

Live Like a Mature Christian

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[0 : 00] Hey, let's get into God's Word this morning. We are continuing with our series on spiritual growth, and the Bible talks a lot about encouragement as well as exhortation. It speaks of judgment as well as joy. And once we begin to follow Jesus, life will begin to change, or at least it should begin to change, because we know that maturing as a Christian involves change.

We've been talking about the positives as well as the negatives that go along with Christian growth, as the Apostle Paul has been teaching. But today we're going to go back to the negatives, or the things that don't belong in the lives of a person that follows Jesus Christ. And as Paul is teaching to the Ephesian believers, he lists in our section this morning that we're going to be looking at that there are some things that are sins, things that are behaviors that just do not belong in the lives of a growing believer. We're going to be seeing those things today to realize that we are to stay away from certain things as a growing Christian. So let's take a look at Ephesians chapter number four this morning as you take your Bibles. And as we turn to chapter number four, with quite a few verses, we're going to be looking at verses 17 to verse 32 this morning.

And as he begins in verse number 17, we're continuing on where we left off last week. Paul says, This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart, who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard him and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus, that you put off concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to deceitful lust, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind.

That you put on the new man which was created according to God in true righteousness and holiness.

[2 : 39] 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 to him who has need.

Verse 29, 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, even as God in Christ forgave you. So what is the first thing that we see? The first thing that we see, if this slide will advance, is that we are not to live like someone who doesn't know Jesus.

[3 : 58] So what Paul is talking about as he is writing to these Ephesian believers, he is saying that your life should change when you begin to follow Jesus. Our life should look different from those who don't follow Christ, because Jesus will make a difference.

Jesus is going to come in, and he's going to begin, through the Holy Spirit, to clean up our lives. So there are things that don't belong. There are things that should be different in our lives.

So we will not be living like those who don't know Christ. We'll go back to verse number 17. He says, We see in 2 Corinthians 5, Behold, all things have become new.

Verse 18, Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation.

So what it's really saying is, don't live like you used to live. Especially once we become an adult, and we've had the opportunity to live as we choose, there are things that come into our lives, for most people, for the majority of people, that are not Christ-like, that would grieve the Holy Spirit once we begin to follow Christ.

[5 : 32] So what Paul is saying is, don't live like you used to live. We see in Ephesians 2, verses 1-8, he says, And you, this is kind of expanding what Paul is saying, and he says, And you he made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lust of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as others.

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love, with which he loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ, by grace, you have been saved, and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come, he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward us, in Christ Jesus, and the verse that most of us know, it's a very, very popular verse, speaks to the life that we now have, and how we come to know Jesus, for by grace, you have been saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.

So apart from Christ, the Bible says, that we're separated from God, just like verse 1 says, that we were dead in our trespasses and sins, we were not alive toward God, and, but something wonderful happens, when we trust Christ as our Savior, he gives us a brand new life, our sins are forgiven, and we're brought into the family of God, we are made alive toward God, we can now hear him through his word, we can understand spiritual things, and that's what happens, when we begin to trust Christ, but what is it like, without Jesus, in our life, go back to what he was talking about, about what has been, in our lives, according to what we saw, in Corinthians, according to the course of this world, that's how the world lives, according to how everyone else lives, we hear that often, well, that's how everyone else is living, everyone else is doing it, so, apart from Christ, people are living, we, apart from Christ, we live according to the course of this world, and, he said, according to the prince, of the power of the air, that's Satan,

