

TEN EXHORTATIONS, PT. 4; EPH. 4:32-5:2 (Ed O'Leary)

INTRODUCTION.

THIS MORNING, ~ WE'LL FINISH OUR LOOK AT PAUL'S TEN EXHORTATIONS IN THIS next section of the second overarching theme of Ephesians, ~ 4:25 — 5:2. ~ ~ Chap./Vs.

▶▶ In this paragraph, ~ 4:25—5:2, ~ as we noted, ~ we find a series of ten exhortations to believers. ~ ~ No one unifying theme

▷▷ So in this paragraph, ~ Paul gives us 10 exhortations that help spell out in detail the type of life that brings honor and glory to God, ~ the type of life that should result from the truth of chap. 1-3.

▷▷ And as we pointed out, ~ in the more immediate context, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ these ten exhortations serve the purpose of describing some of what it means to put off our old self and to put on our new self, ~ which Paul talked about in the previous paragraph, ~ 4:17-24.

→→ So we can also look at these ten exhortations as ten examples of what it means to take off the old life and put on the new life.

▶▶ Now again, ~ it's important to understand that, ~ while these 10 exhortations could apply universally, ~ i.e., ~ to our relationships to everyone, ~ believer and unbeliever alike, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ in the context, ~ Paul is specifically talking about believers' relationships with other believers in our local fellowship.

↳↳ And that is what we'll continue to focus on. ~ ~ But I encourage everyone to later think of ways to apply these 10 exhortations to relationships outside these 4 walls.

TODAY, ~ WE'LL LOOK AT 4:32—5:2, ~ AND THE FINAL FOUR EXHORTATIONS.

▶▶ In addition to helping spell out the type of life that brings honor and glory to God, ~ the type of life that should result from the truth of chap. 1-3, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ and in addition to serving as examples of what it means to take off the old life and put on the new life, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ these final four exhortations serve the purpose of telling us what is to replace the six sinful practices listed in verse 31 that Paul told us to banish from our lives. ¶¶ 1/8

IN VERSE 32a, ~ WE FIND THE SEVENTH EXHORTATION THAT HELPS SPELL OUT in detail the type of life that should result from the truth of chapters 1-3, ~ ¶¶

AND THAT SERVES AS AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT IT MEANS TO PUT OFF OUR OLD SELF and to put on our new self. ~ "Be kind to one another."

▶▶ Kindness in Scripture covers a broad range of meaning.

▷▷ This word can describe gentleness, ~ goodness, ~ uprightness, ~ generosity, ~ graciousness, ~ and being helpful to people.

↪↪ Furthermore, ~ kindness is the opposite of being harsh, ~ the opposite of bitterness towards others, ~ and the opposite of envying or despising others.

▶▶ Most likely all of this is wrapped up in what Paul is saying here when he says "Be kind to one another."

▷▷ We are to be gentle, ~ good, ~ upright, ~ generous, ~ gracious, ~ and helpful in our relationships with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

↪↪ And we are not to be harsh with ~ or bitter toward ~ or envy, ~ or despise ~ any of them.

▶▶ This definitely rules out bitterness, ~ hot-tempered anger that explodes under the slightest provocation, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ habitual anger, ~ screaming, ~ slander, ~ and malice in our relationships with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

PROV. 3:3-4, ~ NASB, ~ POINTS OUT SOME OF THE BENEFITS OF PRACTICING kindness.

▶▶ "Do not let kindness and truth leave you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart. So you will find favor and good repute In the sight of God and man."

▶▶ Solomon calls upon us to hold to kindness and truth tightly, ~ to always display them outwardly in our lives, ~ i.e., ~ to always practice them in our lives.

▶▶ And we are to burn them into our minds, ~ perhaps so they become guiding lights for us in life.

▶▶ As a result of doing this, ~ we will gain God's and peoples' respect and have a good reputation. ¶¶ 2/8

▷▷ And Prov. 22:1 says, ~ "A good name ~ [i.e., ~ a good reputation] ~ is to be chosen rather than great riches, ~ and favor ~ [i.e., ~ to be respected] ~ is better than silver or gold."

▶▶ So we see some of the benefits that kindness, ~ along with a commitment to truth, ~ brings.

PROVERBS 19:22 TELLS US, ~ NASB, ~ "What is desirable in a man is his kindness."

▶▶ People desire and admire kindness in others.

▶▶ The term translated here as "kindness" is descriptive of covenant love and faithfulness.

▷▷ It is a mercy, ~ kindness, ~ love, ~ and compassion ~ that flows from an unalterable commitment made to another.

▶▶ It is not hard to see why this is a quality desirable in those with whom one builds relationships.

