

Pastor Kyle Mercer
Change Your Clothes

June 11, 2023

Series: The Church and the Home
Ephesians 4:17-32

**BIG IDEA – WE NEED TO BE DIFFERENT IF WE ARE GOING TO
MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

Welcome, mom and dad and grandma and grandpa and aunt and uncle and nice neighbor who came for Parent Commissioning. I'm glad you guys are here. Now, here's what we're hoping. This is the first of many moments and memories and milestones we want to share with these little kids. Wasn't that beautiful? We're going to dedicate over 80 kids across this weekend. Isn't that incredible? You can clap.

This is going to be the first of many milestones. Here's what that means. We hope all of these kids trust Christ as their personal Savior, and we're eager to celebrate the next milestone of conversion. Then we hope they get baptized, and we want to celebrate *that* milestone of baptism.

Mom, Dad, it's going to be here before you know it. They're going to graduate, and they're going to go to college or trade school or into the workforce, and we're going to celebrate sending them. But do you know what we love to celebrate? We love to celebrate sending them on short-term mission trips.

We have 113 people leaving on Saturday to head to Mississippi and Tennessee. It's our students going on their mission trips. Isn't this incredible? Here's why we love mission trips. You've been told this before. You've probably said this. You're going to be in the same place a year from today that you're at today except for the experiences you have, the people you meet, and the books you read.

When they go on this mission trip, it's like a discipleship microwave. They're going to have unbelievable experiences, and they're going to meet people, and a few of them may even read a book on the way. I don't know, but it's going to be incredible. I need

to honor... I know I'm a little biased, but I think we have the greatest student leadership team.

You have to understand this. We have adults who go to Community Group every week, and their schedule is just as busy as yours. Then on top of that, they go on Wednesday night every week and serve our students. God bless them. Then they're taking their PTO to head on this mission trip. For those of you who don't work, that's time off. That's vacation. So, God bless them.

Guys, here's what I'm going to do. I want you to look at this. I'm going to put all 113 names on the screen. I want you to see this. That's who's going. We count people because people count. Every number is a name and a face and a son and a daughter. In a minute, I'm going to pray for these students going on this mission trip. I just want you to look at one name. You can keep your eyes open during prayer. Don't look at me, though. That would be awkward for us to make eye contact.

Here's what I want you to do. I want you to pick a name, and you just pray for that person. I'm going to pray for the whole trip, and then we're going to get into Ephesians 4. Let's take a moment, because we believe this is a significant moment. When you go on a short-term mission trip, you don't come back the same person. Okay. Let's pray.

Lord, we just pray for these students and the student leaders. Whether it is when they get in the van and they barrel down the road and the...whatever it is...10 or 12 hours of conversation, or whether it's the people they meet, the spiritual and financial poverty they see... In fact, we've heard stories before of students who go on these mission trips, and they end up becoming Christians on the mission trip.

They realize *they* were the mission field. They realize *they* weren't Christians. Lord, you're always doing ten thousand things we don't know and can't see. We just pray for these. We pray a unique blessing on the student leaders who are uniquely giving of their time, energy, and resources to this next generation. We pray this in your name. And everyone said, "Amen."

All right. I need to state the obvious for a moment. The obvious is this: every person comes into the world naked. You're like, "Where is he going to go with this?" Hold on. Or as my grandmother used to say, everybody is born in their birthday suit. But as soon as you come out in your birthday suit, clothes immediately become important. The parents are like, "Put a diaper on and put the swaddling cloth on and get Grandma's onesie she just gave and put that on the baby. Put the bow in the hair." Clothes become really important.

When you're a really little kid, like, when you're 1 or 2 years old... All kids try to do is take their clothes off. Then you hit 3 or 4. What happens at 3 or 4? You play dress-up. This is actually a very important developmental stage for kids. You have the dress-up bin, right?

I know I'm stereotyping, but the girls get all of the princess dresses, and they dress up in all that fairy-tale stuff, and the boys start dressing up like ninjas and firefighters and police officers. Then you get a little bit older and get out of that phase, and you start dressing like your favorite superhero.

Now, why am I talking about this? Because sometimes we need to see in kids what we can't see in ourselves, which is clothing matters and clothing does two things. Hear this out for a second, because Paul is going to talk about clothing today. Clothing tells other people something about you, and clothing tells *you* something about you. I'll explain.

Clothing tells me, by the way, how to interact with somebody. When I'm going to my favorite (and I think *your* favorite) fast food restaurant, Chick-fil-A... This is a good way to think about it. I *am* interacting with a person, but why do they all wear the same uniform? Because what I'm actually interacting with is the uniform.

The Chick-fil-A worker is not going to tell me his or her whole life. She's going to say, "Chick-fil-A sandwich? My pleasure," because I'm interacting with the uniform. Sports teams have uniforms. You wear certain things depending on the event you go to. Right? To a prom I'll wear something, to a funeral I'll wear something, to a wedding I'll wear something, and when I go to court I'll wear something.

This is very interesting, though. Clothing doesn't just tell other people about us. When I grew up, my dad used to say, "Dress how you want to be treated." Clothing tells other people something, but clothing tells *you* something. We actually know this. This is very interesting. They did this study (this was a university study) where they gave two groups of people white coats.

They went to the first group and said, "Guys, this is a very nice, very expensive doctor's coat." And they put it on. Over here, "Hey, guys, this is just your generic painter's coat that people don't mind getting messy. It's just what guys paint in." They gave them the exact same tasks to do. The people who thought they were wearing a doctor's coat did a better job and were more careful. Clothing communicates something to you.

