

Title: TO WALK IN LOVE (Relationships that Work), Ephesians 4:25 – 5:2
(Chatham, NJ; 08/09/15, AM) [Pc – Exegesis/Topical]

Theme: Paul's exhorts the Ephesians to conform to certain behaviors, and though he connects them with the idea that these affect relationships with others, he acknowledges that God provides the foundation for doing them.

Purpose: To encourage the audience to see these things as things we should not put off, but to acknowledge them as significant "bucket list" things.

Introduction:

1. Think about how short your life is: what things would you do if you knew that you only had a short time to live? (Mention our friend, Marcos?)
2. Why not spend it on really important things, not merely selfish "bucket lists?"
3. In 1 Timothy 6:10-11 Paul tells Timothy to flee the pursuit of wealth but pursue godly things.
4. Would you think that your relationship with God and others was important enough to focus on?
5. In Ephesians 4:25-5:2 Paul describes what such a list might look like.
6. Throughout this section he keeps talking about their relationships: though the body of Christ is the context, it becomes a paradigm for all human relationships.

I. Members of One Another (25): Two Things that Kill Relationships

A. Lying to each other

1. Put away falsehood and speak the truth to each other
2. Leviticus 19:11 prohibits lying
3. He has already brought this up in 4:15
4. Lies poison communication and breed suspicion instead of mutual trust
5. "Deceitful desires" are at the heart of our sin (22)
6. We are not to be people with hidden, deceitful agendas

B. Put away anger

1. Verse 26 is not permission to be angry (see verse 31)
2. "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."
3. Anger is destructive, and James 1:19 carries the same caution: be slow to anger for the anger of man does not bring about the righteous life that God wants
4. Proverbs has many prohibitions and warnings
5. Eccl. 7:9 says, "Be not quick to anger, for anger lodges in the bosom of fools."
6. Anger can cause estrangement, thus, we are to get rid of it quickly: don't let the sun go down on it

II. Have Something to Share with Others, 28

A. Stop stealing

1. A prohibition of the eighth commandment, Exodus 20:15
2. Repeated in Leviticus 19:11
3. Yet Paul's exhortation goes deeper than mere prohibition
4. Speaking to thieves in particular he says that we should become productive members of the community: have something to share with others, 28
5. Do honest work: responsible members of the community don't become dependent on others. This is not the Christian way.

B. The joy of giving

1. Giving is an unselfish, spiritually rewarding act: "It is more blessed to give than to receive," Acts 20:35.
2. God gave his son to demonstrate his love, 1 John 4:9-10
3. Jesus gave his life as a ransom, Mark 10:45
4. Experience the joy of giving rather than taking.

III. Kindness and Forgiveness toward One Another, 32

- A. Get rid of . . . (remove or put off the old self, 22): listen closely to this list
 1. Bitterness: harbors resentment; bitter people persistently let past hurts simmer
 2. Wrath: an explosion of hostility
 3. Anger: a settled feeling of gnawing hostility
 4. The Stoic philosophers made this distinction
 5. Clamor: shouting (remember my friend who worked on Wall Street and then had to settle himself down to work with the baseball team)
 6. Slander: abuse and vilifying of others
 7. All malice: any action or attitude that intends harm
- B. Kind and forgiving ("put on" is implied)
 1. "One another" again is the important dimension and it characterizes individual relationships first
 2. His exhortation to use no corrupting talk but only what help builds up others fits with this exhortation
 3. Consider the power of kindness and forgiveness
 4. Consider what relationships look like that are characterized by these things
- C. Which of the two contrasting ways of life in verses 31 and 32 create an environment conducive to human flourishing and good relationships?
- D. When you come to the end of your life and you look back what will you see in the wake of your life? Which of these things do you want to see?

Conclusions:

1. Everything here boils down to 5:2 – imitate God; love as Christ loved.
2. All of these teachings come from participating in the true Bread of life, Jesus, the head of the body from which all other things originate.
3. From Him come all these teachings that lead to flourishing human relationships.
4. You won't have the power to do these things until you undergo the transformation mentioned in 4:22-24.
5. You do that by accepting the Gospel first. You must believe in him, die to your old self in baptism, and walk in newness of life.
6. Isn't it time you made these things your bucket list?