

Lifestyle Changes

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[0 : 00] In Ephesians chapter 4, Ephesians chapter 4 verse 25 through 29. I want you to follow along in your Bible as I read this passage, and then I would ask that you join me in prayer as we come together and ask the work of the Spirit of God in giving to us hearts that are attentive to us.

Intentive, humble, teachable. Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each 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 mouth, but only such as is good for building up as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

Let us pray. Father God, this morning we need your help.

[1 : 29] I need your help to preach the Scriptures accurately, and by your grace and your enabling to allow the Word to be applied practically.

Father God, this morning we need your help to pray. That those who are here today and know the Lord Jesus Christ would have the Word of God form and shape the things they say and the things they think.

That all of us together would be better illustrations of the power of the cross and the power of salvation.

Father, we also pray for those who are here among us today that do not know Christ, who perhaps know of Him in an intellectual sense.

They know the facts or they've heard His name, but they do not have the sweet personal relationship that comes because of grace, that first draws them to see the absolute moral bankruptcy of their soul, the darkness of their heart, and then draws them to cry out and ask for salvation.

[2 : 51] We pray, Father, that all that takes place this morning would cause us to grow in our affection for the Lord Jesus Christ. And we ask this because of Him.

Amen. Amen. One of the lessons that I learned over the years in ministry is that conversion is really more than a set of rules. The wonder and the power of God in transforming a person's life by conversion is something that is spectacular.

In fact, it tells us in the book of Luke that angels do what? What do the angels do when a person is genuinely converted? What do they do? They get happy. They rejoice. I can't help but think back to the book of Job where it talks about the fact that as angels watched God in creation and they saw Him forming the stars and all the miraculous things that He did, they couldn't contain themselves. They broke out in just absolute praise and worship as they saw the power of God at play. And it tells us that when genuine conversion takes place in a person's life that it is in every sense as spectacular and wonderful an issue as creation was, so you can understand that angels would rejoice.

What we're looking at actually this morning in Ephesians chapter 4 is a practical application to the matter of what conversion really is.

[4 : 19] Paul took three chapters to teach us the glory of God in conversion, explaining to us the miraculous, the undeniable, amazing fact that He would take people who are dead in trespasses and sin, miserably broken by Satan, and He would transform them.

And in chapter 4, 5, and 6, Paul then begins to lay out very carefully and thoughtfully a clear picture of what is so spectacular and evident about conversion.

The fact of the matter is, is that conversion changes us on the inside. Isn't that right? It says, if any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creator.

You're different. And so it's practical and it's understandable that having made this argument for the unbelievable glory of God in salvation, Paul then would take the time to explain what salvation actually produces in a person's life.

And we're looking at the practical application of, so if a person's converted, what really changes about them? And we're going to be looking at several things here in the passage, and we will work our way through it to kind of get a better understanding about what really is different about a person who really knows Christ.

[5 : 44] Verse 25, Therefore, having put away falsehood, and that idea of putting away falsehood kind of takes us back just a little bit to what we studied last week where it talked about the fact that the believer puts off the old man and puts on the new man.

His past, his behavior from prior to his conversion, that's the old, that's the way he used to be. Now he is something different, and he's in the process of putting on those characteristics that reflect the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so here is Paul, and he says, listen, we move from lying to being truthful. Now you may wonder why Paul starts out with lying. It isn't the first of the Ten Commandments.

It isn't the first with promise. But here is Paul talking about the fact that conversion makes us radically different, and he starts out dealing with the matter of lying.

And probably most of us are sitting here thinking to ourselves, well, that's not the one I have the most problem with. The truth of the matter is that lying is something that is far more pervasive than we may think.

[6 : 54] In fact, let me rephrase this. Lying is far more pervasive in your life than you think, and lying is more pervasive in my life than I may think.

And so when the Spirit of God says to me, Tim Kenoyer, you need to work at not lying, you need to think very carefully, all right? Well, that's good for them? No, no, no, it's also good for me.

And we need to think very carefully about what is actually involved in lying and its application to our lives. We understand about people lying.

You listen to the news. Depending on which channel you go to, what do you immediately think when you hear the news? You're always thinking that they're giving their spin. That's a very polite way of talking about manipulating the truth for their particular side or their preference.

