

Shalom AZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption



“When the Flesh Feeds, The Spirit Grieves”

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Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts (TLV): Eph. 4:17-5:2; Jer. 17:9; Rev. 3:17, 19-20; Ps 4:5; Js 1:19-20; Prov 10:19; Luke 6:45

This message reminds us that the flesh is not a minor issue. It is like a sleeper cell hidden within, working against the rule of Yeshua in our lives while pretending to be for us. The flesh presents itself as our ally, telling us it is protecting us, helping us, and fighting for us, but its true nature is always me-first-ness. That is why Jer. 17:9 says, *“The heart is deceitful above all things, and incurable—who can know it?”* The danger is not only that unbelievers are deceived, but that believers can also become blind to what is still active within.

Paul's words in Ephesians were written to believers, even to a mature congregation. That means this call is for us too: *“With respect to your former lifestyle, you are to lay aside the old self corrupted by its deceitful desires, be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self—created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness”* (Eph. 4:22-24). This is not a message of condemnation, but of loving exposure and invitation. The Lord reveals what is still old so that by the Spirit we can keep taking it off.

1. LAY ASIDE THE PSEUDO-YOU

Paul says, *“So lay aside lying and ‘each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,’ for we are members of one another”* (Eph. 4:25). This is more than avoiding obvious lies. It is a call to take off falsehood, to lay aside the pseudo-self, and to stop hiding behind appearances. The flesh often wants to protect image, conceal weakness, and manage how others see us. But the Spirit calls us to truth and authenticity.

Because we are members of one another, falsehood damages the Body of Believers. Healing cannot happen where truth is hidden. Yeshua is the Truth, and to be formed into His likeness means learning to walk in honesty, humility, and authenticity. This is not careless over-sharing or harshness. It is simply refusing the fake version of ourselves.

Challenge: Ask yourself where you may be managing appearances instead of walking in truth.

2. LAY ASIDE REACTIVE, DESTRUCTIVE ANGER

Paul writes, *“Be angry, yet do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on your anger”* (Eph. 4:26). The issue is not that anger exists, but that anger can quickly become reactive, explosive, and destructive. Jas. 1:19-20 says, *“Let every person be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger—for human anger doesn't produce the righteousness of God.”* The flesh wants to react, defend, and prove itself right.

But Psalm 4 gives the deeper heart of this command: *“Tremble, but do not sin! Search your heart while on your bed, and be silent”* (Ps. 4:5 TLV [4:4]). Instead of feeding anger or forcing resolution in the flesh, we are called to bring that turmoil to the Lord. The first battle is often not with the other person, but **within our own hearts**. The Spirit says: let the Lord deal with you first.

Challenge: When anger rises, pause before reacting and bring it to the Lord in silence and honesty.

3. LAY ASIDE SELFISHLY TAKING AND BE A GIVER

Paul says, *“The one who steals must steal no longer—instead he must work, doing something useful with his own hands, so he may have something to share with the one who has need”* (Eph. 4:28). At the

heart of stealing is me-first-ness. It is the mindset that says, “My wants matter more than your wellbeing.” Even if most believers are not literally stealing, the deeper issue still presses on us: are we living as takers or as givers?

The Lord’s desire is that we would reflect the generosity of Messiah. We are not just called to stop taking, but to become people who work, serve, and share. Yeshua did not come to get but to give Himself. So the question becomes: am I centered on what I can receive from others, or am I becoming someone who looks for ways to bless?

Challenge: Choose one practical way this week to give rather than take.

4. LAY ASIDE DESTRUCTIVE WORDS AND SPEAK LIFE

Paul says, “*Let no harmful word come out of your mouth, but only what is beneficial for building others up according to the need, so that it gives grace to those who hear it*” (Eph. 4:29). Harmful words are decaying words. They erode, weaken, and tear down. The flesh often wants to vent, criticize, or “say it how it is,” but the Spirit calls us to use words that build.

Yeshua’s words were always aimed at what was needed. Even when they were sharp, they were for good. Our words should do the same. They should strengthen, repair, and give grace. *Luke 6:45* reminds us, “*From the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.*” If destruction keeps coming out, then the Lord needs to deal with what is filling the heart.

Challenge: Before speaking today, ask whether your words will build up or tear down.

CONCLUSION

Paul says, “*Do not grieve the Ruach ha-Kodesh of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption*” (Eph. 4:30). The Holy Spirit is grieved when we cling to the false, feed our anger, live as takers, use our words to wound, and refuse to put off the old life. This is not merely about behavior adjustment. It is about whether we are yielding to the Spirit who is forming the life of Messiah in us. But this is also a message of grace. The same Spirit who is grieved by the flesh is the One who empowers transformation. Paul says, “*Get rid of all bitterness and rage and anger and quarreling and slander, along with all malice. Instead, be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving each other just as God in Messiah also forgave you*” (Eph. 4:31–32). Little by little, layer by layer, the old self comes off, and the life of Yeshua is revealed.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why is the picture of the flesh as a “sleeper cell” so helpful?
2. In what ways can “pseudo” show up in a believer’s life?
3. What does it look like to take anger to the Lord before taking it out on others?
4. Where are you most tempted to live as a taker instead of a giver?
5. How can your words become a greater source of grace and life to others?

CLOSING PRAYER:

Avinu Malkhenu, Our Father, Our King, search us and show us what is still old within us. Expose what is false, what is reactive, what is selfish, and what is destructive. We do not want to grieve Your Spirit. We want to walk in truth, humility, generosity, and love. Holy Spirit, help us to keep taking off the old self and to put on the life of Messiah. Form in us the character of Yeshua. Teach us to speak life, to surrender anger, to live as givers, and to walk in love. Little by little, let the old fall away and let Yeshua be seen more clearly in us.

B’Shem Yeshua, In the name of Yeshua, amen.