

**EPHESIANS – THE MYSTERY OF GOD’S CHURCH –
OUR IDENTITY, OUR WALK, OUR WARFARE
PROGRAM 44 (#912224)
WEEK 9 (912349)
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a Production of
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**SERIES: Ephesians – The Mystery Of God’s Church –
Our Identity, Our Walk, Our Warfare
TITLE: Program 44 – We Are Not To Grieve The Holy Spirit**

THURSDAY

OPEN

One day I was sitting counseling a woman and I listened to her as she poured out her story and finally I stopped her and I said, “Let me just ask you a question, dear. Are you bitter?” She said, “I am not bitter!” My question for you today, Beloved, is, are you bitter? Is there any root of bitterness springing up in you? O Beloved, if so we need to get it out because it’s dangerous.

PART ONE

Bitterness, Beloved, will not only eat your lunch it will eat your stomach and then like a cancer it will spread until it takes all your vital organs and just literally destroys you and that’s why today’s lesson is so absolutely critical. As we look at Ephesians chapter 4, we need to remember that we’re in this

segment of Ephesians that talks about how we are to walk. [We’re not to walk as the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind.] (PARAPHRASE, Ephesians 4:17b) We instead are to “...**Be renewed in the spirit of [our] mind.**” (Ephesians 4:23b) We put on a new man. And we need to let the new man have full control in our life. And so as he looks at this new relationship what Paul is going to do is hit a bunch of issues. He’s going to hit various sins in our life and one of the things that he’s going to come down to and camp on is bitterness and this is what we want to look at. We want to go back to Ephesians chapter 4 and as we do we want to see where we are in the text and then we’re going to move to bitterness but we’ve got to stop and look at these other sins. And yet those are not sins I think that a lot of you are probably involved in like stealing. Are you stealing? I know we can steal time from our employer by talking to our friends or getting on the computer and doing our own thing. But he’s talking here about stealing where you take someone else’s possession when you should be working for it. So let’s go back to Ephesians chapter 4 and then we’re going to move on down to bitterness. So I want you to know, my friend, today although I opened with bitterness we’re not going to talk about it right away. All right now, as we look at this remember we have marked every reference to the recipients. When we studied Ephesians and we went through it chapter by chapter, one of the instructions was to color every reference to the author in one way and every reference to the recipients in another way. That means that you would color “you” and “your” or anytime he says “you Gentiles” you would color that. So now he’s talking to a group of Gentiles. He’s talking to people that were not raised under the Law. Yes they had a Law in and of themselves because there’s a natural law within man where we know that we are are not to murder and we know that we’re not to steal and we know that we’re not to commit adultery. It’s kind of innate and yet these were Gentiles that had been brought up apart from the Law that lived in a culture that encouraged self, a culture that was set on self. We know also

from studying Ephesians and studying Acts which we did earlier in this study that this was a group of people that lived under the influence of the occult. This was a group of people that worshipped idols and we know that from going back and looking at the account of Paul’s visit to Ephesus and his time spent there as he taught the people. Well now he’s away from them. Now he’s a prisoner. We saw that he calls himself a “...**prisoner of the Lord....**” (Ephesians 4:1a) He does that in chapter 4, verse 1 he refers to his imprisonment also in chapter 3, verse 1. So now what he’s doing he’s going to hit a bunch of things. We’ve looked at, “**Be angry, and ... sin [not; and don’t] let the sun go down on your anger.**” (Ephesians 4:26) We’re gonna hit anger again though a little bit later because bitterness and anger go together. But before we do that in verse 28 this is what he says, “**He who steals must steal no longer....**” (Ephesians 4:28a) In other words if you’ve been stealing it’s gotta stop. It says, “**...But rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need.**” (Ephesians 4:28) Now this is very, very interesting. There are a group of people and they believe that others should work and they have a right to what others have earned. These are people with no scruples. This is what people are like apart from Christ. This is the depths of degradation. The depths of degradation mean this. That I’m going to be slothful all my life. I’m going to live off of the government taking care of me or I’m going to live off of begging for food and I’m just going to lay around and I’m gonna think everybody owes me something and if I see something that I want then I’m going to go in. I’m going to break into your house. I’m gonna steal what you have because it should belong to me. I mean it is awful. And when I hear about my friends who have had their houses broken into, I can understand the anger and it’s a righteous anger and God is angry also. Stealing is the height of selfishness. It is the epitome of selfishness. It’s not stealing because you have no bread. But because there is a place to get bread, there’s a place to go. There’s always in every city

