

## ***Ephesians 4:28-29***

The next 6 verses are Paul's instructions for us to live a successful life. In fact, Paul tells us many things that can help us be successful if we will just listen and do them. The warnings here are to ensure that we have the social relationships that create long lasting friendships and as little stress as possible.

1. ***Stop stealing – vs. 28*** – This is a no brainer. Don't steal. It is one of the 10 commandments, so why did Paul feel he had to specifically talk about it? In that day many did not work or feel like they needed to. They could just take from someone else. It is no different today. There are people out there that believe that you owe them a wage just for showing up at the office. Some believe that they can do whatever they want and whether or not it is against the company rules. The bible says that a man is worthy of his wages. That means he needs to work. It also says that if a man doesn't work he shouldn't eat.
2. ***Start working – vs. 28*** – We do not only need to stop doing things but we need to start doing things. Paul says that we need to labor, that means hard, sweat equity, doing something worthwhile. We are also told to work with our hands, and do good. That is never do evil or harm knowingly.
3. ***Share something – vs. 28*** – Here is the reason we are commanded to work hard, save, and not be a taker in the world. We are told to look at others and if someone needs something, give what you have. We (the church) are the most benevolent group in America. We are the ones who should take care of the widows and the orphans, not the government. The "entitlement" mentality is because the government doesn't have what it takes to create an environment that fosters and encourages work. The goal of benevolence is to help one get to a place where they do not need help. The government's position is to create a generation of loyal takers who will keep the politicians in office.
4. ***Shut your mouth – vs. 29*** – Watch what you say. It is very easy to speak the first thing that comes to your mind. But how many of us have had that happen and then regretted it? Man if we could just take back those words. Why did I say that? What was I thinking? That just wasn't me talking. It was the stress. It was the drugs. Or anything else we can blame it on.
5. ***Say something meaningful – vs. 29*** – How often do we just say something to just be talking? Man we do some of the craziest things and say the dumbest things when we do not have a purpose in mind. We need to always be aware of what and who is around us and what they may need to hear from us.

6. ***Set out to give Grace to others*** – vs. 29 – Sometimes we get the idea that we can say anything that nothing false about it. If it is true, then we can speak it, no matter what. Well here we see that the real value of speaking to someone is that the words we speak need to be grace and kind, edifying one another. ***Col. 4:6*** Anything less is not being spiritual or even Christian. It goes back to what I said weeks ago, we need to give as much grace and mercy as God has given us. Wow, what a different world we would live in if we all did that!