

"Do Not Grieve the Spirit"

Ephesians 4:22-32

July 27, 2008
by C.W. Powell

Ephesians 4:22-32:

“22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. 25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another. 26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: 27 Neither give place to the devil. 28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. 29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. 30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.” (Eph. 4:22-32)

In the passage we read responsively a few moments ago in Galatians 5 contrasts the works of the flesh with the works of the Spirit. As an introduction to the sermon from Ephesians, I want to make a few remarks about Galatians 5, especially what is said in verses 15 and following.

A. The church was being torn apart by “biting and devouring.” It was consuming itself, not growing. The parts were not edifying one another, but destroying one another.

B. Paul says that the cure is to walk in the Spirit, and not walk in the flesh. “If ye walk in the spirit, ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh,” he said.

C. The flesh has its own works, he said, and these works are not the works of

the spirit: those of the flesh are adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like: All such transgressions of the Ten Commandments are the works of the flesh.

D. The Spirit has its own works, and these works are not of the flesh: those of the spirit are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

E. The fruit of the flesh is not grown on the tree of the Spirit; the fruit of the Spirit is not grown on the tree of the flesh. To put it another way: Adam cannot produce the fruit of the Spirit; Christ cannot produce the fruit of the flesh.

F. The child of God has both of these principles at war within him: He has the old man which is corrupt “That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” (Eph 4:22-24)

So now we come to the passage we read in Ephesians 4:22-32:

“22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. 25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another. 26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: 27 Neither give place to the devil. 28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. 29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. 30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.” (Eph 4:22-32)

There are two things I want to make about this passage:

I. I would remind you that we are to be renewed in the spirit of our minds. This is a most dramatic transformation of the man. The spirit of the mind is to be renewed.

A. Not just the mind; but the spirit of the mind.

1. The spirit is the bent, the direction, the attitude of the soul.

2. Sometimes spirit is the same as mind, in the sense of contrast with the body. There are only two entities that make up the man: body and soul; or body and spirit. The spirit is the inner man that cannot be seen, but uses the body.

3. Sometimes the spirit is contrasted with the soul: in this case it means the attitude or the direction of the soul or mind: happy spirit means a happy soul. Various spirits can direct the soul: rebellious, happy, cheerful; hopeful; depressed; gloomy; unbelieving; faithful, angry, forgiving; hard, implacable. Especially, the soul can be dominated by a “lying” spirit: deception of itself and others.

4. The flesh directs the soul in godless ways of darkness, as we read in Galatians 5:

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” (Ga 5:19-21)

5. But a different spirit is to direct the soul to righteousness and holiness: Galatians 5:

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” (Ga 5:22-23)

6. Paul uses a different figure in Galatians 5, but it means the same as put off and put on: “And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.” (Ga 5:24) The figure is harsher, much harsher, but the effect is the same. Put off, means to crucify, to put to death. If you are a Christian you have begun to do this in coming in faith to Christ and His cross. As Paul says in Romans 8:

“So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. 10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.” (Ro 8:8-10)

B. This means that you and I have a war going on in our members, as Paul tells us. We are pulled this way by the sinful desires of the flesh, and we are pulled that way by the work of the Spirit. But the Spirit is a mighty power, invigorated by the power that raised Christ from the dead, so that there is now in you a greater power than that of the flesh. That former power was so great that it held you in bondage, but now Paul prays for the church:

“14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; 17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. 20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, 21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ

Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.” (Eph 3:14-21)

II. We are not to grieve the Spirit. “Grieve” means to sorrow, to be uneasy, to be offended. Just as Christ wept over the city of Jerusalem and was often upset over the sins of men as He was on this earth, so the new man in you which is the work of the Holy Spirit, is grieved when you walk in the flesh and live in the sins of the flesh.

A. Thus was are to walk “walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, 2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3 Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” (Eph 4:1-3) as he says in the beginning of this chapter.

B. As new men in Christ we are one with one another in the body of Christ and nourish and build up one another in the things of Christ. We have been given gifts according to the measure of Christ in order to serve one another. Each has his own place in the body.

C. We have learned this from Christ. And we are not to walk as the unbelievers walk in the vanity of their minds.

D. We are to put off the old man with his deeds and live in the newness of life that is the work of the Spirit. The old man cannot be grieved—he is crucified with Christ; it is the mark of spiritual life that you sorrow for your sins and keep striving to walk in Christ and not after the flesh.

E. You will never grieve because you read your bible; you will never grieve that you showed kindness to your loved ones; you will never grieve because you witnessed for Christ; you will never grieve because you gave of yourself in the service of others. The old man doesn't grieve; he is dead and stinks up the place. It is the spirit of life in you that grieves over the works of the old man; a certain evidence that you live in Christ.

F. If you live in Christ, then you ought to walk in Christ, as the apostle says. “If we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit” Gal 5:25

Paul gives some illustrations of how we walk in the spirit here in Ephesians 5:

1. Put away the lying spirit. Vs. 25 Stop lying to each other. Just as order in the body depends upon the nerves communicating truth to each part; so also is the body of Christ. Not speak truth TO each other; but speak truth WITH each other. We are members of each other. The spirit of your mind must not be a lying spirit. We must speak the truth in our hearts, so we can speak the truth with each other. Psalm 15 says that the one who will abide in the tabernacle of the Lord is the one that speaks the truth in his heart. You cannot speak the truth with your brother if you cherish lies in your heart.

2. Put away the angry, hateful spirit. Vs. 26,27 Do not let anger be the spirit of your mind. I believe he quotes Ps. 4:4 here: "Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still." We are to tremble before the Lord and flee from sin. Instead of going to bed at night and nursing our grudges and dwelling upon them upon our pillow, we are to put away wrath, make peace with our fellow Christian and "be still." A man cannot keep the Sabbath of God if the spirit of anger rules his mind. Nor is he fit to offer the sacrifices of the Lord when he has wronged his brother. Go make peace with your brother, and then come and offer your sacrifices, is the way Jesus put it. It is through anger and strife that we give place to the devil, for hatred and deceit are the original and best works of the devil.

3. Put away the slothful spirit. Vs. 28 You are to serve one another. I know that you and I are very clever at bringing forth excuses in this regard. This is why we are so often urged to wake up, rouse up, stir ourselves. "The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason." (Pr 26:16) A committee of seven men will not be able to stay ahead of the slothful, for he is better at making excuses than anyone. You do not work to feed just your own mouth, but you are also to work to have enough to help others.

4. Put away a corrupt spirit. Vs. 29 Be wholesome and edifying.

Your speech should be “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.” (Col 4:6) This wholesomeness must begin in the inner man, as Paul again tells us:

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”
(Php 4:8)

5. Put away the bitter spirit and all that is with it: vs.31

6. Put on a gracious spirit. Vs. 32: Kindness, tenderheartedness, forgiving.

May God bless you. I have made the applications as I went along.

Amen and Amen.
God bless you.