

Ephesians 4:25-32

Ephesians  
*How To Fight With Your Spouse*

Video: *Christian Shopping Network II*

We are a nation of news junkies. We have cable news, local news, news papers, news magazines, news web sites, RSS news feeds, and news blogs. We love to keep up with the news.

There are monumental news events going on all over our world and all over our nation. But it seems like every time I turn on a news report I'm treated to another episode of the verbal battle between Rosie O Donald and Donald Trump.

Is that really the news we we're interested in? Obviously the news outlets think we are because they keep up the reporting.

Donald Trump has his fingers in a lot of pies. One of them is an online school called Trump University. In a Trump University article is this suggestion: "Allow negative people to defeat themselves. Don't get drawn into public conflicts with erratic people..."

Donald might disagree with me but it looks to me like he needs to go back and take a few courses at Trump U.

How should Donald and Rosie handled their disagreement? How could that situation have been diffused?

How do we handle disagreements? How do we deal with that annoying person at work? How do we handle a confrontational neighbor? How do we respond to our spouse when we don't see eye-to-eye?

What do when the blow gun isn't a viable option?

Communication is the key to relationships and what's interesting is the superabundance of verses in the Bible that deal with the subject of communication.

As we've often pointed out, the Bible's been given to us by God so that we'd not

only know about how to have a relationship with God and go to heaven but so that we'd know how to live a fulfilled life in the here and now.

The Bible is a book of life principles. And my theory is that if God mentions certain principles repeatedly it's because those apply to areas we have the most trouble with.

Conflict resolution, communication is one of those tough areas in life isn't it?

let's start by opening our Bibles to **Ephesians chapter 4, page 1040**

The Bible is crystal clear when it comes to the question of how to have a relationship with God. Our relationship with our Creator becomes the basis for our relationship with one another.

Originally, when God created Adam, there was a perfect relationship between God and man. Adam walked and talked with God.

But when Adam chose to eat the fruit rather than to obey the clear command of God something radical happened.

The Bible says Adam died spiritually and all of us as his offspring are born in spiritual deadness and separation from God.

Most people realize there's a separation, that's why there's thousands of religions on the planet. People are trying to reach back to God.

The thing is we can't reach God. He's holy and perfect. We are far from perfect.

That's why God has reached down to us. Two thousand years ago He visited our world in Jesus Christ to remove the barrier.

The book of Hebrews in the New Testament explains it this way:

*10:11-14 And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God...For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.*

God, in Christ, died on a cross to take the eternal consequences of our sin upon himself. He rose again and gives forgiveness and eternal life to all who will trust Him for it.

Once we place our faith in Christ there's a brand new relationship established between us and God. He's our Heavenly Father, Savior, Lord, Master, and friend all rolled into one.

Now He calls us to live a life that's worthy of our new relationship with Him.

We can't earn that relationship by what we do. If we could, the death of Jesus Christ would be a great tragedy. Our relationship with God is totally and completely dependent on what He did.

What we're to do in response, is to honor that relationship by following out God's direction for our life. When we do not only is God honored, but we experience His blessings.

Last week we looked at verse 17-24 of Ephesians 4 and we saw that Christians fall into sin just like everybody else. We need to commit ourselves to live for God by the power of His Holy Spirit.

We saw that we're to put off the old way of life and put on God's new way. But, we saw that a lot of times people just focus on the put off and forget about the put on.

If we only focus on what we're not supposed to do we're going to get bored and have no sense of purpose, because our life will be just about avoiding things. We're going to run the risk of being judgmental and critical of all the people we don't think are doing life the right way.

That's why we need to focus on the put ons, what we're supposed to do.

Today we're going to continue that theme of living life God's way, but the emphasis is going to be communication.

*I. To Communicate We Need To Tell The Truth*

**Read 25**

We've already seen in verse 15 that when we speak the truth, we need to do it in love. We don't use the truth like a club to beat people down.

Now if we're to put off Satan's way and put off God's way, isn't it interesting that first on the list of put offs is lying.

In John 8:44 Jesus said this about the fallen angel we call Satan. *When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.*

God is a god of truth. The Holy Spirit is called "the spirit of truth." Jesus said, "I am, the truth."

The first sin on the planet grew out of a lie. II Corinthians 11:3 say, *the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness.*

The first lie was about the character of God. God had said the day you eat from the fruit you'll die. Satan said, *You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.*

That's the same bogus message he tries to spread today. There's no consequence to sin and God's just holding things back from you.

That's the lie that changed paradise into what we know as earth today.

When we give excuses, flatter someone, when we keep silent when the truth should be spoken, those are all examples of deception that shouldn't be in our lives.

When I go over this passage in premarital counseling I start with this communication principle, tell the truth.

You know what most couples say? "Hey, we have no problem there. We're in love. We tell the truth."

Then I ask them this, have you ever been aggravated or upset about something and your significant other says to you, "What's wrong honey?" And you don't want to get into it so you answer, "Nothing."

I've never had a couple say, "No way, we've never done that to each other."

That's a lie. Now you might say, "But it's just a little lie. I only would say that if I didn't want to get into a big blow out."

