

Sanctification

December 2, 2012

I. Review:

A. Our Text: Eph 4:25-5:5

B. The walk of faith

The Christian life is to be lived in faith, knowing who you are in Christ. Faith is applied practically in repentance and walking in sanctification. This is a process of spiritual growth as we learn how to put off the old and put on the new. We look at seven specific areas in this study

C. We have covered the first four of seven issues in this section

1. Lay aside," but "Put on"
2. Don't give the devil an opportunity or grieve the Holy Spirit.
3. Put off the lie and embrace the truth.
4. Put off sinful anger while being angry without sin.

II. Last three points:

A. Put off "stealing" instead, put on "work."

1. Stealing; Let him who steals steal no longer; (Eph 4:28)

The 8th commandment forbids theft in all its forms. It recognizes the right of personal ownership of property.

All theft is forbidden (Ex 20:15; 21:16; Lev 19:11; Dt 5:19; 24:7; Ps 50:18; Zec 5:3; Mt 19:18; Ro 13:9; Eph 4:28; 1 Pe 4:15).

When God gave this commandment, He instituted the right of private ownership of property. A man has the right to turn his strength into gain, and to keep that gain and use it as he sees fit. God gave numerous laws to the Jews for the protection of their property, and these principles have become a part of our law today.

Stealing was particularly a sin of the slaves in Paul's day. Usually they were not well cared for and were always in need, and the law gave them almost no protection.

When he wrote to Titus, Paul urged him to admonish the slaves not to pilfer (to steal, especially in small quantities but to be faithful to their masters. (Titus 2:10)

But it was not only the slaves, but citizens in general, who were addicted to thievery, for Paul wrote to people in the Ephesian church who were gainfully employed (Eph. 4:28).

Just as Satan is a liar and a murderer, he is also a thief.

"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy" (John 10:10).

He turned Judas into a thief (John 12:6)

and he would do the same to us if he could.

When he tempted Eve, he led her to become a thief, for she took the fruit that was forbidden. And she, in turn, made Adam a thief.

The first Adam was a thief and was cast out of Paradise;

the Last Adam, Christ, turned to a thief and said, "Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise" (Luke 23:43).

Stealing may take many forms:

from grand larceny to nonpayment of debts, to witnessing for Christ on the employer's time, to plagiarism, to the use of false measurements, and to falsifying expense accounts. Of course, this prohibition against stealing is not new.

2. Put on hard work.

Instead of being a thief they were to work and provide for their own needs. They were to perform with their own hands that which is good instead of that which is evil.

Instead of being a taker, they were to work, so that they would have something to share with those in need.

a. Definitions:

The term for work found here denotes labor to the point of weariness.

Work is physical or mental activity directed toward the accomplishment of a task; the labor by which a person earns his livelihood.

This English term is the rendering of a large number of Hebrew and Greek terms.

1. (Heb. yeghia) = it stands for "fruit of labor." Gen 31:42; Job 39:11,16; Ps 128:2.
2. (Heb. amal) = Sometimes, in conjunction with "travail," it refers to childbirth (Gen 35:16-17; Eccl 1:3,8; 2:10-11,18).
3. (Heb. aboda) = is the execution of a definite daily task, whether in field labor (Ps 104:23) and mechanical employment (Ex 39:32) on the one hand, or priestly service and the duties connected with the worship on the other (12:25-26; 23:7-8), i.e., such occupations as came under the denomination of labor, business, or industrial employment"
4. (Gk. kopos) = labor; 1 Cor 15:58; 1 Thes 1:3; 2:9; 2 Thes 3:8; Heb 6:10;); 1 Tim 5:17

"Work, as distinguished from labor, is not so much a term denoting a lighter kind of labor as a general and comprehensive term applied to the performance of any task, whether easy or severe."

b. Original design:

Man as created was intended to work. One of his primary tasks in the Garden of Eden was to "till [work] the ground" (Gen 2:15).

