

## ROCK GROUP BIBLE STUDY

May 9, 2003

### Characteristics of the Righteous Walk [Part 4]

#### 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, **Lay aside falsehood and speak truth.**

Vs. 26-27, **Never stop being angry with your sin.**

Vs. 28, **No longer steal, but work and share.**

Vs. 29-30, **No unwholesome words, but words of edification.**

Vs. 31-32, **Put away bitterness, wrath, anger and clamor and be kind, tender-hearted and forgiving to one another.**

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 verse 29 as Paul moves on to address the topic of the believer's speech.

#### Verse 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.*

- ***What is the sin that needs corrected according to verse 29?***

The correction in verse 29 is that of moving from unwholesome words or speech to wholesome words or speech. The Christian's life should not be characterized by unwholesome words. The correction here is once again an imperative emphasizing a command.

- ***What do you suppose Paul means by the phrase "unwholesome word?"***

The English term unwholesome conveys the idea of bad, unsound or unhealthy.

The Greek term (SAPROS) can be translated rank, foul, putrid, rotten, diseased, disgusting, decayed, worn out, bad, profitless, and worthless. It was often used of rotten fruit, vegetables or other spoiled food. [cf. Matthew 13:38 of spoiled fish; Matthew 12:33 of rotten fruit] Here it conveys the idea of worthless or profitless speech. Speech that causes harm rather than building up.

- *What might be some examples of worthless or profitless speech/unwholesome words?*

-off color jokes; profanity; dirty stories; vulgarity; wrathful or careless words; gossip; slander; whispering; backbiting; evil surmising; talebearing; babbling; tattling; evil speaking; defaming; bearing false witness; circulating false reports etc....

**There is much instruction in the scriptures regarding our speech. At this time we will break up into groups and research the following verses as they relate to our speech:**

James 1:26

James 3:1-12

James 4:11

Luke 6:45

Matthew 12:36

Matthew 15:18-19

Colossians 4:6

1 Timothy 5:13

Exodus 23:1

Leviticus 19:16

Psalm 5:9

Psalm 34:13

Psalm 39:11

Psalm 52:2

Psalm 52:4

Psalm 109:2

Psalm 120:2-3

Proverbs 6:12

Proverbs 6:17

Proverbs 10:6

Proverbs 10:13-14

Proverbs 10:18-19

Proverbs 10:31-32

Proverbs 13:3

Proverbs 15:1-2

Proverbs 15:28

Proverbs 17:20

Proverbs 17:28

Proverbs 18:6-8

Proverbs 26:28

Paul does not just renounce unwholesome speaking, but provides instruction regarding a substitute for our unwholesome words.

- ***What are the three specific characteristics of wholesome speaking that Paul emphasizes in verse 29?***
  1. The believer's words should be good for edification. We need to be helpful, encouraging, instructive and uplifting in our speech even when it is for corrective purposes.
  2. The believer's words should be appropriate. (according to the need of the moment) Our words need to be fitting for the situation. We need to avoid unnecessary things that might harm, discourage or disappoint someone. Proverbs 25:11 teaches, "*Like apples of gold in settings of silver is a word spoken in right circumstances.*"
  3. The believer's words should be gracious. Remember that we need to speak the truth in love (cf. verse 15). Just as grace characterizes our God it should characterize His children, especially in our speaking. Cf. Colossians 4:6, "*Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.*"

John MacArthur says in his commentary, "Salt is a preservative and helps retard spoilage. The gracious words of Christians help retard the moral and spiritual spoilage in the world around them. They also provide strength and comfort to those in need. Our graciousness reflects the grace of Christ, who uses our graciousness to draw others to His grace."

### **SMALL GROUPS**

- ***Is your walk characterized by unwholesome or wholesome words? Explain.***
- ***Which category of unwholesome words do you struggle most with and why?***
- ***What can you do to guard yourself against speaking unwholesome words?***