The problem is, the other person knows your lying. They know something's wrong but they don't know what it is. So they start guessing.

That's the kind of response that builds suspicion and mistrust. That's the kind of lie that allows problems to grow.

It happens between husbands and wives, boyfriends and girlfriends, parents and children. It can happen in any relationship.

It's deadly but you know what? Christians do this. How do I know that? Because we're reading a letter from an apostle to a church full of first century believers and he says, "Stop lying."

He doesn't say, "You might be tempted to lie, but of course you're all Christians so you'd never do that." He says, "Stop."

"Stop lying, and start telling the truth." When does a liar stop being a liar? when he starts telling the truth.

Why do we tell the truth to each other? *For we are members of one another.*

The overall context of this book has been about unity in the church. The church is described as a body with Christ as the head and believers as the parts of the body.

Parts of a body need to be truthful. What would happen if the parts of your body weren't honest with each other. What would happen if your eyes lied to you? Where would you end up if the nerve endings didn't tell you the truth about extreme heat or cold? There'd be a disaster.

The church can't function without that same kind of honesty. How can we minister to each other, encourage each other, bear each other's burdens, love each other, teach each other. or pray for each other if no one knows what's really going on.

We have to speak the truth in love in our relationships, in our marriages, and in our church.

*I. To Communicate We Need To Tell The Truth*

*II. To Communicate We Need To Deal With Anger*

## **Read vs 26**

There's a lot of misunderstanding in people's minds when it comes to how God views anger.

Anger isn't sin. The New Century version translates this, "When you are angry, do not sin."

Anger is a God-given emotion so it's not wrong in itself. In fact, there's some times when it's completely appropriate.

In Mark 3, religious leaders are following Jesus around just looking for an excuse to bring Him up on charges of violating the laws of Judaism. Verse 5 says, *And when He had looked around at them with anger...*

Jesus got angry.

In John 2 we read about Him going up to Jerusalem and finding money changers on the temple grounds.

They sold animals for pilgrims to offer as a sacrifice and changed money into Jewish shekels for the purchase. All this was at exorbitant rates and just ripped people off.

John says, *When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!" Then His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up."* John 2:15-17

Jesus, the Son of God, became angry, and rightly so. Part of our problem is we get angry about the wrong stuff.

We get all up set because somebody says or does something to us. We ought to be angry about injustice and inequity in our world. We should be angry about the destruction of the family, the lives ripped apart through pornography, the slaughter on our highways because of drunk drivers.

We ought to be angry enough to speak and act in a positive way for change. If God's angry with those things we should be too.

Yet at the same time we're still sinners who can turn what should be righteous anger into unrighteous anger.

To put a check on that the Bible qualifies the permission to be angry with three negatives:

1. "Sin not." Donald Trump and Rosie O'Donald aren't exhibiting righteous anger. They're not angry at the fact that other people are suffering.

Anger that comes from injured pride, spite, malice, animosity, or revenge is sin.

That's the anger that destroys our relationships. 'She can't talk to me like that!' 'He can't treat me like that!' That's destructive anger.

2. "Don't let the sun go down on your wrath." If you allow anger to go unchecked it eventually turns into bitterness. Time may heal a lot of wounds but it doesn't take care of anger.

The Bible gives us this command. Take care of anger daily. Now that doesn't mean you have to challenge everybody around you about everything that rubs you the wrong way.

In fact, the Bible says, *Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.* I Peter 4:8

If life isn't all about us we're going to have an attitude of forgiveness up front. People who get angry in traffic, and angry in the supermarket line, and angry when people don't meet their expectations are totally wrapped up in self.

But there are some things that can't be just set aside. They would grow into a root of bitterness, as the Bible puts it.

This applies to everybody, but think about how it hits married couples. The lesson is don't pull the covers up with your back to one another in anger.

Matthew 5 says if you've caused the offence, get it straightened out. Matthew 18 says if the other person caused the offence, get it straightened out.

God always puts the responsibility for seeking reconciliation on us. He doesn't give us the option of saying, "No way I'm making the first move, I didn't start this. Let him come to me and then we can talk."

If we play that game we open the door up for the third warning... **Read 27**

You can believe what you want to believe but the Bible says that Satan is real and he's active. In fact Peter says, *your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*

He hates God and so he hates you. You're made in the image of God and Satan wants to bring you down. He wants a foot hold in your life. Unresolved anger gives him just what he needs to get traction.

### **Verse 28**

Obviously this verse isn't about communication but it's a perfect illustration of how God says we're to deal with sin in our lives.

How do you stop being a liar? You start telling the truth. How do you stop being a thief?

You start working and give some of what you have to people who are really needy.

God's telling us to put off the wrong behavior patterns, but don't stop there. Put off the wrong but put the right in it's place.

*I. To Communicate We Need To Tell The Truth*

*II. To Communicate We Need To Deal With Anger*

*III. To Communicate We Need To Build Others Up*

**Read vs 29a** *Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth*



The NIV says, *Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths*

Here's the "put off." Don't let words come out of your mouth that hurt others. Proverbs 18:21 says, *Death and life are in the power of the tongue.*

Here's where communication really breaks down. When we tear down someone else we're changing the focus from the problem to a personal attack.

