

## **Ephesians 4:25–30**

### **"The Cosmic Battle for Believer's Mouths, Hearts, and Vocations"**

***The Holy Spirit and the devil are at war. Wherein does this battle rage? Not in the stuff of movies but in the stuff of everyday life: congregational life and worship, marriage, parenting, and vocation. But in these six verses specifically, we see the necessity of both "putting off" and "putting on" in godly speech, godly anger, and godly labor.***

**(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are welcome to listen to the audio recording, which you may find via [tinysa.com/hopewellarp](http://tinysa.com/hopewellarp))**

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Ephesians. Chapter four verses 25 through 30 is our portion for this afternoon, let's pray.

Our Father in heaven how we thank you. That you have sought us who like sheep head straight. We thank you Lord Jesus at you the good shepherd have laid down your life. For your sheep. We thank you that you feed us upon yourself.

And are making us to be like yourself. And we pray now that your spirit would use your word. For that portion of your work that you have assigned for us now. In our lives and we ask it in your name. Lord Jesus amen. Fees in chapter 4 beginning in verse 25 therefore putting away lying.

Let each one of you speak truth. His neighbor. For we are members of one another. Be angry. And do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on your rough nor give place to the devil.

Let him who stole steal no longer. But rather let him labor. Working with his hands, what is good? That he may have something to give him who has need. Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth. But what is good for necessary edification that it may impart grace to the hearers.

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God. By whom you were sealed for the day. Of redemption.

So far the reading of God's inspired and inherent word.

One of the things that we sometimes see because we tend to be very taken with and caught up with that which appears sensational and spectacular is that Christians who? Christians who discover that there is a spiritual world and that there is a devil and that there are demons and that there is such a thing as spiritual war will come up with an idea of how that war proceeds.

Sadly their idea usually ends up being something more like. Battle between magical good and magical evil that you might see in anything from Marvel comic books to Harry Potter to the left behind series and things like that. But what we have here at the end of Ephesians chapter 4 is the Apostles introduction to the spiritual warfare section of his letter.

It does not as many of us probably including this afternoon's preacher. It does not the spiritual war portion does not really begin halfway through chapter 6. There's a tug of war in the 6 verses before us this afternoon. There is a devil who is looking for opportunity there is a warning not to give place to the devil.

There is the Holy Spirit whom we know from Galatians chapter 5 is lusting against warring against our flesh. And he is with us we are sealed by him unto the day of redemption and so whatever we do either gladdens him or grieves him and he pleases him and participates in his work of killing flesh or it grieves him and we are to love him as he loves us and as we are to love the father and to love the son and we are to be thinking about in our daily doings and speaking whether or not we're collating.

The Holy Spirit whether or not we're giving place to the devil, in fact the first half of chapter five will be talking about light versus darkness and this cosmic battle and we're not surprised because the whole letter has been about how God is redeeming sinners by Christ Jesus and making them to walk in good works showing off the new creation that they are as his workmanship in Christ.

Jesus as displays of his grace. And that the end goal is that for unending ages we will be a display of his grace to his glory and that in some sense we already get to participate that in that right now especially in the church. And so what kinds of things or what height what kind of an arena is the spiritual war going to be carried out in?

Well it's going to be carried out in how church members treat one, another. And the intentionality of their conversations. In what you do Monday through Saturday. When you're not in church. And how you work and what kind of work you choose and what you want to do with your paycheck.

Those things will see in six verses before us now but if you'll if you'll quickly run over chapter five into chapter six in your mind, you'll find that the spiritual war is fought in places like what is the role of a wife how does she think of and respond to her husband what is the role of a husband?

Ha what is he supposed to do it in what way is he especially to love his wife what is he to aim at in his love for his wife, which is her sanctification and delight in Jesus. Children obey your parents in the Lord. That's the next place where the spiritual war takes place did, you know children that when your parents tell you to do something and you don't want to do it that is right in the middle of the spiritual war.

When they tell you to do something that you want to do, it's not hard. But when they tell you to do something that you don't want to do, there's a devil who wants an opportunity and there's a holy spirit. Who attends you. And whom you may either gliden or grieve.

Fathers do not provost your children to wrath. But bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord and then the workplace again in chapter six, these are the places. Marriage parenting children vocation and church relationships. It's not sensational like something from one of these fantasy books or fantasy films.

But it is a battleground, isn't it? Isn't that exactly where we see the decay and opposition to Christ most both in the culture and in the church. Well. In what we have before us we have four areas and what we notice is that in all of them there is a putting off of the old man like we heard about in verse 22 last week and they putting on of the new man in verse 24 and both will help us.

So if you want to work on putting away lying putting away lying therefore put away lying let each putting away lying let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor for we are members of one another and there are many reasons that we that we lie and one of the big ones is we want to look better than we are or we want to get out of some troubles that we are in but we real.

Ize that that were to put off the old man and were to put on the new man and one of the things that we do is we care about the other parts of the body isn't that one of the things that we saw in the second half of chapter two is on that one of the main things that we have been seeing in the way that Christ grows his church up into himself in chapter four and so if you're on mission the temptation to lie growth smaller because in thinking instead of thinking I want to look better to my brother you're thinking about Jesus has assigned me to do my brother good.

I need to speak truth to my neighbor because true one. Another in love is one of the ways that I as one of the joints and every joint in the body supplies something strengthens the rest of the body and the whole grows up into Christ. And so being intentional about the speaking of the truth with our neighbors because we are members of one another.

Helps us to put away lying and putting away lying will help us with the other. Now where to put away lying. All together, which is not surprising because the scripture tells us that God cannot lie and we're being conformed to Christ. But you know what the scripture tells us about God and anger.

