place in their lives. Their old nature has been stripped off as a filthy garment is stripped off and a new self has been put on. Remember that this is the aorist, which emphasizes a once and for all action. It is not in the imperative (command) form. Paul is illustrating what has already happened in the lives of these believers. Because of what Christ has already done on the cross, these Ephesians who have trusted Him as their Lord and Savior have been transformed. Their old nature has been removed and they have been given a new nature.

Notice that verse 25 begins with the term *therefore*. Remember that when you see a *therefore* in Scripture, you have to see what it is there for. In this particular case it is looking back to the previous verses, in particular verses 22-24. It is referring to the laying aside of the old self and the putting on of the new self. Since the old self has been stripped off as a filthy garment is stripped off and a new self has been put on; since the old nature has been removed and they have been given a new nature, then they are to respond differently than before. Their life should be characterized by the characteristics that follow in verses 25-32.

- **In light of having been given a new nature, how are we to respond? In other words what are the characteristics of the righteous walk? (cf. 4:25-32)**

Vs. 25, A Life free from Falsehood: moving from lying to speaking truth.

Vs. 26-27, A Life free from Anger: moving from unrighteous anger to righteous anger.

Vs. 28, A Life free from Theft: moving from stealing to sharing.

Vs. 29-30, A Life free from Rot: moving from unwholesome words to wholesome words.

Vs. 31-32, A Life free from Vices: moving from bitterness to forgiveness.

Over the next few weeks we will be dealing with each one of these characteristics and attempting to apply them to our lives.

### **Verse 25: A Life free from Falsehood: moving from lying to speaking truth.**

25 *Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one [of you] with his neighbor, for we are members of one another.*

- *What is the command here in verse 25?*

The command is to speak truthfully! The term *speak* is in the imperative in the Greek emphasizing a command to be truthful. We are to speak truth, not lie.

- *What characteristic of the old life must be removed in order to speak truth?*

Clearly we must lay aside falsehood in order to speak truth. Falsehood is a characteristic of the old nature, while truthfulness is a characteristic of the new nature.

- *What is your definition of lying/falsehood?*

Webster defines *lying* as follows: *to make a statement that one knows to be false, especially with the intent to deceive.*

The term *falsehood* in the Greek is PSEUDOS, which refers to that which is false, a lie, or an imitation. It is literally rendered *falsehood*. It includes the idea of deception and fraud. Some versions translate the term as *lying*. However *lying* is only a part of the idea of falsehood, although it certainly might be considered the clearest example and in the context of speaking truth, lying might be the main thrust of the verse.

- *List several examples of lying/falsehood:*
- Exaggeration-which is adding falsehood to that which is true.
- Cheating-in school, which is a misrepresentation of knowledge; or on income taxes which is a misrepresentation of income; or on the job with the time clock; which is a misrepresentation of labor; in marriage, which is a misrepresentation of faithfulness.
- Making foolish promises-which is misrepresentation of your intentions.
- Betraying a confidence-
- Flattery-
- Making excuses-
- Deception of any kind-

- Hypocrisy-the false assurance of the appearance of virtue.
- *What do the following verses reveal regarding lying/falsehood?*

John 8:44 Satan speaks lies, is a liar and the Father of lies. There is no truth in him.

Acts 5:3 Satan prompts men to lie (ie. Ananias).

Exodus 20:15-16/ Lying is forbidden both in the Old & New Testaments.

Leviticus 19:11/ We are commanded not to lie.

Colossians 3:9

Proverbs 14:5, 22 False witnesses are addicted to lying.

Psalm 52:3/58:3 The wicked love and are addicted to lying.

Psalm 4:2 The wicked seek after falsehood.

Psalm 7:14 The wicked bring forth falsehood.

Proverbs 17: 4 The Wicked give heed to lying.

Proverbs 26:8 Lying leads to hatred.

Proverbs 12:19 Lying is only temporary, the truth will be found out.

Proverbs 12:22 The Lord detests lying and delights in men who are truthful.

Revelation 21:8, 27; 22:15 Liars are excluded from heaven and will be cast into the Lake of fire for all eternity. Obviously this refers to those whose lives are characterized by lying and are thus demonstrating that they are unsaved.

Clearly the Scripture is replete with verses that demonstrate that God detests lying, lying comes with consequences and as believers in Christ we should certainly strive not to lie. Have you ever heard the phrase: *Honesty is the best policy*? Is this saying Biblical? Certainly it is! Paul commands

the Ephesian believers here to speak truth to one another rather than to deal with each other in falsehood.

- ***According to the following verses, why is honesty the best policy? Why is it necessary to speak truth to one another?***

Deuteronomy 32:14/Psalm 31:5 **God is a God of Truth!**

John 14:6 **Jesus is the Truth!**

John 14:1-17; 16:13 **The Spirit is the Spirit of Truth, who will guide believers into all truth!**

2 Samuel 7:28/John 17:17 **God's Word is Truth!**

- ***According to the following verses how should we as believers respond?***

John 4:24 **Worship in Truth!**

Joshua 24:14/

1 Samuel 12:24 **Serve the Lord in Truth!**

Proverbs 23:23 **Esteem the truth as priceless!**

1 Corinthians 13:6 **Rejoice in the Truth!**

Philippians 4:8 **Meditate upon the Truth!**

Ephesians 4:25 **Speak the Truth!**

Since God is a God of Truth; Jesus is the Truth; the Spirit is the Spirit of Truth who will guide us into all Truth; and God's Word is the Word of Truth, then according to Paul's instruction here in Ephesians, we as believers should speak truth! We need to be truthful and honest in all of our dealings and in every situation of our life.

Paul goes on to say that each one of us are to speak truth with our neighbor.

- ***In the context here, who is our neighbor?***

**Clearly our neighbor in this context must be believers, since we are commanded to speak truth with our neighbor. But the term *neighbor* is further identified by the following phrase, "*for we are members of one another.*" The phrase, "members of one another" is speaking of fellow Christians.**

"We are to speak truth to everyone and in every situation, but we have a special motive to be truthful with other believers, because we are fellow members of Christ's Body, the church, and therefore members of one another... The church cannot function properly if its members shade the truth with one another or fail to work together honestly and lovingly. We cannot effectively minister to each other or with each other if we do not speak "the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15), especially among our fellow believers." [John MacArthur, New Testament Commentary, p. 184]

- ***How do you deal with another believer, whom you know to be speaking falsehood rather than truth?***

## **SMALL GROUPS**

- *Honestly examine your life to see if you are exhibiting the characteristic of speaking truth rather than falsehood. Do you struggle with this command? If so what area is the most troublesome for you? How can you lay aside your own falsehood and put speaking the truth into action in your own life?*