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# The Summation of All Things in Christ

Studies in Ephesians with a Local Church Emphasis

LESSON XCVIII : PRACTICAL INJUNCTIONS ABOUT THE OLD AND NEW LIFE (4:25-5:2)

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## *Ephesians 4:25 ~ 5:2 —*

*Wherfore put away lying and speake every man truth vnto his neighbour for as moche as we are members one of another. Be angrye but synne not let not the sonne go doune apon your wrathe nether geue place vnto the backbyter. Let him that stole steale no moare but let him rather labour with his hondes some good thinge that he maye have to geve vnto him that nedeth. Let no filthy comunicacion procede out of youre mouthes: but that whych is good to edefye with all when nede ys: that it maye have faveour with the hearers. And greve not the holy sprete of God by whome ye are sealed vnto the daye of redempcion. Let all bitternes fearsnes and wrath rorynge and cursyd speakyng be put awaye from you with all maliciousnes. Be ye courteouse one to another and mercifull forgevyng one another even as god for Christes sake forgave you. Be ye folowers of god as dere children and walke in love even as Christ loved vs and gave him silfe for vs an offeryng and a sacrifice of a swete saver to god. (Tyndale's New Testament, 1534)*

*Wherefore cast off lying, and speake euery man truth vnto his neighbour: for we are members one of another. Bee angrye, but sinne not: let not the sunne goe doune vpon your wrath, Neither giue place to the deuill. Let him that stole, steale no more: but let him rather labour, and worke with his handes the thing which is good, that hee may haue to giue vnto him that needeth. Let no corrupt comunication proceed out of your mouths: but that which is good, to ye vse of edifying, that it may minister grace vnto the hearers. And grieue not the holy Spirit of God, by whom ye are sealed vnto ye day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and anger, and wrath, crying, and euill speaking be put away from you, with all maliciousnesse. Be ye courteous one to another, and tender hearted, freely forgiuing one another, euen as God for Christes sake, freely forgauē you. Bee yee therefore followers of God, as deare children, And walke in loue, euen as Christ hath loued vs, and hath giuen himselfe for vs, to be an offering and a sacrifice of a sweete smelling sauour to God. (Geneva Bible, 1599)*

*Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. (King James Version, 1769)*

*Wherefore, putting away the lying, speak truth each with his neighbour, because we are members one of another; be angry and do not sin; let not the sun go down upon your wrath, neither give place to the devil; whoso is stealing let him no more steal, but rather let him labour, working the thing that is good with the hands, that he may have to impart to him having need. Let no corrupt word out of your mouth go forth, but what is good unto the needful building up, that it may give grace to the hearers; and make not sorrowful the Holy Spirit of God, in which ye were sealed to a day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice, and become one to another kind, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, according as also God in Christ did forgive you. Become, then, followers of God, as children beloved, and walk in love, as also the Christ did love us, and did give himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odour of a sweet smell, (Young's Literal Translation, 1898)*

*Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need. Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and railing, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you. Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odour of a sweet smell. (Revised Version, 1885)*

*Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbor: for we are members one of another. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need. Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath,*

*and anger, and clamor, and railing, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you. Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odor of a sweet smell. (American Standard Version, 1901)*

*Therefore, putting away falsehood, let every one speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil. Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his hands, so that he may be able to give to those in need. Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for edifying, as fits the occasion, that it may impart grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (Revised Standard Version, 1952)*

*Wherefore, having put off the lie once for all, be speaking truth each with his neighbor, because we are members belonging to one another. Be constantly angry with a righteous indignation, and stop sinning. Do not allow the sun to go down upon your irritated, exasperated, embittered anger. And stop giving an occasion for acting [opportunity] to the devil. The one who is stealing, let him no longer be stealing, but rather let him be laboring, working with his own hands that which is good, in order that he may be having that wherewith to be sharing with the one who is having need. Every word that is rotten and unfit for use, out of your mouth let it not be proceeding, but whatever is good, suitable for edification with respect to the need, in order that it may impart grace to the hearers. And stop grieving the Spirit, the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed with a view to the day of redemption. All manner of harshness and violent outbreaks of wrath and anger and brawling and slanderous speech, let it be put away from you together with all manner of malice. And be becoming kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other even as and just as also God in Christ forgave you. Be becoming therefore imitators of God, as children beloved, and be ordering your behavior within the sphere of love, even as Christ also loved you and gave himself up in our behalf and in our stead as an offering and a sacrifice to God for an aroma of a sweet smell. (Kenneth Wuest's Expanded Translation, 1961)*

*Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another. "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil. Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you. Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. (New King James Version, 1982)*

*Therefore, laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE of you WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, for we are members of one another. BE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity. He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need. Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. (New American Standard Version, 1995)*

*Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. "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. Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need. 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. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (New International Version, 2011)*

*Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil. Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (English Standard Version, 2016)*



- Verse 25 begins with the word *‘therefore’* which connects it to the preceding paragraph as Paul moves from more general to more specific exhortations.
- The negative (4:17-19) and positive (4:20-24) notions just written are continued as Paul gives negative and then positive injunctions in 4:25-5:2, along with motivational statements, the negative relating to *‘putting off the old person’* and the positive relating to *‘putting on the new person’*. In fact, the word translated *‘putting away’* in 4:25 is a form of the same word used for *‘to put off’* in 4:22 and *‘truth’* relates back verbally to 4:24 as well.
- The call to be *‘imitators of God’* in 5:1 is inherent in the thought that the life of the new creation is one that is patterned after God’s (4:24).
- The summary *‘walk in love’* (5:2) finds its foundation in 4:1-16 where love itself is set forth as the essential ingredient in the life of our churches (cf. 4:2, 15, 16). Also emphasized is the notion of the body and how the Lord uses each of those within His body for the growth of the body (4:16) which finds its parallel in us being members of one another (4:25) and the importance of building up one another (4:29).
- Our being sealed by the Holy Spirit for the day of redemption (4:30) takes us back to the beginning *berakah* (1:13, 14) while us being forgiven in Christ (4:32) may recall 1:7.
- Looking ahead: the exhortations by means of contrasting patterns of behavior continues throughout 5:3-20. *‘Walking’* (5:2) is again picked up in 5:8, 15; the example of Christ’s love (5:2) is an important part of the passage on marriage (5:25-28), and the devil (4:27) is prominent in the discussion of the believers’ spiritual battle (6:16; see also 2:2).

**GENERAL EXHORTATIONS WITH NO PARTICULAR ISSUE IS IN MIND** — In contrast with such epistles as 1 Corinthians, Paul’s list is very general and not directed towards any particular issue. But this being so, the list may give us a better picture of the general state of the churches at this time. [Best, 445] “The nature of the pericope’s paraenesis, with its traditional material of general applicability, means that inferences which move directly from individual exhortations to the supposed setting of the recipients are to be avoided. It should not be assumed, for example, on the basis of 4:25, 28 that [Paul] knows specifically that there are thieves and liars amongst his readers who need to be confronted.” [Lincoln, 299]

**NO REAL ORDER** — “Their order does not appear to follow any logical development, and this is true of the remaining material in the paragraph. They are not linked together with catchwords as in Mk 9.33-50; catchwords are more characteristic of oral tradition than written. *They are held together by their common theme, the treatment of fellow believers.*” [Best, 444]

**‘RULES OF CONDUCT’ COMMON IN THE FIRST CENTURY** — These *‘rules of conduct in daily life’* are not unique to Christianity but commonly appear in Judaism and even pagan Greco-Roman literature. Similar lists of vices / virtues and collections of ‘sentences’ (frequently as commands) appear among Hellenistic philosophers such as Democritus, Isocrates, Diogenes Laertius and Seneca, and had been adopted by Hellenistic Judaism (e.g., Philo). Orthodox Judaism had its Holiness Code of Lev 18, 19, its list of blessings and curses in Deut 27-30, the ‘Two Way’ pattern, Jewish proselyte catechisms, the Dead Sea Scrolls. [Best, 444; Lincoln, 295, 297, 314f; O’Brien, 335]

