

Christian Students Association Bible Study

February 9, 2021

The Living and Responsibility Needed in the Body of Christ

Basic Principles - Ephesians 4:21-24

21 If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him as the reality is in Jesus,

22 That you put off, as regards your former manner of life, the old man, which is being corrupted according to the lusts of the deceit,

23 And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind

24 And put on the new man, which was created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality.

The Details of This Living - Ephesians 4:25-32

25 Therefore having put off the lie, speak truth each one with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.

26 Be angry, yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your indignation,

27 Neither give place to the devil.

28 He who steals should steal no more, but rather should labor, working with his own hands in that which is respectable, that he may have something to share with him who has need.

29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but only that which is good for building up, according to the need, that it may give grace to those who hear.

30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed unto the day of redemption.

31 Let all bitterness and anger and wrath and clamor and evil speaking be removed from you, with all malice.

32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ also forgave you.

Note for “new man” in verse 24 – The new man is of Christ. It is His Body, created in Him on the cross (2:15-16). It is not individual but corporate (Col. 3:10-11). In this corporate new man Christ is all and in all — He is all the people and in all the people. See note 11⁹ in Col. 3.

This book reveals first that the church is the Body of Christ (1:22-23), the kingdom of God, the household of God (2:19), and the temple, the dwelling place of God (2:21-22). Here it reveals in

addition that the church is the new man. This is the highest aspect of the church. The church is an assembly of the called-out ones. This is the initial aspect of the church. From here, the apostle went on to mention the fellow citizens of the kingdom of God and the members of the household of God. These are higher than the initial aspect, but not as high as the church as the Body of Christ. Yet the new man is higher still than the Body of Christ. Thus, the church is not just an assembly of believers, a kingdom of heavenly citizens, a household of God's children, or even a Body for Christ. It is in its ultimate, uttermost aspect a new man to accomplish God's eternal purpose. As the Body of Christ, the church needs Christ as its life, whereas as the new man, the church needs Christ as its person. This new corporate person should live a life like that which Jesus lived on earth, that is, a life of reality that expresses God and causes God to be realized as the reality by man. Hence, the new man is the focus of the apostle's exhortation in this section (vv. 17-32).

Note for "put off the lie, speak truth" in verse 25 - The lie refers to anything that is false in nature. Because we put off the old man, we also put off everything that is false in nature. Hence, we speak truth, that is, we speak the things that are true.

Note for "angry" in verse 26 - To be angry is not a sin, but with it there is the possibility of committing sin. We should not continue in anger but should relinquish it before the sun sets.

Note for "give" in verse 27 - According to the context, to continue in anger is to give place to the devil. In nothing should we give any place to him.

Note for "labor" in verse 28 - Stealing is due mainly to slothfulness and greed. Hence, the apostle charged him who steals to labor instead of being slothful, and to share with others what he gains instead of being greedy.

Note for "building" in verse 29 - Our conversation should not corrupt others but should build them up.

Note for "grace" in verse 29 - Grace is Christ as our enjoyment and supply. Our word should convey such grace to others. The word that builds up others always ministers Christ as grace to the hearer. The apostle's exhortation in vv. 17-32 took grace and reality (vv. 21, 24, 29) as its basic elements. The apostle wanted us to live, as Jesus did, a life full of grace and reality (John 1:14, 17). Grace is God given to us for our enjoyment, and reality is God revealed to us as our reality. When we live and speak reality (vv. 21, 24), we express God as our reality, and others receive God as grace for their enjoyment (v. 29).

Note for "grieve" in verse 30 - To grieve the Holy Spirit is to displease Him. The Holy Spirit abides in us forever (John 14:16-17), never leaving us. Hence, He is grieved when we do not walk according to Him (Rom. 8:4), that is, when we do not live according to the principle of reality with grace in the details of our daily walk.

Note for “Spirit” in verse 30 – The apostle’s exhortation in vv. 17-32 not only takes grace and reality as the basic elements but also takes the life of God (v. 18) and the Spirit of God as the basic factors on the positive side, and the devil (v. 27) as a factor on the negative side. It is by the life of God in the Spirit of God, and by not giving place to the devil, that we can live a life full of grace and reality, as the Lord Jesus did.

Note for “in” in verse 30 – I.e., in the Holy Spirit as the element. We were sealed in the element of the Holy Spirit. This shows that God has sealed us with the Holy Spirit as the sealing element.

Note for “unto” in verse 30 – From the time that we are saved, the Holy Spirit as the seal in us seals us continually with the element of God that we may be transformed in nature until our body is completely transfigured and redeemed. Hence, this verse says that we were sealed with the Holy Spirit unto the day of the redemption of our body.

Note for “tenderhearted” in verse 32 – The Greek word has the same origin as *moved with compassion* in Matt. 9:36 and *inward parts* in Phil. 1:8. Only by enjoying Christ as grace and reality can we be tenderhearted and thus be able to forgive one another.

Note for “God” in verse 32 – God In his exhortation in this section (vv. 17-32), the apostle presented God as the pattern of our daily life. In the Spirit and by His life, we can forgive as God forgives.

Fellowship Questions

- How was the new man created?
- By what element does the new man live and move and have his living?
- On what is the specific focus of the practical living of the new man?