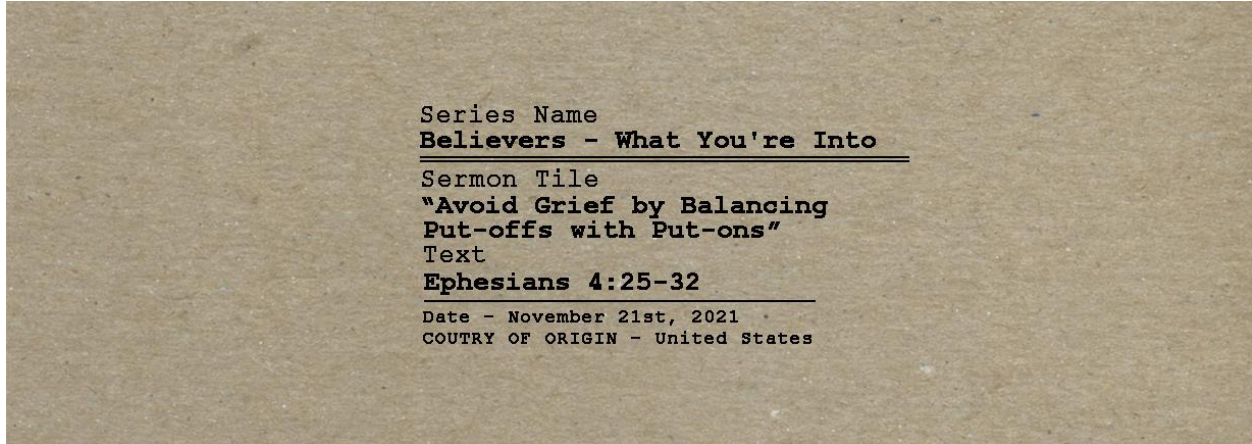


# "Avoid Grief by Balancing Put-offs with Put-ons"



## [Ephesians 4:25-32](#)

*Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. <sup>26</sup> Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, <sup>27</sup> and give no opportunity to the devil. <sup>28</sup> Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. <sup>29</sup> Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. <sup>30</sup> And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. <sup>31</sup> Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. <sup>32</sup> Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*

Video of Sermon: <https://youtu.be/hULEPjOpe3I>

Sermon Notes are available [HERE](#).

Sermon Transcript:

Pastor Thom Rittichier

I've got a question to start out with here. Is there such a thing as good grief? Well, there's this guy named Charles Schultz, who has made quite a name of that, kind of almost legendary, with this enduring character, Charlie Brown. It's probably with the whole peanuts crew, not just Charlie Brown. I think they've all been noted that to have said that on occasion, at least most of them. And you know, we can hardly hear that expression, good grief, without adding or saying Charlie Brown. Like when he was leaning over that pathetic Christmas tree. And his friend said, Good grief, Charlie Brown, can you do anything right? Well, Charles Schultz has made quite a legendary figure there, who is still going on. And the phrase is almost contradictory. Good.

Grief. Good grief. At course, I understand what they're saying is like, really!? Really!? Like when you've got a sense of exasperation of something from something that's happened. Really!? Yeah. Oh, good grief.

And yet, I'm bringing it up this morning because it's definitely not a good grief for us. When the person being grieved is the Holy Spirit of God. Do you know that the Bible points out to us that we can do that, we can grieve the Holy Spirit of God. We can. I want us to stop for a moment and think about that. We can grieve the Holy Spirit of God. As believers? As believers. We can grieve the Holy Spirit of God, but we're to avoid doing that. And Ephesians chapter 4 talks to us about avoiding this. Paul explains to us here, some important things about grieving the Holy Spirit of God. This is the last Sunday before our Thanksgiving recognition. And I want to talk about avoiding grief, avoiding bringing grief to the Holy Spirit of God. Then next Sunday, after Thanksgiving, which is actually the closest to Thanksgiving, we are going to be talking about the benefit of what Ephesians brings us to there. So first, I'm going to have you look ahead to next Sunday, where we talk about this thing of thanksgiving. Look with me to Ephesians 5:4, the last phrase where the apostle says, "but instead let there be thanksgiving." "Let there be." Now that's a look ahead at something that is very valuable to us, it is repeatedly given to us as an admonishment and a challenge. It's something we're called to and encouraged to be engaged in and stirred up about, because of the benefit that this thanksgiving brings to us. It's something we really need. It's something we genuinely need for our own hearts, the expression of thanksgiving that's genuine. So it's more than a holiday. We're looking ahead to that in chapter 5.