God is angry with the wicked every day. Psalm chapter 7. In fact, there are many places where God describes himself full of wrath and fury but it's tricky for us, isn't it because we're very fleshly we're not like God. In our flesh, we easily get upset about the wrong things and we nurse that unrighteous anger in a way that the anger controls us.

So, maybe a surprising to you that we have a command and verse 26 to be angry. Anger about the right things in the right way will help us. Not fly off the handle and be controlled by fleshly anger. Most of all, we are to be angry for anything that is against the Lord Jesus.

And yet we are not we are not to harbor bitterness in our heart or let that anger consume us. In fact that as the context in our passage in which he says you give place to the devil. We're to put off stealing. Let him who stole still know longer desire to get for yourself that which is not yours.

Well what putting on helps you fight against or as part of the fight against putting off stealing? Three things. One is that you work hard. Let him labor working with his hands and the hands here are apart for the hole. If you are are doing a job that yes, you work with your hands a little bit but your primarily working with your mind and so forth but that is that you use what God has given you how God has made you to work hard.

So that's one thing work hard. Second thing the kind of job that you choose. Working what is working with his hands what is good? That your goal in your vocation is not to feel fulfilled. That kind of nonsense just came into the church in the last couple of generations because frankly we for the most part of human history haven't gotten to choose our vocation.

It was chosen for us. But. You are to work something that does good to others that is productive that does your neighbor good something that is honoring unto God and you are to feel fulfilled by being conformed to Christ and loving God in your work and loving others in your work and you are to find that fulfilling.

Now, there is something too matching the various skills and characteristics that are unique to you the and opportunities that God has uniquely given you in order to do as much good as you can. But you are to work hard and you're to aim at something that that does good and then what are you to do with your earnings?

Well, you are to take care of yourself instead of stealing and if you are to take care of your household because he doesn't care for his own household talking in the context of financial support has denied the faith and his worst than an unbeliever. Says the Apostle Paul by the Holy Spirit to Timothy, But your goal is to be productive enough that you'll have something left over so that you can do what?

Save up for that airsoft weapon. Save up for that. Nicer newer fancier car. That vacation. Well, There's nothing wrong with having air soft weapons or cars. Or recreation that God can give us in in a vacation those things easily become self-indulgence. But there is supposed to be in our hearts as Christ as we are conformed to him the desire that we would earn enough that we might be able to give to him who has need.

Now if the Lord puts you in a position where you are the one who has need praise God because your brother whom he enabled to have something to give to it and who has needs somebody to give it to. And that brings honor to Christ that those who are in the one season receive with Thanksgiving and gladness unto God from those who are in the other season.

If you read and first and second Corinthians the collection that Paul is taking for the Saints and Judea there is a hope that one day the rules will be reversed and they will have plenty in the Corinthians and the Macedonians will have need. And so do not feel that this passage means that you should never take help from

anyone else, but work with your own hands, what is good so that you can hide from your brother who has extra when you have need.

It can't work that way can it. But if your goal in trying to earn and prosper is to be able to give to him who has need after you've taken care of your own household. All right, don't forget. Taking care of your own household if you don't deny the faith and worse than it unbeliever.

But if that's what you're focusing on stealing is so.

Your honor Christ enough hard work, you are Christ in the choice of the kind of work you honor Christ and what you want to be able to do by what you get by that work. Then finally putting off corrupt words for a seating out of your mouth. The kinds of words that reinforce one another's flesh.

And always being given to silliness or indulging with a snicker in foul joking or just talking to one another about your covetousness or rehashing the same argument over which is the better engine or which is the best mobile operating system for the 17th Lord's Day in a row. How do we put off speaking words that reinforce corruption that which comes to the flesh?

Well part of putting off that corruption is to put on speaking to what another what is good for necessary edification that it may impart grace to the hearers. Isn't the grace of God wonderful? That's one of the main things in the book of Ephesians that all that God planned to do through Christ is to the praise of the glory of His grace.

And the Holy Spirit comes to us in this passage and He says and your words get to be imparters of grace. That there is a necessary building up it will happen and there is a necessary means for that building up the Lord Jesus using one another's mouths not to reinforce the flesh but to reinforce the new man that he is made us and is growing us in the image of Christ in by the words that we speak to one another.

So whatever of these areas you are growing in dealing with especially whether you are focused, especially on the putting on. Part of it don't forget also the putting off of the other if you're focused on the pudding off don't forget also the pudding on the Holy Spirit who has been assigned to you until the day of redemption is fighting against your flesh and you can love him and see his love for you and join him in battle against the devil and not give the devil any opportunity or any place.

Amen. Let's pray.

Lord we thank you that you have made the place the arena of the display of your grace in Jesus. And the arena of the battle between the forces of the devil and your Holy Spirit, even our own hearts are a mouths our relationships and the congregation are work and life in the home together we pray Lord that you would make us to see the power and the goodness of your grace in our Lord Jesus Christ that that by which you have created us.

You. As the same power and the same grace by the same spirit in which you are have equipped us for battle in the spiritual war grant to us to fight it. Grant to us to have conversations like those who are doing battle in the strength and for the glory of the Lord Jesus.

Help us to remember how much your spirit loves us and that he is with us and dwelling in us so that we too will love him and care whether or not we are grieving him or gladdening him we pray that you would help us in our daily work when we bog down and things are difficult and it feels uninspiring that you would remind us that we have opportunity there to bring you glory by the work that we are doing working hard doing what is good and desiring to.

To minister to our brother who has need we pray Lord for any who have need that they would rejoice in the opportunity that you have given them to be part of how Christ's grace and glory are displayed in that way as

well send us from this place now eager to display you in the rest of our lives we thank you for this day and we pray that you would continue to delight us in your day and use that to make us delight in yourself and to make us ride on the heights.

And feed us with the heritage of Jacob for we ask it in Jesus name amen.