Isn't that right? Have you ever heard the saying that statistics never lie, but liars use statistics? It's amazing how adept we can be at framing an argument or forming the idea that we want to communicate and then casting it out there and thinking, well, Lee, we pulled that off.

[8 : 07] I also get a chuckle out of those people who in their brassy arrogance will make statements like this, well, at least I never lie. Have you ever heard anybody like that? At least I never lie.

That person is a lie walking because when they say I never lie, what they're really saying is that I use the truth to manipulate the situation to serve myself.

And when I dump on you or when I smack you like I do and I kind of hide behind that argument of, hey, at least I never lie, I'm all about me. And my dark, nasty little heart is taking advantage of using a portion of the truth to use it to my advantage.

Well, I want to stop and ask ourselves the question, why does Paul start with lying? I want you to think here just for a moment and understand this truth.

Our mouth is the primary advertisement of our character. Our mouth is the primary advertisement of our character.

[9 : 18] And Paul puts what comes out of our mouth as the first thing on the list of things that are to be different because we've been converted by the cross.

Paul wants us to understand that what comes out of the mouth of the believer, listen to me carefully, is to be different. Isn't that right? So what happened after you got saved?

Well, I started speaking differently. Right? If God has the power to save, should He make a change in your tongue?

And the answer from all of God's people is, you betcha. In fact, if there is no evidence of a change from what is happening on your tongue, you better go back and ask the Father, what's going on here?

Now, am I suggesting that all of it changes immediately? And what is the answer? No. But here's the truth. There should be a difference in what comes out of your mouth. A lying Christian, I want you to understand this, insults the Father and raises a question of pedigree.

[10:43] A lying Christian insults the Father and raises a question of pedigree. Now, why would I say pedigree? Because here's the deal. Jesus, when He was speaking about Satan, He said, Satan is the...

What? Does anybody remember? He is the father of lies, and it goes on to say this, and He really speaks according to His character. Satan just lies because that's who he is. He's a liar. And when he opens his mouth, guess what comes out? Just the standard old thing. It's a lie. As a side note, don't go huffing and puffing out of here deciding that what you're going to do is be unkind and brutal with your truth and then hide behind the fact that you're not a person who lies anymore.

I want to remind you of what it says in verse 15. It says this, Rather speaking the truth in what? In love. We're to speak the truth in love. Now, we do come to a very interesting statement in this matter of lying and the matter of speaking the truth because we recognize here that wholesome body life depends on loving truthfulness.

Mark what it says in verse 25. Put away lying, falsehood. Let each of you speak truth with his what? His neighbor. Neighbor isn't close enough and he says this, For we are members one of another.

[12:12] There is a far greater connectedness in the thinking of the apostle than most of us when it comes to the matter of the way we speak to each other.

As I was thinking about this today, earlier in the morning, I was thinking of how the physical body, thankfully, in my case, the brain kind of is all connected and controls everything else, but as a result of that interconnection, my right hand and my left hand have some moderate sensitivity to one another and they behave according to that sensitivity.

Just imagine that the right hand gets a little irritated with something that the left hand does. And so the right hand picks up a hammer and says, Well, I'm going to be truthful with you and since you messed up, I'm going to just give you a little gentle love tap right there on the digit so you get the memo that this is not acceptable.

You know, it's a, Ah! What is going on? Paul says, Listen, think about this. He says, You are to be truthful with one another because you are connected.

One of the sadder things that I have had to deal with, one of the, we're in the process, we're searching for a family youth pastor. And I really didn't realize how unusual it is for pastors to stay.

[13:54] Now, I've had more men, I can't believe you've stayed, I can't believe you've stayed. One of the things that has been sad to me is the number of times I've seen people leave this church and go somewhere else because of some things that others in the body have said to them.

I remember sitting in a home where an individual brought something up that had happened and I asked the question, When did this happen? Because I had, I'd only been here like about 11 or 12 years and this person said, 17 years ago.

And they were filled with, with a, an embittered spirit at just bringing it up. Well, for one thing, I thought to myself, wow, if, if it bothered you for 17 long years, shame on you for not dealing with it biblically.

Now, Paul says this, he says, listen, when you speak to one another, speak to one another with respect to your relationship in the family of God.

