

Text: Eph 4:25-32

Title: Fundamentals of a Believer's Walk – part 3

Intro: Refreshing section as to living the Christian life

2 Cor 5:17—"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."

- Even though as believers we are spiritually made new/alive in Christ, we still have sin and weaknesses that we must learn to gain control over.
- No Christian is without sin—so, all believers are in a process that we call 'sanctification.'
- As believers, we press forward in our faith—we embrace the Scriptures, we submit to them, we submit to Christ. We battle sin in our own lives and become more like Christ.
- The goal in living the Christian life is seeing the 'outer man' become (by God's grace and by the power of the HS) more like the 'new man on the inside'
 - God is not progressively making believers new creations—he's already done that
- As our faith grows, as our inner man matures and grows in the knowledge of Christ, the outer man begins to change in patterns of obedient behavior.
- You cannot have a new nature in Christ and not begin to demonstrate new attitudes and behaviors consistent with that new nature.

Eph 4:20-21—"But you did not learn Christ in this way, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus,"

- The old man acted consistent with the old man's nature—but when we were converted, we learned about Christ and the Truth—we heard the truth with 'ears of faith'—we believed and now live in accordance with the truth.
- We're no longer hostile to Christ and the Word of Christ.
- We don't rail against the commands of God—we come under them.
- We don't get comfortable with sin like we used to—and, if we try to, the Scripture says that God graciously brings chastisement because He loves His children and will not allow them to continue in sin (Heb 12:3-11).
 - Heb 12:8-11—"But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness."
 - God is gracious to us, even when we are spiritually weak.
- What God does is grow us on the inside so that the outside begins to demonstrate obedient living.

Eph 4:22-24—"that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth."

- The old man is corrupt and no longer useful—it must be discarded—(like an old, worn out, worthless wheel bearing).
- At conversion, there's a transformation on the inside—a complete 180-degree reversal of direction. That has already occurred.
- The new man has new behaviors—but they don't occur automatically—without effort, without striving. Even though God declares us righteous by the merits of Christ, we are commanded to subdue the remaining humanness by the power of the HS.
- The resources are there.
- Phil 3:12—Paul says, "...I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus."

In Eph 4:25-32, the Apostle Paul takes his argument a step further and gives some practical ramifications of the believer's new walk.

4:25ff—"Therefore..." (a logical connection from what precedes)—Paul gives concrete exhortations that flow from the preceding paragraph on the contrast between the old man and the new man—the old way of life and the new way of life. Each exhortation has to do with right, meaningful relationships within the body of Christ.

- Truthfulness replaces lying
- Restraint replaces sinful anger
- Giving replaces taking
- Edification replaces tearing down
- Kindness replaces bitterness

Within each exhortation is: a negative (what we're no longer to do), a positive (what we ought to do), and a theological reason (whether stated or implied).

Prop: This morning: Truthfulness must replace lying/deceit.

4:25—"Therefore, laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE of you WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, for we are members of one another."

- Truth-telling replaces lying
- This is first and foremost in Paul's list. No wonder because the Scriptures place a priority on truthfulness.

Ex 18:21—"Furthermore, you shall select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; and you shall place these over them as leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens."

Joshua 24:14—"Now, therefore, fear the LORD and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD."

1 Sam 12:24—"Only fear the LORD and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you."

1 Kings 2:3-4—as David was about to die, he charged his son, Solomon—“Keep the charge of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His ordinances, and His testimonies, according to what is written in the Law of Moses, that you may succeed in all that you do and wherever you turn, so that the LORD may carry out His promise which He spoke concerning me, saying, ‘If your sons are careful of their way, to walk before Me in truth’ with all their heart and with all their soul, you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.”

Psalm 15:1-2—“O LORD, who may abide in Your tent? Who may dwell on Your holy hill? He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness, and speaks truth in his heart.”

Psalm 51:6—“Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being, And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom.”—David acknowledged that God desires a life of integrity on the inside—there’s no use pretending or trying to hide anything.

Psalm 86:11—David says, “Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your truth; Unite my heart to fear Your name.”

Psalm 145:18—“The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth.”

Prov 3:3—“Do not let kindness and truth leave you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart.”

Prov 8:6-7—“Listen, for I will speak noble things; And the opening of my lips will reveal right things. For my mouth will utter truth; And wickedness is an abomination to my lips.”