Satan is in control, of this world today, for a short period, as God allows him, to, do whatever he wills, to a degree, because we know, that, although God is ultimately, in complete control, and he has the last say, he's given Satan, he's given the devil, the, he's given the devil, enough reign, to allow him, to do what he wills, today, but when Jesus Christ comes back, he's going to change things, and he, is at his second coming, going to be ruling, and reigning, completely, with authority, but, he says, apart from Christ, those who are not following Jesus, walk according to the course of the world, and also walk according to, how, Satan would want people to, to live, or not live, according to the lust, of the flesh, and fourthly, fulfilling the desires of the mind, meaning, we do, what feels good to us, we do what we feel like doing, and that's, how we live, apart from Christ, but how do those, who follow Jesus walk, we go back to, verses 17 through 19, of Ephesians, Ephesians 4, 17 says, this I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, he says, this is true, that you should no longer walk, as the rest of the Gentiles walk, how, he says, first of all, in the futility, of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated, from the life of God, because of the ignorance, that is in them, because of the blindness, of their heart, and verse 19, who being past feeling, have given themselves, over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness, with greediness, so, how did we once live, how do those, who don't follow Jesus Christ, live, the apostle Paul, then lists out, some behaviors, that should not be, part of, the life, of a follower, of Jesus, he says, first of all, he says, those who don't follow Jesus, walk in the vanity, of the mind, or the emptiness, or the futility, of the mind, he says, they're hopelessly confused, about eternal things, and that is why, we see so many, self-help books, on the shelves, of bookstores, that's why we have, a Dr. Phil, that's why we have, all of these others, who try to say, this is how we're, supposed to live, because your life, is so messed up, because you're so, hopelessly confused, and this is what, we recommend that you do, but it's another, person who's, hopelessly confused, who's trying, to lead others, and the Bible, has a saying about that, it's like the blind, leading the blind, it's like someone, who is blind, you've seen someone, who has these, white sticks, with the red on the tip, and they're, they're standing, at a street corner, and another blind person, would come up, and say, hey, follow me, and they would walk, across the street, and they get, maybe struck by a bus, and kill both of them, he, and so,

[11 : 45] Paul is saying, he says, they're hopelessly, confused in their mind, they don't know, up from down, left from right, it's like the blind, leading the blind, and so, he says, that is one of the ways, that those who are without, Jesus Christ, live, they do what, feels right, they do what, they believe is correct, but ultimately, end up, horribly confused, and wondering why, their life, is not, bringing them joy, and wondering why, there is no hope, so he says, they live in the futility, of their mind, secondly, he says, they have their understanding, darkened, darkened, we see that, in chapter number four, he says, their minds, are full of darkness, they're not able, to understand, the things of God, and we know, the Bible tells us, that Satan, the devil, keeps the minds, of those who don't know Christ, darkened, so they don't understand, it's almost like, trying to read, with that, with a sleeping mask, on your face, it's kind of difficult, what, and then what happens, when God calls us, in effect, now this is just, probably a very, poor analogy, it would be like, someone coming to you, and saying, oh you're trying to read, well let me help you, and they take the sleeping mask, off your eyes, and you're like, oh wow, now I can see, and so what the Holy Spirit does, is the Holy Spirit comes in, and illuminates our mind, so we can understand, the things of God, he gives us the ability, and so, when God calls us, and when we share the gospel, with someone, and the Holy Spirit, is able to open their mind, then they're going, oh, that makes sense,

I'm a sinner, Jesus is God, he died on the cross, in my place, I don't have to be good, and I don't have to work, for my salvation, all I do is trust, what Jesus did on the cross, because he already, paid my penalty, so I just trust, not work, and that's what we just read, in Ephesians chapter 2, verses 8 and 9, so he says, their understanding, has darkened, and the thirdly, he says, they have blind hearts, they have blind hearts, in, he says, in verse number 18, having their understanding, darkened, being alienated, from the life of God, he says, they've closed their mind, and have hardened their hearts, against God, he also says, that in verse number 19, who being past feeling, have given themselves, over to lewdness, you know what that means, it simply means, they have no sense of shame, and, in, in certain parts of the scripture, and in, here, specifically, one of the ways, that he talks about it is, they're not red faced, if you remember last week, when I had a slip of the tongue, my face got red, and that's what happens, when we do something, where we feel shame, that we shouldn't do, and we see, we see our children, our grandchildren do that, they do something wrong, and they know they've done something wrong, and when we come, it's, you can see it written, all over their face, they know they've done something wrong, well, the way the Bible portrays, portrays someone, without Christ, who has lived, because, because we, apart from Christ, are dead, spiritually, that we, we live according to, the course of the world, we live according to, what feels right, and the Bible says, our conscience can become seared, now, for, for, even for those who don't know Christ, we were all born, with a conscience, we all, innately, know, that there are certain things, we just should not do, we have that from God, and, there comes a point, where, someone, is doing something, that is just not right, and for them, it is no, big deal, and they don't mind, doing it in front of others, matter of fact, sometimes they might even flaunt, their behavior, so, so, they don't, they don't blush, when they do, do things wrong, because for them, their past feeling, and so he says, they have no sense of shame, their past feeling, having given themselves, over to lewdness, so, no sense of shame, then he goes on to say, to work all uncleanness, with greediness, living in lustful pleasure, and eagerly practice, all kinds of impurity, and are greedy for more, that's pretty much, what he is talking about, behaviors of those, without Christ, and these behaviors,

