

## *A Daily Devotional Study Guide*



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# **The Epistle to the EPHESIANS**



**WEEK 5**

## **“A Change of Clothes”**

**Study:** Ephesians 4:21-24

**Reading:** Matthew 12:43-45, Romans 6:1-14

**Memory:** Romans 8:26

**W**hen I was a pastor in Wisconsin, I lived in an area where there were many dairy farms. I never liked it when I went to visit someone and found out that the person I wanted to talk to was in the barn. I didn't necessarily mind the smell of the barn when talking to the person, but I knew that as soon as I was done I would have to go home, take a shower and change my clothes. The barn smell would attach itself to my clothes and body. The only way to get rid of it was to shower and change.

Today, we are going to read about the importance of removing the “clothes” of the world and putting on the “clothes” of righteousness.

### **What Does the Bible Say?**

The pagan world emphasized the fulfilling of the desires of the flesh, but Paul had taught the believers in Ephesus something different. The teaching about Christ involved self-control and holiness. Paul assumed that the believers in Ephesus had been taught this as well, knowing the foundation that He had laid while He was with them and the leaders that he had left in charge. The truth that Jesus was taught was one that challenged those who claim to be believers to take off the “old self.” Paul pictures the life of a believer before they met Christ as one filled with corruption and selfish desires. This does not mean they were all “wicked” people in the eyes of the world. Just as today, many of those involved in the world system are looked to and respected. Just because a person does not have Christ, does not mean they live without any moral values. Yet, without Christ, the motivation for most people in the world is often a very selfish one. The system of the world is corrupt and as they follow that system they are also corrupt. Paul had made it clear already in Ephesians that this didn't mean believers were better than unbelievers, only that believers were to be different than they were when they were unbelievers. They were to take off those old dirty clothes of selfishness

and worldliness (vs 21-22).

They were not only to remove the old way of living, but they were to replace it with something better. Righteous living is not something that begins with the way you physically look on the outside, but it is to begin in the mind. In order to live out a new life spiritually, one has to have their mind renewed by the Word of God. Basically, you have to think differently to live differently. Most people followed the way of the world simply because that is what everyone else did. You must make a choice to live differently and that choice needs to be directed by the Word of God (vs 23).

The new clothes that all believers are to put on will be the ones created by God and will reflect true righteousness and holiness. Instead of getting their direction on how to live from the world around them, believers are supposed to get their plans for life from the Word of God. It is the Word of God that is the source of righteousness (vs 24).

## **How Does this Apply to Me?**

Contrary to what many may think, following the Word of God doesn't result in a life of misery, but results in a life of joy. The world lives by giving into their passions and selfish desires. Though there is pleasure with this, the consequences for ungodly pleasure is often pain and suffering. Most of the things of the world produce emptiness and dissatisfaction where the things of God result in joy and fulfillment. Choose today to be continually in the Word of God, letting that Word renew your mind so that you will be putting off the old man and putting on the new. Though you are a new creation in Christ, you have been given the ability to make daily choices. Just as you choose what clothes to take off and put on each day, you can choose what things in your life to take off and what to put on. Choose to put on the righteousness of Christ and to continually remove the sinful desires of the flesh.

## **Suggestions for Prayer**

- \* *Ask the Lord to show you if you have been untruthful in any area of your life.*
- \* *Ask the Lord to give you strength to overcome anger.*
- \* *Thank the Lord for all the times He has forgiven you.*

What assumption was Paul making when he was writing this letter (v 21)?

Why is the teaching about Jesus so important when it comes to the teaching about morals (vs 21)?

*\*\*\*Many religions have placed a strong emphasis on living a moral life, but have not emphasized the transforming power of Jesus. This is where many people get the idea that living a Christian life is the same as choosing to live a life of misery. Jesus should be the reason that you choose to live a moral life.*

What are you to put off (vs 22)?

How would you define the "old self" (vs 22)?

What is your old self corrupted by (vs 22)?

How would you define lust (vs 22)?

*\*\*\*While lust is generally thought of in the area of sex, it is more than that. It is a desire to have something that you are not intended to have.*

How was your "old self" focused on deception (vs 22)?