I had this weird thing happen this week. I can't get into all of the details with it right now, but basically, I was invited to something where I had to be in a suit in a different city on the same day. Basically (it's a long story), I couldn't pack the suit, so I showed

up at Charlotte airport in a full suit. I had to go buy this and get it tailored. I didn't have a suit. So, I am the only person... I was there for, like, an hour and a half.

I mean, who wears a full suit in Charlotte airport? I'm like a goofball, but I have to be honest with you guys. I was looking pretty good. I mean, it fit me nicely and the tie popped. I'm walking through the airport, and I'm watching people watch me. Everybody is thinking something similar. It's like, "Who *is* this person?" Some people were thinking, "Are you important?" And *I* started thinking, "Am I important?" That's the power of clothing.

Now, why do we stop wearing certain clothes? Well, there are a lot of reasons. Two main reasons we stop wearing clothes are they stop fitting or they go out of fashion. Here's what Paul is going to say today. This is the whole message. Paul is going to say your old clothes of the old man and the old self and the old life before Christ don't fit anymore.

So, he's going to use this imagery of clothing. He says, "You have to take off the old clothes of the old man, and you have to put on the new clothes." I want you to look at your neighbor and say, "You need some new clothes." And the wife said, "Give me the credit card."

He's saying your new life needs to show up in a new lifestyle. He's going to say that your walk needs to show up in a new wardrobe. He's going to say your change of heart needs to show up in new habits. Your new beliefs need to show up in new behaviors. That makes sense, right? You get it.

So, what I want us to do today... We have to kind of see this whole idea. Come with me. Look at verse 17. I want you to see this. He says, "**Now this I say and testify in the Lord...**" You know how Paul gets intense every once in a while. He's saying, "Look, guys. God is my witness. These are not my ideas, and I didn't discover this, and I didn't make this up. This is the Word of God." This is what he's saying.

"**...you must no longer walk...**" That means you used to walk this way. By the way, *walk* just means live. That's all he's saying. "Okay. You can't live *this* way." Well, what can I do? Hold on. Let me see. "**...you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do...**" Now *Gentiles*... He's not saying there's some ethnic group or some culture you can't be like. The Gentiles represent the world and worldliness. So, let's read it with that line.

"**...you must no longer walk [or live] as the [world does]...**" How? "**...in the futility of their minds.**" I want you to understand this. It's Parent Commissioning weekend, and we're in the buckle of the Bible Belt, so every once in a while, at least once every other week, I kind of come up here and go, "Hold on. Let me explain Christianity really quickly to everybody." So that's what I'm going to do right now.

No one is born a believer. No one comes into the world as a Christian, and becoming a Christian (this is really important) is a process and an event. The process is there are certain things you have to learn. You have to learn that God made you on purpose for a purpose. You have to learn that. Then you have to learn you're sinful. Like, really, *you*. You do things God hates, and you're sinful by nature and choice. You have to learn that.

Then you have to learn Christ was your perfection in his life and your punishment in his death. You have to learn that. Then Jesus rose from the dead over Satan, sin, and death, and you have to put personal trust and personal repentance in him. You have to learn that. Now, you could learn that in 10 or 15 minutes. That happens every once in a while.

There's a guy named Billy Graham. He's dead now. He's with the Lord. Believe it or not (it wasn't that long ago, actually), he used to fill stadiums, and he used to tell people those four things. He would do it in 45 minutes, and everyone would be like, "I never heard that" or "I never put it all together." They'd walk down the aisle, and the process and the event of becoming a Christian would happen.

For some of you, your parents have been trying to tell you these things for two decades. It's like, "Here's *The Jesus Storybook Bible*, and here's another story. Here's more Scripture. Here's a kids' ministry, and here's a student ministry. Here are all of our prayers, and here's our devotional life. All I'm trying to do is get you to understand those things so you can have that process to have that event."

Here's what he's saying. When the event happens... I'm one of those weird people who know the exact day it happened. March 28, 2001, I became a Christian. I walked the aisle. I prayed the prayer. I cried. I got a Bible. I did all of it. I was 16. My life immediately changed. No one even needed to tell me. I mean, I started reading my Bible, but I just knew. I knew, "You don't do these certain things," and I stopped doing them. I mean, not perfectly but progressively.

I knew there were new ways I needed to talk and new ways I needed to relate and things I needed to stop doing and other things I needed to start doing. This is really cool: no one told me, because the Holy Spirit was inside of me. Here's what he's saying: when you become a Christian, your life has to change. That's the religious part of it, but here's the other part: you *want* your life to change.

Then he's saying this. I know we have a lot of guests in here. You're just going to have to listen to this part for a second, guests. I want to talk to the people who say, "Two Cities Church is our home." I want to talk about how we live different and distinct lives, because if you want to make a difference, you need to be different. That makes sense.

So, how do we do that in a world that's very different than us? How do we be in the world and not of the world? Well, let me tell you how to do it and how not to do it. First, how *not* to do it. I'm going to give you four ways not to do it and one way to do it really quickly. This is helpful, I think.

First of all, the way you cannot interact with the world is through *compromise*. This is the project of Protestant liberalism for the last 70 years, and it doesn't work. It's like, "Let's water down what we believe. Let's throw the pride flag out front. Let's just basically be the neighborhood Rotary club."

Do you know this? There's not one theologically liberal denomination in the world growing, obviously. It's like, "There's no heaven, no hell, no judgment, and no cross. Everything is okay, everybody is okay, and everything goes well for everybody forever." It's like, "Well, then I'm not showing up and tithing to *that*."

Here's the thing. When you compromise, you just upset both God and the world. God is like, "I didn't say that. Why are you so embarrassed to say what I have said?" Then the world is like, "You'll never be liberal enough for us!" There you go. Don't compromise.

