



## **Ephesians Week 10 - Ephesians**

**4:17-24** November 12, 2023 - Pastor

Rafael Aristy

A couple weeks ago Greg shared with us THE PRINCIPLE behind all that Paul started to share with the Ephesians in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of chapter 4, and now through the final few chapters of his letter. This principle is to guide the way they live. It seems a little out of order to us, but remember that the numbers (chapters and verses) are not part of the original letter. They are present to help us find our way around the book.

**Ephesians 5:1-2 NLT 1** *"Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. 2* Live a life filled with *love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God."*

What's the principle? IMITATE GOD.

Why? Because WE ARE his children! Our kids do certain things AND don't do other things because they are our kids (family values).

This is not normal for the original listeners. They lived in a fear-based religion, always trying to appease their gods. This God as their loving Father is a new concept to them.

- Why is this statement significant for us today?

- How does this reality affect how you live, and how you interact with God and others?

How do we imitate Him? Live a life FULL of LOVE, following the example of Jesus' love and sacrifice. In **chapter 3:18-19**, Paul prays that they may understand God's love...How wide, how long, how high, and deep is His love.

**You have to first understand AND possess His love before you can attempt to give it away to others. You can't give away what you don't have!**

- In what ways are you or are you not living a life filled with His love?

**Following Jesus' example and offering yourself...a SACRIFICE.** This is probably one of the most difficult things for us to do. We are not used to putting the needs and desires of others above ours. We want to know "what is in it for me and how will this

benefit me?". We want our needs met first. But Paul says to FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS!

Sacrifice begins with obedience...**MARK 14:36 NLT** "Abba, Father," he cried out, "everything is possible for you. Please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine."

Did it sound like Jesus wanted to go ahead with OFFERING HIMSELF? No! He wasn't looking forward to it, yet He surrendered His will to God's.

We need to follow his example..."Not my will, but Yours be done, God."

Jesus made a habit of obeying the Father, obeying the Father, obeying the Father...

- What does it look like for you to "offer yourself as a sacrifice"? What does it practically look like to sacrifice for Jesus?
- Where does it start and how does it grow?
- What hinders us in obeying the Father, and what can we do to overcome it?

So, with this PRINCIPLE in mind, IMITATE GOD and Follow the EXAMPLE of JESUS, let's go to today's text...

**Ephesians 4:25-32 NLT 25** "So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. **26** And "don't sin by letting anger control you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, **27** for anger gives a foothold to the devil. **28** If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need. **29** 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. **30** 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. **31** Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. **32** Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you."

Paul is addressing some issues. STOP lying...don't let anger CONTROL you...QUIT stealing...don't use foul/abusive language!

**Why is Paul highlighting these 4 issues?** I believe it is because **they threaten RELATIONSHIP and UNITY.** This unity he has been talking about for the past few chapters.

- Lies and stealing destroy TRUST
- Anger and abusive language poisons LOVE

Let's take a close look at ANGER and how it affects us and our unity.

**26** "And don't sin by letting anger control you. Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry..."

This is an important warning. This tells me that anger can cause me to sin. It can cause me to forget that I am child of God. It can cause me to lose my temper and do something I'll regret, do something that grieves the Lord.

When something controls you, it now determines your direction; it determines your actions!

- Anger will make you SAY things you wouldn't otherwise SAY
- Anger will make you DO things you wouldn't otherwise DO

### **Genesis 4:6-7 New English Translation**

Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why is your expression downcast? Is it not true that if you do what is right, you will be fine? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at the door. It desires to dominate you, but you must subdue it."

*Foothold: a secure position from which further progress may be made*

Cain was angry because the LORD had accepted his brother Abel's offering and not his. The Lord's warning to Cain of what would happen if he did not do what was right came to pass.

- Sin is right by the door of your heart, looking for an opportunity to go in and dominate you.
- Cain was angry and had the power to subdue sin but he did not.
- Instead he chose to kill his brother...**ANGER LED TO SIN!**

**V. 26 continued**, "Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry," Don't allow yourself to DWELL on your anger. **Dwelling on your anger could lead you to a place you don't want to be...giving the devil a foothold.**

- Can you relate? Do you find yourself "dwelling" things that made you angry?