1 Cor 13:6—“[love] does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth,”—things that are truthful build up one another

The idea is: an inner life that is so committed to truth that what comes out of the mouth is without deceit.

Matt 22:16—even when Jesus’ opponents tried to trap him with questions they had to admit his truthfulness, “...Teacher, we know that You are truthful and teach the way of God in truth, and defer to no one; for You are not partial to any.”

- Every religious system apart from true Christianity is built upon a foundation of lies and deceptions. The enemy is a schemer who effectively deceives the hearts of the unbelieving.
- 1 John 2:4—“The one who says, ‘I have come to know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him,”
- Rev 21:8—“But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

Today, lies and deceit are the norm. As a society, we once praised honesty and truthfulness and lies and deception were scorned.

- Now, there’s no stigma—we’ve deteriorated to the place where lying is acceptable.
- Nothing is more characteristic of the sinful, unbelieving life than lying and deceit.
- Lying is the most common and universal sins of all.

- John 8:44—“You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

The Christian knows that lying is wrong/evil—and it goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden where Satan lied and deceived Eve.

- The most essential characteristic of the Christian life is truthfulness. That’s what sets the Christian apart from the unbelieving world.
- Rom 1:18—says that as unbelievers, we once ‘suppressed the truth in unrighteousness’—but we’ve been transformed on the inside.
- We once lived in lies and deception, but the truth has set us free and we love the truth—we treasure the truth.
- Even when we struggle with truthfulness, we still love it and pursue it because we’ve been delivered out of the realm of lying and have been brought into the realm of truth.

1 Tim 2:4—says that God our Savior... ‘desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.’

Col 3:8-9—“But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices.”

As a believer, we’ve had our conscience wiped clean—we have the truth in the inner man—and when we stray and fail in being truthful, the Spirit of God convicts us—there’s guilt, then confession, and learning how to be a better, more consistent truth-teller.

The Ephesian believers lived in a society much like ours where lying and deceit was practiced regularly.

- Lying, stealing, defrauding others—was how they were brought up.
- But now they are Christians, and they must fight against the old tendencies.

“laying aside falsehood”—(pseudo)—‘falsehood’ (singular used collectively and contrasted with ‘speak truth’)—meaning ‘falsehood in all its forms’—‘all that belongs to deceitful scheming’ (4:14).

‘laying aside falsehood’ includes the more subtle forms of lying:

1. Bragging, boasting. Inflating your reputation—misleading for the sake of gaining one’s approval. Taking credit for another’s work or achievements. Stretching the truth in order to gain followers.
2. Exaggeration—‘adding falsehood to that which begins as true’—embellishment of facts—exaggerating the faults of others in order to deflect and blame-shift—‘you always...you never...’
3. Misleading while giving the appearance of truthfulness—such as: cheating on tests or lying on tax forms—lying or misleading about one’s education/degrees
4. Evasion—changing the subject in order to avoid the real issue—deflection
5. Betraying a friendship/confidence—you say one thing to their face, ‘we’re friends,’ then talk maliciously about them behind their backs.
6. Flattery—saying things you know are not true in order to gain control or approval or a following

7. Concealing the truth—withholding pertinent details/information—not giving the whole story—
withholding key information that would not reflect well on yourself—that is dishonest
8. Inventing ‘facts’—just making stuff up in order to make yourself look better in the eyes of others
9. Not owning your part in a conflict—you say it was ‘this’ when you know it was something else.
10. Ignoring issues—‘what’s wrong? Nothing.’ That’s not true.

Falsehood, in all its forms, has no place in the body of Christ because Christ is Himself the truth and His body should reflect that.

- Sin is a terrible thing. Though we all may hate lying and despise it and denounce it, we are all guilty of it.
- Prov 10:18—“He who conceals hatred has lying lips, And he who spreads slander is a fool.”
- Prov 12:19—“Truthful lips will be established forever, but a lying tongue is only for a moment.”—lying and deceit only brings temporary gain.
- Lies damage reputations of others—Prov 14:25—“A truthful witness saves lives, but he who utters lies is treacherous.”

