

## **HONEST WORK & EDIFYING WORDS**

(Ephesians 4:28-29)

Have you ever wondered why the Apostle Paul would exhort a group of Christians to stop engaging in the sins of stealing and corrupt language? God has included this admonition in His Word to awaken us to the reality that there is a constant temptation for every true Christian to revert to the old sinful ways and to return to the ungodly practices of the unbelieving world. As believers of Christ, we are called to live out our new identity in Christ with a lifestyle that renounces sinful habits and puts on righteous and holy virtues. Here are two pastoral instructions geared towards living out our new life in Christ.

**1. Renounce \_\_\_\_\_ and devote yourself to \_\_\_\_\_.**

The apostle Paul continues his exhortation to the Ephesian Christians with a direct and authoritative command to stop stealing (Eph. 4:28). Our old self has a built-in inclination to steal. Stealing of whatever form is sinful because it is taking anything that doesn't belong to us. But for those who have been redeemed by Christ, theft must no longer hold a place in their lives (1 Cor. 6:10). Our new life in Christ must be marked by a commitment and devotion to do honest work which is done excellently for the honor and glory of God. God has ordained work not only to provide for our own and our family's needs but also to use to fruit of our labors to help and bless those who are in need (Rom. 12:13). Through our work, we must be channels of generosity and service to others.

---

**2. Replace \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_.**

God is very much concerned about our language because we express what we really are by what we say. What comes out of our mouth reveals what's going on inside our hearts (Matt. 12:34). This is why Paul includes a pastoral instruction on the believer's speech. He reminds God's people that corrupt language must not characterize our speech because it's totally inconsistent with our new life in Christ (Eph. 4:29). This term for rotten words covers the whole range of evil talk, such as profanity, cursing, name-calling, dirty jokes, lies, idle rumors, slanders, gossips, blaming others, angry words which includes threat and revenge, mockery and destructive criticism (Matt. 12:36-37).

Instead of destructive language that is dishonoring to God and harmful to others, those of us who are in Christ must employ edifying speech (Eph. 4:29). Edifying speech aims to build up others in the faith through the truths of Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16). It encourages people through words of affirmation, appreciation and affection (1 Thess. 5:11). Furthermore, edifying speech is appropriate for the occasion and gives grace to those who hear (Eph. 4:29; Prov. 15:23; John 1:14).

---