

*Introduction: Pg. 978*

How do you dress? What's your style? Everyone has a style. Some try to impress. Some try to fit in. Some try to stand out. Some may say, well, I don't really get into that, which is cool, but if you try to avoid a particular style, you really just create your own style.

Hipster  
Urban  
Preppy  
Punk  
Vintage  
Indie  
Sporty  
Casual  
Business

Maybe you work a combination of those styles. Whatever the case, here's the deal.

FCF: As a general rule: we all think we look good. Don't lie. Most of us don't wake up with the goal: I'm going to look like a dweeb today. "Yes! I look awful, borderline, ridonkulous!"

We've all been there, right? Rocked high waters we didn't know were high. Got out that new shirt we love but didn't see the stain on it. Thought we had the right color scheme but our friends almost signed us up for "What Not to Wear."

When it comes to the kingdom of Christ, there is only one style: Jesus gear. Whatever he would put on, we put on. He is the standard of our attire. And like our physical clothing, often times we think our spiritual wardrobe is looking so fresh and so clean, when, in reality, it really needs some work.

Our study in God's Word is going to encourage us:

**The Point: Wear your Jesus gear motivated by Jesus' gospel.** That's where we are going today. To put it in simple terms, we are talking about . . .

**"Gospel-Motivated Living"**  
**Ephesians 4:25-5:2**

The metaphor Paul is using in this passage is that of clothing. As Jon shared with us last week, we should constantly give attention our spiritual wardrobe.

These specific encouragements flow out of what Paul just said in Ephesians 4:17-24. You are a new person in Christ. :) Therefore, you should live consistent with this new reality by putting off old ways, renewing your mind with God's truth, and putting on new ways that reflect the character of God. As Romans 13:14 says: **"Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 13:14, NIV)**

Now Paul provides concrete examples of what this should look like in the grind of life.

You will notice at least 6 ways to dress like Jesus as we dive into these verses.

*Read 4:25-32*

Before we break this down, let me give you a heads up on **three fronts**.

**#1. All of these instructions carry huge significance for our relationship with God *and* one another...**

- The deceitful ways we to avoid (lying, stealing, unkind words . . .) all serve to tear down our relationship. They disrupt harmony.
- The positive commands we are to put into practice (speaking truthfully, sharing with others, kind words) all serve to build up and harmonize our relationships.

**#2. These instructions are Gospel-motivated.** It is *never simply* do this. Don't do that.

- Imperatives - Directions of Command are always rooted in Indicatives statements of fact - namely, concerning who God is and what he has done.
- You will notice that each time a command is given, a motivating reason related to the gospel is also provided.

**#3. These instructions are not burdensome.**

- God commands are never burdensome. (1 John 5:3) The only reason we view them as burdensome is that we fundamentally, don't want to do them.
- As Milton Vincent says, "**When I begin my train of thought with the gospel, I realize that if God loved me enough to sacrifice His Son's life for me, then He must be guided by that same love when He speaks His commandments to me. [Read that again] Viewing God's commands and prohibitions in this light, I can see them for what they are: friendly signposts from a heavenly Father who is seeking to love me through each directive, so that I might experience His very fullness forever."**

So what are these signposts? Step into the closet while we pull out our first piece of Jesus attire. #1 . . .

**I. Speak the truth with your neighbor (4:25).**

V. 25: Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.

- Put off "falsehood." Put it away . . . Discard of it.
  - You know what happens every Wednesday morning at my house?
  - **PIC of WASTE MANAGEMENT truck.**
  - Get that nasty mess up outta here! Our trash is removed, never to be seen again.
  - This is how we should view all sin in our life. Anything that does not look like Jesus. Done!
- When we are telling a story, we tell the truth. When we are asked a question, we tell the truth. When we are giving account of what is going in life, we tell the truth.
- Think about this: we usually lie because some other idol in our life is threatened.
- We lie because we fear what others will think of us if they knew the truth.
- We lie because we love our reputation more than godliness.
- We lie because telling the truth will mean more cash out of my pocket.

**New Slide (Main Point Again) I. Speak the truth with your neighbor (4:25).**

- *T*: So we put off lying... And put on honesty. We speak truth.
- Truth should be the distinguishing mark of our speech. Why? Because God is the God of Truth
- Additionally, it is characteristic of the new society of God's people. Look back at the end of v. 25: "for we are members of one another."
- We should speak with honesty and transparency, because every strong relationship "is built on trust, and trust is built on truth." (Stott)

- This is the motivation. "For we are members of one another." We "speak the truth in love..." (Ephesians 4:15) because . . .
- We belong to one another. We are family. When one suffers, everyone suffers. When one succeeds, everyone succeeds.
- We honor one another through honesty and transparency.

