

New Year. New You. Part 2

Ephesians 4:25-32

MPS Jesus makes you new to produce a new kind of living that forms more of Him in you.

OBJ Every person can understand how more Jesus is formed in every Christ-follower by FIVE Practices of Repentance.

INTRO **What part of creating do you most hate?** Most artists or craftsmen and such that I have talked to have some point in the process of their work that is the worst for them. For some it is simply getting started. I am a woodworker and love to build, sometimes. For me, the point I most dread is painting. I loathe painting. I love to build, shape, and finish, but painting is for someone else. In painting, I am the king of brush strokes and roller streaks. Nothing I do changes that. Like I said, painting is for someone else.

TRANS There is a point in every process of that is most painful, that demands sharpest focus, and requires greatest energy and effort. And typically, it also demands regular repetition to improve and perfect the process. I wish it were not so, but for most, today is that point in the process of learning to follow Christ. (Makes you really excited for the sermon, doesn't it.)

READ Ephesians 4:17-32

*²⁵Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. ²⁶Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷and give no opportunity to the devil. ²⁸Let 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. ²⁹Let 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. ³⁰And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³²Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. **Ephesians 4:17-32***

Review Last week we looked at Ephesians 4 where Paul establishes Jesus is Lord and introduces life under His Lordship. The whole Christian life is built on the foundation of the confession, "Jesus is Lord". This confession establishes the life of following Jesus on three foundational convictions.

The first conviction was that Christ-followers no longer live according to worldly thinking. We cited Paul's words to the Romans that God transforms our life by renewing our mind to discern His will. Paul also writes to the Colossians and states that we are, "*being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.*"(3:10) The first conviction of life under Jesus' Lordship is that we think differently because our minds are being renewed from the futility of sin. **Are you learning to think in a whole new way, like Jesus?** **The second conviction** is that the life of following Christ must be learned. What God has perfectly completed for us in Jesus Christ we are in the process of carrying out now. We are learn godliness and righteousness that has been given to us by darkness and lies being renewed through obedience to the light of God's truth. Finally, **the third conviction** is that Christ-followers live out our confession, "Jesus is Lord", by a practical rhythm of **repentance**. Christians live in a war of natures in this life, the old warring against the new. The practical rhythm Paul provides, putting off the old and putting on the new, is the process of repentance that we learn by faith to confront lies and darkness with truth's light. Repentance grants us the means to activate faith and align our whole life with our new identity in Jesus Christ as we practice the new we are learning.

One Word of Warning: When we speak of the "process of learning" we must understand that this is never an **excuse** for our sin (Romans 1:20), but in our mind under renewal becomes an **explanation that fuels the exercise** of God's grace through the gospel of Jesus Christ to apply His forgiveness and cleansing for more growth into His image. #moreJesus

TRANS From foundational convictions last week we move today to the kind of life those convictions motivate.

Jesus makes you new to produce a new kind of living that forms more of Him in you.



Last week I stated, “The way you think determines the way you live.” You will not escape this reality because you cannot. [Learning to think distinctively according to God’s Word to determine your living is empowered by a process of repentance.](#)

OBJ FIVE Practices of Repentance to form the New You in Jesus.

1. Commit to Speak the truth. .25

²⁵Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.

This is the second time Paul instructs in the importance of speaking the truth in Ephesians 4. In verse 15, he says “*speaking the truth in love*” is central to the church’s ministry for everyone’s maturity in Christlikeness. Verse 25 is not simply a repetition for more ministry, but an expansion that defines our Christian witness. We are implored to speak the truth at all times. You can’t accommodate the world’s narrative and bear a faithful witness to Christ. You can’t live in the shadow of a lie and be changed by truth. Like truth and lies, light and darkness do not coexist. [If you want to be changed by the truth, you must put away all falsehood everywhere you find it, regardless of who repeats them, and walk in truth’s light.](#)

Most people tolerate lies because they don’t like conflict. But tolerating falsehood creates the conflict. Many also think it will help to shorten the path from where they are to where they want to be. But that is the essence of a lie, making you think it will produce what it is incapable of providing. What it does produce is more momentum for its darkness and deception, because it operates on the philosophy that “if everyone is doing it, then it must be right, good, beneficial, or produce what it promises.” None of this is true. All of this is the lie of every falsehood.