**SIMILAR TO OTHER PASSAGES** — Many have compared these verses with Col 3:8, 12-14. The differences include five vices found in Col 3:8-14 compared with only four in Eph 4:25-5:2; only *‘foul talk’* is missing (but see Eph 5:4) and Ephesians has added *‘bitterness’* and *‘shouting.’* Paul used five nouns as virtues in Col 3:12 while in Eph 4:32 he only used two and used them as an adjective. [Best, 445; the following chart is from Lincoln, 295f]

<i>Ephesians</i>	<i>Colossians</i>
<i>‘Therefore, putting away lying’</i> (4:25)	<i>‘But now you yourselves are to put off all these... Do not lie to one another, ’</i> (3:8,9)
<i>‘Be angry, and do not sin’</i> (4:26)	<i>‘anger’</i> (3:8)
<i>‘Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth’</i> (4:29)	<i>‘filthy language out of your mouth’</i> (3:8)
<i>‘Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.’</i> (4:31)	<i>‘anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy’</i> (3:8)
<i>‘And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.’</i> (4:32)	<i>‘put on ... kindness, humility, meekness ... forgiving one another ... even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do’</i> (3:13,14)
<i>‘as dear children’</i> (5:1)	<i>‘as the elect of God, holy and beloved’</i> (3:12)
<i>‘And walk in love’</i> (5:2)	<i>‘But above all these things put on love’</i> (3:14)



**GOOD SUMMATION / OVERVIEW OF THESE VERSES** — Once again, please forgive the long quote but I thought this too good to separate. This comes from Clinton Arnold's commentary on Ephesians, pp. 312ff.

**“Theology in Application** — This section consists of a series of moral exhortations that unpack what it means to ‘walk worthily’ (4:1), especially in the context of living together in community. These appeals also explain what it means to take off the old self and put on the new (4:22 - 24). Throughout this section, Paul does far more than simply give moral exhortations. He grounds these exhortations in theology in a way that provides perspective, inspiration, and a pattern to follow. Below are some of the key elements of the way he applies theology to life.

**“Change Expected on the Basis of Our New identity in Christ** — *Change is not only possible, but expected, on the basis of our new identity in Christ.* The introductory conjunction (dio) roots this passage in the new identity of the believer that Paul has laid out in the previous passage (4:22 -24). This connection makes it clear that this new identity — a new self created in the likeness of God in righteousness and holiness of truth — is the basis for the transformation that should take place in the lives of believers.

“Interspersed throughout this passage are a number of additional reasons explaining how and why believers should change their attitudes and behaviors. These reasons all express various aspects of this new identity. They also reveal the Trinitarian dimensions of the new identity. There are five aspects that the passage touches on:

**“1. We are dearly loved.** Paul stresses that believers are dearly loved by the Father and by the Son (5:1- 2). God demonstrated his love by giving his Son (see also Rom 5:8) and Christ has shown us his love by his willing self-sacrifice on our behalf. This fact should be a significant motivation for us to love one another.

**“2. We are forgiven.** Paul declares that God has forgiven us in Christ (4:32b; see also 1:7). This truth will motivate us to forgive one another.

**“3. The Holy Spirit lives in us.** Because of the presence of the Spirit in our lives, a truth that Paul has emphasized earlier (1:13, 17; 2:18, 22; 3:16; 4:3, 4, 23), we are divinely assisted in the process of renewal. Nevertheless, if we choose not to cooperate with the Spirit, the Spirit does not leave us but is deeply grieved (4:30). The reality of the personhood of the Spirit and his presence with us should motivate us and empower us to develop holy lives.

**“4. We have a future with God.** The Spirit is a seal guaranteeing our future redemption in the consummation of the ages (4:30; see also 1:10, 13 —14). This fact should not only give us a feeling of profound security, but motivate us to align ourselves with the purposes of God.