KINDNESS IS A CHARACTERISTIC OF TRUE LOVE.

▶▶ 1 Cor. 13:4, ~ "Love is . . . kind." ~ "kind" here means to be kind, ~ agreeable, ~ willing to help or assist.

AND KINDNESS IS AN ATTRIBUTE OF GOD HIMSELF.

▶▶ In Ps. 25:8a, ~ David writes, ~ "Good and upright is the Lord."

▷▷ I.e., ~ the Lord is kind, ~ morally good, ~ generous, ~ and he is also "upright," ~ i.e. ~ fair and just, ~ always doing what is right, ~ David says.

▶▶ In Ps. 34:8a, ~ David exclaims, ~ "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good!"

▷▷ Here David calls upon all to discover for ourselves how good the Lord is. ~ How

▶▶ In Ps. 145:9, ~ David declares, ~ "The Lord is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made."

▷▷ God not only is morally good, ~ but he actively does good. ~ He is actively kind and generous.

↪↪ He actively displays his kindness, ~ goodness, ~ generosity, ~ and love to people.

▶▶ Recall back in Eph. 4:19b, ~ Paul prayed that believers "may be filled with all the fullness of God."

▷▷ As we noted, ~ the point of Paul's prayer was that believers grow more and more like our heavenly Father. ~ And being kind to one another helps us do that.

TO RECAP PAUL'S SEVENTH EXHORTATION: ~ ~ ¶¶

▶▶ "Be gentle, ~ good, ~ upright, ~ generous, ~ gracious, ~ and helpful in your relationships with your fellow believers in your local fellowship," ~ Paul says.

▷▷ And don't be harsh with ~ or bitter toward ~ or envy, ~ or despise ~ any of them.

IN VERSE 32b, ~ WE FIND THE EIGHTH EXHORTATION THAT HELPS SPELL OUT in detail the type of life that should result from the truth of chapters 1-3, ~ ¶¶

AND THAT SERVES AS AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT IT MEANS TO PUT OFF OUR OLD SELF and to put on our new self.

▶▶ Paul exhorts us to be "tenderhearted" toward one another. ~ Means "compassionate."

▶▶ It refers to being conscious of others' needs ~ and having a strong desire to alleviate those needs in some way.

▷▷ We ought to be deeply touched ~ and moved ~ by the hurts, ~ pain, ~ needs, ~ and adversity of fellow believers ~ and then act to alleviate them.

▶▶ Notice, ~ then act to alleviate them.

▷▷ Compassion is an active force. ~ It does not merely "feel someone's pain." ~ It is not merely being deeply touched and moved by people's needs.

↳↳ It gets involved whenever and wherever possible.

▷▷ In his discussion of faith in relation to works, ~ James says something that is very hard hitting and applicable here. ~ James 2:15-16.

↳↳ "15 If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that?" ~ Obviously

▷▷ And 1 Jn. 3:17 says, ~ "But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?" ¶¶ 4/8

▶▶ And of course, ~ Jesus sets the example for us to follow.

▷▷ Matt. 14:13-14, ~ "Now when Jesus heard this," ~ [i.e., ~ about the death of John the Baptist], ~ he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, ~ they followed him on foot from the towns. ~ When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, ~ and he had compassion on them ~ and healed their sick.

▷▷ Jesus was not just deeply touched and moved by the people's needs. ~ He did not just feel their pain. ~ He did something about it. ~ Healed . . . ~ Further . . . ~ Fed

▶▶ And we, ~ His followers, ~ are to do the same.

▷▷ Not just be deeply touched and moved by people's needs. ~ Not just feel their pain. ~ We are to take action on their behalf.

IN VERSE 32c, ~ WE FIND THE NINTH EXHORTATION THAT HELPS SPELL OUT in detail the type of life that should result from the truth of chapters 1-3, ~ ¶¶

AND THAT SERVES AS AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT IT MEANS TO PUT OFF OUR OLD SELF and to put on our new self. ▶▶ "forgiving one another."

▶▶ The verb translated "forgiving" means forgive freely, ~ graciously, ~ willingly.

▷▷ So Paul is calling on all believers to freely, ~ graciously, ~ and willingly forgive our brothers and sisters in Christ.

AND THERE IS TO BE NO LIMIT TO OUR FORGIVENESS.

▶▶ Matt. 18:21-22. ~ NASB ~ "Then Peter came and said to Him, 'Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.'"

▷▷ Jesus is not saying ~ that we should keep track ~ and when a fellow believer sins against us the 491st time, ~ we don't have to forgive them any longer. ~ No!