Speak the truth means two things. First, what you speak must be the truth, not a lie nor a half truth. Speaking includes affirming or accepting anything less than the truth. And second, you must speak. This doesn’t mean you have to correct every wrong around you. It does mean that where you are involved you can neither accept nor accommodate anything that counters truth without speaking up to address it with light. “*God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.*” (1 John 1:5b) Then, repeat as frequently and fervently as you must to kill the lie. [Falsehood always settles where truth remains absent. Christ-followers speak truth to fill the world with the glory of God’s wisdom.](#)

TRANS Here the act of repentance becomes proactive.

2. Redeem anger to grow godliness. .26-27

²⁶Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷and give no opportunity to the devil.

Anger is not sin, but an indicator and invitation. Psychology tells us anger is a secondary emotion, meaning it signifies or tells us something is not right. God created anger to serve His purpose in us.

Anger is our response to anything that counters, confronts or threatens us. ILLUS If you claim to never get angry, you are a liar who denies God and is deceived. ([How are you feeling right now about what I just said?](#)) Every person in the room has an anger issue. Some let it become a problem. Some are more obvious than others, and it comes in many varying degrees and severity. But just because anger doesn’t find outward expression doesn’t mean it’s not present or that you are handling it. Anger is not your problem; unaddressed anger produces sin. [Unaddressed anger become Satan’s invitation and unrighteous manifestations create all your problems with anger.](#)

God filled our “anger thermometer” with the “mercury of His righteousness” to warn our conscience when His Holy Law written on our hearts in creation was being threatened, confronted, or violated. Sin’s depravity tainted our “anger mercury” with self-righteousness, so our anger is aroused by the threat or violation of self-protection or self-offense. When anger arises, you must choose how you will address it. Anger left unaddressed never dissipates. [Like glue left in a cold room, unaddressed anger hardens the heart, first toward the object of threat but ultimately toward God.](#)

What you do with or out of your anger determines whether or not you commit a sin. Two exhortations guide us to deal with anger. First, guard yourself so that your anger does not produce sin in you. Learn to recognize when your anger arises,



even at its inception, to address it. Second, learn to recognize when your anger rises, and deal with it so Satan cannot have his way in you. [Christ-followers recognize anger as a healthy emotion but a dangerous “bed-partner” \(pun Intended\), so we apply the gospel to discern by God’s truth and respond for righteousness to be produced both in and through us.](#)

3. Labor to build a life of generosity. .28

²⁸Let 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.

Stealing is sin not only because we take what is others’, but most importantly, it denies God’s provision and fuels greed. God designed man to labor and earn in this world so we could both provide for our needs and practice generosity to help others in need. Honesty and integrity in labor and relationships are righteous values that confront stealing, which shortcuts the path to gain. Notice how the sinful action produces a sin-stained identity. What you do matters to determine who you are! Stealing may get you something, but it condemns and destroys in the process. Honesty and integrity manifest the righteousness and justice of God. When practiced, they too forge the character of the individual that produces other goodness, namely generosity. A strong work ethic that honors God is the way of the Christian, to acknowledge Him as the source of life. [Christ-followers labor to demonstrate God’s goodness in life provision, and to be generous to others in need.](#)

APPL Parents, if you want your children to be honest and have integrity, you must teach a high work ethic as they grow up. Train them in the value of labor and striving to earn, as opposed to only giving for nothing demanded. The difference is that on one end you nurture entitlement by coddling laziness, and at the other you forge their character in honesty and integrity. Learning this lesson as an adult is painful, and seldom without lasting consequences. I add one caveat: sports/arts are great to teach the value of discipline in labor and striving toward a goal. But there are two aspects that sports are incapable of teaching, the economics of labor and striving, and the value of labor simply for the good of it. Never allow sports to substitute for work, but to be a helpful trainer.