The second one is *Christianize*. Some of you, especially you homeschool families, are going to be tempted to do this. Here's why: because you're afraid, and I get why you're afraid. The world is a scary place. "What's on Netflix? What's on Disney+?" I get it. There's a big, scary world out there, and you're afraid it's going to infect and influence your family. I get it. But you don't want to be Amish.

The Amish are the classic example of Christianized/bomb shelter/monastery mindsets. If 1850 comes back, the Amish are ready. Every Amish person needs to watch *The Village*. Unfortunately, they don't have TV. That's a movie that M. Night Shyamalan did. Watch it. The whole idea of the movie is that, basically, sin is not out *there*; sin is in *here*. There's no walled city you can build or time you could think of... Was 1850 the perfect time? Is there something godly about not having electricity?

Guys, I experienced this Christianizing for the first time... I was a brand-new believer. I was, like, a year in the Lord. I went to the Family Christian bookstore. Have you ever been to one of those? They don't exist anymore. So, I went to this Family Christian bookstore. I don't know if I was buying a Bible. I don't know if I was buying a book. I don't remember what I was buying.

I go up to the front counter, and I'm checking out, and on the counter are Testamints. I'm like, "Do we need a Christian mint? Testamints?" I'm like, "What's wrong with...? I like my secular mints. I like my unbelieving mints. I don't need a Christian mint. What has happened to the world? Somebody thought this up?" We can't Christianize.

We also can't *criticize*. *Criticize* is "I'm just angry." People get that way. Here's the thing. When you Christianize, you're afraid of the world. When you criticize, you're angry at the world. These are the Independent Fundamental churches. They're the ones that put *fun* in *fundamentalism*. (No, they don't.) They are so angry at the world. You know, the whole world is going to hell in a handbasket, and all of the good people are in *here* and all of the bad people are out *there*.

We can't have a posture of anger toward the world. We have to have the heart of Christ who wept over Jerusalem. But you can't *compartmentalize* your faith. That's another one. This is probably the temptation for most of us. There was a famous philosopher and seminary professor who said the average Christian finds their Christian faith privately compelling but publicly irrelevant.

You're doing your Bible Recap. You're doing your devotion. You're with your Community Group. Maybe you're even in here right now, and you're like, "This is interesting," but then you leave, and it was privately compelling but publicly irrelevant. No one knows you're a Christian at work except for you and Jesus.

So, what we're trying to do is not compartmentalize or Christianize or criticize or compromise. We're trying to be a *counterculture*. I'm not just talking about that kind of coffee I love, Counter Culture Coffee. *Counterculture* is a way you are in the world. It says, "I am not angry at you, world. I'm not apathetic at you, world. I'm not afraid of you." What we want to do is be in the world and not of the world. This means we're going to be around you, but we're going to do money, sex, marriage, family, leadership, and faith differently.

01 THE BATTLE TO BE DIFFERENT BEGINS IN THE MIND (BROKEN BRAINS)

Okay. So, that's the introduction. We have to have changed lives but live as a counterculture in the world. Then he tells us how to do this. The battle begins in your brain. I'll show you this. Go back to verse 17. ***"...you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds."***

Let's talk about the mind for a second. What does it mean if something is futile? If something is futile, it means it's not accomplishing the purpose for which it was created. Some of you are familiar with the idea of a broken body. That makes sense. You're like, "Yeah. Our bodies break down, especially as we age." Okay. There are broken bodies and there are broken brains.

He's saying the human brain, the human mind, is not working the way God created it in the unbeliever. You're supposed to look at me, and I'm supposed to look at you,

and I'm supposed to be like, "Oh my goodness! You guys are made in the image of God." I'm supposed to look at you and think about God, and you're supposed to look at me and think about God. We're supposed to look at the creation and think about the Creator. Our brains are broken so we don't do that.

I want you to see what he says about the mind. Look at verse 18. **"They are darkened in their understanding..."** That's the second thing he says about the mind. Third, **"...alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance..."** That's the mind again. **"...that is in them, due to their..."** Uh-oh. He's going to go one level deep. **"...due to their hardness of heart."**

If you write in your Bible, you might want to write this: *psychology of unbelief*. Paul is the first psychologist. Paul, because he has revelation, is going to go, "Guys, hold on. Let me pull the curtain back, and let me show you behind the curtain what's called a *psychology of unbelief*." Why do people not believe in Jesus?

He says there's darkness of understanding, and then he says they're ignorant, and then he says they have a hard heart. Look at verse 19. **"They have become callous..."** Okay. So, you're telling us twice about a hard heart? That's interesting. **"...and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. But that is not the way you learned Christ!"**

By the way, it didn't say learn *about* Christ. *Learn* Christ, because Christ is alive. **"...assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus..."** Okay. So, we have to talk about the mind for a second. Paul is telling us two things, and we need to hold them in tension.

First, why don't people believe? Because they're ignorant. I've told you this before, but man's greatest problem, theologically speaking, is that he or she is ignorant. For the unbeliever, your greatest problem is not that you're going to hell. It's not that you're a sinner. It's not that the wrath of God is on you. You're like, "Well, that sounds like a big problem." No. Your greatest problem is that you don't know those things.

This is why preaching and teaching exist: because ignorance is man's number-one problem. I know what you're thinking. You're like, "But, Pastor Kyle, I don't get it. I told my son about the cross, and I told my daughter about the resurrection. I've shared Christ with them, and they still don't believe. They're not ignorant anymore, so what's going on there?"