Some of you know Kenoyers, others of you don't, but the Kenoyers are fairly straightforward people when it really comes to within family dynamics, but I'll tell you what, we don't pull off drive-by shootings with each other.

[15:21] And the reason we don't pull off drive-by shootings is because we know we're going to be together until they put one or the other in a pine box. So I want you to mark the focus of the Spirit of God here.

Loving truthfulness is a church life and health thing. That's what the Spirit is saying here at the moment in verse 25. So when was the last time you thought about telling the truth with a quiet, gentle spirit because you had really thought out how does my being truthful help the body? Most of us tend to think about using the truth in a narrow perspective of how it suits us or our agenda. What we want. Let me spell out several principles to help you with truthfulness in the body.

First of all would be start with your own walk. Matthew chapter 7 Jesus says, hey, before you go do brain surgery on somebody else, that's not the passage but you understand the point.

Matthew chapter 7 what do you deal with? You deal with something in your own eye before you try to go help somebody else. In Galatians chapter 6 verse 1 and 2 it says, when you see someone who's been overtaken with a fault, you who are spiritual do what?

[16:39] Restore such a one with a spirit of meekness. Secondly, really be about the body not yourself. How does this issue that I'm addressing have bearing on the well-being of the bride?

How does it relate to the family of God that He has made me to be part of? Third, don't be a drive-by shooter.

You know what I mean by a drive-by shooter? Well, I told him. You know, kind of, it's like trick-or-treat. You know, you ring the doorbell and leave.

And that's not what Paul has in mind here when he says, let every man speak truth with his neighbor. He's not talking about kind of an unkind little broadside in which you really nail the person to the wall and all that vituperative attitude that's kind of built up inside, it kind of blows up and everybody gets fragged in the process.

That's not it. I remind you also of the fact that when we speak the truth, we are to bring the grace of Christ and His Word into play. Let me make an appeal.

[17:52] I want you to turn in your Bibles. I'm going to come back to this passage again, but this is a passage that last week just got a hold of me in a fashion that really has gripped me.

Isaiah chapter 50, verse 4. Isaiah, here, hey, you want a verse to memorize? This one. This one. Isaiah 50, verse, go ahead and look at it.

It's not going to be on the screen. Is it, Connie? It's not going to be on the screen. I didn't plan for it to be on the screen. So it's not going to be on the screen. You have to use your own Bible.

If you don't have one, there's one in the pew in front of you, or you can ask your name. Go ahead, grab the other person's Bible and pull it over. And it's like, I'm Sharon. I didn't know we'd need a Bible when we came.

Yeah, you do. Okay. Isaiah 50, verse 4. The Lord God has given me the tongue of those who are taught that I may know how to sustain with a word him who is weary.

[18:58] Morning by morning he awakens me. He awakens my ear to hear as those who are taught. Keep your finger in this passage.

Turn over in your Bible, if you would, to John chapter 12. By the way, the passage that we have just looked at in Isaiah is a messianic passage.

That means that it has direct application to Christ. But over in John chapter 12, verse 49, Jesus says something that is rather interesting.

He says this, For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment, what to say and what to speak.

Are you thinking with me? Jesus says, I'm not out here freestyling and saying what I think. I am speaking according to what the Father wants me to say.

[20:09] How did that happen? How did that happen? If you look back at the passage in Isaiah chapter 50, Jesus says this.

This passage was written of him. God has given me the tongue of those who are taught. And when did I learn what was the right thing to say?

Morning by morning he awakens. He awakens my ear to hear as those who are taught. Listen to me.

Sidebar. I shared this in Sunday school, but the truth of the matter is is that the biggest problem most of us have with sin is with our tongue.

Is that true? Oh no, I have a big problem with murderous thoughts, not with my tongue. No, that's not true. James says this.

[21:17] If you can handle the tongue, you're on top of the game, right? Isn't that free translation there? Some of you would tweak me afterwards. My email, send it to me.

But, you know, James says this. If any man doesn't offend with his tongue, he's got it together. I tell you what, I have more verses memorized on the tongue than on any other part of the spiritual walk for Tim Kenoyard.