**The verse continues with the put on. Read 29b** *but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.*

Jesus said, *A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.* Luke 6:45

You can tell a lot about somebody's character by what they say.

If God's not a priority in your life it'll show up in your speech patterns.

God says, "Don't attack with your speech. Don't tear down with your words. And don't even do it a little bit. It's *Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths.* There's no excusing ourselves.

Instead we're to use words that edify. That word means to build up. God's purpose for our words is that we build character in others.

That's the purpose of our speech. Whether it's criticism or praise. Whether we agree or disagree. Whether it's parents to children, husbands to wives, friend to friend, or stranger to stranger. We're to impart grace with our words.

That means this. Before we open our mouths we need to ask ourselves, is what I'm about to say helpful or hurtful? Are my words and tone of voice going to encourage this person or are they going to assail them?

The word translated "corrupt" in this verse *sapros* was used by the Greeks to describe rotting food. if you're not helping the person your speaking to your words have as much value as a piece of rotten broccoli.

That's challenging, isn't it? That puts things in perspective.

When we don't agree with someone. When things are getting tense, the temptation is to just ignore these verses. God says He counts what we say, and how we say it to be absolutely important.

If we don't speak properly there are some very serious spiritual consequences.

**Read vs 30**

Verse 30 is packed with truth. We've already learned that when we trust Christ as Savior God the Holy Spirit comes to live in us. Our body becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit.

And our speech is so important that if we don't get it right we grieve God.

Some cult groups say that the Holy Spirit is an impersonal force, kind of like God's power. The Bible says He's a person. You can't grieve an impersonal force.

Other groups say if you sin as a believer the Holy Spirit will leave you and you won't be a child of God any longer.

Again, the Bible teaches something very different. The Spirit seals us until the day of redemption. The Holy Spirit is the seal and He keeps on sealing us until the day our redemption is complete and we're with the Lord.

We're not sealed until we sin, or we'd be in big trouble. Especially in this context. This isn't about going out and murdering somebody or committing adultery, this is about speaking to someone unkindly.

If that would be the thing that somehow breaks the Holy Spirit's seal on our lives then everyone in this room is in jeopardy.

The point is not that we lose our salvation, which is impossible or it would be probation, not salvation.

The point is that God can be grieved through our words.

People say don't get all bent out of shape by cursing and swearing, it's just a bunch of words. God says our words are spiritually significant.

The word translated “grieve,” *lupeo* means “to cause pain in the body or mind.”

God is pained when we use destructive speech.

By the way, you can’t grieve someone who doesn’t care about you. God cares about His children intimately.

- I. *To Communicate We Need To Tell The Truth*
- II. *To Communicate We Need To Deal With Anger*
- III. *To Communicate We Need To Build Others Up*
- IV. *To Communicate We Have To Proact, Not React*

### **Read vs 31**

It’s one thing to watch what you say and not hurt people with your words. It’s another to not fight back when somebody hurts you.

All of this bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor is like lobbing back the grenade when someone attacks you.

That’s the put off. Now notice here. God’s not leaving any room for excuses. None of this “Well, I know I shouldn’t have yelled like that but, you’d have yelled too if someone called you a jerk.”

And here’s what we’re to put on... **Read vs 32**

Instead of reacting when somebody else blows it with their words, proact. This is like the crown jewel of communication principles. This is one we’re only going to do if God’s in our life and if He’s a top priority.

Treat others the way God has treated you.

Paul, who was writing this letter to the Ephesian Christians, is saying, “Hey, I know what life is like. There are people in life who will do you wrong. Sometimes it’s the people you love the most, which is why it hurts so bad. But if you’re going to do things God’s way you have to forgive them like God’s forgiven you.”

He doesn’t say, “Just ignore the hurt. Pretend like they haven’t done anything to you.” He says, “Forgive them.”

And here's how: unconditionally, totally, undeservedly, and eagerly. God was so eager to forgive that He made the way by giving up His own rights and paying the highest price anyone could pay.

That's the way we're to treat others.

God has made us a promise based upon the cross.

Because Christ died on the cross to pay for sin God promises to never bring our sins up to us again.

And even though God is omniscient, meaning He knows all things, He purposely does n't remember our wrongs.

That's the real meaning of forgiveness. It's promising not to bring that wrong up to the person who wronged you, not to talk about it with your friends, and not to bring it up to yourself.

To say, "Sorry, I've been wounded too deeply. I've been hurt too badly. I refuse to forgive," grieves the heart of God.

Aren't you glad God didn't say, "I'm only going to forgive the people who haven't sinned against me too badly. I'm only going to forgive the people who deserve my forgiveness."

None of us deserve God's forgiveness. But God forgives all who come to Him in faith. That should be an incentive for forgiveness, but it should be an incentive for salvation too.

If you've never received Jesus Christ as Savior you can be forgiven. The Bible says, *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.* John 1:12

The Bible is so practical. It tells how to get to heaven, and it tells us how to communicate and deal with conflict right now.