Paul says, has no place, in the Christian life, so, secondly, what we see, is, that, well, first of all, we see that, there are certain things, that don't have a place, in the Christian's life, and then, what we see, we are to live like, a mature Christian, and then, next, what we find, is, verse 25, where the Bible says, don't lie, he says, don't live, like, those who don't follow Jesus, that's number one, don't live, like the rest of the Gentiles, don't live, like those who don't know Christ, but secondly, in verse number 25, he says, don't lie, verse 25, therefore, putting away lying, let each one of you, speak truth, with his neighbor, for we are members, of one another, this includes, all forms of lying, includes all forms, of deception, this refers, to a lifestyle, not only a lifestyle, but also a motive, for why we are to be honest, and why we are to be, transparent, with one another, he says, we are to live, openly and transparently, and honestly, with one another, he says, because we're all in the family, you know, we're all members, of the same family, in Christ, if we know Jesus, as our Savior, so as followers of Jesus, we are a family, the question is, how do you treat your family, hopefully, honestly, openly, and positively, at least, that's how we are, to treat one another, so he says, just

speaking the truth, with one another, be open, be honest, don't deceive, don't say things behind their back, don't run them down, in front of others, he says, just be open, be honest, because we're all in the same family, we're in the family together, thirdly, he says, don't go to bed mad, you've heard that before, well that's the Bible, that's the Apostle Paul, saying, don't let the sun go down on your wrath, look at verse 26, he says, be angry, do not let the sun go down on your wrath, and the thing is,

Christians can be legitimately angry, you say, well I thought you're not supposed to get mad, well, it is biblical, and I think it is right for us to get mad, at the right things, at the right time, to the right degree, when you see someone being hurt, when you see someone being taken advantage of, and when you see things that are done, that are just simply, egregious, get mad, get mad, at sin, because we know what sin does, sin kills, sin hurts, and sin will tear lives and families apart, and so, it's not so much that we're mad at a person, even though we might be, we're mad at what they're doing, and we're mad at what they're doing, and how it affects others, and most of the time, innocent people, so, it is okay, now don't go, and just say, well Pastor,

Pastor Leje said, it's okay to get mad, so I don't really have an anger problem, I don't need to go to anger management, because Pastor Leje said, the Bible says, it's okay to be angry, context, context, okay, so, be mad, be angry at sin, the thing is, while believers may at times be angry with righteous anger, towards sin, we're not to sin, so, how do we prevent sinning, when we have righteous anger, keep short accounts, keep very short accounts, deal with the anger, before the sun goes down, take care of it, give it over to God, let him have it, and then, get over it, and then let God handle the rest, the reason is, that the devil would like to intensify a Christian's righteous anger, against sin, and then, eventually causing it to become a sin, in and of itself, righteous anger is one thing, but when we hold on to it, when we feed it, and when we harbor it, it in itself becomes sin, sin, and so, we might be angry at someone else, but in turn, we become the sinner, because we harbor the anger, and causing it to become a sin, in itself, and then, thus, this gives the devil a foothold, it gives him a place, for him to, attach himself, and enable to gain more ground, so, thus, an opportunity, to lead a Christian into more sin, then, anger begins to control the believer, rather than, the follower of Christ, controlling their own anger, so, what's the prescription, never, let a day end, being angry, your mama probably told you that, probably, is good marriage advice, don't go to sleep, angry, at your spouse, but this holds true, for anyone, don't go to bed mad at someone, what, what do we do, well, take care of it, get on the phone, get in the car, and go, to that person, that you're angry with, and apologize, or let them know, how they made, what they did, and how it made you feel, and then talk it out, get, get rid of the anger, and deal with it, and he says, don't let, don't go, don't go to bed mad, don't go to bed mad, don't go to bed upset, he says, deal with it, do something about it, you know, some people live in anger, constantly, some people just, are angry at life, angry at everything, anger, they're just angry, angry people,