**V. 27** "for anger gives a foothold to the devil." Foothold: a secure position from which further progress may be made

Anger provides Satan a secure position from which to try to **make progress, move forward, advance**, in getting you to lose your identity as a child of God, forget who you are, and behave in a way unlike Jesus. He will make progress in disturbing/destroying your emotional life taking you from ANGER to WRATH to BITTERNESS to ABUSIVE LANGUAGE .

- Can you see the progression? Have you ever lived this?

It is so much easier to use *foul or abusive language* when you're angry.

**V. 29a** 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.

- What is the natural outflow of anger? Where does it start to be visible?
- What does God desire for us to bring to people through our words instead?

You may ask, is it ok to curse as a Christian? The fact that you're asking the question tells me you probably already know the answer! Paul hits this hard in chapter 5, so we can discuss it more at that time.

Let's focus on what Paul says TO DO:

**V. 29b** "Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them."

Are you serious, Paul? Have you seen the people who I'm surrounded by? This is IMPOSSIBLE!

We blame others, but it's NOT about them, it is ALL about us! It is about **WHOSE I am, and who God says I am.** It's about **who I REPRESENT** when I open my mouth.

**Proverbs 18:21 (Amplified Bible)** "Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it and indulge it will eat its fruit and bear the consequences of their words."

What do you want to bring: death or life? Satan's words bring death. Jesus' words bring LIFE! There are consequences to YOUR words.

Key word here is *YOUR* words. This is not about "their" words...

- Oh, "they need to hear this..."
- Or say, "If they would only \_\_\_\_\_, I wouldn't say what I said."
- This is about YOUR WORDS, not theirs!
- You WILL bear the consequences of YOUR WORDS; they are responsible for theirs and bear the consequences of their words.

- Do I represent the kingdom of LIGHT or of DARKNESS?
- What kinds of consequences come to mind?

Sure, "their" words can be hurtful, their words could be abusive, and you may have experienced this.

- If that's you, ***I pray you hear the words of Jesus towards you; the words of the Spirit of God...*** "You are mine! You are worthy! You are forgiven! You are beautiful, wise, and valuable, and I love you!"

**Proverbs 18:20 NLT** "Wise words satisfy like a good meal; the right words bring satisfaction."

We want to use words that encourage, words that build up, words that foster UNITY, and not division. **Let's be a people known for bringing encouragement and unity by our words.**

- Think practically: how can your words bring unity and encouragement into situations in your life right now?

**V. 30** "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."

Some of you know what it's like to see someone you love live in a way that it's harmful to themselves and to others. **Holy Spirit is grieved when he sees us live in a way beneath God's intended purposes for us.**

- Imagine HIS grief when you say those words or act in a way that's incongruent with your God-given IDENTITY...

Paul is asking them, he is asking us, to REMEMBER who you are and is asking them to remember what he told them earlier in his letter:

**Ephesians 1:14 NLT** "The Spirit is God's guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him."

**Good News Family, REMEMBER who you are!**

Greg talked about the last couple of verses in our text when teaching us the principle of 5:1,2. He read 4:31-32 together with 5:1-2.

**V. 31** "Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. **32** Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you. **5:1-2 NLT 1** Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. **2** Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God."

**Stop all types of evil behavior, instead - be kind, be tenderhearted, and forgive.**

How? By imitating God - By following the example of Jesus... by loving sacrificially... remembering who you are!

What must we do?

1. Don't let anger control you. Don't give Satan a foothold.
2. Let your words be an encouragement to those that hear them.
3. Remember who you are: a child of God sealed with the Holy Spirit.

**We imitate God**, who gave his BEST for the sake of others... **We follow the example of Jesus**, who didn't want to surrender His life, but did it out of love and obedience...

- What is Holy Spirit saying to you?
- What action do you need to take this week?
- What sacrificial obedience is He asking of you?
- Who do you need to love better, with the help of the Holy Spirit?
- Are you treating your brothers and sisters in Christ in a way that brings unity?