Appl—We live in a time when men and women are lying at unprecedented rates in order to gain power and control of others—in government—political figures are lying to gain control—they make up all kinds of false accusations to discredit their opponent

- What is worse is the lies and deceptions among the professing body of Christ.
- In both Scripture and in personal experience—the most damaging lies don’t come from ‘outside’ the fellowship, but from within—professing believers maligning the character of faithful pastors and teachers, ‘abusive speech’ (Col 3:8)

What should characterize believers is: ‘throwing off all kinds of falsehoods and deceptions’
‘laying aside’—has to do with ‘stripping off...casting aside’

- The same verb/tense used in 4:22—Lit ‘having laid aside falsehood’
- The believer ‘lays aside’ deception in order to do the work of Christ—propagating truth

Notice: the imperative: ‘speak truth’

- It is not enough to simply ‘stop lying’—we must ‘speak truth’—speaking the truth should be a distinguishing mark of a Christian
- Paul quotes Zechariah 8:16—“SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE of you WITH HIS NEIGHBOR”—be fair and honest so that what comes out of the mouth is truthfulness
 - In Zechariah 8:1-15—God promises that a remnant of his people will inherit the future kingdom—they will inhabit Zion—Jerusalem will be called the ‘city of truth’ because of the presence of Yahweh (8:3).
 - In that day, God’s people will be characterized by truth, by righteousness, by holiness, and every member of that community can expect to be dealt with truthfully.
 - Paul uses Zechariah 8:16 to emphasize that the ‘new community’—the ‘church’ should be just like the future people of God.
 - The ‘new man’—according to 4:24, has been created in ‘righteousness and holiness of the truth’
- When God converts a sinner through the gospel of Christ, he is a new creation, and he steps out of the realm of lies/deception and into the realm of truthfulness. Why? Because every form of lying and deception is a contradiction of the new man.

Ill—when I was first converted, I had been doing mechanical work at a car dealership—one day, I became acutely aware that I had a couple tools in my toolbox that did not belong to me—I had borrowed them and never returned them—it seems that almost immediately I was burdened to return them—interestingly, both people that I tried to return things to told me to keep them and use them—it’s as if the Lord allowed me to be tested to see if I would walk in truth and not hide things/deceive.

“SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE of you WITH HIS NEIGHBOR”—That means we’re to speak truth with ‘every one’ and in ‘every situation’—none are left out—your ‘neighbor’ = ‘fellow believers’ and those outside the body

“for we are members of one another.”—(explanatory) Lit ‘because we are members of one another’

- This is the ‘motivation’ behind being truthful—‘because we are fellow members of Christ’s body’—there is ‘spiritual connectivity’
- Romans 12:5—says that we are ‘individually members one of another’
- The church is Christ’s body made up of harmonious relationships—and Paul’s point is that there’s no place for deception/lies.
- The closer you get to one another the more vulnerable you are and the easier it is to hurt others if you are not truthful.

Q—How can the body of Christ function together with honesty, love, and integrity if we are shading the truth with one another??? How can we have ‘fellowship’ (commonness) if there’s lying going on???

“...we are members of one another”—when you lie to a fellow believer, you hurt yourself. To be honest is to avoid ruin among the body. We are in union with Christ and with each other.

- 1 Cor 6—if one participates in immorality, you join Christ to a harlot—1 Cor 6:15—“Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? May it never be!”
- Eph 5—in marriage, if you love your wife, you do yourself good

Lying destroys trust and makes unity impossible.

- Eph 4:15—says that by ‘speaking the truth in love’ the church is to grow up in all aspects into Christ, who is the Head of the church.
- Prov 12:22—“Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, But those who deal faithfully are His delight.”
- Prov 16:6—“By lovingkindness and truth iniquity is atoned for, And by the fear of the LORD one keeps away from evil.”
- Prov 19:1—“Better is a poor man who walks in his integrity than he who is perverse in speech and is a fool.”—the way of the fool is lies, dishonesty, and deception

Prov 21:6—“The acquisition of treasures by a lying tongue Is a fleeting vapor, the pursuit of death.”—any gain from lying and deception is brief...momentary

Prov 26:28—“A lying tongue hates those it crushes, and a flattering mouth works ruin.”

See: Prov 30:1-9—verse 8—"Keep deception and lies far from me, give me neither poverty nor riches; Feed me with the food that is my portion,"

Q—Are you known as a truth-teller???