*\*\*\*It is very easy to deceive yourself or deceive others. Much of the world system is based in deception and one of the main deceptions depict sin as being far more pleasurable than it really is.*

How can you have a renewed mind (vs 23)?

How is the renewing of your mind a result of the choices you make (vs 23)?

What are you to put on (vs 24)?

What is the difference between the new self and old self (vs 24)?

# “Anger Issues”

**Study:** Ephesians 4:25-27

**Reading:** Matthew 18:21-35, Colossians 3:1-11

**Memory:** Romans 8:26

**D**uring my freshman year at college, my parents switched churches. When I went home for Thanksgiving, my mom told me that a group of men from her church were playing football and I was welcome to play. I showed up at the field and had a good time. The older men were on one team and the younger guys were on another. During the course of the game, my team sent a receiver out to the sidelines like he was going off the field. We then snapped the ball and that receiver was wide open and scored a touchdown. There were two men on the other team that threw a fit about the play. They were yelling and upset with what we did. I could not believe how angry they became. When I asked one of my team mates who those men were, I expected them to say that they were unsaved men that were invited to play. Instead, I received the shocking news that one was the pastor and the other was the assistant pastor.

How many times do we discredit our witness for Jesus Christ when we fail to control our actions? We will be reminded today what it looks like to practically live as a Christian.

## What Does the Bible Say?

Our life should be an example of the truth. Many times we allow “little white” lies in our lives. We will tell someone the half truth instead of the whole truth, or we will deceive someone by the inflection of our voices. As Christians, we need to be above board in all things. It is not always easy to tell the truth. It may mean that you will get in trouble because you are honest. If that is the case, so be it. Christians should always desire to be right with God and others, even if it means you will face difficulties. In Matthew 5:37, Jesus told his followers to let their “yes” mean “yes” and “no” mean “no.” Believers display the character of God to the world and one of the things God wants all men to know about Him is that He tells the truth and keeps His Word (vs 25).

In verse 26, we are told that we should be careful that we don’t let our anger turn into sin. This reveals the fact that anger is an emotion. It is what we choose to do with that anger that makes the difference. If we choose to dwell on that anger and let it fester, it will often turn into bitterness or hatred. By declaring that we should not allow the sun to go down upon our wrath, Paul was inferring that we need to forgive and make the choice to not be angry. Because anger is a natural emotion, sometimes it may take a few seconds, minutes or even hours to work through the emotions we are feeling. The principle here is that you should not carry anger with you for an extended period of time. When we allow anger to continue, we are giving room for the devil to work. When we get over our anger quickly and move on, we will be far better off, but when we let our anger grow, the devil will use that in many ways to start destroying our lives and our testimonies (vs 26-27).

## How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you have a tendency to tell only half the truth? Do you deceive others to get your way or to get out of trouble? A Christians life should be an example of righteousness, not evil. You need to make up your mind that you will tell the truth in all that you do,

Are you angry at someone right now? Have you allowed anger to turn to bitterness? Is there someone you need to forgive or to ask for their forgiveness? It is so important that you do not allow anger to take control in your life. This same thing applies to many emotions that we face. There is nothing wrong with the emotion. That is how God created us, but when you choose to allow your emotions to control you, that is when the problem arises. One of the best things you can do is choose to deal with your anger as soon as possible.

## Suggestions for Prayer

- \* *Ask the Lord to give you strength to overcome anger.*
- \* *Thank the Lord for all the times He has forgiven you.*

## Thought for the day

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What should you put away (vs 25)?

What are areas where you can be tempted not to tell the truth?

What can you do in your life to help you speak the truth (vs 25)?

What do you think Paul was trying to say at the end of verse 25?

*\*\*\*In a general sense, we all need one another. We are all part of the human race. This probably is more of a picture of how believers should be honest with one another since we are part of the same body. If we hurt another body part with our dishonesty, we are only hurting ourselves.*

Describe how you think you can be angry and not sin (vs 26)?

Do you think there is a way that you can avoid anger in the first place? Explain.

What are things that tend to make you angry?

How do you deal with those situations?

What do you think the end of verse 26 means?