[23 : 15] I've known angry people, and they're not fun, to be around, it's caustic, because, it, if we're not careful, that we may fall prey, to the same, way of thinking, we are never to let a day end with anger, so, how do we deal with anger, as I said earlier, deal with that person, confess it, and then, give it to Jesus, confess it, forsake it, deal with it, then, he says, in the next verse, verse 28, he says, don't steal, don't steal, verse 28, let him who stole, steal no more, steal no longer, but rather, let him labor, let him work, for what he wants, working with his hands, what is good, and then, he added this, not only, should a person, not steal, not take what is not theirs, but should work, for it, and then, he gives another motive, work, so then, that way, not only will you have what you need, but you will have more than what you need, so you can help somebody else, who has a need, so we are to be thinking about others, don't just think about yourself, he says, so, work, let him work for it, don't steal anymore, work, earn money, so that way, not only can you have enough, to take care of your own needs, but you can be able, to take care of the needs, of others, who don't have, so,

I'm strange, a strange statement here, but it's, it obviously was necessary, with those the apostle Paul, was talking to, because some people, are addicted to stealing, do you realize, some people shoplift, even when they have the money, to pay for it, it's crazy, but it's true, isn't that right, those who've dealt, with shoplifters before, sometimes, they come from, families who, are fairly well to do, and, but it becomes something that, a thrill, or whatever, it meets a need, for them, psychologically, and so some people, are addicted to stealing, people will steal, from others, matter of fact, we can also steal, from God, Malachi chapter 3, 10, talks about that, when we withhold, the tithe, when we

don't give, accordingly, as God has blessed us, to, to the, the local church, and so the local church, will have what it needs, to be able to take care, of not only its needs, but then, then also, the needs of others, he says, rather, we're called to generosity, and we're called to, honesty, so what's next, you thought, we're going to, going to end here, we're not ending here, next he says, watch your language, watch your language, verse number 29, let no corrupt, word, or communication, proceed, out of your mouth, but, what is good, for necessary, edification, that it may, impart grace, to the hearers, do you realize, that, as a follower, of Jesus, we're going to be judged, for every word, that we speak, and you may be, thinking to yourself,

I'm okay, because I don't curse, or as we say, here in the south, I don't cuss, right, well, it's not, just, taking the Lord's name, in vain, that Paul was talking about, it's not just, using coarse language, that, that, Paul is talking about, do you realize, that when you run, someone down, and you kill, their character, by speaking, negatively about them, to someone else, that that's corrupt, that's corrupt, communication, that's corrupt word, or what about, well, I, there's so many things, that we could, we could say, to give an example, of this, but, be careful, because what are our words, supposed to do, read the next phrase, what we should say, or what we are saying, should be, for, building others up, but what is good, for necessary edification, we learned, last week, week before, that edification, means to build up, just like an edifice, that, that, that a contractor, would build, a construction worker, would build, and we see it, come up from the ground, and it becomes, a beautiful, edifice, office building, or church building, or skyscraper, so he says, every word, that comes out of our mouth, should be building, someone else, up, so he says, let no corrupt communication, come out of your mouth, if you're wondering, about the tongue, all we need to do, is go to the, little small book of James, in the New Testament, and hear what James, talks about, about the tongue, he said, it's such a small member, just as, it's such a small, part of our body, but we can kill, people's character with it, we can hurt people with it, we can build, other people up, by a word, we can, do so many, positive things, and so many negative things, as well, so, what, what is corrupt communication, tearing someone else down, obviously taking the Lord's name in vain, using coarse language, some people try to get as close to profanity as possible, but without, some people will use euphemisms, for curse words, and use it as a curse word, you know, be careful, be careful with that, so, just understand, that we're going to be judged, for how we speak, look at Psalm, 19, 14, in Psalm, 19, 14, what we read is, let the words, this was the psalmist's, psalmist's desire, he says, let the words of my mouth, and what I think, the meditation of my heart, be acceptable, in your sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer, how about, would that change, the way we talk, if we, if we pray that, if we ask God that, multiple times during the day, O God, let what I say, and let what I think, be acceptable to you, and please you God, so, if we thought, in terms of that, I think it would change, the way we speak, it would change, the way we deal with our, brothers and sisters, in Christ, so he says, let no corrupt word, let no corrupt communication, proceed out of your mouth, and then, lastly, he says, don't grieve, the Holy Spirit, don't grieve, the Holy Spirit, and we see that, in verse number 30, you may be wondering, well how would we, grieve, the Holy Spirit, he says in verse number 30, and do not grieve, the Holy Spirit of God, he says, by whom you were sealed, for the day of redemption, now that is a very good verse, that we can add to others, that talks about, the security of the believer, once we trust Christ, as our Savior, the Holy Spirit, seals us, and making us ready, for to be presented, before God one day, and so once we are sealed, by him, we are safe, so our body is, the temple of the Holy Spirit, this should make us careful, in everything that we do, so how would we grieve, the Holy Spirit, has anyone, ever grieved you, you know, our children, grieve us sometimes, do you remember, children will say, what is an art link letter, that said, kids say the darndest things, you have to be careful, about that language, right, and so, a lot of times, what will happen is, you'll say something, kind of, either offhand, it's not necessarily, maybe just kind of personal, and then your kids, either in church, or they'll come in, and they'll say, and it is embarrassing, oh, don't grieve me like that, and so, so what, what they said, or what they did, like, oh,

