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## Ephesians 4:28-29: A BRAND NEW WAY OF LIFE, PART 4

by Dr. Wayne Barber

Ephesians 4:28 Let him who steals steal no longer; but rather let him labor, performing with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have something to share with him who has need.

29 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, that it may give grace to those who hear.

I want to remind us of something that I think is very, very important. We are in some very difficult Scripture and it is going to show us how we are living as compared to how we ought to be living. That is no fun sometimes. Why are we in it? What is God doing in our lives? I want to remind us what all Scripture is for. Look in 2 Timothy 3. It starts off with people who love themselves, but in verse 10 it takes a turn and begins to talk about people who love God.

In the context of people who love God, we find these 2 Timothy 3:16-17:

"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching."

God wants us to be informed. We want our minds to be renewed so that our behavior can be transformed. Therefore, the Word of God is to inform us for teaching. Secondly it is to reform us. Now to reform somebody, you first of all have to reprove them and then you must correct them. That is what the Word of God is for. It exposes us for what we are, then it corrects us.

The Spirit of God wants to do a work in us through the book of Ephesians. I think He has been whetting our appetite on who we are in Jesus in the three chapters. It is wonderful to know what we have in the Lord Jesus Christ, who we are, whose we are. But in chapter 4 Paul changes directions. He is going to start saying, "Okay, folks, if you say you have Him, then you are to walk in a manner worthy of who you say you are and whose you say you are. You live in a manner worthy. Look, you have every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus. Now live up to it and walk like you are supposed to walk."

Now let's turn back to Ephesians and outline the rest of the book to show you how it fits together. Ephesians 4:1-16 show the overview of what the church ought to be, worldwide, locally, wherever you are. People are to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace and be strengthened in the inner man by the Spirit of God. That is in his prayer in the last few verses of Ephesians 3. When I am being strengthened in the inner man, I am being given the ability beyond what I can do apart from God. In other words, I am living differently. There is something totally unique and different about my life. When I am doing that, it is going to reflect in the body of Christ. We are going to be seen for how we behave toward one another. We are going to be seen for how we believe, Ephesians 4:4-6. We are going to be seen for how we cooperate in being built together in the body of Christ, Ephesians 4: 7-16.

So we see a picture of what the church ought to be. It begins to show us how we are to walk. It begins to show us individually how we are to live a brand new way. This is when it really goes home with us. Ephesians 4:17-19 says, "Don't live as the Gentiles live." The Gentiles are darkened in their mentality. They are depraved in their morality. Their inclinations are based on their darkened understanding. They don't know how to live morally. Their relationships are fragmented. They don't know how to build up. They only tear down as they live together. We are not to live like that anymore.

Ephesians 4:20-24 says we are to put on a new life, a new garment. That garment is Jesus Christ. We have already worked through all of that. We are to take off the old and put on the new. The new garment is a lifestyle, a lifestyle that all the world can see. What I say I possess is one thing, but the way I live is another thing. You don't tell a man about your faith, you live it out. He sees it by the way you live, by the way you speak and by your actions.

In Ephesians 4:25 Paul starts qualifying what that garment is. He starts showing us what that fabric is really like. He says in Ephesians 4:25 that when you put on the new garment you are going to have a transformed tongue. It is amazing what comes out of the mouth. Jesus said it is not what goes inside a man that defiles him, it is what comes out because it reflects his heart. He says first of all, you are not going to lie. That is the new garment. That is the Lord Jesus in your life. You see, when you tell a lie or when I tell a lie, and it is always easy to do that, what we are doing is protecting ourselves. We are never to protect our flesh. We are to confess our flesh. We are to be open and honest before God. We are never to live deceitful before others because the Lord Jesus is

a truthful being. He is truth, and He lives in us. Therefore, we cannot lie.

Secondly, you have a controlled temper. It is amazing. You are angry at the right things for the first time. Now it is not wrong to be angry. He says,

"Be angry but do not sin when you are angry."