How do you think you can practically carry this out?

Why is it sometimes easier to be angry than it is to forgive?

What happens when you choose to hold on to anger (vs 27)?

How do you think this principle applies to other areas of your life?

*\*\*\*There are many things that you face in life that stir up your emotions. It often takes a little time to work through these things and think logically about them, but when you fail to do that, your emotions often snowball into something far bigger. By choosing to be quick to forgive and reasonably thinking through things, you will save yourself much trouble.*

## “Steal No More”

**Study:** Ephesians 4:28

**Reading:** 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15, Luke 19:1-10, Matthew 6:1-4, 19-21

**Memory:** Romans 8:26

**W**hen God called our family to step out in faith and start our guest house ministry to pastors and their families, we weren't fully sure what was going to happen, but we felt compelled to serve fellow ministers. We currently serve over 75 pastors and missionaries and their families each year and provide over \$50,000 dollars worth of services to these faithful ministers of God. We are not only able to provide housing through our guest house and RV guest house, but we provide them with canoe and kayak trips, boat rides, four wheeler rides, a zipline experience and many other small gestures of love and care. Our family has been blessed in incredible ways to help bless the pastoral families that God brings us each year.

Today, we are going to spend the whole devotional focused on one verse because I believe it is a very powerful verse when it comes to our practical Christian lives.

### What Does the Bible Say?

We all know that it is wrong to steal. Many times though, we do it without thinking about it. We take something small from school or work, and we think nothing of making it our own. Stealing of any kind is wrong, whether it is a paperclip or a large sum of money. If it is not ours, and we do not have permission, we should not take it.

Stealing is contrasted with working in verse 28. We should work for what we get. Paul goes beyond the idea of working just to provide for our own needs. He points out something that is easy to overlook. The reason why we should work is not just to provide for ourselves and save up money to buy things that we want. Verse 28 tells us that one of the reasons we should work is to earn money so we can give it to other people. This is something that is foreign to our society, but it is something that the Bible teaches. Everyone of us should be willing givers. Not only to church, but to those who are in need.

If we really understand the point that this verse is getting across, it will change our whole view on money. Our minds should be in the continual state of unselfishness. We should be thinking about how we can help others out on a regular basis. Many times this type of help will come in the form of financial assistance. Instead of thinking about how we can get ahead or gain an advantage for ourselves, we need to think of ways that we can use what we have been given to help others.

One of the great results of following the principle given in this verse will be great joy. When you only think of yourself and how you can get ahead you will find some pleasure in the things you have, but that pleasure will often be accompanied by worry and guilt. When you sacrifice and give to others, the result will be joy and peace, which are far better for you.

## **How Does this Apply to Me?**

Are you a taker or a giver? This verse challenges believers to stop taking, especially taking things that don't belong to you, and start giving. Not only will you be a great example of Christ when you do this, but you will also be greatly blessed when you step out in faith and give to others in need. In many cases, the more you bless others, the more God will bless you so that you can have more to give to others. Though the emphasis in this verse is clearly on money, you can give much more than money to others. The end result will be a life that is far more full than if you simply choose to consume all God has provided for yourself.

## **Suggestions for Prayer**

- \* *Ask God if there are any areas in your life where you have been stealing from others.*
- \* *Ask God to show you what He wants you to do with your money.*

## **Thought for the day**

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Who does Paul address in verse 28?

What are ways that you have stolen something? This could be time, money, objects or even attention.

What is one of the reasons God has given you a job or the finances you have (vs 28)?

How are you giving to those around you who are in need?

Why is this sometimes a difficult verse to practice?

### **Matthew 6:1-4**

What did Jesus warn about (vs 1)?

How were the people in the days of Jesus giving to be seen of men (vs 2)?

What did Jesus say they receive when they give to be praised of men (vs 2)?

How did Jesus say you should give (vs 3)?

What do you think He meant by this?

What will happen when you give in secret (vs 4)?

### **Matthew 6:19-21**

What did Jesus say you should not do with your earthly treasures (vs 19)?

Why not?

What should you do with your treasure (vs 20)?

What do you think this looks like?