4. Speak words to build up. .29-30

²⁹Let 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. ³⁰And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Corrupt speech provides the greatest evidence of the depth of depravity and perverseness in our society. **ILLUS** You are hard-pressed to find a movie that didn’t take the F-bomb and write a whole script around that one word. I’m no “prosperity gospel preacher” to tell you to create your own reality by your speech. But the Bible does teach that the language and speech you use both represents and reinforces the reality of your heart. (Matthew 12:34; Proverbs 17:17) [Like every other addiction, the lesser swear words only build the roadbed to all cursing, course talk, and corrupt speech.](#)

Corrupting talk has at least three expressions. Cursing holds a double-destructing effect; it makes you sound dumb, and makes you actually dumb. The more you curse, the dumber you sound and the dumber you become because it reduces your vocabulary to a few simple, meaningless words. It is not what it produces outwardly, but what it perverts inwardly.

Course Speech uses legitimate words in illegitimate ways to propagate perverseness and unrighteousness. The unrighteousness most dominating the culture typically provides the primary object of words used, like words associated with sex used so freely today. These illegitimate references to sex are most prolific because they are simultaneously universal to humanity and both pervert action and condemn identity all in one. **Criticism** is negative speech of something or to someone with the intent of tearing down or destroying. The destructing force of criticism is this, the more you practice it, the more it inhabits you. The more you speak critically, the more you think, and ultimately, inhabit a spirit of criticism. But the greatest problem of corrupt talk comes next. “*And*”, verse 30 continues, which connects what was said, “*do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God*”, to what was just said. Corrupt speech is strategy for neglecting and avoiding God altogether, because once you shut Holy Spirit up, you cannot produce godliness on your own. So, every time you practice corrupt talk, you block God from the occasion or situation. [The more you allow, entertain and practice corrupt talk, the greater you are affected by and infected with it, and mostly in severing Holy Spirit from the situation, both in conversation and in relationship. Christ-followers cannot walk by light of God’s truth when our talk grieves Holy Spirit.](#)



Christ-follower, your tongue is a tool and a weapon. Use it to build up by truth and destroy lies. Every time you use it, be careful to do so in a way that builds, and not destroy, even when you have to say negative or hard things. Every time you use your tongue, both in public and in private, you either build or destroy, sow or grieve the Spirit, cultivate godliness or propagate wickedness. And every time you use it, what fills your heart is revealed. **What kind of You is your speech creating; the “new You” from Jesus or the same old infection?**

5. Model in life what God has shown toward you. .31-32

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.*

When you fail to put away bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander, and malice, then you are only being nice. And nice is a horrible substitute for kindness. Kindness is a godly trait that personifies good to bless another. Nice is a mask put forth to cover or fabricate reality. Kindness serves the one who receives it. Nice focuses on self to cover the one who offers it. Kindness considers the other person and acts for their good. Nice is what you do when you need to get on with life and don't want to be bothered. Kindness pauses to consider another and how you can serve in that moment to help, encourage, or alleviate some burden. You can harbor all your bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander, and malice, and still be nice. You will never be kind until you put all these things away. That makes “nice” a ticking timebomb, but kindness a burst of refreshment and encouragement. Nice is a hollow shell that hides reality. Kindness draws from God's nature toward people in mercy and grace and offers His goodness to others. Nice is never tenderhearted. Kindness acts out of a tender heart. Nice is a strategy of evade and escape. Kind a strategy to alleviate shame, guilt, and sin's burden, because God has done that for you in Jesus. **Christ-followers live to model in life and share what God has shown to us in the gospel of Jesus Christ.**

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CLOSE Of greatest interest to me in this passage is the relationship between our speech and actions, and our heart condition. What we say and do really does expose what is going on in our heart. And, what we say and do determines who we become. The patterns of our speech shape the practices and habits of our life, which fill our heart to form the essence of our identity. **Learning a rhythm of repentance fills our life in every realm with more Jesus to shape our heart and life to be like Him.** These five practices ultimately come down to this one issue: **“Is Jesus Lord of your life, or are you?”**