Now, the anger of man, James tells us, never accomplishes the righteousness of God. So this is a different kind of anger. This is God's righteous indignation rising up in us. We are not mad at the sinner. We are mad at the sin. We are angry at the right thing and we know where to focus all of our anger. We don't let the sun go down on our anger. We are making sure consistently that we are quiet in our spirit. It is incredible the disposition of a person who puts on the new garment.

Then in Ephesians 4:27 Paul says we have a frustrated tempter. In the context what Paul is saying is, if you want to frustrate the devil put on the new garment. When you put on Christ you have frustrated the tempter in your life. As a matter of fact, the word for "devil" is even very important to the context. The word "devil" is the word *diabolos*. It means to cast in between, to separate and to divide. Now what was Ephesians 4:1-16 talking about? Preserving the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. How do we continue to do that? We don't give the devil an opportunity. How does the devil take opportunity? Only when he can tempt us into putting on the old garment and taking off the new. Don't let him have that opportunity. You continue to walk in the new garment and you will continue to preserve the unity in the bond of peace.

### REPLENISHERS DEPLETERS

Paul gives two threads and a warning or a principle about the garment. We don't lie and we control our temper and we frustrate the devil. Let's look at Ephesians 4:28. I become one who is a giver and not a taker. That is the new disposition. This is the new garment. I don't lie. My temper is under control. I am frustrating the tempter. Now I am a giver instead of a taker. I'll explain that in a second.

Do you know there are two kinds of people in this world? There are replenishers and depleters. A depletter is somebody you are around that absolutely sucks everything out of you. You have no energy left to do anything with this person. He is a taker, never giving anything back. That individual has never put on the new garment.

But when you find a person who is a replenisher, he has put on the new garment. He is a person who doesn't take. He gives and replenishes and replenishes. The difference in wearing the new garment and the old garment is, the old garment wants to be ministered to. The new garment wants to minister. It wants to give. It doesn't want to take. It wants to give. The new garment changes everything about your disposition towards all relationships whether at home, church or wherever you are.

Let me show you what I am talking about. Verse 28 says,

"Let him who steals steal no longer."

#### What does it mean to steal?

That is pretty obvious. You break into a store and you steal something." Now wait a minute. The word is *klepto*. Now what word do you think we might have in the English language that comes from that? Kleptomaniac. That is a person who habitually takes what is not his. He can't help it. Wherever he is, he is always an opportunist and he grabs for himself whatever he wants to take.

Well, the present tense and the active voice is used. It is a participle. Here is a person who consistently, by his own lifestyle, depletes. He takes. What he takes is not his to take. Interestingly, in checking this word out, I found out how it is associated. It is intermingled with some other things that are very helpful to understand.

Look in Leviticus 19. When you talk about the old garment, somebody who is a taker has all of his relationships messed up. Leviticus 19:11 deals with three things here and ties them together. It says,

"You shall not steal, nor deal falsely."

What he is talking about here is living deceitfully with folks. In other words, it is living a lie as much as telling a lie. It is living a deceitful, false life. It is letting people think you care about them when you really don't. As a matter of fact, you are going to take what is theirs the moment you get an opportunity.

The next thing it says here is,

"nor lie to one another."

We have already seen that we are not to lie to one another anymore. Somehow this is all fixed in together. It is **inrelationships**.

When a person doesn't have the new garment on, he is going to be a deceitful person, a taker, a depleter. He is going to lie to protect. So you see relationships on a wrong level.

Do you realize how this affects our families?

Do you realize when I've got the old garment on in my family, I will manipulate my wife and others to get what I want out of them?

Every one of us are that way. When I have the old garment on all I have are false relationships with anybody. I don't care who it is. People may think I am their friend. Oh, no. I am a user and I'll use that person for my own benefit. I'll step on whoever I need to step on to get what I want out of them. That is what the old garment is. That is why three out of every four marriages are ending in divorce. Why? Because people are takers. They are depleters and they've got the old garment on. A marriage cannot work unless you have two people wearing the new garment.

