

## Grace Living

We have experienced God's grace in salvation.

We live daily by the strength His grace supplied to us from His abundant riches.

From the grace we have been given, we can be a source of grace for others?

Before someone becomes a Christian he is lost and in bondage to sin. This scripture refers to the old sin nature of unbelievers – as that which is becoming corrupt.

They walk...

“...in the futility of their minds ... darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness...”

The lifestyle of the unbeliever stands in direct opposition to that of believers. In fact the only reliable evidence of salvation isn't a past experience of receiving Christ as Savior, but a present life that reflects Christ.

“But you did not learn Christ in this way, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, that in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.” (Eph. 4: 17-19, 20-24).

Christians are different from non-Christians in their natures. Salvation is pictured here as laying aside the 'old self' and putting on the 'new self'.

What does living the new life look like, practically?

Many claim to be Christians, but does what they say match how they live?

This Scripture shows a sequence of contrasts that characterize a Christian's Walk.

First of all, new life in Christ involves a change from lying to speaking the truth.

### I. **Falsehood Vs. Truth**

Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with His neighbor, for we are members of one another. (vs. 25)

Liars will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

After the fall lying became a common trait of fallen man.

The apostle John wrote,

“For the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death” (Rev. 21:8).

A believer can fall into lying just as he can fall into any sin, but if his life is an habitual flow of lies that proceeds from a heart that seeks to deceive, he has no biblical basis for believing he is a Christian. The person who continually lies as a regular part of his daily living shows himself to be a child of Satan not of God.<sup>1</sup> Jesus said that Satan was a liar from the beginning and the Father of lies.<sup>2</sup>

Satan lies about God, Christ, life, death, heaven, hell, Scripture, good, evil, and everything else. Satan is the originator of the deceptions of all religions apart from Christianity. Jesus said of the Pharisees that they were not sons of Abraham, as they claimed, but were of their father, the devil.

Because Christians have a new nature and Christ within, they tell the truth, for Christ is the truth. Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth

When we were children my brother and I made mud-puddles of our front lawn with a garden hose. When my mother discovered what we were up to she used the hose on us. Before we could enter the house we had to lay aside our filthy clothes and get a thorough hosing. All I can say is that it was as fun to get clean as it was to get very dirty.

This is the idea of *laying aside lying*. Paul quotes from Zechariah 8:16

“Speak truth, each one of you, with his neighbor.”

Every form of lying is utterly inconsistent with the new nature of a believer in Jesus. Only the truth fits who we are!

The second contrast concerns resolving anger.

## II. Anger Vs. Resolution

Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity. (Vs. 26-27)

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<sup>1</sup> John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Ephesians*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986), p. 182.

<sup>2</sup> John 8.

Whenever someone has an anger problem on the job or school or family, he is often required to attend anger-management classes. Someone has aptly asked the question: Why do we want to manage anger? Would you want to manage the flu? Anger like the flu, should always be resolved.

Two possible meanings are conveyed in this text: **First**, it may be speaking of righteous anger, which is an anger against that which is evil. Jesus violently chased the money changers out of the temple. Other prophets and great saints displayed righteous indignation against evil on occasion.

**Second**, it is likely referring to anger that is self-defensive and self-serving, or resentful of what has been done to them.

**Anger** – orge – {present imperative passive voice}

Translated “**When anger comes upon you...**”

- Do not sin (by giving in to angry emotions).
- Do not let the sun go down on anger
- Do not give the devil a place

We sin by giving in to it.

We sin by not dealing with it efficiently, and become bitter.

We allow the devil to take ground within our soul.

Heb. 12:15 illustrates unchecked anger...

“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...”

God’s grace is always with us to help us forgive, give a gentle answer, or dispel an argument before it erupts. Bitterness, like any pollution becomes a doorway to defiling many people. It is essential to deal with anger quickly. Conflicts can and must be resolved or they can escalate, like an infection that won’t go away without antibiotics.

After comparing anger with murder Jesus speaks of the priority of resolving a conflict before offering to the Lord,  
 “...leave your offering there fore the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.” (Matt. 5:24)

### III. Stealing Vs. Sharing

He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need. (v. 28)

Stealing is a part of the old nature – it's natural to take what belongs to others. The eighth Commandment is simply: "You shall not steal." (Ex. 15)

This Scripture demands a change from stealing to sharing;

because the old nature has a built-in inclination to steal.

Steal – Gr. Klepto Lit. "Steal no longer."

"In the past several decades shoplifting has grown alarmingly, a large percentage of it being done by employees. In some large stores up to a third of the price of the merchandise is used to cover theft losses of various sorts. Intentional overestimating, falsified cost overruns, and outright embezzlement are rampant throughout business and industry. Padding expense accounts, reporting more hours than were worked, failing to report income to the IRS, and other such deceptions are accepted as normal by many people. To them, stealing is simply a game in which getting caught is the only cause for regret or shame."<sup>3</sup>

Stealing is sin and has no part in the new walk of the new man in Christ.

**Labor** –God's answer to stealing is to work with our hands.

To meet own needs, so that there is enough to share with those in need.

"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." (2 Thess. 3:10-11)

The contrast of stealing is sharing from money earned by labor.

Giving is a means of conquering materialism and greed.

No records are kept of how much is made in this life, only how much we gave.

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<sup>3</sup> MacArthur, p. 186.