

## “God Wants To Protect Me From Myself” - Ephesians 4:25-32 – May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2018

- The title I chose for today's teaching is “God Wants To Protect Me From Myself.”
  - We have before us today a most interesting passage of scripture as it relates to how God desires to protect us from ourselves.
  - This because, He loves us so much and doesn't want us to needlessly suffer the consequences of own decisions and actions.
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- It's important to understand when God commands us to not do something; He does so because it's for our own good in the end.
  - One noted that the “Ten Commandments” are really to be seen as the “Tender Commandments” from a loving heavenly Father.
  - In other words whenever God says, “thou shalt not,” it's always because He wants to protect us from that which would harm us.
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- Such is the case in our test today, where the Apostle Paul no less than four times, lists what we are not to do, for that reason.
  - In verse 26 he says, “Do not let the sun go down while you're still angry.” In verse 27 he says, “Do not give the devil a foothold.”
  - In verse 29 he says, “Do not let unholy talk come from your mouth.” In verse 30 he says, “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God.”
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- All these are in the context of eight sins in which we unnecessarily subject ourselves and bring on ourselves harm and danger.
  - 1 lying (verse 25), 2 anger (verse 26), 3 stealing (verse 28), 4 cursing (verse 29), 5 bitterness (verse 31), and 6 rage (verse 31).
  - 7 fighting (verse 31), and 8 slander (verse 31). The common denominator in all of these is that we do them to our own peril.
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- Now, the question becomes one of why are these sins so destructive to not only me, but to those who are close to me as well.
  - I find it rather interesting that Paul would mention that we are all members of one body when he says we are to put off all lying.
  - The reason being is were one of the parts of our bodies, metaphorically, to lie to the other, it would be dangerous even deadly.
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- I like how one commentator explained it, “A body can only function properly if it tells itself the truth. If your hand touches something hot but your hand tells your brain that the thing is cool, your hand will be severely burned. That's why telling the truth is so important, because we are members of one another.”
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- This brings us to the next one on Paul's list and it's that of anger, which, along with rage in verse thirty-one is equally as deadly.
  - However, this presupposes it's an unrighteous anger, not a righteous anger, the difference being that of someone offending me.
  - The best example of righteous anger is when Jesus was angry with the moneychangers in the temple overthrowing the tables.
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- While righteous anger is when there's injustice towards someone else, unrighteous anger is when there's injustice against me.
  - The problem is that when we become angry with someone for what they did to us, we, as a result, will give the devil a foothold.
  - It's for this reason scripture is replete with how much damage anger will cause when we do the devil's work for him in anger.
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- Matthew 5:21–26 - 21 “You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ 22 But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister, will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell. 23 “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, 24 leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift. 25 “Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still together on the way, or your adversary may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. 26 Truly I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.
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- I would suggest that unrighteous anger is the catalyst for the rest of the sins that Paul lists here, and I'll explain how I get there.
  - When I become angry with someone for a perceived injustice against me, I then resort to stealing in order to get back at them.
  - So too is this true with how I talk about them, I slander and curse them in rage and bitterness towards them, fighting with them.
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- Sadly, in addition to being destructive to us and those around us, it more importantly grieves the Holy Spirit of God when we do.
  - I think about how grieved I am as an earthly father when my children are angry and fighting each other. How much more God.
  - Another way to think of it would be that of how hurt we become when someone hurts one of our children. How much more God.
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- Now, when we know why doing this can be so destructive it will motivate me with the how of the Holy Spirit to overcome them.
  - More specifically, once I know the “why” I will now want to know “how” I can change so as to not suffer the consequences of it.
  - Thankfully, Paul, by the Holy Spirit, gives us the answer as to the how in verse thirty-two, which I would like to read once again.
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- Ephesians 4:32 - Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.
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- When we realize just how much kindness, compassion, and forgiveness God has shown us, we in turn can show it to others.
  - This is what the Savior taught the disciples when they asked Him to teach them to pray, in what we call “The Lord's Prayer.”
  - Namely, “forgive us of our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.” We forgive others because we're forgiven.
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- One commentator said it best this way, “Forgiveness is not a burden God places upon us, but rather a safeguard for our mental health and emotional stability. After teaching His disciples to pray, Jesus went on to underscore only one point: Forgiveness! ...Why? ...He was saying, “I want you to be free from the burden of holding a grudge.
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- I will close with a question, and please know that it's one for which I ask of myself, for what would be deemed obvious reasons.
  - The question is this, “is there someone in your life with whom you've become bitter towards and need to ask forgiveness from?”
  - If so, do not delay any longer by virtue of the fact that you will be freeing yourself from the destructive and defiling bitterness.