



June 3, 2019

Ephesians 4:29:

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.

Doesn't this sound like a powerful way to live? As born-again believers, we *want* our mouths to speak that which is good. And right in the context of Ephesians 4:29 are two verses that give us specific advice on how to do this. Ephesians 4:31 tells us what kind of communication to “put away,” and Ephesians 4:32 shows us what we can become.

Let's first look at what kind of communication we are to put away.

Ephesians 4:31:

Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.

Put Away Bitterness

The Greek word translated “bitterness” means acidity (especially poison), literally or figuratively. When something is acrid it is extremely or sharply stinging. Bitterness can build up in our hearts when conflicts are unresolved or when we hold on to grudges, and this can cause our words to be sharp and stinging. These are definitely not good words that edify and minister grace to the hearer, so we put away bitterness.

Put Away Wrath

The Greek word translated “wrath” here is anger that boils up and soon subsides again. Wrath can flare up at times for any number of reasons—especially when we

are overly tired. Fatigue can cause us to be short-tempered. An antidote to fatigue and irritability is getting a good night's sleep. In fact, it's been proved that sleep affects our mood. I know for me personally that having a good night's sleep makes me more positive, happier, and better able to handle demanding situations. This is one action we can take to help put away wrath.

Put Away Anger

The Greek word translated "anger" here denotes indignation which has arisen gradually and become more settled. It is a more lasting resentment than wrath. Prolonged and deep-seated anger may take more than a good night's sleep to resolve. In addition to our personal study of the Word and prayer, getting some help from a trusted friend, a minister, a mediator, or even a professional may be required. To help us speak "that which is good," we put away anger.

Put Away Clamor

The literal meaning of the Greek word translated "clamour" is outcry, and this can be evidenced by loud and unruly or aggressive speaking, brawling, railing, boisterous talk. These words are not graceful or good to the use of edifying, so we put them away.

Put Away Evil Speaking

"Evil speaking" here is slander, speech injurious to another's good name. No born-again Christian, faithful in Christ Jesus, wants to injure another, but it can happen if we are not mindful of the words we are speaking. Taking a moment to think about what we will say helps us to put away evil speaking.

Put Away Malice

"Malice" indicates having ill will or a desire to injure someone or see them suffer. One lexicon uses the definition "badness." Malice is a bad way of thinking. We are to put away all malice.

A very important element in putting away corrupt communication is to be aware of what we are thinking, to guard our heart. As Jesus Christ taught, "...out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

Ephesians 4:32 shows us what we want to become, the kind of thoughts we *want* to cultivate in our hearts. Growing in these qualities will help us speak that which is good.

Ephesians 4:32:

And be [become] ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Become Kind One to Another

The Greek word translated “kind” here is also translated as good, gracious, and easy. It carries the sense of being mild or pleasant as opposed to being harsh, hard, sharp, or bitter. When we are being kind, then at times we allow others room to offend or make mistakes without getting irritated or impatient with them. We can even actively “do good” in spite of someone’s ingratitude. The love of God is kind (I Corinthians 13:4), and gentleness (kindness) is a fruit of the spirit (Galatians 5:22). Kindness is deeper than a nice personality trait; it is spiritual in nature. As born-again believers, we can become kind to one another.

Become Tenderhearted

The Greek word translated “tenderhearted” implies compassion. And in this context, we’re being instructed to show compassion to one another—to our fellow saints in the Body of Christ. We can become tenderhearted.

Become Forgiving

It might seem difficult to forgive at times, but verse 32 doesn’t stop at “forgiving one another.” It goes on to say, “even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.” Becoming forgiving to one another as God in Christ has forgiven us is an ongoing process that keeps sweetness in the Body of Christ. We can become forgiving.

As we put away bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, evil speaking, and all malice and become kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving to one another, the natural outflow will be words that are good to the use of edifying and words that minister grace to the hearer. What a powerful way to live. This is what we really *want* to do!

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