

THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS
“PUTTING OFF AND PUTTING ON”
(EPHESIANS 4:25-32)
MAY 20, 2007

MEMORY VERSE

*Ephesians 4:32, “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another,
as God in Christ forgave you.”*

INTRODUCTION

Because those who have placed their faith in Jesus are a new creation, they have put off the old humanity and put on the new. They must put away the old standards they use to live by and adopt new ones. Just as we adapt our dress to fit the occasion, our new role means new clothing and our new life, a new ethical lifestyle. In Ephesians 4:25-32, Paul begins to get down to the nitty-gritty of Christian behavior, citing specific examples of this new lifestyle. All of these are very practical and they all concern relationships.

In each example, a negative injunction is balanced by a corresponding positive command. It is not enough to put off the old rags; we have to put on new garments. It is not enough to give up lying and stealing and losing our temper; we must also start speaking the truth, working hard and being kind to people. Just as Jesus intertwines belief and behavior in all of his teachings, Paul either implies or states a theological reason or command for each of these statements in Ephesians 4.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

1. In Ephesians 4:25, Paul once again uses the conjunction “therefore” to begin this transition. In regards to verse 24, why do you think his first exhortation would be that of “speaking truthfully” to one another? According to James 3:6-8, is what we say to one another really that important?

2. What does Ephesians 4:26 reveal to us concerning anger? How do verses 26 and 27 relate to each other?

3. In Ephesians 4:29, the word for “evil” (or unwholesome) is “sapos,” a word used for rotten trees or rotten fruit. When applied to rotten talk, whether this is dishonest, unkind or vulgar, we may be sure that in some way it hurts the hearer. Review James 1:26 and 3:3-10. What kind of power does “rotten talk” possess? What kind of talk should be coming out of our mouths and why?

4. What does Paul mean by the phrase, “do not grieve the Holy Spirit?” In the context of the verses we are studying, how does this truth apply?

5. List and define each of the six negative attitudes or actions Paul tells us to “put off” in Ephesians 4:31. What kind of attitudes and qualities are to replace these in the life of a Christian?

6. Why do you think Paul ends this discussion with the subject of forgiving others? (Ephesians 4:32) Why is this truth so important to the body of Christ?

OUR WALK WITH GOD

1. Anger is a natural instinct for humans, though we tend to deal with it in different ways. What is your tendency ... are you a “stuffer” or an “exploder?” Is it ever okay for a Christian to be angry? If so, in what cases would it be justified? What occurs when anger is not dealt with appropriately?

2. What are some ways that people show disrespect when communicating with others? How can you display respect and value to someone when communicating with them?

3. Why do most people struggle with forgiving others? What does Paul say is the key to forgiving? Is there someone you need to ask forgiveness of today? How can your small group hold you accountable to take this step of obedience?

4. Why aren't we completely changed when we accept Christ?

GOING DEEPER

In this passage, Paul exhorts us to “put off” the old way of life and “put on” the new. How do the following passages further explain Paul’s admonition? (Romans 8:5-11; Galatians 5:22-26; Colossians 3:12-17; James 1:19-27, 2:14-26)

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

“We are beginning to see the threads of the new garments weaved together into a beautiful, multicolored pattern of the character of Christ. The clothing of righteousness that God wants us to wear reveals practically what Jesus would do in the everyday situations of life. It is so important that we understand the central message of this passage. Paul is not saying that we should grit our teeth and try hard to be like Jesus. What he is saying is that we should put Jesus on like a garment so that He is seen instead of us. We cannot imitate Jesus, but we can yield to Him and let Him live His life through us. When we do this, we are putting on the new garment of Christ and taking off the old garment of “self”.

“The Book of Ephesians,” Eddie Rasnake

SUGGESTED SMALL GROUP STUDY FORMAT
“PUTTING OFF AND PUTTING ON” (EPHESIANS 4:25-32)
WEEK SIXTEEN – MAY 20, 2007

CONNECT30 MINUTES

Time of Fellowship

Opening Prayer

Icebreaker Question:

1. What is your favorite movie of all time and why?
2. What was the most meaningful act of kindness you ever received from someone? How did it make you feel?

MEMORY VERSE (Memorize and say aloud in your group) 5 MINUTES

Ephesians 4:32, “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS 35 MINUTES

PRAYER AND PERSONAL SHARING 30 MINUTES

1. Spend time praising the Lord for His work in your life. Ask Him to give you grace in the areas of your life that need to change and mature.
2. Determine to reconcile any areas of bitterness or resentment you are harboring in your life. Ask your small group to pray with you and hold you accountable in dealing with this area of struggle.
3. Pray for the personal needs of one another in your small group.