Gen 2:15 Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.

The teaching of Scripture is that man, even in his state of innocence, was to lead a life of activity, which was different, however, from the trouble and restlessness of the weary toil into which he was plunged by sin. Exercise of some kind was essential to his well-being (cf. Eccl 5:12).

c. The curse of work:

Although work was ordained by God as a blessing, it became a curse as a result of the Fall
Gen 3:18-19 Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; and you will eat the plants of the field; By the sweat of your face you will eat bread, till you return to the ground,

In consequence of the Fall, the earth no longer yielded spontaneously the fruits requisite for man's maintenance, but he was obliged to secure the necessities of life by labor and strenuous exertion (Gen 3:19). Man would now have to work for his food and much of his produce would be frustration.

The Book of Ecclesiastes teaches that work, no matter how noble and diligently pursued, is rendered meaningless in a world cursed at the Fall (Eccl 4:4). Work in a fallen world is frequently reduced to exploitation and oppression.

c. Through redemption, work finds blessing and meaning.

Nevertheless, through redemption, work finds meaning. God ordained that six days be spent in work with one day of rest (Ex 20:9). The people of God in the Old Testament are frequently encountered performing works in service to God, for instance, in the building of the tabernacle in the wilderness (Ex 26) and the Temple (1 Chron 28:10).

Much of the WISDOM LITERATURE of the Old Testament praises hard work (Prov 14:23; 31:27), while it condemns and ridicules laziness (Prov 6:6-11; 21:25).

The ancient rabbis regarded manual labor as honorable and urged it upon all as a duty. In the Talmud we find such sayings as the following: "He who does not teach his son a craft is, as it were, bringing him up to robbery"; "Labor is greater to be prized, for it elevates the laborer, and maintains him.

d. The same attitude is found in the New Testament.

The example of Paul:

Paul supported his missionary activity through his work as an artisan, making tents from leather (Acts 18:3; 20:34; 1 Cor 4:12; 1 Thes 2:9; 2 Thes 3:8-9).

Paul and his associates worked (1 Cor 4:12; 9:6) and he exhorted his congregations to work with their hands as well (1 Thess. 4:11, 12; 2 Thess. 3:6-12).

Paul's teaching:

Acts 20:34-35 work to meet your needs and have enough to bless others also.

"You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my own needs and to the men who were with me. "In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

1 Thes 4:12 ...make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you,

2 Thes 3:10-13 be disciplined and work hard; anyone unwilling to work should not be given anything to eat.

For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either. For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread. But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary of doing good.

Titus 2:9-10 Urge bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect.

Col 3:17 everything (whatever) you do ...

Whatever you do in word or deed , do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

Col 3:22-25 don't serve your employer, serve the Lord.

Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality

B. Put off “unwholesome words,” instead put on “graceful speech.”

1. We are to put off speech that is:

a. Unwholesome words; (Eph 4:29)

Unwholesome means “rotten, putrid, like spoiled fruit (Matt. 7:17), and bad fish (Matt. 13:48); worn out, unfit for use, worthless, bad.”

Unwholesome words are any form of conversation that is frivolous, empty, idle, and worthless.

Corrupt speech comes from a corrupt heart, and pure speech comes from a pure heart. Corrupt speech is like rotten fruit (Mt 7:16–20) or a fish (Mt 13:48) and tainted with moral decay. Corrupt speech will contaminate the thoughts of others.

b. Words that are filthy (Eph 5:4)

Filthy in the Greek means obscenity, all that is contrary to purity.

“Filthiness” is *aischrotēs*, “obscenity, shameless, immoral conduct.”

Filthiness refers to dirty stories, suggestive jokes with a sexual coloring, and all forms of obscenity and indecency

c. Foolish words; silly talk

“Foolish talking” does not mean innocent humor but rather senseless conversation that cheapens the man and does not edify or minister grace to the hearers (Eph. 4:29). Paul is not condemning small talk because much conversation falls into that classification. He is condemning foolish talk that accomplishes no good purpose.