Today, I want you to see where the apostle tells us to avoid grief, Ephesians 4:30, "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God". Don't do it. It's possible. Jesus told, us when he was here on two occasions, the Spirit is with you, and he shall be in you. And that Spirit is in you until the day that this rescue plan of God is complete, when the whole undertaking of paying the price for our sin through the death of Jesus Christ. That's what Colossians says, the charges that we were indebted to, that were against us, were nailed to his cross and taken out of the way, in his death, his burial, his resurrection to life, to show us that there is a future. And we are sealed, he says here, by that Holy Spirit until this rescue plan is complete. Notice how he says it, verse 30, "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption." He's put a mark on you and sealed it, the Holy Spirit has, until the day that the rescue plan is complete. The point is though, for the believer. Because it's genuinely the believer that's being spoken to, they are the redeemed ones, they are the ones that have the future experience of redemption coming to its completion in their life. So to us he says, Don't grieve the Holy Spirit of God, don't do it. Avoid it. We're talking here about avoiding grief by balancing what the Apostle Paul sets out to us here in Ephesians 4:25-32. We have given to us here the thrust, that thing of avoiding grieving the Holy Spirit of God is the thrust, the motivation for engaging in what he's going to tell us here. These are very practical things, practical things about "putting off" in your life by "putting on" in your life and he gets very specific here. Very specific.

There is a guy named Curtis Vaughn, who is quite a good author and Bible teacher. And he says this about Ephesians 4:30, which is what we just looked at, "it's to be taken in the closest

possible connection with what has been said in the preceding verses", that is verses 25 through 30. He goes on to say, Christians grieve the indwelling. Spirit of God. This fact explains the misery of many believers, for it is precisely by reason of permitting such practices that they have lost the joy, peace, and the blessedness that they once knew." Then he quotes a song that has been handed down to believers through the generations by Cowper. "Where is the blessedness I knew when first I saw the Lord? Where is the sole-refreshing view of Jesus and His word? What peaceful hours I once enjoyed! How sweet their memories still. But they have left an aching void the world can never fill. Return, O Holy Dove, return..." So Curtis Vaughn says this grieving of the Holy Spirit is a basis for the misery of a loss of joy and peace and happiness, this grieving the Holy Spirit of God. And he's still sealing us and in us, because it's until the day of redemption.

What is it that like? What do we experience when the Holy Spirit of God is grieved? What will be the inner experience of a person who's grieving the Holy Spirit of God? What will they be going through? Jesus said, These things I've said to you that my joy may be in you. And your joy may be full, that you may have it to the extent that God intended it, his joy in you, your joy, full. But when the Holy Spirit is grieved, that gets interrupted for us. This morning, we're going to talk about this. And we're going to talk about your counterbalancing, what it should look like. Counterbalancing "put offs" with "put ons". And we're going to talk about God's Spirit is in on this. So it's big, this is big.

Specifically and precisely, Paul talks here about "put ons" that fit our life. And I want you to know that what he says here is not to be looked at as abstract and distant from the believers life. It's to be looked at as genuine, possible, and practical for us to live in. And as a matter of fact, as we look at this, we can come to a good conclusion about how the Spirit is working in our life. Is the Spirit doing what God intends for this spirit to do or is the Spirit quenched? I want you to know it's a real thing. It explains the reason for misery, loss of joy, peace and blessedness, Vaughn said. It's a real thing. I recall at the beginning of the pandemic, that's going around still, it was discussed with some zeal...Is this a real thing? Is it a real thing? Let me ask you, is the pandemic a real thing? What do you think? We have seen people, who we know and love, influenced by it, some even died due to it. It is a real thing. Okay, so there's still the discussion going on about the vaccine...the positive or the negative, all of that. I understand that. Here's the point, we're dealing with a real thing here for us.