So, it affects my relationships, the way I deal with somebody else. As a matter of fact, if you will go back in the text, I think he gives us another definition right in the very verse that we are looking at in Ephesians 4:28. Let's just look and see what he says. He gives two characteristics of a person having the wrong garment on, who is a thief. I want to get out of your mind that a thief is somebody who sneaks into somebody's house and steals something or somebody who breaks into a store to rob them. That is a thief, yes. But there are other ways to steal. You've got to go deeper than that.

Look in Ephesians 4:28. After he tells him not to steal any longer He says,

"but rather let him labor, performing with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have *something* to share with him who has need."

There are two things Paul tells us here about a thief.

Number one, he is too lazy to work. He will not go after it on his own energy. He wants to take it. He wants people to give it to him. He thinks the world owes him something.

Secondly, he will not share what he has. He is not a giver. He won't work and he won't give.

"You mean to tell me if I am wearing the old garment, even though I'm not going out and robbing a store somewhere, I am still a thief?"

Yes, you are. To some extent you are stealing from other people what could have been replenished in their life. What you are doing is you are depleting them, robbing them.

As a matter of fact, in Malachi 3:8 God made the statement,

"Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, 'How have we robbed Thee?' In tithes and offerings."

What is he talking about? Your tithes and offerings, when you don't give.

So we find then that there is an area here where we rob from others and we rob from God. It is the attitude that I am going to take. We find that he won't work and he won't share. Look over in 2 Thessalonians 3. Paul, being the writer of both of these epistles, says almost the exact same thing in 2 Thessalonians 3. It gives us a little bit more of an idea of a person who is a thief, a person who steals. You've got to realize we can be thieves in relationships by being takers and not givers.

In 2 Thessalonians 3:6 Paul says,

"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep aloof [stay away] from every brother who leads an unruly life."

That word "**unruly**" means undisciplined. Undisciplined here means that he is not willing to submit to the standard of God's Word. If you are going to discipline yourself, you've got to discipline yourself according to a standard. The idea of being unruly or undisciplined in the Christian life means that you don't give the time of day to the Word of God. You are not willing to line your life up with what God's Word has to say. You are an undisciplined, unruly individual.

Drop down to 2 Thessalonians 3:11:

"For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies."

You've got your nose in everybody else's business because you are a taker, and you are stealing from them what is rightfully theirs.

This is the person who divides and gives the devil an opportunity. That is the very instrument that the devil is using to divide the church of Jesus Christ worldwide. He won't put on that new garment. He would rather steal, deplete and take rather than give and replenish.

Well, Paul gives an antidote to that. He tells you what the new garment is. It is very clear. He says,

"Let him steal no longer; but rather let him labor."

The word "labor" means to be willing to work with your hands and not be ashamed of it. In other words, to go to work, to do whatever you have to do.

### ROTTEN SPEECH

Secondly in Ephesians 4:29, we become a person who builds up rather than tears down. This is so explicit I don't even have to say a lot about it. Let me just read it.

"Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth."

That is interesting. He has talked about what we say twice. Once not lying, but now this is any general speech that comes out of our mouth. It changes gear a little bit. The word "unwholesome" there is the word *sapros*. It means rotten, something that is rotten, something that decays.

A principle comes to my mind. If you take a barrel of good apples and put one bad apple in that barrel, do you think the good apples are going to crowd out the bad apple and therefore all the apples are going to become good? No, it works exactly the opposite. One rotten, putrid apple will begin to contaminate every single good apple that is in that barrel. That is the way our speech is. The word "rotten" is that which decays, that which putrefies. You know folks, the way you talk to people is incredibly different when you have the new garment on as to when you have the old garment on.

It goes on to explain itself. It says,

"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."

In other words, this is so relative that you can't really apply it in an adequate way. It fits whatever situation you are in. The Holy Spirit will give you words that can build up. That doesn't mean that you are never to confront. That doesn't mean you don't address problems, but it does mean that whatever you do, you do it with an attitude of building up and not tearing down.

### SEVERAL THINGS YOU CAN DO TO TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Then Paul says in verse 30,

"And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."

I want to show you something here. When he says, "Do not grieve," the word "grieve," *lupeo*, is a love word. In other words, there are several things you can do with the Holy Spirit. I want you to know that the Holy Spirit is not an "it." He is not the force as Star Wars tells us. He is a person who lives within us. He is the person, the Spirit of Christ who lives within us, the third person of the trinity.

#### 1) **He can be resisted.**

Acts 7:51 talks about the religious Jew where it says

""You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did."

He can be resisted by the lost

#### 2) **He can be quenched** by the church. In 1Thessalonians 5:19 he Paul instructs us...

"Do not quench the Spirit."

"Quench" is plural indicating Paul is addressing the entire church. You can put the fire out. You can quench the Holy Spirit.

#### 3) **He can be grieved.** Here in Ephesians 4.30 the individual believer can grieve the Holy Spirit and so Paul says, "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God."

Well, what does it mean? Well, in context, it means don't become a taker or you have just grieved the Spirit of God who is a giver. Don't let any unwholesome word proceed out of your mouth, or you have just grieved the Spirit of God who is the builder of the church. Don't grieve the Spirit of God.

Do you ever grieve somebody you love? There have been times that I have said things that have pierced my wife's heart, not really knowing how much damage it could actually do. This was true especially years ago when I was just learning how to walk and live the Christian life. It's not as much often now, thank God, as it was then. But when you grieve somebody you love and you can't take back what you have said and you know now how they feel, that is exactly what happens to the Holy Spirit every time we refuse to put on the new garment of Jesus Christ. It grieves Him. It distresses Him. The word means to distress someone.

Paul says,

"do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."

That refers to the day Jesus comes for the church. He is there in your life for a reason and He wants to control your life.

I think Ephesians 4:27 and 4:30 parallel each other. In other words, I think he brings both spirits into play, the Holy Spirit and the unholy spirit who is just an angel, certainly not equal to God. He brings them both into play. Which one are you going to please? If I grieve the Holy Spirit, I have just given the unholy spirit an opportunity. If I bless and please the Holy Spirit, then I have just frustrated the unholy spirit. I've got a choice to make. The devil is not somebody we reckon with, folks. He can only be in one place at a time. He is not omnipresent. His system is in this world. He is wherever God is working in such a way that he had to get his attention to stop it. I pray that some day we will be the kind of church that would attract that kind of attention. Folks, let me tell you something. His spirit is in this world. The mark he left on humanity is our flesh. When he gets us to put on the old garment, he doesn't have to get in us. That old garment does the damage. We have given him an opportunity, and he takes it from there in the downward spiral of self.

Well, maybe you feel convicted. I am. Do you know what you do when you realize you've sinned? Let me tell you what to do. There is such grace in this. Come right back to where you departed. You confess, which means you agree with God,

"God, I have missed the mark. I am doing more damage to the body of Christ than I am building it up and God, I want to stop it."

Secondly, you repent. Now the forgiveness will be there when you confess. You can appropriate that at that point. Now you must repent.

If you've done wrong, if you have been wearing the wrong garment this past week, if you've offended other people and you know by what you have said that you have hurt them, first of all confess it and make sure you make it right with them and then repent of it.

A young fellow was in the house with his dad and his family. It was warm inside. Outside it was below zero, the wind blowing, snow stacking up. It was awful outside. Inside it was a warm house, insulated, fire in the fireplace. You can just get the picture. A ball game on television. Carpet on the floor. You could smell the bread cooking in the kitchen. Supper was about ready. It was just where you want to be. The boy was sitting there enjoying it, and the father looked over at him and said,

"Hey listen, son, put another log on the fire."

The son jumped up and said,

"I am 18 years old and I'm sick and tired of being told what to do when I am in this house. I am leaving, and you can have it. You do it yourself. If you want a log on the fire, put it on yourself."

He went upstairs, got a duffle bag, put his clothes in it and walked out of that house. He walked about a block. The wind was picking up. The chill factor now below zero. The wind was burning his face it was blowing so hard. He was cold and thinking to himself,

"You know, I was just inside that house and it was warm. I was about ready to eat, and it was wonderful fellowship. This is sort of stupid."

He finally decides to go back. So he walks back to the house kind of sheepishly and knocked on the door. The father opened the door and said,

"Hey, son. Good to see you. Been gone 30 minutes. I thought you were leaving for a while. Good to see you. Come on in. Take your stuff upstairs, unpack and come on down and watch the ball game with me."

He went downstairs and sat in the chair. Boy, he was glad to be home! This is where he belongs. While he was sitting there, the father looked over at him and said, "Oh, by the way, put another log on the fire."

Folks, you can confess until you fall over in the floor and you will never have that new garment on until you put another log on the fire and go back and repent of what you didn't do before. If you are not going to obey, forget what you've heard. You are going to wear that old garment and you are going to be miserable. We will have to put a tag on you because Paul says mark those who cause division. The people who cause division are people who won't wear the new garment. People who wear the new garment preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace.

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## **Ephesians 4:31-32: A BRAND NEW WAY OF LIFE, PART 5**

by Dr. Wayne Barber

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Ephesians 4:30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.<sup>31</sup> Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

In Ephesians 4:31-32 Paul contrasts the two garments. He will do this through chapter 5. It is amazing what happens now. We are in a flow now that is going to go all the way through the rest of the book. How we are to walk? How we are to live a brand new life? He backs up now and gives us a contrast. One is a cesspool, the other a wellspring and there is a difference. I want you to know the difference. One I would rather not speak about, the other one is an artisan well. It is something that never ends in its supply and provision to others.

That is exactly what Paul does here in chapter 4. He shows you the cesspool of the old self and the wellspring of the new self, the new garment. He lets you see what is underneath everything that is going on in your life. You can either tap into the cesspool, the old stagnant, rotten, putrid type of thing, or you can tap into the wellspring of Jesus Christ. Which garment are you going to put on? Paul very vividly portrays this.

Let's look in Ephesians 4:31 at the cesspool of the old garment.

"Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you [put off like taking off a garment], along with all malice."

Now Paul does something here that really throws me. Normally when Peter or Paul makes a list, the first thing they mention is the most important thing. It tends to be the catch-all. It tends to be the subject, whereas the rest of it seems to modify that subject. In Galatians 5:22 he says,

"The fruit of the Spirit is love."

Then all the things that follow are just manifestations of that love. In 2 Timothy 3, Paul says in the last days men will be lovers of self and then he gives 19 different characteristics of a lover of self.

However, here in Ephesians 4:31 he reverses it. Let me show you what I mean. The last word, "malice," is the catch-all word. Malice is the "house" that all these words live in. I think it would be best to start there. He is doing something, I know, because he does the same thing in verse 32. He puts the source at the end, and he puts the symptoms in the front of the verse. That, to me, is significant.

Let me show you what that last word, "malice," means.

Look over in 1 Corinthians 5:7-8. We are going to find this word "malice." It is the very essence of all that flesh is. It is the word *kakia*. It is the word for inherent unrighteousness. It is vicious malice. It is a viciousness that comes along with that old garment. All these are relationship words. Isn't that incredible? We keep seeing that.

**The signal that we are spiritual and have on the new garment  
is going to be in our relationships.**

Over and over and over we see this. Well, here we go again. In verse 7 he says,

"Clean out the old leaven."

Do you know what leaven is? It is yeast. I don't know much about cooking, but I do know that when you put yeast into things, it causes it to rise up.

That yeast causes something to happen. You see, the moment I put on the old garment, immediately a viciousness begins to set in. Immediately I am out to get you. Immediately I am going to manipulate you. Immediately something I am going to do, say, or

whatever is going to divide me and you because I am not interested in you anymore. I am interested in me. That is the old garment. That is *kakia*. That is inherent unrighteousness. It comes along with the old garment. It is in that cesspool when we put that thing on and we won't bow before the Lord Jesus.

