

"Wherefore, Putting Away ..."

"Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbor: for we are members one of another. Be ye angry and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath ..." (Eph. 4:25-26).

In vss. 24-32 a series of "don'ts" and "do's" are given; all on the basis of a conclusion Paul made in verses immediately preceding them. In vss. 22-24 he had urged that Ephesians put off the old man and put on the new man who is an imitation of God; which new man *"has been created in righteousness and holiness of truth."* These practical and essential commands are often prefaced by the word *"let"* which word appears often in Paul's letters, nine times in Ephesians.

Because he urged that the *"old man"* be *"put off"* and says to put away *"falsehood,"* one understand that *"falsehood"* is part of that old man. Of course, that should be fully understood without explicitly saying so. The devil is a masterful liar. In his cunning deception he beguiled Eve to eat the forbidden fruit by his denial of God's warning *"In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die"* (Gen. 2:17). He is called the great deceiver and *"when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar and the father thereof"* (Rev. 12:9; Jn. 8:14). Rather than speaking a lie, we should speak truth, for after all, such must be our conduct if we imitate God. He cannot lie (Titus 1:2).

Next comes the exhortation, *"be ye angry and sin not. Let not the sun go down upon your wrath."* He returns to this appeal later in the same passage, saying *"put away wrath, anger"* (vs. 31). The command *"be angry and sin not"* is an implication that one may be angry, yet not sin. Such is not likely, but still possible. Jesus was angry because of the hardness the heart of some of His adversaries (Mark 3:5). Paul's Galatian letter evidenced anger because false teachers were enticing the Galatians to accept things as gospel that were no part of the gospel. He warned, *"Though we, or an angel from heaven should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we have preached unto you, let him be anathema"* (Gal. 1:9). There is righteous anger when the downtrodden are stomped ever lower, when innocent children are abused, and when the aged are fleeced out of their life savings by unscrupulous men who are concerned only with themselves.

Still, there is danger that anger which is not wrong might develop into sin: when anger at an injustice turns into a burning desire for revenge, to inflict injury on the one with whom one is angry, thus the appeal, *"Let not the sun go down upon your wrath."* Speedy reconciliation and forgiveness is the

apostle's thought; an important rule to apply in all human relationships, especially in close family ties. How often do people grieve for lost opportunities of giving or seeking forgiveness after a loved one dies. There can hardly be a torment greater than that a parent has died and the surviving child was estranged from that parent, or perhaps had spoken some unkind word or shouted, "I hate you." In such instances the adjustment and acceptance of the death of a loved one will never come or will be long delayed because the surviving one did let the sun go down upon his wrath; did not settle his differences with the other, before the end of the day.

"Let not the sun go down upon your wrath" is essential to our own peace of mind and preserving healthy, wholesome and loving relationships with others. Let us recognize and appreciate the divine wisdom in this command from God!

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