

April 18, 2003

## Characteristics of the Righteous Walk [Part 2]

### 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.*

Remember that in Ephesians 4:25-32 Paul is emphasizing the characteristics of the righteous walk. Since the old nature has been removed and we have been given a new nature, then we are to respond by walking in righteousness and holiness in truth (cf. Ephesians 4:17-24).

· ***What are the characteristics of the righteous walk that Paul highlights in Ephesians 4:25-32?***

Vs. 25,

Vs. 26-27,

Vs. 28,

Vs. 29-30,

Vs. 31-32,

Remember that we are in the midst of examining each one of these characteristics and attempting to apply them to our lives. Our focus this evening will be on verses 26-27 and the topic of anger.

### Verses 26-27:

*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.*

· ***What is anger? How would you define anger?***

Webster Defines as—An emotional agitation of no specified intensity aroused by great displeasure.

The verb *ORGIZOMAI*—is not momentary outward, boiling-over rage or inward, seething resentment, but rather is a deep-seated, determined and settled conviction. It can be used to represent an emotion good or bad, depending on motive and purpose.

The large majority of references to anger in the Bible refer to the anger of God and they usually speak of His anger against the sin of His people.

· ***What do the following verses describe in relation to God and anger?***

Exodus 34:6 God is slow to anger following the people's sin of worshipping a golden calf.  
Numbers 14:18 God is slow to anger although the people rebelled and refused to enter the promised land.

Psalms 86:15 A psalm of David in which He announced that God is slow to anger even though his oppressors have not set the Lord before them.

Jonah 4:2 Jonah knew that although the people of Ninevah had greatly sinned, God was slow to anger.

(Cf. Nehemiah 9:17; Psalm 103:8; 145:8; Joel 2:13; Nahum 1:3)

· ***What do the following verses reveal regarding anger expressed by Christ, during His first coming?***

Mark 3:5 The only passage that directly states that Christ was angry. It was a righteous anger directed against the hard-heartedness of the Pharisees who resented His healing the man with the withered hand.

Matthew 21:12-13/Mark 11:15-18/Luke 19:45-48/John 2:13-17

Each of these passages describes Jesus' expression of anger that drove the moneychangers out of the temple. Jesus was angered at their sin and the way that they mistreated others and maligned the Father.

These passages reveal that Jesus' anger was never selfish; was a selective anger at particular sins; served others and expressed His authority.

It is interesting that Ephesians 4:26-27 is the **only** verse that commands the people of God to be angry. The NKJV is the best rendering of the Greek Text, "*Be angry and do not sin!*" This is a quote from Psalm 4:4, where it is in the context of a rebuke of sin.

· ***Why do you think that Paul commanded believers to be angry in verse 26, yet commanded believers to put away anger in verse 31?***

Verse 26 and verse 31 must be referencing two separate types of anger. Verse 26 references a righteous anger at our own sinfulness, while verse 31 is referencing the sinful anger of mankind against one another.

Remember that Paul is instructing the Ephesians on the characteristics of a righteous walk.

· He is not commanding them toward sinful anger, in fact he commands them against sinful anger in verse 31.

· But neither is he commanding them toward righteous indignation toward the sin of others. We as sinful mankind are incapable of having a truly righteous indignation as God does.

Remember the focus of verses 25-32 is personal, on our own walk. Since verse 26 cannot refer to an anger directed at anyone else then it must be anger directed at our own sin. In fact the command *Be angry* is closely connected with the prohibition *Do not sin*. They are connected and hence carry the force of being angry at our own sinful behavior. It is in the present tense emphasizing a continuous action.

Because we have been transformed, stripped of our old nature and given a new nature in Christ, we must continually be angry at our own sin, and diligently striving not to sin.

· ***What do you think Paul meant by the instruction, "Do not let the sun go down on your anger."?***

This is also an imperative emphasizing a command. It is also in the present tense noting a continual action. The way the phrase is used in Micah 3:6 suggests that it means the end of an activity. The idea here is to never stop being angry about our sin.

· *What do you think Paul meant by the instruction, "Do not give the Devil an opportunity."?*

This is also an imperative emphasizing a command. It is also in the present tense noting a continual action. We must not give the devil an opportunity by allowing our sin to continue.

**Our emotional agitation aroused by great displeasure concerning our sin is an essential character of the righteous walk!**

**SMALL GROUPS:**

· *How have you been responding toward sin in your life recently?*

· *How have you given the devil an opportunity in your life by your response to your sin?*

· *How do you think this passage helps you to protect yourself?*