Let's talk initially about your counterbalancing. Now I want to put these in the sense of counterbalancing, because that's actually what goes on. It's a counterbalance. I want to put this up here, (outline for all the next four points as such: \*concerning...\*put off...\*put on...\*why...) because Paul goes through these, there are four of them that are genuinely to be experienced by us in our practice. He points out first what he's talking about concerning. And then secondly he talks about the "put off" here, and then third he talks about the "put on" here. And then lastly he says the why. The why for doing this changes a little bit from explanation, to purpose, to aim, that kind of thing. But nevertheless, he gives a why, it's a counterbalance.

I want to use an illustration from cars. So cars have been produced, engine wise, in regards to even number of cylinders, 4 cylinders, 6 cylinders, 8 cylinders, 12 cylinders, 16 cylinders, that many cylinders in a car. And in a smaller engine, they've even come up with a 3 cylinder. As a matter of fact, someone from our fellowship talked to me about having a 3 cylinder in his truck that he drives around. And you see an engine works on a four cycle, there's an intake, there's a compression, there is a combustion or an explosion, and then there is exhaust. And there's four strokes through an engine to do that. And when you have an even number of cylinders, it kind of balances itself, because you have all of these cylinders doing that repeatedly over and over so that the engine keeps going when you put gas and have spark plugs there and electric, that's good. But in a 3 cylinder, that balance gets off, so that the car, that's a 3 cylinder, vibrates a lot. That has been the problem with them. So what they do is they put a counterbalance in this. When the weight is shifting, because 3 cylinders are in four cycles, it's not working very well. So they put a counterbalance, a weight, that keeps it from vibrating and shaking. And some of the 3 cylinders shake a whole bunch, but when they've got a counterbalance in, they don't. The reason I'm saying all that is because there is a counterbalance that's to be in the believers life, a counterbalance so that the focus isn't so much on the "put off" as it is on the "put on" here. Let me show you.

The Apostle Paul talks here in Ephesians 4:25, concerning words. Your words. All of us have words, as a matter of fact, some of the number of words that we speak in one day are absolutely amazing. Anybody talk today? Anybody not talk today? Nope. We've all talked. There is a lot of words. Words is a God given thing, language is a God given thing. As a matter of fact, the effective language he showed by confounding language and then brought all the races into existence that we know on the planet. The races were generated there. So in this he speaks to us specifically and initially about words. And he says this verse 25, "Therefore", based on what he's said about putting off the old self, being renewed in the spirit of your mind, putting on the new self, which is like God, it's going in God's direction, going God's direction with him and with other people. "Therefore", he says, "having put off falsehood". Here is the put off, falsehood. The word that's here that is used is pseudo. As if to say...somebody is a pseudo...here is a pseudo definition...here is a pseudo explanation. It's something that's not a good fit. I don't know how many times I've gotten called from someone saying, This is the IRS. And you need to stay on the line, because we have an issue, or this is the VISA credit card company, or this is Verizon and we need to have your account information. So we can....and let me tell you, that's a pseudo call. It's a sham. It's a falsehood. You get any calls like that? Yeah. That's the word that he uses here. Pseudo, put away from yourself pseudo speech. It's speech that isn't conforming to what's real. One preacher said this, More than simply telling falsehoods, lying also includes exaggeration, and adding fabrications to something that is true. It's a pseudo. Cheating, making foolish promises, betraying a confidence, making false excuses are all forms of lying, being pseudo. And Paul says, put this pseudo speech off, this sham speech, put it away from you. That's the put off, there it is, really clear. Do we need that? When I was reading through that, and I got that, and I studied that, I said, I need this. I need this. Put it off. And then he goes on and says, Put on truth, what does conform to what's real. The expression here is to be truthing it, it's telling what's real, in speech, with each other. Put that on. Put that on, he says, each of you speak truth with his neighbor.

