

EPHESIANS

PUT OFF

Friday, September 25

Reading: Ephesians 4:25-32

Ephesians 4:30 *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. 32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*

Paul has already said that believers are to “put off your old self” when they “put on” the Lord Jesus Christ (4:22-24). Now he gives some examples of what he means by putting off the old sinful nature. When a person accepts Christ as Lord and Savior there must be a difference in their lives.

First, Paul mentions a difference in SPEECH (4:25, 29). Truth is to be the hallmark of the believer’s life. Lies only destroy the unity of the body of Christ. The word “unwholesome” in verse 29 was used for rotten fruit. Rotten, foul, abusive language should never come out of a believer’s mouth. Everything a believer says should be good and build up others instead of tearing them down.

Next, there should be a difference in EMOTIONS (4:26-27). Believers are not to get angry over wrongs done to them or hold a grudge. Like Jesus when He cleansed the temple, their anger is aimed at sin and not at the sinner. It is displayed to defend the righteousness of God and not avenge personal grievances. Holding on to anger only allows Satan the opportunity to gain a foothold in their lives.

The last example Paul mentions is a difference in BEHAVIOR (4:28, 31-32). Instead of causing trouble, a believer should focus on working hard so that they will be able to provide for their own needs as well as help with the needs of others. Verse 31 gives a grocery list of things believers must “put off.” Instead, their lives should be characterized by kindness, compassion, and forgiveness.

LESSON ONE: “Do Not Grieve the Holy Spirit.” Two things occur when Christians act like the sinful world around them. One is that Satan gets a foothold in our lives that can drag us far from the Lord. Second, we grieve the Holy Spirit who lives in us when we live like the world. The word “grieve” means to hurt, to afflict with sorrow, to offend. The Holy Spirit is offended when we are no different than the world around us. He mourns and sorrows over our sinful choice to ignore God’s righteousness. Is there something in your heart and life that you know offends the Holy Spirit? What are you going to do to root it out of your life?

LESSON TWO: “Just as in Christ God Forgave You.” What is our standard of forgiveness? Do we forgive only to hold it over someone’s head for the rest of their life? Do we hang on to grudges and hatred? Among Christians, the standard of forgiveness is Jesus Christ! He forgave us and cast our sins as far as the east is from the west (a never-ending line; see Psalm 103:11-12). Is there someone in your life you are having a hard time forgiving? Ask the Holy Spirit to remind you how much God has forgiven you and then extend that love.