Well, do you see what it says in verses 18-20? Bad news. It's going to get awkward for some of you who are not believers just for a second. It's saying the reason you don't believe is the mind is moral and you have a hardened, calloused heart that doesn't want to believe.

Let's pick on the college students for a second. They're not here anyway. We'll pick on them while they're not here. I did college ministry for 10 years. Why do more college students not believe the gospel? I know what they'll tell you. They'll say, "It's the problem of evil." It's the problem of suffering is what it is. "It's that I'm really struggling with Darwinian atheistic evolution. It's that I'm just not convinced about the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ." It's like, "I don't think so."

Now, let's give the Devil his due. Maybe 1 or 2 percent of people really feel that way. Here's what most people are not saying: "I still want to sleep with my girlfriend. I don't want to give up my sinful habits. I would like to remain the lord of my life." But no one wants to say that.

Guys, the best books on apologetics have already been written. *Apologetics* just means the defense of faith. They've all been written. There will be more that will come out. They've all been written, because way before Netflix and way before social media, there were people way smarter than us that all they ever thought about were these questions. That's all they ever did.

All they did all their lives was write unbelievable answers, and there *are* answers to all of those questions. Here's our job, Christians. Our job is to help people with their ignorance. God has to deal with the hard heart. Okay. What we hope for is repentance. That's what the mind needs. The mind needs repentance.

Here's the modern word for repentance, because *repentance* is kind of a religious word. Let me give you a modern word for repentance: *paradigm shift*. Have you ever had a paradigm shift? A *paradigm shift* is "I think differently about this now, and because I think differently about this now, I actually live and interact in the world differently." That's repentance.

Repentance is "I no longer see men and women as sexual objects to be objectified. I now see them as image bearers of God who will live somewhere forever, people for whom Christ died, some of them my very brothers and sisters in Christ. If I actually thought about him or her that way, that would really help me in my struggle with lust." We have to think differently. It's not just, "Okay. I'm not coveting." No, no, no. I now see that everything is God's and it's all stewardship on my part.

02 RELATIONSHIPS ARE BUILT ON TRUST AND TRUST IS BUILT ON TRUTH

So, the first thing he says is we have to work on our minds. The second thing he says is we have to work on our relationships. I'll show you this. Verse 22: *"...to put off*

your old self... " See? That's clothing. He's using the language of getting undressed and dressed.

"...which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self..." There it is again. ***"...created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another."***

Here's what I want you to know. For the rest of the time, from verse 25 to verse 30, all he's going to do is talk about how we are to live in the context of relationships. Here's why: your life (and you know this) is only as good or bad as the relationships in your life. Have you ever seen...? I've seen this, and it's sad. Have you ever seen dads dying of dementia? That's terrible when you see that happen. It could be Mom. It could be Dad. It's heartbreaking, and it's very hard on a family for multiple reasons.

Do you know what's even worse? When all of the siblings are fighting. Oh! It's almost more than you can bear. Dad is dying, and all of the horrible, toxic nature of these four siblings and everything they've not dealt with for 20 years is now coming up. You can barely stand it. They're fighting over the will and the inheritance as Dad is there dying. That happens.

Or how about this? I've seen marriages... By the way, a lot of you are still very young. Figure this out now. You do not want to be in your 50s stapling and duct-taping your family together after 20 years of horrible decisions and learning how to relate. Okay. What you want to do is you want to figure this out, so you want to work on your marriage.

I've seen families in this church, and things don't go well financially for them. This happens. The stock market goes sideways. People lose their jobs. If people's marriages are fine, it's like, "We can handle this." You know, what do they say? A good marriage makes the good times twice as good and the bad times half as bad.

But have you ever met someone who has a 2 out of 10 in their marriage? Their kid starts to rebel or one of them gets cancer or there's financial... You can feel it right now. I can feel it as I'm talking. You know this. You've seen this happen, and you don't want that to happen to you. So, you have to work on your relationships now.

Now, here's the principle for relationships: *relationships are built on trust, and trust is built on truth*. That's the principle for all relationships in your life. It's the principle for your relationship with your bank. How does *that* relationship work? The only way it works is because there's trust.

The reason our nation is in trouble is we don't trust the government and we don't trust the mainstream media anymore. A lot of people feel like, "Well, you lied to me. You lied to me for a long time, and I don't know that I can trust you." By the way, how do you get trust back?

I know how some of you are. Someone breaks... It's going to happen. Your spouse is going to break your trust. Your friend is going to break your trust. Your teenager is going to break your trust. I know how some of you are. "Well, you're going to have to earn it back. It's going to take five years, and I'm going to remind you all the time of how you broke my trust." Please don't do that.

Trust is earned and trust is given. I'm going to, little by little, give you more trust, and hopefully, little by little, you're going to earn more trust. The goal is to bring back the trust. Why? Because relationships move at the speed of trust. Have you ever met a family that can't make any decisions? They can't move. They can't buy a house. They can't switch jobs. They can't send their kids to school.

It's like, "What's going on in this family? You guys can't make any decisions." It's like, "Oh, there's no trust in this family." Everything turns into "World War III" every time they're going to talk about something, and everybody is questioning everybody else's motives. It's like, "Stop that." Churches are the worst. It's *this* committee and *that* committee, and it needs to go through *this* board and *this* elder and *this* deacon. It's gross. There's no trust.

Now, he says we have to tell the truth. I want to tell you one person I want to challenge you to tell the truth to. It's not your spouse. Some of you go, "Oh, thank goodness." I want to challenge you to tell the truth to yourself. Some of you tell yourself you're okay and you're not okay. You tell yourself you don't have an addiction and you do.

