

Ephesians 4:30-32

We continue to the end of the chapter with Paul telling us that our behavior is critical to living a Godly life. He has spent the first of this chapter telling what we need to do as Christians, and then he says, “oh yeah, one more thing”.

1. Our behavior affects the Holy Spirit – vs. 30

- a. First we have to understand that the Holy Spirit is in us all the time. It is not just when we are at church, or when we are doing Bible study, or being spiritual. It is the Holy Spirit that works in us to give us our strength and ability to do what is right and keeps us in communion with God the father.
- b. Second our bad behavior grieves that Holy Spirit. You see the Holy Spirit will always give us the resources to do what is right, but will never force God’s will on us. We can do several things when it comes to the Holy Spirit. We can resist, blaspheme, grieve, quench, and obey. As believers we cannot blaspheme, but we can grieve and quench the spirit. It is when we do things that break the heart of God that grieves the Spirit. It is much like when we disobey our parents. They don’t stop loving us, but they are disappointed in our behavior.

2. We are sealed by the Holy Spirit – vs. 30

- a. If we are sealed, we are forever sealed. In the day of Jesus and up until modern times, people sealed their letters and important documents with sealing wax and a seal like a ring or special “seal” to certify that the contents were not tampered with. The Holy Spirit does the same thing for me and you.
- b. We are sealed (protected) until the day of redemption. Sealing shows possession and security. Therefore we are both children of God and saved forever. It is our security of eternal life and being protected by God from Satan.

3. When the Holy Spirit controls us, we avoid specific sins – vs. 31 – Paul names six things here that we are to specifically to avoid. Notice that they are not the same thing found in the Ten Commandments. Here we are not commanded to avoid murder, lying and cheating, adultery and those things we all count as “serious sins”. Why does Paul mention these things? Why does he talk about the things mentioned here? I believe that these are the things we all too often think are small or insignificant, and therefore not important to God. Well let me correct you right now. These are just as important to God as murder and adultery if not more so. We must be careful to follow Paul’s admonition here and do everything to pay attention to even the little things that trap us every day.

a. Six things (attitudes or behaviors) to avoid

- i. Bitterness – It is no secret that bitterness is named first in this list of things we are to avoid. Bitterness is a root that grows so deep in the human soul that it takes the axe of disaster to cut it out. If you have ever had or known someone who had a root of bitterness, you know them to be miserable all the time. Bitterness comes from not following Paul's counsel in Phil 4:13, "*I can be content in whatever circumstance I find myself.*" Heb. 12:15; Deut. 29:18; Titus 1:15-16
- ii. Wrath – This is a word we use seldom these days. It means violent reaction. Acting out and having a vengeful heart. Wrath is one of the Seven Deadly sins of the Catholic Church. Ps. 37:8 we are told to *forsake wrath*. That means to turn away from it and never bring it up again. Walk away before it consumes you. Prov. 19:19 says that *a person given to wrath will have to be delivered over and over again*. They never get the satisfaction they are seeking.
- iii. Anger – We have just seen 5 verses earlier where Paul told us to "be angry and sin not." Now Paul is telling us not to be angry. What's up? Which is it? Can we be angry or can we not be angry? Well we have to look at the meaning Paul is trying to convey here. In verse 26 Paul tells us not to sin when we get angry, and in verse 31 he tells us not to be angry at all. Let's review the circumstance we can get angry. It is to be angry to the injustice of others, to be angry enough to take action to help others and stop someone else from being hurt. We are never to be angry for selfish reasons. Prov. 16:32; 27:4; Ecc. 7:9;
- iv. Clamor – Webster defines this as, "undisciplined loud and nosy". It refers to the way we deal with things that are done against us. It carries an "obnoxious" feeling to it. How often have we just not let something go, but insisted by going on and on about it until we became wearisome to all those around us.
- v. Slander – Often we wish we could sue someone for saying hurtful and bad things about us. But God loves the one who does not slander or speak evil against someone else. Slander is saying something about someone with the intent to inflict harm. It can be either true or false. That isn't the issue. We often think if it is true, it is OK to tell all we know. That is so against what God wants for us. Ps. 15:1-3
- vi. Malice – This is evil, meanness, and just plain cruelty. Webster says, "*a desire to inflict injury, harm, or suffering on another, either because of a hostile impulse or out of deep-seated meanness*". Paul tells us here that malice can manifest itself in many different ways. We can just be mean or be a bully, or gossip, or some other action that has the effect of destroying another person. We have

to be careful not only of what we say but how we say it. We hurt others more by how we say something, even if it is true. So we are given a strong warning here to avoid malice.

- b. Not only avoid, but put away – vs. 31 You see, Paul knows human so well that he warns us that if we just try to stop doing these things, we will often fail. We need to be determined to “put it away”. Bury it. Dig it out of your life.