And then he tells us why, it's an explanation. Because we're members of each other. We're members. How foolish is it to misrepresent to yourself something that you know doesn't conform to what's real. Like saying this...Hey, I've got a meeting in Fort Wayne in 20 minutes. I can make it, no problem. Just relax....How foolish is that? It just doesn't make sense. Or this...I got a quarter of a tank of gas. I'm gonna drive to Chicago and back.... That's stupid. Right? That's stupid. And that's just how foolish this is not to be truthing it with each other. It's communicating to each other. You see God has a picture of this, of his body functioning and functioning on what's real. What's real, legitimate. So, the first "put off" is pseudo words, language, communications. And you know, this is with your neighbor, members of one another in Christ. We talk about this often when we talk about marriage, because even in marriage, there's this bend that we have towards ourself. And this kind of thing prevails. As a matter of fact, this is one of the major things that we bring into play when talking about marriage. Truthing it, being open and honest, speaking the truth, like Ephesians 4 says, in love, speaking it in love, truthing it.

Let's do another one. Concerning emotions, here in verses 26-27, anger. Is this what he says, put off anger? No, he doesn't say that. Look at how he says it, "Be angry". Now an interesting thing about this passage is that there are 12 different imperatives that the apostle uses. What is an imperative anyway? A command, this is a direction, this is a "to be" way to do this and make it work. And this is like how this works. This is one of the 12 imperatives, be angry. Anger is part and parcel of living in a fallen world. God is angry. But God's anger is controlled. God's anger is directed. God's anger is aimed to accomplish benefit. Jesus, was he ever angry? He was angry. He was angry. The put off here is not anger. As a matter of fact, the Bible gives it to us as an imperative, to be angry. But this isn't an excuse to go round all worked up. You see anger is an energy that arises in you. It's a feeling that wants to do away with something that is threatening, it's provoking. God has that, Satan has that. There's a world of difference between God's anger and Satan's anger. God tells us what he's angry about. He tells us what he's going to do. And he gives us an opportunity of getting out from under what he's angry about and to join him. It's anger that is told ahead, it's under control and it's directed to alleviate the problem, the threat for what is good. Satan's anger, on the other hand, when you see it, it's uncontrolled, it's at people, for self concerned reasons. They are totally opposite. We, human beings, have anger. We have this rush of emotion, the sense of energy that comes up within us. And he says to us, the "put off" here is not the anger, the "put off" is the sin in your being angry. It's the sin, "be angry and do not sin". Both of those are the imperative here. Don't sin, don't miss God's target, his mark, his aim for you in having anger.

Now very seldom do I come to a righteous place in my anger. Usually, it's about something that's irking me that I want to do away with, usually. And usually it comes up very quickly. And kind of explodes, usually, usually. The "put on" here, he says, is to deal with that recognition of your anger, I deal with it daily. He says in verse 26b, "Don't let the sun go down on your anger". Go in the direction of what is giving this rush of emotional energy to you, go without missing God's mark, under control, directed to this, telling the other person, to bring it to a resolution. I want to share with you that one of the most helpful things in my relationship with my wife was when we both got to the point that instead of slamming things or shutting doors, we're leaving,

we got to the point, where under control, we would say to the other one, You know, this is really making me angry. This is really making me angry. When my wife says that to me...and she does, can you imagine her saying that to me?...what happens is I kind of put up my antennas and kind of focus in saying, oh, wait a minute. And giving her attention. What's making you angry here? We need to talk about this. Now, sometimes we can't talk about it right then, but at least it's on the table. Okay, we need to talk about this. This is a major step, I want you to know, it was a major step in our relationship when instead of acting in anger, we would talk about the anger, under control. This is the "put on", dealing with it daily.

And there's a reason why. The why is a reason this time, it's not an explanation. And it's so as "to give no opportunity to the devil", verse 27. The devil is an accuser. That's the nature of what's going on. He is an accuser of the brethren. He is a slanderer, he is in that thing of destroying relationships and people. He was a murderer and a liar from the beginning, God says. And we see that when he first appears in the story of Scripture with what he did with Eve. The accusations about God in such an underhanded way, to get her to question what God had said, he's an accuser. And when you don't deal with anger, when it's swept under the rug, he has opportunity. One of the most recent times in counseling, I was telling a couple of this principle, face to face. The guy leaned back in his chair, and he says, Do you really think that this "not dealing with your anger" gives the devil opportunity? And I read him again this passage. Because it does. And if you want accusation and slander in your house, be angry, and don't deal with it daily and you'll have it. You'll have it.