What powerful proclamation did Jesus make in verse 21? Why is this such a powerful and true statement?

# ***“I Am a Butterball”***

**Study:** Ephesians 4:29-30

**Reading:** James 3:1-13, Mark 7:14-23

**Memory:** Romans 8:26

**W**hen I was in seventh grade I played on my school’s junior high basketball team. After one game, one of my brother’s friends told me that I looked like a “butterball” on the basketball court. Little did he know how much those words would affect me. I did not want to be called something like that ever again. I put up a piece of paper in my room that would remind me to exercise every day. All I had written on that piece of paper were the words “I AM A BUTTERBALL.” I kept that piece of paper up in my room for quite some time and constantly worked hard to loose weight. As I look back, I am just amazed at the affect of those four little words.

Many times we do not realize the affect our words have on other people. Sometimes we hurt others by saying mean things jokingly, and sometimes we just say some rotten things to others. It is vitally important that we gain a proper understanding of the way God wants us to use our words. We live in a culture that constantly knocks others down, so we as Christians should do the opposite and seek to build others up.

## **What Does the Bible Say?**

Paul continued to give practical doctrine that we as Christians should apply to our everyday lives. Controlling what we say is extremely difficult, but also extremely important. Many times, we are judged by an unsaved world from what comes out of our mouths. In Mark 12:34, Jesus said that what comes out of our lips is what is truly in our hearts. The word “corrupt” in verse 29 was used in reference to something that is rotten, like fruit. We should not let anything rotten come from our lips.

There are two things that our speech should do. One of the greatest things you can do with your words is build others up. Your words have the great possibility of building others up in a powerful way or they have the ability to tear others down. Most of the time it is easier for us to say something bad about people than to say something good about them.

The second things that you should do with your words is to use them to “give grace” to others. You can be a great blessing to those whom you talk to. The idea hear presents talking to others with an attitude of loving kindness. When we degrade others, it displays our pride. But, when we build others, it displays our humility. Our speech is an area where we as Christians need to be on guard because we reveal who we are to others by the words that come out of our mouths (vs 29).

Rotten speech always grieves the Holy Spirit. Verse 30 tells us that through salvation the Holy Spirit dwells inside of us. Paul mentioned that we are sealed with the Holy Spirit. He used this term earlier in the book to remind us that we are special children of God set apart for His use. The word “grieve” basically means to hurt emotionally, to disappoint, to break someones heart. When we use our toungue for putting others down instead of building them up, it breaks the very heart of God (vs 30).

## **How Does this Apply to Me?**

Using your tongue improperly is a big deal. Many times it is easy for you to underestimate the affect that your words have on others. Do you have a tendency to put others down? Are you characterized by building others up with your words? You can make a great difference in the life of others and be an outstanding example for Jesus Christ if you will constantly strive to build others up instead of tearing them down. You have heard, “If you can’t say something nice, don’t say anything at all.” That is very true, but it can be taken a step further. Your attitude should be “You should always try to say something nice even if you don’t want to say any thing at all.” The power to do this can only come as you continually yield to the Holy Spirit.

## **Suggestions for Prayer**

\* *Ask God to show you where your speech has not been pleasing to Him, and seek forgiveness for those times.*

## **Thought for the day**

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What should not come out of your mouth (vs 29)?

What do you think corrupt talking is (vs 29)?

Why do you think it is often easier to say negative things than it is to say positive things?

What should come out of your mouth (vs 29)?

What do you think it means to build others up with your words?

How can your words give grace to those who hear them (vs 29)?

What are ways you have used your words in the past to tear others down?

What are ways you have used your words to build others up?

What are some practical steps you can take to help yourself become a builder rather than a destroyer when it comes to your words?

What are you not to do (vs 30)?

What do you think it means to grieve the Holy Spirit?

What are ways that you can grieve the Holy Spirit?

*\*\*\*This reminder was given right between teaching about the words you use and your attitude towards others.*

Why do you think Paul reminded the believers they were sealed with the Holy Spirit?