“Foolish talking” (*mōrologia*); “foolish” in the sense of the lack of forethought and wisdom. Impious, godless, because such a man neglects and despises what relates to salvation, and *logos*, “a word, speech.”

Foolish talking; this means empty conversation that is worthy of a moron. Here it may include gutter language.

d. Coarse jesting

Coarse jesting; this means jokes or talk with unsavory, hidden meanings. To talk about something, to joke about it, to make it a frequent subject of conversation is to introduce it into your mind, and to bring you closer to actually doing it

Jesting is a translation of a word that means “able to turn easily.” This suggests a certain kind of conversationalist who can turn any statement into a coarse jest. The gift of wit is a blessing, but when it is attached to a filthy mind or a base motive, it becomes a curse. There are quick-witted people who can pollute any conversation with jests that are always inconvenient (out of place). How much better it is for us to be quick to give thanks! This is certainly the best way to give glory to God and keep the conversation pure.

2. We are to (put on) speak words that:

Eph 4:29 ... but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear.

Eph 5:4 and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.

- a. Words that edify** (Eph 4:29 ... but only such a word as is good for edification)
edification (literally for the building up of the need) edifying as the need may be;

1 Thes 5:11 Therefore encourage one another, and build up one another, just as you also are doing.

Rom 14:19 So then let us pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.

Rom 15:2 Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to his edification.

1 Co 8:1 ... Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies. 2

- b. Words that meet "the need of the moment,"** (Eph 4:29)

This is the Bible's version of, "If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all." We are to speak only words that build up and encourage others. This one passage, if consistently obeyed, would eliminate the overwhelming majority of life's conflicts. Words of a mature Christian seek to help the listener, not harm him.

- c. Words that give grace to those who hear** (Eph 5:4).

Here it (grace) refers to the spiritual blessings and benefits that will accrue to the hearers from the gracious words of the speaker.

Having put on the 'new man', we will want to develop new standards of conversation so that our words will be a blessing, perhaps even the means by which God's grace comes to those who hear.

- d. Words that give thanks** (Eph 5:4)

Thanksgiving is almost a synonym for the Christian life. It is the response of gratitude to God's saving activity in creation and redemption, and thus a recognition that he is the ultimate source of every blessing. Christians, because of the grace given to them in Christ Jesus are to live out their lives with joyful thanksgiving. It should be the accompaniment of every activity, being the appropriate response of those who have been filled by God's Spirit

1 Th 5:18 in everything give thanks ; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Eph 5:20 always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father

Php 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

Col 3:17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

Heb 13:15 Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.

Ps 34:1 I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

Ps 92:1 It is good to give thanks to the LORD, and to sing praises to Thy name, O Most High;

C. "Walk" (speaks of the process of sanctification)

Eph 5:1-5 1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; 2 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. 3 But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; 4 and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. 5 For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

1. How we do this:

a. As new creations in Christ we are to imitate God.

vs. 1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children

b. We "walk in love."

vs. 2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us,

Rom 13:10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.
(See Rom 13:8-10)

2. There are specific areas of sanctification each must pay attention to:

Immorality Bitterness Wrath Clamor Slander Malice

3. Warning to those unwilling to deal with issues:

Eph 5:5 For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

See also Gal 5:19-22; 1 Cor 6:9-11; Heb 2:2; 6:4-8; 10:26-30.

Note: Besides my own thoughts and notes, I have used references from the following sources:

Bible Exposition Commentary; Believer's Bible Commentary; Nelson's Bible Dictionary; Pillar New Testament Commentary; Nelson's Bible Dictionary; Unger's New Bible Dictionary; Holman New Testament Commentary; International Standard Bible Encyclopedia; KJV Bible Commentary; Vine's Expository Dictionary; Vincent Word Studies; Wuest Word Studies;