You tell yourself you don't drink too much, but you do. You tell yourself your marriage is fine and it isn't. You say your daughter is in a good place and she's not. I want to challenge you. I mean, go burn the journal afterward. That's fine. Throw it in the fireplace afterward, but I want to encourage you to write down and just be honest with yourself.

Here's why (this is going to sound weird): so you can trust yourself. You go, "How does that work?" Well, what if you keep telling yourself you're going to do things and then you don't do them? What happens? You don't trust yourself. You're like, "My head hurts. How does that work?" That's what happens. You won't tell the truth to anybody else until you tell the truth to yourself.

You have to get to that place where you say, "This is the real condition of my heart and my soul. I love money." You may have to say that. "I'm selfish." "I'm half the dad I should be." "I'm not a very good wife." Okay. Great. Now we can start the repentance. Now we can start the renewal.

Notice there's a pattern he uses here. He uses the same pattern every time. He says don't do something. Do you see that? "Don't tell lies." Then he says *do* something. "Tell the truth." Then he says, "Here's why you do it." Here's what I want you to know. This is very interesting and good to know. This is actually how child developmental psychology works. It's how we learn and grow is what I mean. You always have to tell people what *not* to do before you can tell them what to do. Always.

Why are the Ten Commandments all negative? Have you ever read the Ten Commandments and been like, "Was God having a bad day?" I mean, "Don't do this" and "Don't do that" and "Don't do this" and "Don't do that." There's one positive, the fourth commandment, but nine of the Ten Commandments are negative. What's up with that? It's because people need to be told what *not* to do before they can build on that. They have to start living that.

You have to start going, "I don't do *this*, and I don't do *that*." Great, great. Then on top of that, you can start building all of the things you *can* do. I'll give you an example. Say Timmy somehow gets a fork. Timmy is a child. I don't know how old Timmy is. I don't know how he got a fork, and you don't know how he got a fork either, but Timmy has this fork, and Timmy is about to stick the fork into an electrical outlet.

What do you say to Timmy? "Timmy, do not stick anything in the outlet!" Now is that true? Well, not technically, because actually you *do* stick something in there. It's how you charge your phone or your computer or your iPad or plug in your blender. But Timmy can't understand that. You can't go, "Timmy, that's an electrical conductor."

Only later, once you've been told what *not* to do with something, can you be told what *to* do with something. You need to be told "No adultery" before you can get a Christian sexual ethic. We need to be told, "No." Now, what does Jesus do in the Sermon on the Mount? He expands and enhances all of the teaching of the Decalogue, the Ten Commandments, and he expands both what we shouldn't do and elongates on what we should do.

Okay. Here's the big idea. You have to get this. You have to repent and then replace. If you only repent... What I mean by that is if you only stop doing things, you will be miserable. That's the religious spirit. Some of you have that spirit. You're miserable because your whole life... Sometimes mom gets like this with the kids. "It's all about what we don't do, what we don't watch, what we don't say, and where we don't go in this house." It's like, "Get me out of that house."

If you repent and don't replace, you are going to be miserable, you are going to be bored, and you are going to be boring. You need to start saying, "I am going to repent, and then I'm replacing." Go ahead and try not to be greedy, envious, jealous, and coveting. Go ahead and try to just take that off. You can't. You have to replace it.

You have to say, "Every time I get on Instagram and see somebody who's doing something, I'm going to start rooting for them. I am so going to rejoice with every person who's rejoicing. That's what I'm going to do." "I'm done lusting. Instead, I'm starting to look at every person as an image bearer of God."

"I'm going to stop being so greedy, and I'm going to start being the most generous version of myself." Yes! That's what he's trying to get us at. I'm worried and concerned that some of your lives are all about repenting without replacing.

03 THE BIBLE BOTH PERMITS AND RESTRICTS ANGER (EMOTIONS)

So, we have to understand relationships, but then we have to understand emotions. Part of what we put on is relationships. Part of what we put on is emotions. He's going to talk about getting angry. Look at this. Verse 26: "**Be angry...**" Some of you just need to hear those first two words: "Be angry."

Some of you are never angry about anything, and your wife and kids are like, "Dad, do you care about anything? I'd like to see you get angry every once in a while. I'd like to know that there's somebody in there." Here's what he says. "**Be angry and do not sin...**" Okay. Put that airbag around it. I'll explain that in a second. "**...do not let the sun go down on your anger...**"

Here's what happened to some of you. You experienced unrighteous, sinful anger directed toward you or someone you love. This happens. Your ex did it or your dad was like that, especially when he drank, or your grandfather or your mother. You had the screaming, yelling, overly disciplinary mom. You had the boss, that terrible boss. He got angry, and he took something away from you, and you didn't get the raise.

You told yourself... You said it. "I'm never going to be angry." Freud said there are two things we tend to not be able to control: our sexuality and our anger. He thought that's why they show up in our daydreams, in our fantasies, and in our nightmares: because we didn't know what to do with them.

If you ever meet a person who's like, "I never get angry," it's like, "You are a dangerous person," because I know what that means. It means you get passively aggressive, and it means you don't know yourself, which is kind of scary. It means

you use all of the euphemisms for anger. "I'm not angry; I'm just frustrated." It's like, "No, you're angry."

Okay. So, some of you need to get angry. Here's why: because you need the energy, the rocket fuel power, that comes from being angry to deal with some of the things you're going to need to deal with in your life. Some of you need to get really angry that your marriage is still in the exact same place it has been for five years and it's mostly your fault. You need to have an angry conversation with yourself in love that you would even allow it to get there.

