

The Store of Corrupt Behaviors

Introduction

Welcome to this edition of ***“My Thoughts with Dale Van De Bogart.”*** I would like to welcome all of our faithful watchers and our new ones. As a reminder, all notes are in PDF, and located on our website, vdbm.org. Click on My Thoughts Video Series, scroll down on the page to choose the series, and download our notes.

In this week’s segment, ***“The Store of Corrupt Behaviors”*** I will discuss behaviors that corrupt and destroy us as Christians. Satan loves and delights in seeing us turn away from God. Open your Bible to the Book of Ephesians 4:26-32, 5:1-5.

Beware of Shopping

One day, I was reading my daily devotional and came across one that got me thinking of a song from a long time ago. As I was reading, what is now our main passage text, the song came on very strong. We all have visited the ***“Store of Corrupt Behaviors.”*** The proprietor of this store, Satan, would like nothing more than to have us continue to visit his store and stock up on the latest items of behaviors that corrupt our lives.

When we accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, we stopped shopping at this store, and started shopping at the ***“Store of Godly Behaviors.”*** Unfortunately, we have this bad habit of returning to Satan’s store when we get hurt, disappointed, or feel God is not listening or has forsaken us.

The apostle Paul discussed these same behaviors with members of the church in Ephesus. He told us how to stop shopping there, how to rid ourselves of those corrupt behaviors, and how to shop at God’s store to store up godly behaviors.

Passage Text - Ephesians 4:26-32, 5:1-5

²⁶ Be angry, and do not sin”: do not let the sun go down on your wrath,

²⁷ nor give place to the devil.

²⁸ Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.

²⁹ Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.

³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

³¹ Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.

³² And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

¹ Therefore be imitators of God as dear children.

² And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering, and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

³ But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints;

⁴ neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.

⁵ For this you know that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God

Let the Buyer Beware

There is a Latin phrase for this title, "***caveat emptor.***" You need to be aware of what you let into your life. Proverbs 4:23 tells us to, "***keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it springs the issues of life.***" When we let corrupt behaviors into our lives, we start developing a bad "***heart condition.***"

Corrupt Behavior #1 - Anger/Ephesians 4:26-27

If you vent your anger carelessly, you will hurt and destroy any relationships with other people. A big problem with us is keeping our anger inside and letting it build up. This type of behavior can cause us to become bitter and destroy us from within.

Paul tells us to deal with our anger immediately, but in a way that builds relationships rather than destroys them. If we hold onto our anger, we allow Satan to divide us. Anger must be dealt with as quickly as possible in a godly way.

Anger used correctly, can motivate us to right a wrong, redress a grievance, or correct an injustice. Used improperly, it can burn us and everyone else around us. We must reserve our anger for when we see God dishonored or people wronged. We can get angry, but let us do so without sinning. All it will do is add, "***fuel to the fire.***"

Let us also not allow Satan to gain a stronghold on us. James 4:7 states plainly "***Resist the devil and he will flee from you.***" Satan will use your anger to destroy your life, relationships, unity with others, and our love.

Here are two questions to ask yourself right now:

- Are you angry with someone right now?
- What can you do to resolve your differences?

Don't let the day end before you begin working on mending your relationship.

Corrupt Behavior #2 - Stealing/Ephesians 4:28

When we think about stealing or a thief it concerns a bandit or a person who engages in the livelihood as a thief. Paul explains that such a person, who became a believer, has put off their old, corrupted lifestyle, and turned to “**honest work**” in making a living.

Two things that go together are stealing and idleness. Satan always has plenty of this corrupted behavior on his shelves and would like for you to take as much as you can. Remember, Satan is also a thief, and he has come to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10).

Paul told them not only to stop stealing but to begin honest work. All believers should work hard and do their part in the community, hold their own, and not expect anyone to support them.

Corrupt Behavior #3 - Unwholesome Words/Ephesians 4:29

A while back, I did a six-part series on words and how powerful they are. I invite everyone to access our YouTube channel and watch them or I have the link below. As believers, we must be careful about what we say to others, and about ourselves.

We must never allow unwholesome words or talk to come out of our mouths. The word “**unwholesome**” means corrupt, uninteresting, worthless (gossip and slander), and foul talk or language. This type of speech is worthless, spreads worthlessness, and leads others to think about worthless matters.

Our speech should be kept clean and truthful. We should speak only about what helps build others up according to their needs. We must be wise in choosing our words, for even good words, unless used appropriately, can be destructive instead of useful. Our speech should edify, not tear down. What we say can benefit those who listen. God can work through our words to help others and bring His grace to them.

Corrupt Behavior #4 - Grieving/Ephesians 4:30

When we accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, the Holy Spirit took up residence within us. He can be grieved or saddened by the way we live. The word grieve (**lupeo**) in Greek means to distress or cause pain, grief, or sorrow.

Paul already explained that the Holy Spirit’s power within gives new life to believers. While we continue to battle with our sinful nature, we should be living for Christ each day. To refuse to do so, to constantly give into the previous corrupted behaviors, is to grieve the Holy Spirit of God. What a powerful incentive to do what is right and avoid what is evil! What a privilege and responsibility to know that our actions have that kind of effect on God. Here is a question I want all of you to ask yourselves, how do your words, thoughts, and behavior impact God?

