

Insight for the Issues

Prov. 4:23

NE→XT STEPS

Prov. 4:23 **Keep thy heart** with all diligence; for **out of it are the issues of life.**

“Witnessing to my neighbor?”

Tonight, we continue considering a new “issue:”

“Who is my neighbor?”

The title is taken from Luke 10:29b. Jesus was asked this question from a lawyer that was trying to justify himself in reply to Jesus’ statement regarding the greatest commandment.

Tonight, we will consider how to be a witness to our neighbor.

Eph. 4:17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth **walk not as other Gentiles walk**, in the vanity of their mind,
18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:
19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.
20 But ye have not so learned Christ;

21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:

22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

27 Neither give place to the devil.

28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with *his* hands the thing which is good, **that he may have to give to him that needeth.**

29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

- ❖ Right in the middle of this passage is v. 25, containing this statement: “...speak every man truth with his neighbour...” Observe the context of this verse:

I. THE CONCERN FOR DISTINCTIVENESS OF BELIEVERS, 4:17-19

A. The Concern for Distinction, 4:17

Eph. 4:17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth **walk not as other Gentiles walk**, in the vanity of their mind,

- ❖ The Apostle Paul, in one long sentence, expresses distinctions between a believer and “the world.”

B. The Conspicuous Description, 4:18-19

1. Spiritual darkness, v. 18a – “Having the understanding darkened...”
2. Spiritual detachment, v. 18b – “...being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them...”
3. Spiritual denseness, v. 18c – “...because of the blindness of their heart:”
4. Spiritual dullness, v. 19a “Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness...”
5. Spiritual depravity, v. 19b “...to work all uncleanness with greediness.”

II. THE CONTRAST OF THE DIFFERENCES OF BELIEVERS, 4:20-24

❖ Again, in one long sentence, the Apostle Paul expresses a contrast between a believer and the world.

A. The Assertion of Substantiality, 4:20

Eph. 4:20 But ye have not so learned Christ;

Original Word: μανθάνω

Transliteration: manthanó

Definition: to learn

manthánō (akin to *mathētēs*, "a disciple") – properly, *learning* key facts; gaining "*fact-knowledge* as someone learns from experience, often with the implication of *reflection* – 'come to realize' "

<https://biblehub.com/greek/3129.htm>

B. The Assumption of Salvation, v. 21a – “If so be...”

C. The Accessibility to the Savior, 21b – “...**that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:**”

D. The Abstaining of Self, v. 22 “That ye **put off** concerning **the former conversation the old man**, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;”

1 Pet. 2:11 Dearly beloved, I beseech *you* as strangers and pilgrims, **abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;**

E. The Alteration of the Spirit, v. 23 “And **be renewed in the spirit of your mind;**”

Original Word: ἀνανεώω

Transliteration: ananeoó

Usage: I renew; mid: I renew myself, am renewed.

Properly, going up to a *higher* stage (level of sanctification) by God's power; divinely *renewed*.

ananeoō ("make new in relation to time") is **only used in Eph 4:23**. Here believers are reminded of God's continuous offer to bring new strides in their sanctification through "sanctified reasoning" – raising the meaning *up to new levels of spiritual comprehension and reality*.

<https://biblehub.com/greek/365.htm>

Isa. 26:3 Thou wilt keep *him* in perfect peace, ***whose mind is stayed on thee***: because he trusteth in thee.

F. The Action to Signify, v. 24 “And that ye **put on** the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”

- ❖ IF a person is a believer, there should be a reflection of Christ.

III. THE COMPOSITE OF THE DIFFERENCES OF BELIEVERS, 4:25-32

A. The Truth for the Neighbor, v. 25b “...speak every man truth with his neighbour...”

- ❖ Individual responsibility is implied = “every man” is commanded to “speak.”
- ❖ The preposition “with” is an implication of being in company with, or spending time to witness.

B. The Testimony Needed, vs. 26-32

1. Battle Self, v. 26

26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

2. Beat Satan, v. 27

27 Neither give place to the devil.

3. Be Selfless, vs. 28-29

28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with *his* hands the thing which is good, **that he may have to give to him that needeth.**

29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may **minister grace unto the hearers.**

4. Bless the Spirit, v. 30

30 And **grieve not the holy Spirit of God**, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

5. Banish the Scorn, v. 31

31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

6. Bring Softheartedness, v. 32

32 And **be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.**

Conclusion

Eph. 5:1 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;
2 And **walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us**, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. ...
8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but **now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:**
15 **See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,**
16 **Redeeming the time**, because the days are evil.

- ❖ In order to be an effective witness to our neighbors, we must earn their respect by living differently than the world, and, worldly “Christians.”
- ❖ The passage in Eph. 4:17-32 clearly shows the distinction of believers from the world.