I can't believe you said that, don't say that in public, or, or maybe, someone, maybe a friend, sometimes family, might do something, that you think, I can't believe they did that, and it's, it hurts you, that they would do something like that, and you're grieved by it, we do the same thing to the Holy Spirit, when, when, when the Holy Spirit leads us in a direction, have you ever, now it's happened to me, and it happens to me a lot, have you ever, had an interaction with someone, and they walk away, and you're thinking, I should have told them about the Lord, I should have handed them, I should have asked them to pray with them, I should have, or, or, you see someone in need,

and, you pass by, and we don't take the opportunity, to help another person, and, we feel, it's like we feel the Holy Spirit, you should do something, you've got the ability to help, and we don't, and we, and I think when we do that, we grieve God's Holy Spirit,

[33 : 23] God placed something in our mind, in our heart, to say, you should do this, and we didn't, and we're grieved, or when, Holy Spirit says, no you shouldn't be doing that, and we engage in that behavior anyway, it grieves God's Holy Spirit, so we're to live our lives, in such a way, that pleases our Heavenly Father, it's like a husband and wife, it's like a parent-child relationship, relationship, there are a lot of, you know, there are a lot of things, that probably, for most of us, you didn't do growing up, probably for one reason, you didn't want your mama to find out, right?

Okay, am I right? And so, because you didn't want to grieve your mama, it changed your behavior, it might have changed your behavior, and so, and so, I think what the Apostle Paul is saying here, he says, watch your behavior, because you don't want to grieve the Holy Spirit, you don't want God to know, you don't want God, you don't want God's Holy Spirit, to be grieved by your actions, and so he says, this is how, a maturing Christian, ought to be, living, so we stop grieving the Lord in word, we stop grieving the Lord in thought, and we stop grieving the Lord in deed, so, what are we to do, these things remain in our lives, what are we to do, as a maturing, growing follower of Christ, well, number one, first John, chapter one, verse nine, says that we are to what, confess our sin, it's literally to admit before God, that we sinned, so confess it, confess it,

Romans chapter 12, verse one, says that we are to present our bodies, to Christ as living sacrifices, so we confess it as sin, we turn it over to him, and say, I'm yours, and allow the Holy Spirit, to begin leading us, to begin guiding us, and, just, grow, up, that's what Paul is saying, he says, we are to be growing, in Christ, but in order to grow in Christ, there are certain things, that we are to put away, and not allow us part of our lives, and as we, excuse me, continue to go on, we need to understand, that, our life, is constantly changing, when, we, come into the family of God, when the Holy Spirit, takes up residence, in our life, he, begins to clean, and he begins to, get ready, to take up residence, in our lives, and that's why, when we have, when we first come to Christ, maybe some things, that we weren't ashamed of before, now we're ashamed of, that's the Holy Spirit, that's the Holy Spirit, trying to clean up our life, to make us more, like Jesus Christ, so, let's be growing, and maturing, as believers, let's pray,

Father this morning, as we, have looked into your word, help us to understand, what does not belong, in our lives, help us to understand, how we are to be, living a life, that honors you, and pleases you, Lord help us to be able to, to be open, and honest with one another, help us to, be able to, to work, in unity, help us Lord, to be able to, to live a life, that does not grieve, your Holy Spirit, help us to, surrender to you, and to look to you, to lead us, and guide us, because you love us, so much, Father help us, to live a life, that honors, and pleases you, we pray this in Jesus name, Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen,