

FITTING CONDUCT FOR A NEW PERSON

Ephesians 4:25-32

NOT WALKING AS GENTILES 4:17-32

2nd implication of change God has accomplished in us: **We should no longer walk the same way.**

WALK different than pagan Gentiles!

WHAT LIFE'S LIKE AMONG THE GENTILES 17-19 [futile thinking] *¹⁸They're darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that's in them, due to their hardness of heart. ¹⁹They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity."*

When we lived in darkness among Gentiles, we lived that way!

Now that we're in Christ, we ought to *dress* differently—to live a different kind of life

WHAT LIFE IS LIKE IN CHRIST 4:20-32

New clothes for the new person 20-24

24 *"Put on the new self, created after the likeness of God"*

What does this God-likeness look like? He continues...

Fitting conduct for the new person 25-32

Specific areas where our lives should be different.

In midst of these characteristics comes a warning: *By acting like the world, we grieve the Holy Spirit!*

How can we avoid grieving Him?

How can we bring a smile to His face, instead of the frown of grief?

Conduct that affects our relationships with each other.

[Contrasts with pagan way of doing things!]

Speak truthfully instead of lying 25

Life free from falsehood *“Having put away false-hood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we’re members one of another.”*

The world speaks falsely => We’re to tell the truth

Our culture oozes with deception!

Mortimer Adler: “Books win the plaudits of critics & gain widespread attention almost to the extent that they flout the truth—the more outrageously they do so, the better.

I was reminded of: **“I, Rigoberta Menchú”** won Nobel prize for literature. Purports to be autobiography of her life in Guatemala. It was exposed as a fabricated tale of political deception. It’s defended as “political truth”—substitution of what could have happened for what actually did, in service of higher political ideal!

Kent Hughes: “Disregard for truth & disposition for lying are everywhere. Church is no exception.”

We expect politicians to bend & twist truth.

Even Christians twist truth; it helps a godly cause!

God is NEVER glorified by lies!

We should be known as people who *tell the truth!*

If we’re marked by deception, we’ve lost distinctive!

If so, the Holy Spirit isn’t smiling! He is grieved!

Settle anger instead of holding grudges 26-27

“Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷and give no opportunity to the devil.”

Anger in itself isn’t sin. We’re told: “be angry!” at times.

Even God gets angry.

OT mentions *“the anger of the Lord”*

His holy anger is part of His judgment against sin.
 Jesus was angered by money changers in the temple.
 At times anger's *right* response; when it turns to bitter-ness &
 grudges, it's sin. *Holy Spirit isn't smiling!*
 The world bears grudges & seeks revenge
 => We're to let go of it by nightfall.

We're to live ***a life free from anger!***

Jas 1:20 "*Man's anger doesn't produce God's righteousness!*"

We're to be angry about sin, as He is;
 but not to let it smolder; we're not to bear a grudge.
 Fire of anger, if not quenched by forgiveness, spreads.

When Satan finds believer with sparks of anger in his heart, he
 fans those sparks, adds fuel to the fire, & does great
 damage to God's people & His church.

Rather than remain angry, we're to deal with it & resolve
 conflict before Satan uses it to harm us.

Swindoll: "All of us know in our conscience when anger has
 become sin. Bursts of temper are sinful. Anger that slips out of
 control is sinful. Anger that plans to hurt another person is sinful
 anger."

If our anger carries over to the next day, it's *smoldering*.

Don't let sun go down without resolving the conflict!

Satan uses church filled with angry people to destroy it!

God's Spirit will not smile. He'll be grieved!

Share by working instead of stealing 28 *Life free
 from theft – living for others, instead of stealing
from others!*

"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.”

World steals for personal profit

=> We're to work in order to share with others.

American Psychological Association study: of \$8 billion in inventory shortages in department stores, 60% was attributable to employee theft! Padded expense accounts; “borrowing” & “forgetting” to return it!

It isn't enough *just* to stop stealing!

God's people are to be characterized by hard work –doing good—to help others in need!

Opposite of thief's self-centered approach: *to get more for ME!*

This is living for others first!

When we take from others to get more for us, the H.S. doesn't smile; He grieves.

Build up instead of tearing down 29-32 *Life free from ROT! “Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. ³⁰Do not grieve H.S. of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹Let all bitterness & wrath & anger & clamor & slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³²Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*

Watch the way we use our lips!

World speaks rotten words; => speak to build others up.

World grieves HS with words=>We're not to grieve Him.

World is marked by bitterness & anger

=> We're to be marked by love & forgiveness.

Corrupt, rotten, speech is common in world

Includes many kinds of talk—

Obscene language/dirty jokes

As well as other kinds of decay-spreading talk

Talk that runs down others & delights in weaknesses

If it doesn't build people up, *forget it!*

Our talk should be wholesome & edifying; *not* destructive.

Major motivation to wholesome talk is that destructive talk grieves

Holy Spirit who lives within us (<= v. 30)

Our mouths should not criticize & attack others,

but be kind & forgiving

v. 31 tells us to get rid of all bitterness and anger.

Is there anger in our heart against someone?

"You don't know how that person hurt me!"

That's true. If you hadn't been hurt,

there'd be nothing to get rid of!

If we let it go on, we're rebelling against God & grieving His Spirit.

That's why he concludes *forgive* one another, just as God, in Christ, has forgiven us.

Key characteristic is *forgiving*.

We don't forgive for *our* sake; nor even for *their* sake.

We forgive for Jesus' sake—as He forgave us.

Wiersbe: an elderly man came to his study, asking him to perform a wedding. They'd both been married before— to each other! Over 30 yrs earlier they had argument, got mad & separated. After yrs alone, they realized how foolish they'd been & wanted to enjoy last years together! Bitterness ruins homes,

churches, and friendships.

One who's truly an instrument of God's peace offers, in return for injury, forgiveness, remembering how fully he has been forgiven [1-3].

Unqualified + unlimited = unconditional
Acceptance forgiveness love

1st ingredient of unconditional love: unqualified acceptance 4:2 *"with all humility &*

gentleness, with patience, bearing with 1 another in love"

We often fail to love unconditionally when other people fail to conform to our standards

We don't *really* accept people who don't measure up.

Challenge: to love one another, in spite of differences.

We don't have to agree—don't have to accept same taste. But we do have to love one another in spite of differences!

We can accept people in spite of different tastes in music or clothes.

We can accept people in spite of different moral values.

We can accept people in spite of different levels of spiritual maturity.

To love unconditionally is to love with unqualified *acceptance* of a *person* even when we don't *approve* of everything they do!

That's what God's love is like *"God demonstrates His love for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us!" (Rom. 5:8)* He loved us enough to give Himself for us—*while we were still sinners!*

2nd ingredient in unconditional love: unlimited forgiveness 4:32 *"Be kind to 1 another, tenderhearted,*

forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."

We find it difficult to love unconditionally when people fail to *perform* according to our expectations.

Someone promises to meet us at a certain time, call a certain day, or do a certain job for us, & they fail to meet our expectations. *God still calls us to love them.*

Or, someone does something that hurts us deeply. They become object of our frustration because they haven't measured up to what we expected of them. *God still calls us to love them.*

Our love is not based on people's performance.

We love, accept, & forgive people who don't live up to our expectations.

Our love isn't based on whether they make it or not!

Jesus, on way to cross, loved followers in spite of failure

He asked them to pray with Him?

He went to pray—they fell asleep— 3 times!

They didn't meet His expectations!

Yet He loved them—and forgave them!

Earlier, there's squabble over greatness.

Our Lord took a towel & washed their feet—even Judas' feet! *He loved Judas to the end!*

Whether *you love me* or not,

Whether you measure up to my expectation or not,

I'm to love you continually. –unconditional love!

=> ***"³²Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."***

When we fail to love, the HS isn't smiling; He's grieved!

The fruit of the Spirit is LOVE!

Can people see the difference because He lives in us?
because He changed our life?