

Title: IMITATORS OF GOD, EPHESIANS 4:25 – 5:2  
(Chatham, NJ; 08/12/12, AM) [Pc – Exegesis, Two-Point Outline]

Theme: Behavioral expectations for Christians as set high; piety and doctrine lead to changes in lifestyle.

Purpose: To examine particularly the inner attitudes that produce Christian behavior.

Introduction:

1. Paul emphasizes the importance of ethics, changed minds, and changed lives.
2. He points out the futility (17), darkness (18), hardness of heart, and callousness (18-19) which characterizes life outside of Christ.
3. He then reminds the Ephesians that Christ is different (20).
4. He ends with a repentance metaphor (22-24): put off/put on, renew, and righteousness and holiness.
5. He brings together a set of exhortations with the idea of being created in the likeness of God (24) and of being imitators of God (5:1).
6. Much of it addresses things of the heart.

I. Out of the Heart (Mt. 12:34) – inward transformation (Jesus locates humanities' problems in the heart)

- A. Change is a function of the heart
  1. ILLUS: the issue of gun control after Aurora and other events
  2. Easy availability of guns is blamed for the shootings, but statistics demonstrate that over a ten year period many more people now own guns, but the murder rate has dropped (see other quotes and facts)
  3. Gun ownership or behavior ownership?
- B. Anger ownership, 26-27
  1. "Be angry" does not grant permission to be angry
  2. It is dangerous in vs. 27 and repudiated in vs. 31; Jesus says that anger is the root of murder
  3. More like, "Anger is to be avoided at all costs, but if, for whatever reason, you do get angry, then refuse to indulge such anger so that you do not sin."
  4. The injunction in Ps. 4:4 is to reflect on it at night while Paul's injunction seems to fit with it, "Do not let the sun go down while you are angry"
  5. This all begins by taking ownership of your anger
  6. You can let your anger dissipate in the cross
- C. Put away, 31 (same as put off in vs. 22?)
  1. Bitterness – anger that has been nursed, coddled, and savored
  2. Wrath and anger – to the Stoic philosophers one was the initial explosion of rage, the other was the more settled feeling of gnawing hostility
  3. Most likely used interchangeably by Paul
  4. Clamor – shouting, perhaps with hostile intent
  5. Slander – resulting from the initial vices listed here
  6. Malice – a summary of the terms that refers to any action or attitude that intends harm to one's neighbor
  7. These are all things that come from the heart
- D. Instead, 31...
  1. Be kind and compassionate – exhibiting genuine concern for others
  2. Forgive – one of the keys to dissipating anger
  3. Walk in love – love does no harm to a neighbor, Romans 13:10
  4. To one another – stresses communal harmony

5. These are all things that originate in the heart

## II. The Mouth Speaks (Mt. 12:34) – outward manifestation

### A. Stop stealing, 28

1. An affirmation of the 8<sup>th</sup> Commandment
2. We still must obey it
3. Respect ownership and take ownership for your survival
4. Do your own labor and earn your own wages
5. Paul adds a dimension: instead of being the sort of person who takes from others, be one who contributes (28)
6. Be a giving not a taking part of the community

### B. Put away falsehood, 25

1. The 9<sup>th</sup> Commandment prohibits lying in the realm of legal affairs
2. Lev. 19:11 makes a broader prohibition
3. Satan is the father of lies, John 8:44
4. Deceit can be something inherent in the very human character; we not only lie to others, but we lie to ourselves
5. Be honest

### C. No evil talk, 29 (rotten, corrupting, decaying)

1. Words are powerful indicators of the inner condition of the heart
2. They have the ability to build up or break down
3. James 1:21 tells us that God's "word" can save us
4. 1:26 even says that an unbridled tongue destroys the religious life
5. Do your words build up or destroy?
6. Paul tells the Colossians that their speech should always be gracious
7. In line with his concern for unity in Ephesus, he insists that they use this powerful tool to build people up, not break them down

## Conclusions:

1. Change your heart.
2. Change your ways.
3. Change your speech.
4. Accepting the Gospel does this.
5. Faith, repentance, and baptism bring about a new life.
6. Take hold of it and live it.