I just feel like especially men today are weak, pathetic, and domesticated. Okay. So, Lia Thomas. Do you know who Lia Thomas is? A transgender woman swimmer, aka a 6'4" male. I was watching about it. This is all getting public now, and UPenn is probably going to get in big trouble, and the NCAA is probably eventually going to get in big trouble, and they're going to deserve everything that's coming to them.

Here's what they did. They allowed a 6'4" male to shower in the women's locker room with all of these women. And not just the UPenn team. At the national championship, *all* of the women. Lia Thomas, a 6'4" man, would go in there. You know, I'm thinking... I know it's complex, and I know people are afraid to lose their jobs and people are afraid of the government.

It's like, "Where was Dad?" I'm like, "Are you kidding me? Is there not one..." I don't know how many girls are on that swim team. Did not one...? Maybe they did, but did not one dad get angry enough at this? Just so you know, being indifferent to injustice is not a virtue.

Okay. It needs to be controlled. This is why he says, "Do not sin." Here's what this means. He says, "Do not let the sun go down on your anger." You can't only always be angry. You need to understand that emotions... You'll see this. I'll give you examples. Singular emotions can overtake your life, and they can ruin the heart God gave you.

You've seen the archetype before of the angry old man yelling to kids to get off his grass. That's a stereotype and an archetype for a reason. It's because it happens. You'll see certain people, and anger defines them. You'll see certain men, and lust, sadly, defines them. A lot of times, you'll meet a certain woman, and sadness about something that happened a decade ago defines her. It's like she's trapped back in 2013 when she lost somebody. She can't move past it.

Or you'll meet other people, and they're absolutely dominated by fear. They can't get in a car, they can't get on an airplane, and they can't go certain places in the city. They're dominated by fear. He's saying that anger has a place, but it needs to be controlled and integrated.

One of the things he tells us is "Don't let the sun go down on your anger." Here's what this means. I'm about to step on some toes of some marriages for a second. You can't sleep on the couch. I know this happens. It normally happens because the husband, usually (I'm stereotyping), can get over things a little bit... He doesn't even know the wife is angry. "She's angry at me? I just thought you were being unusually quiet today."

You're lying in bed, and usually the wife is like, "I can't sleep. I'm still angry." Normally, then, the husband ends up going to sleep in the guest room or going to sleep on the couch. That's something you'll watch in sitcoms and stuff. That's a funny thing, and guys will joke about "I'm in the doghouse."

Well, let me tell you what happens. If you are angry at your spouse, and then you sleep in a different room, what happens is, usually, both of you wake up, and you're like, "Well, I feel better. Eight hours of sleep. I feel better, and all of the emotions have kind of gone down." In a lot of cases, people never end up talking about what they need to talk about that they never dealt with, and then they went to sleep. Guess what. If you do that 10 times, woe to your marriage.

Every once in a while, a guy or a girl will be like, "I don't even know why. We were just talking about who takes the dog out, and she exploded on me" or "He exploded on me." I can describe to you exactly what happened. She or he is not responding to you not taking the dog out. She or he is responding to the 15 things you have not dealt with over the last five months, and it all came out at once.

This is why in verse 27 we get a warning. Here's the warning: "[Deal with anger] **and give no opportunity to the devil.**" So, you need to have a category not just for the extraordinary demonic but for the ordinary demonic. I know you've heard of the extraordinary demonic. *The Exorcism of Emily Rose*. Someone's head is spinning. There's goo on the walls. There are ghosts everywhere. You think of Jesus and his confrontation with Satan in the wilderness.

Well, that is the extraordinary demonic. Then there's the ordinary demonic. This is the ordinary demonic. It says a household where Mom and Dad send the kid up to bed, and they're angry with the kid, and the kid is angry with them, and it's not dealt with is a demonic home. I don't know how else to understand this.

It's a demonic home because that's exactly what Satan does. He never deals with things, and he's always bitter and always angry. The ordinary demonic shows up in 1 Corinthians 7. It says a husband and wife should give each other their conjugal, sexual rights, and he says if there's a sexless marriage, it is a demonic marriage. It's like, "Whoa!" That's 1 Corinthians 7.

04 THE CALL TO WORK (VOCATION)

So, we have to deal with our minds, we have to deal with our relationships, we have to deal with our emotions, and we have to get to work. Look at what it says here.

Verse 28: ***"Let the thief no longer steal..."*** That's, again, what *not* to do. ***"...but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need."***

So, the first thing he says is "Don't steal." What is the number-one way you're going to be tempted to steal? To look like you're working instead of working. How many of you spend...? You don't need to raise your hand. You're working from home. I know you are. Wink, wink. Yeah, you're working from home. It's working out really well for you.

I know how this works in the office. The person who looks the most stressed out everybody thinks is working. So, your boss walks by, and you're like, "Oh my gosh." Then he or she leaves and you get back on Facebook. We know how this works. Part of the way you steal is by looking like you're working instead of actually working.

Some of you steal by using your friend's Netflix username and passcode. Gotcha. Some of you steal by cheating on your taxes. There are different ways. But here's what you do when you steal. You take from somebody else and make things more difficult on them. Here's one of the principles: stop making things worse.

If you have that honest conversation with yourself, you have to ask, "Do I make things worse? Do I come home from work and I just, probably because I'm bitter and resentful... Do I make things worse? Does my husband get home from work and I just decide 'I'm kind of angry that you didn't have to be with the kids all day, so why don't I just make things worse when you get home?'" People do that all the time. They aim down instead of aiming up. He says, instead, what if you worked?

Now, how about this? I know this is a novel idea for a lot of people...work. God shows up in Genesis 1 as the great worker, very busy. He had a very busy first week creating the universe. The first thing we're told about God is he's a worker, and then the first thing he does is make us in his image. What does that mean? Part of being made in the image of God is you are meant to work.