T: The next item in our wardrobe instructs us to . . .

## II. Exercise righteous anger (4:26-27).

**26** Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, **27** and give no opportunity to the devil.

- Is it ever permissible to be angry? Yes, at times, it is warranted and exactly what is called for.
- There is such thing as righteous anger. Read the gospels... Look at Jesus. He got angry at sin, angry at the brokenness of our world, angry when people made a mockery of the worship of God.
- And so should we. There is a time to turn over tables. Perhaps, we get desensitized to the evil around and are not angry enough.

But we must be very careful. After all, it is: "Be angry *and do not* sin..."

- If we're being honest, most of the time we get angry because of our own pride and selfish desires.
- When we're angry with someone else, we are being like Jesus = righteous anger. When someone else is angry with us. "You mad bro?" Hold up = unrighteous anger.
- We should be "sloooooowww to anger" (James 1:19). Anger can be the root cause of relationships that deteriorate.
- **How should we deal with anger?** Here's a simple framework:
  - **Pause & Reflect.** See how you might have contributed to the situation. Sinful anger is closely associated with a lack of patience and self-control
  - **Carefront & Work toward Reconciliation.** We don't confront. We carefront. You say, "yo, that's cheesy." Ok, but you won't forget it.
  - **"So far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all." (Romans 12:18)** In the words of Ken Sande: Don't be peace breaker (stirring up trouble and conflict), nor a peace faker ("everything is cool" but you're boiling on the inside). Be a peacemaker.
  - Here's the main message: DEAL WITH IT. Otherwise, things will go from bad to worse. That's why Paul says . . .

- "Do not let the sun go down on your anger"
- Does this mean we should not ever go to sleep if we're angry? Does this mean people in Northern Norway
- **PIC**
- (who experience the beautiful midnight sun - where the sun shines continuously - in some places for a few weeks, in the northernmost place for four months), Does this mean they have more time to allow their anger to fester? No. :)
- This is proverbial, simply meaning we should not allow our anger to fester and linger

AND why is this so important? *Verse 27*

- Satan is real. He loves to weasel his way into our relationships. He loves for our anger to be fanned like the embers of a fire.
- Why do we start having ill-feelings toward people we loved two weeks ago?
  - Ah.. Man. They are great. I love being around them.
  - And then bang! One or two little things. "Who are they? I don't even know them anymore."

- One of Satan’s schemes is to maximize the minimal. He magnifies the microscopic. He makes mountains out of molehills.
- Do you see what Paul is saying? If you do not deal with it, you are saying to Satan, “come on in and jack up my relationships.”

T: Be angry and do not sin. #3

### III. Work hard and share with those in need (4:28).

**28** 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.

- Some of those in the church of Ephesus were once thieves. Paul says, you’re new. Live differently.

How does stealing manifest itself in our culture?

- Straight up taking what doesn’t belong to you...
- Most of the time, it’s probably more subtle - Cutting a little corner here or there on your taxes. Pirating software, music, movies you should have paid for.
- And what about the workplace?
  - Some employers steal from their workers by overworking them and failing to provide fair compensation.
  - BUT some workers steal from their employers by hanging out on social media, taking short cuts, and not giving their all on the job.

Rather than steal; we are to work.

- God is a working God. As those, made in God’s image, we are made to work. This is why we experience satisfaction when we are working, whether that is vocationally or volunteering. Go listen to our work reimagined.
- The word here conveys “labour to the point of weariness.” (O’Brien).
- When you get home from a long day of work, don’t complain nor be discouraged. Thank God.
- Don’t you admire someone who works hard? My friend Rae runs the show at the Whole Foods Bux on 16.
- She works hard. I’ve told her before: “Rae. You better slow down, you’re making all these other people look bad!”

This is so important because:

- *Not only* do we reflect God as we work, we also can reflect his generosity by sharing with those in need.
- Do you have regard for those in need? Are you willing to give of what belongs to you? Does generosity mark your life?

T: Our fourth trip to the closet tells us . . .

### IV. Use gracious words that build (4:29).

**29** 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.

Everyone of us have a powerful tool that we have 24-hour access too. Our tongue. **“Death and life are in the power of the tongue.” (Prov. 18:21)**

How many **words** do you say **in a day**? Around **16,000!** It is true that women tend to say a few more words than men.