**“5. We are joined to one another in the body of Christ.** Paul here reiterates the fact that every believer is an integral part of [their] community of believers (4:25c). The body of Christ imagery has been prominent in this letter (see 1:23; 2:16; 3:6; 4:4, 12, 16; 5:23, 30). This truth not only should help us to correct wrong attitudes, but should motivate us to exercise the utmost of caution in how we talk to each other. Paul encourages the expression of words that build up and give grace (4:29). He likewise urges believers to work hard so that they can help brothers and sisters who have material needs.

**“Love as the Epitome of Virtues** — *Love — defined by the example of Christ — is the epitome of all the virtues.* The most significant virtue Paul commends is love (5:2). If believers truly love one another, none of the vices he mentions will be a problem and all of the other virtues will naturally be practiced.

“Many Bible teachers over the years have tried to show the distinctiveness of the Christian form of love by contrasting three Greek words — *eros, philia*, and *agape* — and elevating *agape* as the highest form of love known in the Greek language. Although there is some measure of truth to this (except for the fact that the verbs *phileo* and *agapaii* are sometimes used interchangeably), it diminishes the true and most important expression of what love is all about in Christianity. It is not so much the word but the example. The willingness of Christ to sacrifice his own life for us on the cross is the definition of what Christian love is all about. At the same time, the Father's affection for us that prompted him to give up his own Son defines what it means to love.

**“Corruption Needs to be Rooted Out** — *There is extensive corruption in our hearts that needs to be rooted out.* In the various vices Paul mentions, many reflect aspects of the inner corruption that needs to be eliminated and replaced with Godlike attitudes. Some of these feelings and dispositions include bitterness, anger, and rage (4:26, 31). Covetousness and greed are present among those who face the temptation to steal (4:28), and deceit is in the hearts of those who struggle with lying (4:25). Since ‘filthy’ talk (4:29) likely includes sexual innuendo, this suggests the presence of lust.

“All of these rotten and corrupt tendencies, present to one degree or another in the hearts of Christians, need to be progressively eradicated. Paul wants these base attitudes to be replaced by attributes that are characteristic of their new family identity. This includes the development of tenderheartedness (4:32), kindness (4:32), and an ability to control one's anger — both in terms of not letting anger persist and avoiding anger for the wrong reasons (such as an injured pride). Above all, love is the most important virtue to emulate.

**“How We Talk Is Important for Community Life** — *Giving attention to how we talk to each other is important for community life.* Paul places an overt emphasis on speech ethics in this passage. This is consistent with his emphasis on living in unity with which he began the chapter: ‘making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace’ (4:3).

Consequently, he urges believers to dispense with such harmful practices as lying, inappropriate anger, filthy talk, yelling, and saying anything at all that could be hurtful to another person.

**“The Spiritual Dimension to Life — *There is a strongly spiritual dimension to life.*** In this passage, Paul contrasts the work of an evil spirit with the role of the Holy Spirit. He has already indicated that the Holy Spirit is God’s empowering presence who is the transforming agent of renewal (3:16; 4:23). Now he clarifies that willfully choosing to live corruptly grieves the person of the Spirit, who indwells our lives.

“But there is an additional dangerous spiritual implication to willfully continuing to practice sinful behaviors and not cooperating with the Spirit in the process of renewal. Paul warns that such a choice combined with its attendant behavior makes a person susceptible to a greater degree of influence by the devil, or perhaps more precisely, one of his spirit emissaries (4:27). The context speaks specifically of allowing anger to persist too long as putting one in a place of vulnerability of an intensified attack. But the same principle likely holds true with the practice of other kinds of vices.

“In saying this, Paul is not saying that the believer will now need an exorcism or that the person is now no longer responsible for his or her actions. He is merely saying that Satan will exploit a situation whenever he can to gain a stronger level of influence in a person’s life in his efforts to re–enslave them in a life of sin. It is tantamount to envisioning Satan as standing ready with a container of gasoline that he wants to pour on the fire of any uncontrolled passion to cause it to flame out of control.” [Arnold, 312ff]