We have to tell young people this especially. Labor creates leisure. Young people get this backward. They want leisure without labor. They want leisure before labor. It does not work that way. Labor creates leisure. We were meant to work. Have you ever seen...? This normally happens to guys.

Have you ever seen a guy retire, and he didn't retire to hang out with his grandkids, and he didn't retire to work on some nonprofits, and he didn't retire because he had four hobbies that are actually making him better and building relationships? He just had enough money, so he retired, and he becomes a shadow and shell of himself. Have you seen this guy? I know several of these guys.

They eat too much. They drink too much. They sleep too much. They watch too much Netflix. Work is that which regulates your life and orders your life. The first reason to work is we're made in God's image. By the way, work isn't a curse. It's pre-fall, pre-sin. Work is given to us. Now, the Bible says the ground now works against us when we work, and here's why.

God wanted to say this to us. He wanted to communicate something to us. If you start working, you'll understand the gospel more, because everything you're trying to create will rebel against you, and God goes, "Ha! Now you know what it's like to be me. Everything you try to create rebels against you. That's what you're like to me." You'll understand God better. It's very hard to understand the gospel if you're not working.

Secondly, the reason we work is because the natural state of man is deprivation. You have to say this today. All of the lights are on. Isn't that amazing? You're in a temperature-controlled room. You go to Costco or Trader Joe's or Whole Foods, and you just can't believe it. Everything you'd ever want is right there, and you can grab it right away. It'll be there tomorrow too, and it'll be there next week. You have freezers.

You just can't even understand that for most of human history, there was a very simple line that "If I do not work, I do not eat," which is exactly what the apostle Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 3. He says, "If an able-bodied man won't work, then don't let him eat." Yikes!

Now, here's what you've been told, and this is just a lie. I want to tell you this. You've been told that the history of humanity is that we've all been oppressed by other people. Or, if you go to certain universities, they'll tell you something like this, which is not true. They'll say, "Okay. Let me explain the whole history of humanity in a sentence: men have oppressed women." That is not the story of humanity.

Do you want to know the story of humanity in a sentence? Nature oppressed all of us for thousands of years. That's the story. The natural condition of humanity for almost all of humanity was freezing and starving, and we had to do everything we could and work harder than probably any of us have ever worked, constantly, to bring us out of that.

That's how you can get on an airplane. That's why you have a \$10,000 iPhone in your back pocket. (That's what it should cost.) We have the Internet. We have cars. It's unbelievable. Everywhere you go, all the time, you control the temperature. How did all that happen? Work.

Okay. Third reason. Young people especially need to hear this. Work is a window into the rest of your life. Please hear this. If you will get good at something, the whole world will open up to you. I promise you. It doesn't even matter what. Be an unbelievable plumber, and the whole world will open up to you. You will be like, "I don't even know how I got here. I don't even know how I know these people. I don't even know how I have all of these relationships."

Be a great teacher, and the world will open up to you. Be a great financial adviser and watch the whole world open up. Be a good banker. It doesn't even matter. Pick any career possible and get unbelievably good at it. You could do that. Then, he says, you'd have something to share with other people. Wouldn't that be great?

I think it's amazing. Don't you think it's amazing? Think of a family of four. Some families of four... I would say many in our church. One person works five days a week and provides for four people for seven days a week. That's amazing. Did you hear what I said? One person works five days a week and provides for four people for seven days a week. What? It's amazing. What if you just did that the rest of your life?

Here's what you want to become. Really. You do want to become this. You want to become a useful person. By the way, it says you'll have something to share. What does it mean? Money? Okay. That's so low resolution. No, not just money. If I'm good at something, yes, I will find myself having excess discretionary income. That will be very nice.

Even more than that, I'll have a bunch of skills to help people with. I'll have done something difficult myself, so I'll be like, "Yeah, man, let me tell you how to buy your first house. Let me explain compounding interest to you." Maybe you're good enough that you could start a business. Then you could give somebody a job, and that would be really helpful.

05 WE ARE TO BE AN ARCHITECT WITH OUR WORDS (SPEECH)

So, he basically says, "Get your mind right. Get your relationships right. Get your emotions right. Get your work-life balance right." Then, finally, "Get your words right." This is where we have to end. Here's what he says: "***Let no corrupting talk...***"

That's diseased or rotten. "...come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear."

Now, here's what religious people do. I'm afraid that some of you are religious. Religious people read this passage and go, "Aha! There are a couple of words I will never say. There are a couple of four-letter words, and I won't say them." In fact, in a religious home, normally what they do is they say, "Don't say these words, and don't say words that sound like these words. Don't say *darn* because *darn* sounds like..." Exactly.

You shouldn't say those words. There are other places that talk about coarse speech. That's not what this is talking about here. Here's the thing. Religious people, moralistic people... There are certain words they'll never say while they belittle and demean you all day long, and they feel really good about themselves because they would never say those words that are on that one show you shouldn't watch.

Here's the corrupting talk most of us have: gossip. Do you know what gossip is? It's when you confess other people's sins. You're supposed to confess *your* sins. That's great. You should confess your sins to a small number of people whom you trust. Got it. Gossip is when you confess other people's sins. Do you know how we do this in the church world? Through the prayer chain. "Pray for Sally's marriage. It's not going well." Forward to all.

It can come in slander. Women are the best at this. Reputation destruction. "I will find out something that's strange about you. I will find something that's not right with you. I will amplify one of your imperfections. That's what I'll do. I will make sure everybody knows it, and I will leverage my social media accounts to follow you home while doing it." It's reputation destruction.