So Paul writes...

"Clean out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, just as you are *in fact* unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. Let us therefore celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

That gives you an idea of what the *kakia* is. It is the thing that stirs something up in your life.

Look in Acts 8:22. Here is a man who wanted to purchase the Spirit of God. His name was Simon. Simon Peter really lays this guy out.

Let's begin with verse 20.

"But Peter said to him, 'May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! You have no part or portion in this matter, for your heart is not right before God.'"

Now watch out! Peter says, "Your **heart** is not right before God." It is **an attitude you have towards God**.

You put on the old garment and say, "God, I don't want You ruling my life." Can a Christian do that? You better believe they can! We make choices all day long whether or not to let Him rule us versus whether or not we are going to take over rule ourselves.

Luke goes on to record Peter's words...

"Therefore repent of this **wickedness** [*kakia*] of yours, and pray the Lord that if possible, the **intention of your heart** may be forgiven you."

There it is. The intention of your heart is not right.

So we are seeing this **old garment is an attitude** and it is going to affect the lifestyle.

The attitude is rooted into that old cesspool. What is going to come out of it is nothing that is good. It is going to do nothing but tear relationships down. It does nothing to build relationships up.

Look in Acts 14:1-2, and I will show you one more place where a form of the word is used, not the word itself but a form of it. It says,

"And it came about that in Iconium they entered the synagogue of the Jews together, and spoke in such a manner that a great multitude believed, both of Jews and of Greeks. But the Jews who disbelieved stirred up the minds of the Gentiles, and **embittered** (kakoo = verb form related to *kakia*) them against the brethren."

The word "**embittered**" is a form of that word *kakia*.

You see, when you put on that old garment, you want others to agree with you. You are going to find somebody else who is negative. You are going to find somebody else who doesn't want to think about others but wants to think of themselves. What do you do? You begin to embitter others towards the brethren. In other words, you are no longer preserving the unity of the Spirit. What you are doing is dividing by your very attitude, which comes right out of the old cesspool of self.

Let's go back to our text. Paul uses a few different words than Peter uses in 1 Peter 2:1, several words which he also uses in Colossians 3:8. I'm not sure if he wants us to start with bitterness and work toward *kakia*, which is the house it all lives in, or if he wants us to start with slander and work our way back. It works either way. Let's just look at the Word and see what he is trying to tell us.

## BITTERNESS

First of all, out of that *kakia*, out of that old garment, out of that malice, is a word called "bitterness."

Now we know that bitterness is when you have been injured by somebody. You are not bitter unless you have been affected wrongly by somebody. The word for "bitterness" is the word *pikria*. It refers to something that is acidic, that will literally eat you alive.

You know that the problem with many of us as Christians is not what we are eating, but it's what is eating us! That is what bitterness does. Somebody has offended you. It always starts with being personally injured or personally hurt.

You know, if it weren't for people, we could live the Christian life!

But because there are people, we are going to be offended. You are going to be offended by me if I am not wearing the right garment. If it is not the right one, it is going to say what it shouldn't have said. It is going to act in a way that it shouldn't have acted. It is going to offend you. We are the church and we have got to remember that every one of us has those moments when we chose not to wear the new garment. And that is also why we need to be forgiving to each other. Now, if you didn't have any sin in your life, throw the first stone.

**Bitterness** is something that comes from a personal injury. Somebody has hurt you. You have heard what somebody said about you and it dug deep into your life. You didn't put on the garment of Christ, which would be strengthening you in the inner man with something that you didn't have before, forgiveness and unconditional love. You have put on that old garment which is rooted into the cesspool of old self and what you get out of it is bitterness.