Corrupt Behavior #5 - Bitterness, Rage and Anger, Brawling and Slander, Malice/Ephesians 4:31

These sins in this verse are a picture of what our former way of life looked like, or Paul called it the “*old self*” (Ephesians 4:22). None of these have any place in a Christian’s life as they foster dissension today and are the opposite of how Christians should be characterized. Let us take a closer look at these corrupted behaviors:

- ***Bitterness***: A spirit that refuses reconciliation.
- ***Rage***: Outbursts of anger or quick temper for selfish reasons. This could mean continual and uncontrolled behavior.
- ***Anger***: A continuous attitude of hatred that remains bottled up within. This could refer to what is under the surface, while “*rage*” refers to what bursts out. Anger destroys harmony and unity among believers.
- ***Brawling/Clamor***: Loud self-assertions of angry people determined to make their grievances known.
- ***Slander***: Destroying another person’s good reputation by lying, gossiping, or spreading rumors. Malice often manifests itself through slander. This defamation of character destroys human relationships.
- ***Malice***: Doing evil despite the good that has been received. This word is a general term referring to an evil force that destroys relationships, and it can mean anything from trouble to wickedness. It is a deliberate attempt to harm another person.

Destroy Satan's Store

To destroy Satan’s “*Store of Corrupted Behaviors*,” there are some things we must do to rid ourselves of these items of Satan’s shopping cart and add the following items into our godly shopping cart from the “*Store of Godly Behaviors*.”

Godly Behavior #1 - Be Kind, Tenderhearted, and Forgiving/Ephesians 4:32

The first things we can put into our shopping cart are these:

- ***Kindness***: It means acting gracious and benevolently toward others, as God has done toward us.
- ***Tenderheart***: It translates to “*compassionate*.” It is a genuine sensitivity and heartfelt sympathy for the needs of others. Compassion also characterizes God.
- ***Forgiving***: We must forgive others as God has forgiven us. Remember, God gave up His only Son, Jesus, to forgive us. So, we need to forgive others. God does not forgive us *because* we forgive others, but solely because of his great mercy.

Godly Behavior #2 - Be Imitators of God/Ephesians 5:1

You want to put this in your godly shopping cart. We imitate God by following his example in Jesus, emulating his attributes in our lives. The word “be” means “become.” Paul understood that this was a process, and it will take some time.

Perseverance, obedience, and devotion to God will eventually make us imitators. If we are imitators of God, we will be in His image of holiness. Because of our relationship with God through Jesus Christ and the power given us through the Spirit, we are to become Godlike in our characteristics and obedient disciples in our lifestyles.

Godly Behavior #3 - Walk in Love/Ephesians 5:2

The verb “**walk**” continues the thought from verse one, we must imitate God. How we “**walk**” should be characterized by our oneness with Him. Paul explained that we are to “**walk in love.**” Our love for others should be of the same kind Jesus showed to us. A love that goes beyond affection to self-sacrificing service. Jesus loved us so much that He gave Himself for us as an offering and a sacrifice to God. He gave Himself in death as a sacrifice in our place for our sins.

Paul also mentions “**walk in love**” because love is the fundamental factor in the Christian life. If we “**walk in love,**” we will not disobey God or injure anyone. Romans 13:8, “**he who loves another has fulfilled the law.**” Here are three reasons Paul gives to “**walk in love:**”

- **Being God’s child:** Having been born again through faith in Jesus Christ, we are one of the “**partakers of the divine nature**” (2 Peter 1:4); and since “**God is love**” (1 John 4:8) it is logical that God’s children will walk in love.
- **We are God’s beloved child:** We are born into a loving relationship with the Father that ought to result in our showing love to Him by the way we live.
- **We were purchased with a great price:** John 15:13, “**Greater love has no one than this than to lay down one’s life for his friends.**” Our love for Him is our response to His love for us.

Godly Behavior #4 - Nothing Improper/Ephesians 5:3

There must be nothing improper in the life of a genuine Christian. Paul mentions these three items we need to be aware of:

- **Sexual Immorality or Fornication:** This is any kind of sexual perversion. Jesus warned us in Matthew chapter five that thinking immoral thoughts is as bad as committing them.
- **Impurity or Uncleaness:** Aligning your lifestyle bent on fulfilling every indulgence, which usually ends up on the sexual side.
- **Covetousness or Greed:** It refers to an excessive desire for anything. Wanting something so much and doing anything to get it.

These are improper for God’s people to hold onto. Take them out of your shopping cart and let the precious blood of Jesus cover them up and wash you clean.

Godly Behavior #5 - More Thanksgiving and Less Nasty Talk/Ephesians 5:4

Last, of all, let us get rid of the coarse and obscene talking, and let us use our voices to thank and praise God for all the many blessings. Paul cautioned that improper language should have no place in a Christian's conversation because it does not reflect God's gracious presence in us. This use of language by believers sometimes stems from their desire to remain inconspicuous by sounding like the people who surround them.

The obscene, silly, and vulgar talk is to be replaced by thanksgiving. In this way, our words will build up and benefit others. Giving thanks brings the real joy of the Spirit that worldly people try to achieve with their style of humor and communication. This type of talk will harm the spiritual life.

Paul gives a warning in verse five. You can hold onto all the corrupted behaviors you want, but those who do will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

Conclusion

If you've developed the habit of speaking harshly, start changing that habit today. When someone crosses you on the job, at school, or wherever, and you're tempted to tear into them with cruel words, stop! Then take a few moments to give thanks and praise to God. Once you begin thinking about how good God is, more often than not, those harsh, angry words will just slip away unspoken.

Instead of using your tongue to tear people down, train it to lift God's praises up. Then living at peace with others will come easily to you, Amen!

I am Dale Van De Bogart and I approve of this message and fully agree on God's Word!

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