

Grief for God's Holy Spirit

Thomas Robinson, *Ephesians – Growing Up Into Christ 17*, July 21, 2013

Ephesians 4:20 – 5:2

²⁰ But it is not for that way of life that you **learned the Messiah**, ²¹ if indeed you listened to him and were instructed in him – by seeing **truth as it is in Jesus** – ²² to **take off the old self**, which belongs to your former way of life and is being corrupted through **deceitful desires**, ²³ and to be **renewed** in the **spirit** of your **minds**, ²⁴ and to **put on the new self created after the likeness of God** with a justice and holiness that belongs to **truth**. _____

²⁵ Therefore, having **taken off the lie** (everything false), _____ (1)

“**speak truth**, each with your neighbor,” [Zech 8:16]

for we are **members one of another**. _____

²⁶ “**Be angry and do not sin**”; [Psa 4:4] _____ (2)

do not let the sun go down on your anger (provocation),

²⁷ and give no room for **the devil** (the slanderer). _____

²⁸ Let those who steal **no longer steal**, [Exod 20:15] _____ (3)

but rather **work**, accomplishing something **good** with their own hands,

so that they may **have something to share with anyone in need**. _____

²⁹ Let no **corrupting** (rotten) **word** come out of your mouths, _____ (4)

but only if it is **good for building up**, meeting a **need**,

that it may **give grace** to those who hear. _____

³⁰ And **do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God**, [Isa 63:10] _____ (5)

by whom **you were sealed** for the **day of redemption**. _____

³¹ Let all **bitterness** and **rage** and **anger** and **clamor** and **slander** _____ (6)

be put away from you, along with all **malice** (meanness).

³² Be **kind** to one another, tenderhearted, **giving grace to one another**,

as God in Christ gave grace to you. _____

⁵ ¹ Become, therefore, **imitators of God** as **beloved children**. _____ (7)

² And **walk in love**,

as **Christ loved us and gave himself up for us**,

a fragrant offering and **sacrifice** to God. _____

Ephesians 4:1-3

¹ I therefore, a prisoner in the Lord, appeal to you to **walk in a manner worthy of the calling by which you have been called**, ² with all humility of thought and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another **in love**, eager to maintain the unity of **the Spirit** in the bond of peace.

Ephesians 4:15

¹⁵ By **practicing the truth in love**, we are to **grow up** in every way **into him** who is **the head**, into Christ.

Ephesian 1:13-14

¹³ When you heard the word of **truth in Christ**, the **gospel** of your salvation, and when you **believed** in him, you were **sealed** with the **Spirit of the promise**, the **Holy Spirit**, ¹⁴ who is the secure pledge our **inheritance** until our **redemption as God's own possession**, to the praise of his glory.

Seven Days of Renewal

Paul has lifted our eyes to see the vast beauty of the Gospel. He now challenges us to let that truth have its full creative and transforming power in our lives. Not just self-help but active, willing participation in God's creative power to remake our lives from old self to new self. Here he gives us seven steps of self examination, reflection, application, opening to God. There is no desire to give a new set of moral rules. He echoes OT passages. Rather he shows how Jesus gives new shape and power to a life in which moral choices can have real vitality. Most of the seven begin with a negative ("take off the old self") and move to a positive ("put on the new"). From things that isolate us and hurt others to paths that reconcile, share, build life together. They are brief and pointed and call each of us to search ourselves and grow.

Truth without a Rotten Word (1) (4)

Everything starts from truth seen in Jesus – truth about God, ourselves, life, everything. "The lie" is a barrier we put up for defense/hiding and offense/deceiving. We lie to ourselves. Reality is that God knows the worst and best about us and loves us. Paul calls us to build a community life that embodies that truth – mutual belonging that fosters open honesty. Bare factuality is not the only criterion. Love looks for more. The corrupting word may be factual but spreads rotting and death: gossip, contempt, ridicule, prejudice, tempting, shaming, etc. Real truth seeks to build up, meet a need, give grace (lively and life-giving).

The Struggle between Anger and Grace (2) (6)

Paul quotes Ps.4:4 to recognize that anger is a pervasive and challenging emotion. It is deceiving. We think we are controlling a situation with forceful response when we are surrendering control and opening ourselves to Satan. We need to recognize its deceit and confine our anger inside an intentional practice of reconciliation. Then you're in control. Destructive anger takes many forms from a long-nurtured grudge, to an explosive outburst, to bullying meanness, etc. Get rid of it all! It is all the reverse of what we see of God in Jesus. When I see the grace and forgiveness given me, I learn kindness, empathy, giving grace.

From Taking to Creating and Giving (3)

Stealing takes a thousand forms from burglary to insider trading. Employers and employees. Cheating on tests and taxes. I treat someone as 'the other' who has something I want. I take; I subtract from him and add to me. I diminish him and myself – I add to me that I'm a thief. Jesus shows us a life of creation and generosity – giving abundant life. We practice this in everyday work on whatever level. Evaluate your work: are you accomplishing something good/useful. Something that adds to life. Work not to accumulate wealth or even to build security, but to be able to give abundantly, share generously with those in need, build life.

Grieving the Spirit and Imitating God (5) (7)

The power and challenge of this life is the involvement of God – seen and known in Jesus, sharing our life in the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the first taste, seal of full eternal life, the presence of God's love. When we turn from life to death, he grieves like a parent for a child. We actually learn to imitate God. We look at Jesus, see his self-giving love for us and learn to walk in that love step by step. What seems impossible is the daily foundation of our life.