

Discussion Starter #1: How would you describe your new life in Christ?

Key Passage: *“Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. 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. 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. 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. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 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.”* (Ephesians 4:25-32)

When we receive Christ, we receive a new life. In Ephesians 4:25-32, Paul presents the negative, the positive, and the motivation for five dynamics of our new life in Christ:

1. Our new life in Christ involves truth instead of dishonesty. (v.25)

- **The Negative** – We are to “*put away falsehood*” (v.25a). Anything that stands in opposition to God’s plan and purpose is to be discarded.
- **The Positive** – We are to “*speak the truth*” (v.25b). Lies can be told by speaking lies and also by refusing to speak the truth.
- **The Motivation** – The reason we are to put away falsehood and speak the truth is because “*we are members of one another*” (v.25c).

Discuss: What are some key areas in church life in which church members must be sure to speak the truth with one another?

2. Our new life in Christ involves self-control instead of anger (v.26-27)

- **The Negative** – Paul tells us not to allow our sense of righteous indignation to lead us into actions that dishonor God (v.26a).
- **The Positive** – Anger is not to fester in our hearts; rather it is to be expressed in healthy, appropriate ways, and the sooner the better (v.26b)
- **The Motivation** – When we sin in our righteous anger, or allow anger to be held in and built up, we give opportunity to the devil (v.27).

Discuss: How would you advise a new Christian to appropriately express his righteous anger?

3. Our new life in Christ involves compassion instead of selfishness. (v.28)

- **The Negative** – Stealing is taking something that does not belong to us and must be put off with the old self (v.28a).
- **The Positive** – We are to get what we need not by stealing, but through honest work (v.28b).
- **The Motivation** – Our reason for working honestly is so that we can “*share with anyone in need*” (v.28c).

Discuss: What are some marks of a good witness for Christ at the workplace?

Discuss: Why do you think generosity is emphasized so much in the Bible?

4. Our new life in Christ involves encouragement instead of criticism. (v.29)

- **The Negative** – Paul tells us to not let “*corrupting talk*” – that is, worthless, unimportant, inappropriate words – come out of our mouths (v.29a).
- **The Positive** – We are to make sure the words we use are “*good for building up*” not tearing down (v.29b).
- **The Motivation** – One of our main desires in our new life in Christ is to be channel through which God’s grace can touch someone else’s life. Our words can “*give grace*” (v.29c) to others for God’s glory.

Discuss: What are some ways we can build others up with words in our home? In our church? In our workplace?

5. Our new life in Christ involves commitment instead of disobedience. (v.30-32)

- **The Negative** - “*Bitterness...wrath...anger...clamor... slander... malice*” (v.31) must be put away because they “*grieve the Holy Spirit*” (v.30) and limit His work in and through our lives.
- **The Positive** – When we are “*kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another*” (v.32a) we bring joy to the Holy Spirit.
- **The Motivation** – We forgive because “*God in Christ forgave*” us (v.32b). We can bring joy to the heart of God rather than grieving the Holy Spirit by the way we treat others.

Discuss: How can a Christian know if he has grieved the Holy Spirit?

Discuss: How can a church grow in its kindness, tenderheartedness, and forgiveness?