Christians have come to the fore and there are soup kitchens and there are relief shelters and places for people to go where Christians are going to take care of them. But for them to go into another person’s home, he says, “I want it stopped. I want it stopped right now. It is against my Law and we know that the Ten Commandments say, **“Thou [shall] not steal.” (Exodus 20:15, KJV)** The problem is in the United States of America we once lived in a country that was governed by a fear, a respect of God. And so the Ten Commandments were in prominent places and people could see. **“Thou [shall] not steal.” (Exodus 20:15, KJV)** And seeing those we would constantly remember that we were accountable to God. But these people think no. It’s perfectly all right and they justify it. He says it’s gotta stop. Now this is what he says in juxtaposition with this. He says, [“You’re not to steal; you’re to work.”] (PARAPHRASE, Ephesians 4:28a) You are to work and you say, “But I can’t find work.” Maybe you can’t find the work that you want, maybe you can’t find the work that is going to pay you what you think that you are worth but I think that there is work to be had and there is a wage to be earned. And this is what he’s saying, **“He who steals must steal no longer; but [let him labor] rather he must labor....” (Ephesians 4:28a)** And what God told us in Genesis was when He says, [“Six days shall man work, and the seventh he shall rest.”] (PARAPHRASE, Exodus 34:21a, KJV) And he pronounced the work that came as a result of our sin because when you have people that are not working, especially men ‘cause God designed for the man to earn the living. That’s God’s design if you go back to Genesis. And so when you have people that are not working then they have time on their hands and they can get in trouble. Because idle hands lead to bad doings. And so he says, “Work with your hands.” You, **“...must labor, performing with his own hands what is good...,”** why? **“...So that he will have something to share with [the] one who [is in] need.” (Ephesians 4:28b)** In other words you don’t work just for yourself but you work so that you in turn might have money so you can help a person that is

in need. So he’s saying, “You don’t steal instead you work so that you can help somebody that has a need.” And so what we see here is we see yes, we’re to have compassion towards others. Yes, we’re to help those that are poor. Yes, we are to take care of them. Now we’re to take care of those that are rightfully poor. We’re to take care of those who are not poor because they’re slothful but those who have tried and this is one of the greatest privileges. I keep money on hand. I take money when I am paid and some of that money besides what I give to the work of the Lord is ready cash for me to have in order to give to somebody that has a need. The other day I was in a restaurant and it’s a place where you can eat this great meal for five dollars and they have good food and no frills and Jack and I sometimes run over there and we get dinner. And this little Mexican gal was and I know that she’s Mexican because I asked where she came from in my broken Spanish. But I was talking to her cause I looked at her countenance and I knew that life was hard for her. And so I just felt like I was to give her some money. And she was clearing the table. She was not my waitress but God laid on my heart to take that money that I had ready to give away. You know what? This is the way the Lord wants us to move in this great, great sensitivity to the need for others. But the way that you have money is you earn it. You work. You do what is good. You say, “I bet you’ve got a big salary.” No, I don’t. I take a very, very small salary because God has provided my needs. Well let’s go on. It says, **“Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification....”** (Ephesians 4:29a) What’s coming out of your mouth, Beloved, and what does it do when it comes out? We’ll talk about it right after this announcement.

PART TWO

You know you and I are God’s creation and God wants us to make sure that we appreciate one another instead of destroy one another. And this is why in

Ephesians chapter 4, he now moves from stealing to the words that come out of our mouth. And it's very important to know the power of our words. I'm not going to teach on the power of the tongue but I do want us to look at this one verse because it's very, very important. It says, **“Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth....” (Ephesians 4:29a)** Now that word “unwholesome,” it literally means rotten. I mean have you ever forgotten that you had potatoes? In our kitchen we have this old Hoosier kind of cabinet. It's the bottom and it has these two wooden barrels underneath and I bought it years and years and years ago and sometimes I forget that I have potatoes in there. And I open it up and oh my goodness, I have to get them out and they are rotten or there is one rotten one and you go to reach into it and it squishes in your hand. You would never dream of putting such a stinking rotten thing in your mouth, would you? I mean you would never say, “Oh great! There's a rotten potato and I can't wait to eat it with all of it's green and it's black and it's squishiness. (Blehth!) I mean it makes me sick talking about it. Well why then do you put rotten things in your mouth? Why do you let rot come out of your mouth? He's saying, **“Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification....” (Ephesians 4:29a)** Now what does edification mean? It builds up rather than rots. It builds up rather than destroys. It builds up rather than corrupts. What is your speech like? What are your words like? One of the things that grieves me the most is to watch and listen to young teenagers or kids in school and their vile words to one another. They're mean cutting words. And listen, if you're in school and you hear these kids saying these words I want you to think of rotten potatoes and I want you to remember that you're a child of God, that you are to be a representative of God and you can't say those words because those words hurt. Those words destroy. Those words just hurt so bad that it makes some kids cry all night and it makes some kids not even want to even go to school. You don't want to be accused of doing that because that's God's creation. You may not like

