

Connect360: Grieving the Holy Spirit

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- *Lesson 10 in the BaptistWay Press Connect360 unit “Living in the Spirit” focuses on Ephesians 4:25-32.*

Focusing on the good we can do, Paul wrote concerning our words and conversation (Ephesians 4:25). Christians are to tell the truth, not half-truths or false statements, for our words impact the church—the body of Christ. In Ephesians 4:29, note the positive use of speech. Our speech should be wholesome and helpful. We are to build up people with our words. Our conversation should benefit those who hear us. We may not be able to change the world with our words, but if we practiced Paul’s teaching in these verses, the world around us would be so much happier. So would our churches.

In the midst of the evil things that some did, Paul affirmed the value of work and how we use money: He got to that first by saying “don’t steal.” Instead, people should do useful work. Note the purpose—so the believer “may have something to share with those in need.” God’s people are not self-centered but concerned and compassionate about the welfare of others. They are willing to help practically and financially. The Holy Spirit is pleased when we do and grieved when we fail to do so.

Precious trio of virtues

Ephesians 4:32 is worth memorizing. Be kind, compassionate and forgiving. What a trio of qualities to have! The synonyms for kind are numerous: loving, gentle, good-natured, courteous and good-neighborly are only a few.

The use of “kind” in this verse indicates a demeanor that is active: “to one another.” Kindness should be another default setting in how we relate to other people. Similarly, compassionate people are those who feel for and with others. Our emotions can be positive and uplifting. Actions should follow our good feelings. Kindness and compassion walk together. A failure to do so grieves the Spirit within us.

People who practice forgiveness are another example of persons who do not grieve the Spirit. Paul reminded them that God had forgiven them, so they should forgive others. Do you recall the question Simon Peter asked Jesus (Matthew 18:21f): “how many times should I forgive my brother?” Peter tried to answer his own question by saying “seven times?” Jesus answered “77 times.” Other translations say “70 times seven.” Take your pick—7, 77 or 490. Each probably goes a lot farther in forgiveness than most people are willing to go. Start with one, and build from there.

Forgiveness affects a kind and compassionate nature, and a failure to forgive often turns us into less kind and more hard-hearted persons. Such a change of character is destructive to relationships within and outside the church. When Jesus formulated “The Lord’s Prayer,” the only immediate comment he made on the prayer was about the importance of forgiving others.

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