You know why? Because I can say some awful things without practice. Years ago, it became evident to me that my tongue was not what it should be and I began saying, how do I change this?

I could be funny. I could be sarcastic. I could be critical. I specialized in figuring out what people's weak spots were and when I wanted to, I could bring those up and I could cut them to shreds. And I began memorizing bunches of passages of Scripture about the tongue. And when I read this passage in Isaiah, morning by morning, he awakens me.

[22 : 31] He awakens my ear. Isaiah, Ephesians rather, five or four.

Let's look at a second thing that Paul talks about. He says here, he says, you're to speak truth because we're neighbors, but then he says, be angry and do not sin. So, conversion moves us from harmful anger to godly response.

And some of you are thinking, well, now we're coming to a verse I can deal with. Yeah, get angry. I've done that. I put holes in drywall. I put my foot through a door.

Now, I'm not talking about Tim Kenoyer, but some of you sitting there thinking, yeah, yeah, yeah. Go for it, pastor. Preach that one. Now, here's the deal. Anger is actually more complex than we might think.

It's a response to a perceived offense or threat. Anger is really a human emotion and it's not necessarily sinful. Jesus was angry on more than one occasion.

[23 : 42] For one, it tells us that when he cleansed the temple, that made him angry to see what people were doing to his father's house. But another illustration is over in Mark chapter 3 when he looked at the hardness of the hearts of the Pharisees in the face of his healing and it says he got angry with them.

Being angry about some things is essential and necessary. For example, we should be angry when God is offended.

We should be angry when sin raises its ugly head. I did not watch Miley Cyrus last week and I did not click on any of the videos related to what happened.

but I was angered by the incessant twittering and the incessant conversation about something that was so vile and so disgusting to the Lord.

Now there's something else that really should get us going. Are you listening? We're fairly good at getting angry about other people's sin. Do you follow that? We're horrible about getting angry about our own.

[24 : 57] And if you turn in your Bible, you're in Ephesians chapter 5, just keep your finger there because we're coming back, but go back to a passage in 2 Corinthians chapter 7 verse 9 through 11. By the way, this is probably one of those go-to passages when you're trying to really figure out am I serious about changing?

Am I really serious about my sin? Or am I kind of coasting through, kind of playing spiritual games? I'm not really into this. See, we're all dealing with the problem of indwelling sin.

We're dealing with the battle in our own life. 2 Corinthians chapter 7 describes the characteristics of genuine repentance. 9 through 11.

Paul says this. He says, As for me, I rejoice not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved unto repenting. For you felt a godly grief so that you suffered no loss through us.

For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. See what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourself, what indignation.

[26 : 07] Now, who are you indignant with? Yourself. I cannot believe that I have dishonored Christ.

I cannot believe the offense that my sin is against the holy God. I am appalled with that. Well, I do want you to understand that while there are times for us to be angry, there are also times where anger is wrong, anger is wrong, and it's sinful.

And such anger has no place in the believer's life. Being all stirred up about not getting your way, being all in a turmoil because of an offense that you've endured or a disappointment or because someone has done something that was harmful to you, you have to stop and ask yourself, and say, what am I getting angry about, really?

Is this something that really at the heart of it tweaks me because I'm so supremely concerned about the glory of Christ and the importance of God that that's why I'm upset?

No, no, no. Most of the time we're stomping around and we've got a pout on our face because of us. I do want you to mark something else in the passage going back to 1 Corinthians.

[27 : 32] It says, don't let the sun go down on your wrath. Be angry and sin not. Don't let the sun go down on your wrath. Well, that means that if somebody offends me, I'd better get it settled and take it out on them by the end of the day.

That's not what it's saying. It's saying this, that neglecting that which has been perceived as an offense will allow it to fester.

Things that fester cause heartache. So when something is really bothering you, there are a couple things that I would encourage you to do in relationship to that.

For one, deal with it. Deal with it. Deal with it now. Deal with it in the context in which it happened. Now, a preface to that would be that when you find yourself all stirred up, none of us struggle with anger.

We're good Christians and all that. But when you see somebody else stirred up, you want to talk to them and say, take a minute, take a deep breath, pray a little bit and say, Lord, is there anything that I need to work on in my life before I go launch and help somebody else?