*\*\*\*This is most likely a reminder that believers have the Holy Spirit living inside of them and that the Holy Spirit is a participant in whatever you are involved in. When you choose to sin, you are dragging the Holy Spirit into that sin with you.*

## “Forgive”

**Study:** Ephesians 4:31-32

**Reading:** Matthew 18:15-19, Matthew 5:38-48

**Memory:** Romans 8:26

In 1956 five missionaries were traveling to South America to present the gospel to the Auca Indians. This was a tribe that had never heard the gospel before. Shortly after they landed their plane on a narrow strip in the river, they were ambushed by the Aucan people. All five of the missionaries were killed. You would expect the wives of those missionaries to be filled with bitterness and hatred. Yet one of the widows, Elisabeth Elliot, displayed one of the greatest examples of forgiveness. After the death of her husband, she was determined to share the gospel with those who killed her husband. Eventually, she had the opportunity and many of them were led to the Lord through her ministry. For a number of years, she even lived among the same people that killed her husband.

True forgiveness is one of the things that sets Christians apart from the world. We have the ability to forgive others because Christ forgave us.

### What Does the Bible Say?

Paul closed out his teaching on practical issues in the Christian’s life by giving two of the most important principles for dealing with others. Paul used six different terms in verse 31 to cover all facet of a negative attitude that should be removed from the life of a believer. The continual negative thoughts towards others and the words that express those thoughts should not be present in the life of a believer. In verse 26 we were told not to let the emotion of anger turn into something more. Verse 31 explains the things that happen when we choose not to put the emotion of anger to the side. When anger is not dealt with, it turns to bitterness and that thought often turns into action with our deeds and the way we use our words. Christians are to follow the example of Christ who asked God to forgive those who were putting Him to death. Remember that Paul was using the idea of taking off the old clothes of

the world. The world is angry, slanderous and vengeful. Believers should not clothe themselves in those things (vs 31).

Instead, believers are to put on the opposite. Believers should be known for their kindness. Scripture makes it clear that this kindness should be displayed towards all men, believers and non-believers. You would think that kindness towards believers would be easier, but sometimes it is fellow believers that bear the brunt of our anger. We know we are supposed to love the world and many times we expect to be hurt from the world, but when fellow believers hurt us, or family members for that matter, that is where kindness is often very difficult.

The way to be kind is to have a tender heart. It is very easy to become hard hearted like the world around you and let the hurt caused by others to harden your heart even more. When you have a tender heart, you are choosing to trust that God is in control and are choosing to love others like Christ loved you. That love of Christ was displayed in the way that He chose to forgive you. Jesus gave a great illustration of this in Matthew 18 when He reminded His followers that God had forgiven them of a greater debt than the debt owed to them by their fellow man. Christ is the supreme example of love and forgiveness and we need to follow that example.

## **How Does this Apply to Me?**

How kind are you? Do you constantly get in little scuffles with other people? Do you have any negative feelings for someone right now? Are you known as a kind person? Are you known as a forgiving person? You need to be an example of Christ. This can be done by daily applying these two verses to your life. Maybe someone has done something terrible to you and you are angry and bitter at them. In some cases, you may need to go to that person and ask their forgiveness for your wrong attitude towards them. It does not matter if they do not ask you for forgiveness for their terrible act, you need to forgive them. Take time today to compare these verses to your life. What is your life filled with, anger or kindness?

## **Suggestions for Prayer**

- \* *Ask God to help you be a kind and forgiving person.*
- \* *Thank God for forgiving you of all your sins.*

List the six negative attitudes found in chapter 6 and describe what each one means. Then describe how you have been tempted to have this type of attitude in your life (vs 31).

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

What do you think it looks like to be kind to each other (vs 32)?

Why do you think showing kindness to friends, family and fellow believers who have hurt you is so difficult?

What does it mean to be tenderhearted (vs 32)?

How is it a choice to be tenderhearted?

What does it mean to forgive others (vs 32)?

Why is forgiveness so important?

Why is Christ given as the prime example of forgiveness (vs 32)?

Why is forgiveness so hard?



*Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. 3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. 5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. 6 For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. 7 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. 8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. 10 But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you. 12 So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" 16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, In 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. 18 Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later. 19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. 23 And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? 25 Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. 26 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.*