▷▷ Rather, ~ this statement that Jesus made means not to keep track of numbers at all. ~ IOW, ~ Jesus is putting no limits on forgiveness.

↪↪ There is to be no limit to a believer's readiness to forgive another believer freely, ~ graciously, ~ and willingly, ~ Jesus is telling us.

▶▶ So all believers are to continually forgive our fellow believers freely, ~ graciously, ~ and willingly no matter what. ¶¶ 5/8

THIS IS HOW GOD HAS FORGIVEN US, ~ PAUL SAYS IN VERSE 32d.

"AS GOD IN ~ [OR THROUGH] ~ CHRIST FORGAVE YOU."

▶▶ And that is freely, ~ graciously, ~ and willingly.

▶▶ No matter how much a person has done against us, ~ it does not come close to what we have done against God.

▷▷ Yet, ~ through Jesus, ~ God the Father has freely, ~ graciously, ~ and willingly forgiven all those who

▶▶ And we should mention that there are no limits on God's forgiveness of us.

▷▷ 1 Jn. 1:9 says, ~ "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." ~ ~ Doesn't Say

SO WE ARE TO IMITATE GOD PAUL SAYS IN 5:1.

I.E., ~ GOD THE FATHER HAS FREELY, ~ GRACIOUSLY, ~ AND WILLINGLY FORGIVEN US.

▶▶ And as His children, ~ we are to imitate His behavior.

▷▷ We are to forgive our brothers and sisters in Christ freely, ~ graciously, ~ willingly, ~ and continually ~ no matter what they have done ~ or do ~ to us.

IN 5:2a, ~ WE FIND THE TENTH EXHORTATION THAT HELPS SPELL OUT in detail the type of life that should result from the truth of chapters 1-3, ~ ¶¶

AND THAT SERVES AS AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT IT MEANS TO PUT OFF OUR OLD SELF and to put on our new self. ▶▶ "And walk in love."

▶▶ My fellow believers, ~ we are to live a life that is filled with and governed by love for our fellow believers.

▷▷ Our thinking, ~ attitudes, ~ and behavior are to be characterized by love. ~ ~ And love is to become the deciding factor in our choices and the motivating power in our actions.

AND HOW ARE WE TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER?

WELL, ~ NOT WITH JUST ANY KIND OF LOVE. ~ ~ PAUL DEFINES IT IN VERSE 2b.

▶▶ "as Christ loved us," ~ Paul says. ¶¶ 6/8

▶▶ Jesus teaches us this in His upper room discourse.

▷▷ Jn. 13:34, ~ "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another."

▷▷ Jn. 15:12, ~ "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."

▶▶ So, ~ We are not to love each other with just any kind of love.

▷▷ We are to love each other the way Jesus loves us. ~ I.e., ~ we are to have Christ-like love for one another.

AND HOW DID JESUS LOVE US?

VERSE 2c: ~ HE "GAVE HIMSELF UP FOR US, A FRAGRANT offering and sacrifice to God."

▶▶ Simply put, ~ "a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" here means that Jesus' sacrifice on the cross for our sins was acceptable to God the Father.

LET THESE WORDS SINK IN. ~ JESUS "GAVE HIMSELF UP FOR US." ~ LET'S MAKE IT PERSONAL

▶▶ In Jn. 10:11, ~ Jesus said, ~ "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

▷▷ And He did, ~ willingly

▶▶ In Jn. 15:13, ~ Jesus said, ~ "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends."

▷▷ He called us His friends ~ and loved us so much that He willingly and unselfishly sacrificed Himself for us on the cross, ~ so that we might have eternal life.

▶▶ The cross reveals the depth of Jesus' love for us.

AND WE . . . ARE TO REFLECT THAT LOVE, ~ CHRIST-LIKE LOVE, ~ I.E., ~ SELFLESS, ~ sacrificial love, ~ to our fellow believers in this fallen, ~ sinful world.

▶▶ Our thinking, ~ attitudes, ~ and behavior toward one another are to be characterized by selfless, ~ sacrificial love.

▷▷ And Christ-like love is to become the deciding factor in our choices and the motivating power in our actions in our relationships with our fellow believers. 📖 7/8

CONCLUSION.

AND THAT, ~ MY FELLOW BELIEVERS, ~ BRINGS US TO THE END OF PAUL'S TEN exhortations.

▶▶ Ten exhortations that help spell out in detail the type of life that brings honor and glory to God, ~ the type of life that should result from the truth of [chap. 1-3](#).

▷▷ Ten exhortations that also serve the purpose of describing some of what it means to put off our old self and to put on our new self.

▶▶ Let us now apply them to our lives and bring glory and honor to our heavenly Father.

LET'S PRAY 8/8