Let me show you just one Scripture, Hebrews 12:15. You know, I have constantly warned all of us what will happen if we give the devil an opportunity. I don't mean he gets inside of us, but he gets inside the body of Christ by using people, not the body physically but the body spiritually, the church. He uses people inside. You see, there used to be a day when people would come to church, go out and be persecuted. The devil would fight them outside the walls. Now he is going to church, folks. When we give him an opportunity, look out. Look at what it will do.

"See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of **bitterness** springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled"

What is the **grace of God**? It is the **transforming power of God in your life and in my life**. When I put on the new garment, that is His grace working within me, transforming me. Now, I am different than I used to be.

**Bitterness** is usually a reaction that you have to some injury that somebody else caused you, but it is a wrong reaction. You put on the wrong garment. You dipped into the wrong place. You went back to the "**cesspool of self**" instead of coming to the "**wellspring of Jesus Christ**".

## WRATH

Let's look at the word "**wrath**." There are several words here for "anger" and "wrath." We are going to see "**anger**" in the next section. I need to explain them to you. As a matter of fact, let's put them together right now.

"**Wrath**" (in this verse) is the Greek word *thumos*. It is when you explode. Have you ever done that?

I can remember when I was in church recreation. I lost a basketball game one night because of a stupid referee. I mean a stupid, brain dead referee. We lost a championship in overtime. Stupid referee. I remember how mad I got. I was the Minister of Activities, and I took the basketball and threw it against the end wall so hard that it went all the way to the other end of the court. Take a basketball and see how hard it is to throw it to make it go that far. Everybody walked out of the building kind of like, "Whew!" I went into the fireside room of that activities building, slammed the door and sat down. I was ready to take on half the city because of stupid referees. Everybody left. My assistant turned the light off on me and left me sitting there in the darkness. That is wrath, *thumos*. I wasn't just mad. I exploded! That is what *thumos* is.

As a matter of fact, did you know that the seven bowls of God's judgment called the bowls of wrath are called *thumos*? Folks, we haven't seen anything until those **seven last bowls of judgment fall on this earth**. Then those who are here will realize the anger of a holy God towards sin. Without mercy He is going to pour out those bowls of wrath on this earth.

But there is another word. He goes on and says "**anger**" which is *orge* which means you are angry, but you may not necessarily have shown it yet. Oh, you are capable of blowing up, but you haven't blown up yet. You see, this is why we get so judgmental. Some people carry it and hold it pretty well for a long period of time. So we think they are really godly. Are you kidding me? Look at the other things in their life. You see, anger can be disguised. It can be covered over. *Thumos*, is bursting out, the outburst. *Orge*, is the actual anger itself.

Then he gives the word "**clamor**." This is when you get loud. This is the word for loud. It says there was an uproar over in Acts. In Hebrews it says He cried out before the Father. The word is a loud, loud cry. This is when you are getting a little noisy with the way you feel in that cesspool.

Then he uses the word "**slander**." Now that is not the same word Peter uses in I Peter 2:1. There it means to speak against. Here in Ephesians the word is *blasphemia*. It means abusive language. When you start cursing somebody on the highway, you've have just nailed it. You've got on the wrong garment. Watch out. You see, all these are tied intricately together. Either way you go it is the same thing. You are injured somehow inside and now that acid has built up inside you. You are ready to just absolutely stamp out anybody that gets in your path. That comes from that cesspool of self. Think about that. The Holy Spirit will prick your heart and say,



"I want you to make this choice."

You say,

"No, I won't do it."

Do you realize what you have just done? You have just put that old sick cesspool garment on (you've grieved, quenched, resisted the Spirit). Everything that comes out of it is going to defile any relationship you have all day. That is why you have to continuously say,

"Oh, God. I've put the wrong one on. I confess it. I am repenting."

What do I mean by **repenting**? You turn around and put the right one on.

Listen, folks, we have to see that there is a performance or a perfection level. Spirituality is not an arrival. It is a pursuit.

