**Lessons from a Lockdown**

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**Day 48**

**Ephesians 4:25-28**

Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. “In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.

***Questions for Personal Reflection:***

1. In what ways can I commit “falsehood”? In what situations do I struggle about being truthful? Why?
2. How is being “members of one body” connected to Christians being honest?
3. How does being angry lead me to sin? What triggers my anger? What can I do to prevent me from being triggered?
4. In what way can I be stealing instead of working or doing something useful?
5. In my job or in my daily life, do I have an attitude of working to give rather than to take? If not, what can I do to change this?

***Insight:***

Paul lists examples of what Christians should put off and instead put on.

*Put off falsehood and put on truthfulness.* The Greek word translated as “falsehood” can refer to a lie or “whatever is not what it seems to be.” So it includes pretending to be what we are not. Being dishonest is such a common practice today. Some people are dishonest so they can gain more money or possessions. Some people even get paid to post things online which are absolutely false. Some people lie to protect themselves from the consequences of their actions. Some people pretend to be good but they are not. As Christians we cannot be like this. A falsehood is always a lie regardless of our intentions.

The most damaging falsehood we can commit is being dishonest about ourselves. This is when we put on a mask and pretend to be someone we are not. Sometimes we do this because we don’t think people will like who we really are. Some of us think that we need to be a certain way, even though we are not, so people will not stumble. But when we are not honest about who we are, we cannot have the close relationships that we need. If we are not open about how we are really doing we cannot get the help that we need. People have always been putting on masks to hide themselves, but now it becomes easier because of online interactions. It is easier to hide who we really are and just present an avatar or an image of ourselves. Because of this we need to make the extra effort to make ourselves known. If we are discipling someone, we need to dig deeper than what is readily apparent. The thing is, deep down we really want and need to be known. So let us begin by finding a trusted friend and share who we are.

The new self we put on is honest. Our new self has integrity. Our new self is open because we have nothing to hide anymore. Our new self must walk in the light.

*Put off anger.* Anger is an emotion which can lead us to sin. We should not let anger linger in our hearts. We should not nurse our hurts. We need to get rid of anger as quickly as we can. While we are angry our defenses are down and we are more vulnerable to sin. Anger is fertilizer for evil in our hearts. Anger feeds our sinful nature. Anger is an invitation for the devil to live in our hearts.

We need to be aware of what triggers our anger and avoid them. If mass media or social media triggers our anger, why indulge in it? We should avoid anger in the same way a diabetic avoids sugar. Once we are angry we need to pray immediately to overcome it. Ask for help from other Christians to deal with your anger. Anger is like fire which can quickly become uncontrollable and destructive. Anger today which we do not deal with becomes a bigger problem tomorrow.

*Put off stealing and put on working.* We steal when we take things that don’t belong to us. We steal when we get paid for work we did not do. We steal when we borrow but not return or pay back. We steal when we overcharge our customers or our clients. There are many ways we can steal or enjoy unjust gain (Eze 22:12). We overcome this by working or doing something useful with the time that we have. During this lockdown, are we working or wasting time?

Our work must not only provide for our needs. We must work also so that we can share with those in need. We can’t just work for ourselves. We can’t work thinking about how we are going to spend all we earn on ourselves. Is this how we motivate ourselves? Not only must we earn a living righteously, we should also do so selflessly.

During this lockdown, let us put off falsehood, anger and stealing.