

Grace Living – Pt. 2

Eph. 4:17-32

Series of Contrasts

The Old nature is replaced with a new nature, resulting in a change in behaviors.

First, as we live in the new nature we change from lying to telling the truth.

Second, from stealing to sharing.

Third, from angry responses to anger resolution.

Fourth, from Unwholesome words to wholesome words.

Fifth, from Natural Vices Vs. Supernatural Virtues

In Col. 3:9-10 we see a parallel passage:

“But now you also, put them all aside: anger wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the **old self** with its evil practices, and have put on the **new self** who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the One who created him ...”

We experience the new nature that displays the character of Christ in our lives.
Literally, Christ lives His life through us.

Paul writes,

“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”
(Gal. 2:20)

To the Colossians Paul spoke of “...Christ in you, the hope of glory.”
(Col. 1:27)

To the Philippians was written, “For to me, to live is Christ...”
(Phil. 1:21)

Through Christ living in us and through us, we live in the new nature.
A fourth outcome of our new nature is Transformed Speech.

-From unwholesome to wholesome.

Unwholesome Words Vs. Wholesome Words

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**,
 so that it will **give grace to those who hear**.
 Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God,
 by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

(Vs. 29-30)

Mark Twain said,

“The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning – and the lightning bug.”

I. Unwholesome Words

Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth...

unwholesome (Gk. *Sapros*) – refers to that which is corrupt or foul and was used of rotten fruit, vegetables, and other spoiled food.

Foul language should never proceed from the mouth of a Christian, because it is totally out of character with his newness of life.

The New Living Translation says,

“Don’t use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.”

Bad language should be repulsive as a rotten apple or spoiled piece of meat.

“Off-color jokes, profanity, dirty stories, vulgarity, double entendre, and every other form of corrupt talk should never cross our lips.”¹

Paul wrote to the Colossians,

¹ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Ephesians*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986), p. 187.

“...**put them all aside**: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth” (Col. 3:8; see Eph. 5:4)

When children are learning to speak, every word is precious and entertaining. Then the job begins to train them when and how to use the gift of speech.

Not a good example, but from history we learn of a constant sparring that went on between Winston Churchill and Lady Astor.

Lady Astor told him, *“If I were your wife, I’d put arsenic in your tea.”*

He responded, *“If I were your husband, I’d drink it.”*

A poem explains the use of words,

If your lips would keep from slips,
Five things observe with care:
To whom you speak; of whom you speak;
And how, and when, and where.

Why is this so important?

1. **There is great power in the tongue.**

Solomon wrote,

“With the fruit of a man’s mouth his stomach will be satisfied;
he will be satisfied with the product of his lips.

Death and life are in the power of the tongue,
and those who love it will eat its fruit”

(Pr. 18:20-21).

Good and evil results can come from our words.

James warned of the destructive power of the tongue,

“And the **tongue is a fire**, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell.

For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by the human race. But **no one can tame the tongue**; it is restless evil and full of deadly poison.” (James 3:6-8).

2. **We must learn to control our words.**

Words show that our faith is real.

James also wrote,

“If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man’s religion is worthless”
(James 1:26).

Our words are eternally important.

Jesus said,

“...the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart...
But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned”
(Matt. 12:34-37)

3. We control our words by renewing our minds.

As we fill our minds with God’s Word, He will cleanse in our hearts, and wholesome words will come out of our mouths.

Isaiah said,

Seek the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and He will have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.” (Isaiah 55:6-9)

We speak from that which fills our hearts. What we put in will come out

Paul wrote, “Finally brethren, whatever is true, honorable, right, pure, lovely of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.” (Phil. 4:8)

Our strength for living comes from our new nature – which seems to be activated in our lives through the Word of God that build into our minds.

Renewing our minds with the Word is linked with putting on the new nature,

“...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. 4:20-24)

Be not conformed to this world...
but be transformed by the renewing of your mind... (Rom. 12:2)

- 1st Refrain from unwholesome words.
2nd Respond with wholesome words

II. Wholesome Words

...good for **edification** according to the **need of the moment**,
so that it will **give grace** to those who hear.

Three aspects of wholesome speech:

1. **Edifies**– to build up, lift up
2. **Appropriate** – **speak the truth in love**
3. **Gracious**

Lit. *‘in order that it may grace the ones hearing.’*

As we live by grace our words will be gracious – give grace.

Col. 4:6 says,

“Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.”

Our words affect others by encouraging them and giving them grace.
On the other hand, unwholesome words discourage, defile, and defeat them.

The writer to the Hebrews warns,

“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...”(Heb. 12:15).

Unwholesome speech also grieves the Holy Spirit.

(Shame on you warning)

Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God,

by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.
(Eph. 4:29)

The Holy Spirit secured our salvation.

The sealing of the Holy Spirit keeps us in our salvation.

The day of redemption speaks of the day when our salvation is fully realized.

Paul is saying that while we are on our way to that day, we must be pleasing to the Spirit.

Our words should reflect our gratefulness to Him, not grieve Him.

Vance Havner wrote these inspiring words, “Our Life”

Jesus said, “I am the life.” (John 14:6) “Christ, who is our life...” (Col. 3:4)

“It remains to be seen what would happen if we who trust Christ as Savior and Lord would also take Him as our life. We have a new life which is Christ Himself and there is no limit to what might be ours if we could simply trust Him for every need of body, mind, and spirit. This does not rule out the use of means but puts everything in His care. He is the life for the total man and when we say, “Christ lives in me,” and “To me to live is Christ,” we are in a new dimension. There is only one Christian life, Christ Himself, but He lives it again in us according to His Word and will, our need and our faith.”²

Words are like water, that cleanses us, satisfies our thirst, and is useful in every way. The new nature is like plumbing that delivers water to us – It helps us control our words for ourselves and others, building and encouraging.

Water from a leaky pipe or roof will destroy a house, bringing rot and mold.

As we build God’s Word into our lives, it will change us inside and out.

Our words will be a source of refreshing to everyone around us.

² Vance Havner, *All the Days*, (Old Tappan: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1976), p. 29.