them but you know what? God brought that person into being and God wants to use you and your tongue and your words to build that person up to help that person feel good. And this is what we have to remember, children and adults, [the power of life and death, James says in James chapter 3, is in the tongue.] (PARAPHRASE, James 3:5-6) So you as a child of God, [renewed in the spirit of your mind] (PARAPHRASE, Ephesians 4:23), [not walking the way the Gentiles walk] (PARAPHRASE, Ephesians 4:17a) but [have your mind renewed] (PARAPHRASE, Ephesians 4:23) and looking at people as God sees them and remembering that you are to [love your enemies, that you are to do good to those despitefully use you and those that persecute you you’re to pray for.] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 5:44) So you can’t talk this way to people and be pleasing to God. He says, “**...Only... a word [of] edification according to the need of the moment....**”

(**Ephesians 4:29b**) You know one of the things I try to do and I’ve done it because there’s so many lonely old people. There’s so many people that are at the end of their life and you see them trying. And I always try to say a word to them. I like to compliment them either on their eyes or their smile or just be kind and courteous to them and give them a word so that they can walk away and I can put a smile on their face and they can treasure that word. Well he goes on to say, “**...A word [that] is good for edification according to the need of the moment...,**” now listen, “**...so that it will give grace to those who hear [it.]**” (**Ephesians 4:29b**) Now what is grace? Grace is unmerited unearned favor. In other words you’re gonna come along and you’re gonna speak to people in such a way that brings favor to their lives. Sometimes when you have a waitress and they’re just mean as a snake, you know. I mean they are mean as a snake. They’re abrupt. They’re just throwing everything on the table. They’re in a hurry, you know. Sometimes it just helps to say, “Is there any way I can pray for you?” Or, “I just want you to know that you’ve probably had a hard day and I want to pray for you. Some word of kindness, some compliment, some way to soften the

relationship. Well what is all of this? He says, **“Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”** (Ephesians 4:30) He says the Holy Spirit’s in you. And if you are not behaving properly, if you are stealing, you’re grieving the Holy Spirit. You’re breaking God’s commandment. If you are not speaking right and you are not giving grace, you are grieving the Holy Spirit who sealed you and who lives inside of you. He says, **“[Listen]...you were sealed for the day of redemption.”** (Ephesians 4:30b) He’s in there. Don’t bring Him shame, don’t bring Him embarrassment. And then we come to what I said we were going to talk about. Verse 31 and we’re gonna talk about it today and we’re gonna talk about it in the next program. It says, **“Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.”** (Ephesians 4:31) Now what does slander and anger and bitterness have to do with the tongue and have to do with the Holy Spirit? If I’m bitter it’s gonna come out in the way I talk to other people. If I’m bitter it’s going to grieve the Spirit of God. Galatians 5:22 and let’s just take the first part of it. Says, [“The fruit of the Spirit is love, and joy, and peace, and it’s gentleness, and it’s goodness, and it’s kindness, and it’s patience, and it’s self control.”] (PARAPHRASE, Galatians 5:22) It is a nine fold fruit. That’s the fruit of the Spirit. And if I’m not walking in that I’m grieving the Spirit of God. And if there is bitterness in my life it’s like that woman I was counseling when she said, “I am not bitter.” If you’re bitter you’re going to be able to tell by the words that come out of your mouth, if you are bitter you are grieving the Spirit of God, if you are bitter that bitterness is connected with anger. Because the bitterness is the fermentation that comes off of that anger that is seething below. And so if you are bitter you’re going to see wrath, you’re going to see anger, you’re going to see clamor! And you are going to see slander and slander cuts you down. And he says, “Listen, I want all of that put out of your life along with all malice, along with all hatred.” Have you stopped to think about these things that he is talking

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about? Do you realize that all of them constitutes sin? Do you realize that to have bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and slander, and malice in your life that you are going against everything that God is and everything that God has given you? Do you know that you are suppressing the Spirit of God and grieving the Spirit of God? We'll talk about it more in the next program but think on these things, Beloved.