[28 : 45] Quiet yourself before the Lord and say, hey, I need help here before I go do anything.

Sometimes it takes a time of prayer and some planning before you go deal with it. I have to tell you that as a parent, I would almost, as I got older, in my younger days, I didn't practice this as much, but as I got older, when my kids would do something wrong, I would send them upstairs.

I'd say, I want you to go upstairs and spend some time thinking and praying. Guess what I was doing? I was doing that because generally, unfortunately, I would probably let it go a little too far and then I would really get irritated with the fact, why didn't they just listen to what I said and if they were following my instruction, wouldn't I, and I was right at, I'm ready to deal with it and I'd go upstairs and pray myself and then go take care of it.

Well, when it says, don't let the sun go down on your wrath, what do you do when you can't really deal with the problem? How many of you had people who were your superiors that did something wrong and made you angry and you knew that it was going to be a deal breaker, a show stopper, you're going to be out the door if you really went and let them have it, right?

Tried to solve the problem. Sometimes there are things we can't solve and when we can't solve it, God says it's His business.

[30 : 21] Look in the Bible, if you will, just for a moment over to a passage in Romans chapter 12, Romans chapter 12, verse 19.

This is one that you may want to underline and have somebody else memorize. Beloved, verse 19, never avenge yourself.

See, some of the times when our anger gets cooked, our anger will only be satisfied once we really let them know that they did wrong. Oh, I'm sorry. How can I, you know, that we want to solve the problem.

Sometimes you can't do that and Paul says this, hey, listen, never go after revenge. But leave it to the wrath of God for it is written, vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.

Sometimes what we do in that day before the sun goes down, we say, God, this is your problem. I'm going to let you have it. It's not my problem.

[31 : 30] I'll go ahead and talk about it a little bit. I happen to think that the NCAA did not deal with Johnny Manziel the way they've dealt with many other individuals when it comes to violating NCAA standards.

And I see some people hyperventilating on Facebook about it and I thought to myself, you know what? Not worth the trouble because here's the deal. I happen to know that Scripture says God lifts up the humble.

He does what to the arrogant? He deals with the proud. So it's like, God, He's yours. Oh, by the way, there is one little prayer to follow after with this.

Are you listening? And be as merciful to Him as you've been to me. Can you do that? And be as merciful to Him as you've been with me.

Right? Right? We can say that. Oh, Lord, I'm handing this off and I want these people dealt with like Sodom and Gomorrah and I'm giving you 24. Now, what you do is the last part of the prayer is part of the keeper.

[32 : 41] It's like, and Lord, be as merciful to Him as you have been to me. Well, this morning what we've done is we've talked about the fact that the believer's tongue is different.

Amen? Are you there yet? No. But when we realize that our tongue is not what it ought to be, what do we do?

Here's what the believer does. Number one, the believer is convicted by the power of God to say, I'm not there yet.

Help me grow. Amen? I want to change. I want to change. I want to change. It wouldn't be a bad idea for you who are believers to say to your husband or your wife as you're driving home in the car, so, so, how's my tongue doing?

Do you follow that? I, I, go ahead. Yeah. Nudge him and say, you can ask me. Okay. See, the believer says, I want to grow.

[33 : 50] If the tongue is the thing that makes Jesus look good, bring it on. Help me change. change. And if I've got this problem with being all stirred up, Lord, for me to stomp and stomp around like a happy Christian all lit because of things not going my way, help me change.

Why? Do you think angels get excited at junkyard war type of kludgy machines being put together out of trash that kind of flounder around and don't look good?

No. They, they get excited when they see the dramatic power of Christ that can change broken, ruined sinners and make them something different. Amen.

Amen. Amen. There's no reason for you to be bad advertisement when you have received the gift of salvation and you have received the gift of the indwelling Spirit of God who's there to help you be different.

Let's close in prayer. As the baptismal candidates come, you pray for their testimony and for the clarity of the gospel this morning.

[35 : 25] Precious Father, make us a people who are jealous for the glory of Christ. Pray for Mrs.

Malumba and for Isaac sake, that their testimonies speak of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. That those who are here that know the Lord Jesus would have hearts that just rejoice and those who are here who need Christ would be drawn to the cross.

We ask this in your precious name. Amen.