

Living the New Life

July 19, 2026, Sermon Notes

Ephesians 4:23-32 (NLT) So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. ²⁶ And “don’t sin by letting anger control you.” Don’t let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷ for anger gives a foothold to the devil.

²⁸ If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need. ²⁹ 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.

³⁰ And do not bring sorrow to God’s Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption.

³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. ³² Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

Introduction: Last week we learned that freedom is more than a destination; it is a transformation.

What Jesus accomplished on the cross didn’t just free us from our past; it empowered us to think and live differently in the present. What we believe should shape how we live.

As Paul continues his thought in Ephesians 4, he becomes very practical. It’s interesting that nearly every instruction he gives has to do with how we relate to people.

That’s because we don’t live in a vacuum; we live in community. Our walk isn’t only with God; it’s with His family. While our relationship with God is foundational, much of our spiritual formation takes place in our relationship with one another. Community is where we learn to become more like Jesus.

This morning I want us to focus on five practical directions that Paul gives for living the new life Christ has given us.

The first direction is truthfulness.

Stop telling lies. Speak truth.

Ephesians 4:23 (NLT) So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body.

Proverbs 12:22 (NLT) The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in those who tell the truth.

Telling the truth is more than simply giving accurate information; it is choosing honesty, integrity, and transparency in every relationship.

Truth builds trust, while lies destroy relationships. Trust takes a lifetime to build and a second to destroy.

Psalm 34:12-13 (NLT) Does anyone want to live a life that is long and prosperous? ¹³ Then keep your tongue from speaking evil and your lips from telling lies!

Jesus called Satan “the father of lies” (John 8:44) Every time we lie, we represent that wrong kingdom.

Control your emotions

Ephesians 4:26a (NLT) And “don’t sin by letting anger control you.”

Notice that Paul doesn't say not to feel anger; he simply says, "Do not sin" in your anger. God isn't calling us to become emotionless; He is calling us to practice self-control. We are called to manage our emotions, not be mastered by them.

Proverbs 29:11 (NLT) Fools vent their anger, but the wise quietly hold it back.

Psalm 37:8 (NLT) Stop being angry! Turn from your rage! Do not lose your temper, it only leads to harm.

Feel your emotions but don’t follow them. Follow the Holy Spirit and practice self-control.

Putting it into practice: **Pause, pray, then proceed.**

- **Pause before you speak**

James 1:19 (NLT) Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry.

Ask yourself, *“Is what I’m going to say from my emotions or the Spirit?”*

- **Pray - Process your emotions with God**

Before you confront the person, who hurt you, ask the Lord to examine your heart and give you the wisdom to respond in a way that brings Him honor.

Psalm 51:10 (NLT) Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

Psalm 141:3 (NLT) Set a guard over my mouth, Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips.

Ask yourself, *"Have I taken the issue to the Lord?"*

- **Proceed - Choose what honors God**

You and I cannot control how people treat us, but we can control how we respond.

Colossians 3:17 (NLT) And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.

Work Honestly; give generously

Ephesians 4:28 (NLT) If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need.

(ESV) Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

Notice the progression. Stop stealing. Work honestly. Start giving

- **Stop stealing** – Stealing isn't always limited to taking something that doesn't belong to us.

Sometimes it's more subtle, like cutting corners, extending break times, wasting company resources, or giving less than an honest day's work.

All of these are forms of taking what we have not rightfully earned.

- **Work honestly** - For the believer, everything changes.

We no longer do things for self-advancement; we do them for kingdom advancement.

We practice integrity at work, not to stand out above everyone else, gain recognition, or earn our promotion, but because of who we are, representatives of Christ.

Colossians 3:23 (NLT) Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.

- **Give generously**

As believers, we no longer ask, "What can I get out of this job?" Instead, we ask, "How can I honor God through honest work, and how can I use what God has entrusted to me to be a blessing to those around me?"

A generous heart is revealed not only in what you give at church but also in how you conduct yourself every day.

Ask yourself:

- Can your employer trust you to do what you were hired to do?
- Can your employees trust you to be fair, honest, and just?
- Do you go above and beyond, or do you only do the bare minimum?
- Do you consistently give your best, or just enough to get by?
- Are you watching the clock, or are you guarding your integrity?

Generosity isn't just about giving financially; it's about giving our very best in every area of our life because ultimately everything we do is done for the Lord.

Speak Life

Ephesians 4:29 (NLT) 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.

(ESV) Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

Corrupt – rotten, foul, profane, worthless.

Rotten speech includes:

- Profanity used to tear down
- Gossip
- Sarcasm that wounds
- Constant criticism
- Harshness

Proverbs 18:21 (AMP) Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it and indulge it will eat its fruit and bear the consequences of their words.

As believers, we are called to use our words to build up not tear down.

We need to have a biblical filter for our mouth.

Before we open mouths, we need to ask ourselves

“Are these words....

- Encouraging or destructive?
- Building unity or creating division?
- Offering comfort or creating anxiety?
- Speaking life or producing death?

Imagine how our lives would change if after every conversation we asked ourselves: "Did this conversation leave the other person stronger?"

Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them. Ephesians 4:29b (NLT)

Don't grieve the Holy Spirit

Ephesians 4:30a (NLT) And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live.

Notice Paul doesn't say, "Don't anger the Holy Spirit." He writes, "Don't grieve the Holy Spirit."

Think about how a parent feels when their children, especially adult children, to whom they have shown nothing but love, grace, and kindness, don't get along. Instead, they criticize, tear each other down, and remain estranged.

Now, I know everyone here has a different family dynamic, and this may describe your own family. But in the family of God, it grieves the Holy Spirit when His children don't get along. He desires that we live in unity, extending to one another the same grace, kindness, and forgiveness that He has so generously shown to us.

Paul sums up this section with a rapid-fire summary in verse 31 and 32.

Ephesians 4:31-32 (NLT) Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. ³² Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

Conclusion

We can have all the right theology, know the Bible from cover to cover, and speak all the Christian jargon. But if it doesn't translate into a life that looks like Jesus, all we have is dead religion and lifeless information. God's goal is not simply that we know the truth, but that the truth transforms us.

Freedom in Christ isn't just freedom from sin; it is the freedom to live and love as He did.

Today I want us to walk away not just asking, "What did I learn?" but also, "Where is God calling me to live differently?".