### **How many of those are constructive? How many of those are destructive?**

- Our words can build up and give life, OR our words can tear down and corrupt.
- Think about that picture: we can lift someone's attitude and perspective by our words, OR we can be an instrument of decay in their lives.
  
- *Do you choose your words wisely?*
- We should give careful thought to *what* we say. If you have something important to share, give it some thought, pray about it.
- But it's not simply the proper word, but also the proper time. If we say the right thing at the wrong time, we will not accomplish nearly as much.
- But it's not just what you say and when you say it, but also *how you say it*.
- Is your tone harsh or kind? Do you convey grace or frustration?
- How do you talk to your family? Your friends? Your co-workers?

### **New Slide (Main Point Again) IV. Use gracious words that build (4:29).**

What do your conversations look like?

- This is so important: Just because we are not using destructive words means that we are using constructive words.
- In our conversation, how often are we pointing people to Christ?
- How many times does the name Jesus fall from our lips?
- How many times does the word of God move from our heart to the heart of another person any given week?

We will give an account for every word we speak. **"I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, 37 for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."** (Mt 12:36-37)

*What's the goal here?*

- Building one another up by our words.
- "Every one builds for the sake of everyone." Remember that?
- We can strengthen and embolden people simply by our words.

T: Do you build others up, do you give grace through your words? It is one of the highest privileges for those who dress like Christ. #5

### **V. Do not grieve the Spirit; please the Spirit (4:30)**

**30** And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

- God is Triune. Eternally existing as the one God in three distinct persons: Father, Son, Spirit.
- God is a living being. He is personal. He always desires to relate to his creation, including us, in loving relationship. That is why he can be grieved by our attitudes and actions.
- Because Paul inserts this thought here, it is clear that we grieve the Spirit when we tear others down, fail to build others up with gospel rich words, when we take from others rather than giving, when we practice unrighteous anger. We grieve the Spirit when we fail to walk in God's ways.
  
- What would happen in your life? With what kind of brightness would your life radiate if your greatest fear in life was to grieve the Spirit but your greatest aim was to please the Spirit?
- Fireworks!
- And this the only consistent response to what God has done for us.

We have been "sealed [by the Spirit] for the day of redemption..."

- God has given us new life, and freedom from that which enslaved us, and rest. So he says, look back and look forward. The Spirit has sealed you. You are unshakably in Christ
- AND look what awaits you. Have a future-orientation! Your full and final redemption awaits. So live for that day.
- You may remember at Easter we talked about how the vision of new creation empowers and motivates our works. The same can be said for our personal holiness.
  - Conduct and Deeds. Check. It's motivated by the city that is to come.
  - Character and Devotion. Check. It's motivated by the city that is to come.
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*T:* Our last encouragement comes in vv. 31-32.

**31** Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. **32** Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

## **VI. Extend kindness and forgiveness (4:31-32).**

A couple of observations:

- *All.* Do you know what that means? ALL. Every speck. Every little piece that surfaces in our lives. Completely removed.
- Do you see how it starts at the level of the heart and becomes increasingly public?
  - When we get bitter, we are more quickly to turn to wrath, anger, clamor (explain) and slander.
  - We have ill-feelings toward someone one and fail to deal with it, we get bitter.
  - That bitterness can lead to becoming enraged and angry.
  - We get angry, so we tear others by shouting at them (clamor) or by speaking in such a way that we make them look bad in the sight of others (slander).
  - It can even lead to malice, an intent to bring evil upon someone. Have you ever wanted someone to suffer? We must come to grips with our wickedness.

BUT when we have kindness in our hearts to people, we will be sympathetic, tenderhearted. We will be ready to forgive. Why? Because God in Christ forgave you.

- In light of the cross, how can we fail to extend kindness?
- In light of the cross and our great offense before God, how can we fail to extend forgiveness to others, no matter how great the offense?

*T:* The city of Baltimore needs the power of the cross. The justice, love and forgiveness of the cross. And so does the city of Boston.

*Conclusion:*

- What's going to motivate this? Look at the first two vv. of chapter 5: Read 5:1-2. What does Paul say? Imitate God! Walk like Jesus by living in the shadow of his cross.
- We do it all to point to God's glory and the gospel of Jesus.
- Look at how radically God-centered our attitudes and actions are to be as Christians. We imitate God, walk like Christ, and please the Spirit.
- So a great way to end our time together as we've considering speaking truth, watching our anger, working hard, using gracious words, and extending kindness and forgiveness is by praying a very simple prayer: **"God, what would you have me do?"**