

EPHESIANS

ENGAGING THE POWER OF GOD'S AMAZING GRACE



ABUNDANTLIFE
FOURSQUARE CHURCH

GOD'S GRACE AND ANGER

Week Six

Ephesians 4:25-32

So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. And “don't sin by letting anger control you.” Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil. If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need. Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them. And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, He has identified you as His own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other; tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you. (NLT)

COMMENTS AND THOUGHTS

Our new way of living as believers will lead to new ways of behaving. Because believers in the church exhibit “true righteousness and holiness” (4:24), they must put away lies. This is like putting off the old self and replacing it with the new self, so believers put off falsehood and put on the willingness to speak the truth. The change in focus lies in the following clause: for we are parts of the same body. The Word stresses our mutual responsibility. Because we are members of one another in Christ's body, our words and actions must not be destructive to the body. Lying to each other injures unity by creating conflicts and destroying trust. It tears down relationships. To maintain unity, the believers must be truthful with one another.

Ephesians 4:26-27 “In your anger do not sin.” Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold (NIV). The Bible calls us to put off our bad temper, or a lifestyle, behavior characterized by anger. The words “in your anger do not sin” are quoted from Psalm 4:4. The Bible doesn't teach us that we shouldn't feel angry. This is a God created emotion. The problem is how we handle, control and discipline our anger. We must not let our angry feelings control us or let them lead to pride, hatred, or self-righteousness. Jesus Christ became angry at the merchants in the temple, but this was righteous anger and did not lead Him to sin. We need to follow Jesus' example. We ought to reserve our anger for when we see God dishonored or disrespected, or people wronged, abused, taken advantage of, or who are helpless. If we get angry, we do so without sinning. To do this, we should deal with our anger before the sun goes down. According to Deuteronomy, sunset was the time by which wrongs against God and against others should be made right (Deuteronomy 24:13,15). Anger that is allowed to smolder over time can eventually burst into flame and give the devil a foothold, causing us to sin and become bitter and resentful. We should resist the devil (James 4:7). Satan can use our anger against one another to destroy our unity and our love. Anger must be dealt with as quickly as possible. Used correctly, anger can motivate us to right a wrong, redress a grievance, correct an injustice. When used improperly, it can burn us and everyone else around us.

Ephesians 4:28 *If you are a thief, stop stealing. Begin using your hands for honest work, and then give generously to others in need (NLT).* When a person who engages in stealing as a livelihood that person who became a believer had to “put off” that old lifestyle and make a change, turning to honest work in order to make a living. Stealing and idleness go together; thus, the charge was not only to stop stealing but also to begin honest work. All believers should work hard, do their part in the community, hold their own, and not expect anyone else to support them. Giving is at the heart of Christianity. We hold lightly to our possessions because we have our treasure in heaven (Matthew 6:19-21; Romans 12:13; 2 Corinthians 8:1-9:15).

Ephesians 4:29 *Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen (NIV).* Believers must be careful about what they say. We must not let any unwholesome talk come out of our mouths. “Unwholesome” means corrupt, worthless, gossip and slander and foul talk, profanity, and coarse, harsh language. Not only should our speech be kept clean and truthful, but we should also speak only what is helpful for building others up. Our words should edify, not tear down. The words we say to one another can be a powerful force for good, for building each other up or they can be just as powerfully destructive, tearing us down.

Ephesians 4:30 *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption (NKJV).* The Holy Spirit is a person who can be saddened by the way we live. While we continue to battle with our sinful nature, we should be living for Christ each day. To refuse to do so, to constantly give in to lying, anger, stealing, and foul talk is to grieve the Holy Spirit of God.

When believers quarrel and hurt one another, they distress the Spirit. Because the Holy Spirit controls and guides speech, praise, prophecy, and tongues, we offend the Holy Spirit. So, we don't grieve the Holy Spirit — not just so we don't hurt one another, but also so that we do not sadden God the Spirit.

Ephesians 4:31 *Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice (NIV).* These sins listed in this verse picture the former way of life, the old self (4:22). None of these attitudes and activities have any place in the believers' Holy Spirit-filled life; we must get rid of the following:

Bitterness — a spirit that refuses reconciliation.

Rage — outbursts of anger or quick temper for selfish reasons.

Anger — a continuous attitude of hatred that remains bottled up within.

Brawling — loud self-assertions of angry people determined to make their grievances known.

Slander — destroying another person's good reputation by lying, gossiping, spreading rumors, etc.

Malice — doing evil despite the good that has been received.

Ephesians 4:32 *And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you (NKJV).* Believers ought to be kind to one another. Kindness means acting with grace and benevolence toward others, as God has done toward us. Kindness takes the initiative in responding generously to others' needs. The word for tenderhearted is also translated "compassionate." Compassion is sensitivity and heartfelt sympathy for the needs of others.

God had to give up His only Son to forgive us; we have nothing to give up but our selfish natures and our unwillingness to forgive those who have wronged us (Matthew 6:14-15; 18:35; Mark 11:25). God does not forgive us because we forgive others, but because of His great mercy. Those who are unwilling to forgive have not patterned their lives after Christ, Who was willing to forgive even those who crucified Him (Luke 23:34).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is it important to forgive one another?
2. What is the difference between forgiving others and one's self?
3. What makes it hard to forgive?
4. Would you share your personal experience with anger?
5. How does unforgiveness lead to resentment and bitterness?

**WHAT WILL YOU
DO WITH WHAT
YOU HAVE LEARNED
???**