So often we misunderstand relationships. We think because we are putting on the right garment, everybody else ought to be judged by us. Friend, as soon as you think that way, you have just put the wrong garment back on! Who in the world are we to point a finger at anybody? Does being spiritual mean that you have a quiet time every morning at 5:00? Is that spirituality? Are you spiritual because you passed out tracts last year? Are you spiritual because you have witnessed to everything that has moved on the downtown streets? Does that mean that you are spiritual? I doubt it. Every one of us are guilty of putting that wrong garment on. That is why when we see a brother who has the wrong one on, it ought to lead us to bleed for him because we know what he has just done. We have done it ourselves.

Let's go to verse 32. Let's look at the wellspring that we have in Christ. Whew, what a difference! Again he puts the source at the end of the verse. Look at what he says.

"And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."

All the forgiveness that we are able to show towards others is wrapped up in the person of Jesus Christ. You have the **'wellspring of life'** on one side. You have the cesspool of death on the other side. You have a choice of which garment you are going to put on. It is a constant thing every single day of our life.

Paul says,

"Be kind to one another."

The word **"kindness"** is the word that means to furnish what is needed. In other words, the **kindness** here means I am useful to others. My **kindness** is going to express itself in the need that I perceive as I am around others. This kindness is not just an attitude inside. It is an expression of that attitude. I may see somebody hurting, or you may see them. I am not responsible for everybody and neither are you. You are responsible for what is in the sphere of your relationships and I am responsible for what is in the sphere of my relationships. When I begin to discern that somebody close to me is hurting, then immediately the kindness of Jesus turns on and is going to reach out to that person to do something. Whatever is useful and needful is what kindness is all about. That is Christ working in us, being considerate of one another, concerned for one another.

The next word he uses there is the word **tender-hearted**. What a tender word. The word means to be full of compassion and pity. You know, the best people to help somebody else are people who have been there themselves. Paul says,

"Comfort wherein you have been comforted."

It is amazing how God will orchestrate your life and bring people into your walk who are going through the very thing you have just gone through two years back. It is amazing how God does that. Somehow He begins through His own working in our spirit, to create within us a compassion for other people because we have been there and we know what they are headed for or we know what they are going through. The compassion of Jesus then begins to reach out to that person.

Well, the last one he mentions here is **forgiving one another**. I think it starts here. I think it starts with a choice that you make to forgive somebody. Now remember, injury is still the issue. Somebody has injured you and the old garment says,

"Be bitter and loud and angry. Blow up and be slanderous and abuse them with what you say about them."

The new garment says,

"No. You make a choice. Forgive them."

The word for "forgiveness" is *charizomai*. It means to release them from a debt they owe you that they can never repay you. They have offended you to the point they could never come back and repay you for what they have done to you. But, you choose in

Jesus to release them from that obligation.

Paul finishes up and qualifies it,

"just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."

You may ask,

"You mean to tell me you work yourself into a position that you finally deserve God's forgiveness in your life?"

No. I am overwhelmed that God even deals with me. I mean daily I am overwhelmed. Some of the things I think and some of the things I do sometimes I wonder...

"God, why do you even fool with me?"

In Psalm 8:4 David said...

"What is man, that Thou dost take thought of him?"

Folks, listen, when we realize how He has forgiven us, we can turn right around and, out of that **wellspring of His person and strengthening in the inner man**, choose to release somebody else.

The next thing we are going to sense in our life is a **tender-hearted compassion**. Then we are going to sense a **kindness** that is going to start looking out to see how we can meet that need in our brother or sister's lives.

Now I ask you a question. Which garment would you rather have people wear?

I know which one I want everybody to put on, the one that forgives and is kind.

But you see, I can't make choices for you. I can only make choices for me.

So tomorrow when we get up, we have one of two garments to put on. One of them is rooted in the cesspool of self. The other is rooted in the wellspring of Christ.

That is when the prayer of Ephesians 3:14-21 comes back in, to be strengthened with power.

What is the word "power?" (dunamis)

**It is the ability to do what you couldn't do outside of Him in the inner man.**

You accommodate Him by your willingness to choose and obey what His Word has to say. Then the relationships begin to be what they ought to be.