What if instead of *those* things you did talk that built up? Let me give you four types of talk that build up as we close. Do you want to build your marriage? Do you want to build your family? Do you want to build your business? Do you want to build your friendships? Then you have to have these four types of talk.

First, *encouragement*. Some of you are so negative. Your kids and your spouse wonder if they do anything right because you're so great at telling them everything they do wrong. Part of the reason is you (and all of us) are more sensitive to negative emotions than you are to positive emotions. We're more bothered by something bad than we are delighted by something good of the same measure.

You could come home, and your wife cleaned the whole house, and you're like, "Why didn't you vacuum this one part?" What's wrong with us? Start encouraging. People need so little encouragement. They really do. Your kids are dying for two things:

"Dad, will you pay attention to me, and will you affirm me? I'm trying to figure my way out in this world, and could you notice when I do something well?"

That's what you want to do. What you want to do this week is catch people doing the right thing. Here's the most amazing thing ever. If you catch your wife doing the right thing and tell her that was awesome and you liked when she did that, guess what: she'll do it again. So will he.

Secondly, *gratitude*. You have to be more thankful. For some of you, if you told your spouse you were thankful for them, if you told your kids you were thankful for them, they'd be like, "Dad, what's wrong? Are you sick? Did something happen?" It would be so strange, and it will feel so uncomfortable for you to even do it. You're going to struggle to get it out. We need an atmosphere of gratitude and thankfulness.

How about this? *Constructive feedback*. I know this one is not as soft. People need feedback. I am still surprised and saddened by... I meet people all the time. We have people on our volunteer teams or we have people in certain environments or we have people apply for jobs, and they're so obviously not good at something that no one has ever told them, which is very uncomfortable for me.

You don't want to meet somebody who's old and doesn't know who they are. You meet someone, and you're like, "You're 60, and you're not good at this at all, and no one ever told you. I don't know how that happened. If someone would have told you this at 20, then you could have gone on a different path and trajectory in your life, but nobody loved you enough to tell you you weren't good at something." Know that that's loving when people do that with a loving heart.

Finally, what about just *wisdom*? We need wisdom. We need practical advice. I mean, how many of us...? We had a good mom and a good dad, but we got into the world and were like, "Why didn't anyone ever tell me about these things?" Right? We need help in our lives.

If you want your marriage to grow, if you want your family to grow, you have to use words that build up. If you will do those four things, you will wake up in six months, and your family will feel so much different than it does right now. Here's why. He gives us the final reason. Here it is. This is how he ends. Verse 30: ***"And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."***

He's saying this, and I don't understand. There's a mystery in this. He's saying the great God of the universe... I don't know why, but somehow, he has so tied himself in with you relationally, emotionally, and personally that you can actually grieve God by sinning. You can make the Holy Spirit sad when you sin. It's like, "What?"

The Bible says there are three things you can do to the Spirit. You can grieve him, you can quench him, and you can resist him. Did you know that? You grieve the Holy Spirit when you do sinful things. When you start having that corrupting talk, you're grieving the Holy Spirit. When you're stealing and not working hard, you're grieving the Holy Spirit.

It's interesting. The Bible also says you can quench the Holy Spirit. Now what's that? People talk about that. Why *grieve*? Why *quench*? What's the difference? *Quench* is when you don't let the power of the Holy Spirit work through you to do the right things. You're quenching the Holy Spirit by not being encouraging to your kids. You're quenching the Holy Spirit by not being more generous. You're quenching the Holy Spirit by not working hard.

Some of you... It's Parent Commissioning week, and I thought about you. Some of you, I'm afraid, have been coming around, or maybe this is your first time here, and the Bible says you can resist the Holy Spirit. Did you know that? You can feel the Holy Spirit coming and saying, "I want you to believe; I want you to repent," and you can resist.

Now this is interesting. God says we have to come to him on his terms, on what his Son has done, but not just his terms...in his timing. Do you ever wonder why the Bible says, "Today, if you hear his voice, don't harden your heart"? Why? Because he doesn't come knocking every day.

So, if you're here today and you feel like the Holy Spirit is speaking to you... You say, "I've never had that life change. Today I had the process, and it's time for me to have an event." I'm going to give you a second when we pray to give your life to Christ. For the rest of us, I want us to look toward... He said you're sealed for the day of redemption. Here's what that means. Here's the hopeful word Paul ends on.

He's saying it's going to be a lot of work to put these clothes on and try to become the godliest version of yourself, but guess what happens at the day of redemption. When you die or when Christ returns, what you've been working toward for 10 decades Jesus Christ completes in the twinkling of an eye.

He's like, "You've been trying to be the godliest version. I'm going to give you glorification. You're going to get to be the godliest version, the sinless version of yourself in the twinkling of an eye." It's there that we're not going to be wearing any old clothes or new clothes, but instead, Christ is going to put on us the robe of his own righteousness. Let's pray.

Lord, if we're in here right now and say, "I have resisted the Holy Spirit..." I just want to give people a chance to say, "I want to give Jesus my sin and myself. I don't want to

resist you." Jesus says, "I stand at the door and knock," but we have to open up. Lord, you draw, but we have to decide. You call us, but we have to make the commitment.

Lord, I pray if there's anyone here who would say, "Jesus, I want to give you my sin and myself; I want to turn from trusting in myself to trusting in Jesus," I pray they'd do that. Lord, for the rest of us, would you help us to take off the old man or woman and put on the new man or woman? Would you help us to be different and distinct, knowing that's how we're going to make a difference? We pray this in Jesus' name, amen.