Now concerning actions, stealing here, taking what's not yours, verse 28. "Put off" being a thief, taking what's not yours. "Put on" laboring. You know, this thing of being a thief, taking what's not yours, it's pretty big. It includes things that belong to somebody else, something that you owe to someone, and not fulfilling that, laboring here. In all labor, Proverbs 14:23 says, "in all labor, there is profit". In all labor, this is honest work, whether it's on your computer at home or in your office, you're doing this honest work, and it's labor and it takes energy and effort and you get tired. Or if it's showing up at your job each day, or it's taking care of the home and family, if it's providing there, all of that has profit. And this is the "put on" and not to do that is to be taking what's not yours. But to be doing this is what we're called to do, this is the "put on".

And by the way, when is a thief not a thief? When he's not stealing? No, that's a thief on vacation. A thief is not a thief, when he starts working with his hands to give. The why here is purpose. Purpose. Notice what Paul says in verse 28, Let the thief, the one who steal, steal no longer, but rather let him do labor, getting tired, in profitable work, profitable work with his own hands...a statement of purpose..."so that he may have something to share with anyone in need". This is the "put on" concerning actions here.

And then the last one is concerning talking, verse 29. Talking again? I wonder why he puts talking again, why would you include talking again? What do you think? Because this is something we tend to do. As a matter of fact, the books of James and Proverbs talk about this. And here's the "put off", he says, Put off "corrupting talk". It's talk that tears down a situation. It's talk that makes it worse. The word corrupting here is the word that's used for something

that's rotting. This past week, I was riding my bike in the country in the morning, and I passed a possum, freshly spread on the road, all over. And about maybe 10 feet from that, I pass another possum that I've passed for the last two weeks, spread on the road, on the same side of the road. I don't know why the 2nd possum didn't say, Hey look what happened to him, I'm not going to cross the road here. But that one was advanced in its state of deterioration. And that advance was well noted by me on the trip. What Paul's talking about here is that advancing of deterioration from our talk, the decay, the rotting, the corrupt communication, things that make it worse. Put it off, he says. And here's the "put on", beneficial, building, words that fit the occasion. That's how he said it. He says it like this, "Let no corrupt talk come out of your mouths". Can you imagine that? The decaying coming out of our mouths, that's quite a picture. "But only such as is good for building up, as it fits the occasion", it fits the need there.

"That it may", here's the why, the aim, "give grace to those who hear". It gives favor. So there is an influence of divine grace. Matter of fact, that's how it's presented here, there is an influence, a divine influence, on the heart by what's coming out of your mouth. I want you to know that this one particular "put on", if we would just bear this in mind. I would suggest that you memorize this verse. I've memorized verse 29. But I want you to know memorizing the verse didn't stop the decaying that comes out of my mouth on some occasions. This aim of benefiting needs to rise in my heart again, and again and again and again. This benefiting, building up, the word means to actually cause a structure to go up. We've all said, "I'll never do it again. I'll never do it again". But come on. Let's be real here. The idea is not that I'll never do it again. The idea is I keep putting this on, when I see it again. And I put it on when it rises again. And I put it on again and again. Has anybody ever have a kid tell them, I'll never do it again. Ever had that? Boy, yeah, I'm sure. Right. I'll never do it. It's not the idea. The idea is to be reminded to put it on. I would suggest you memorize the verse, it is very helpful, but that won't stop it. Okay, you'll have to actually put it on again when you see it again, that it may give grace to the hearer. It's amazing that God allows us in on this, that we can divinely influence the heart of someone else by aiming words that build up, not flattery, but words that build up, fit to the occasion to the need. That's present there. That is amazing that God allows us in on that.

And this is big, this is big, those four previous points concerning words, emotions, actions and talk are big because the Spirit is in on this. We can divinely influence the heart this way. We can deal with the emotions of anger, we can. And it's big here. It's big because we are not to grieve, cause to be saddened, the Holy Spirit of God. Jesus told us the Spirit will be with us, and is going to be in us. And he doesn't go away until the day of redemption, to the day that he brings to completion this whole rescue plan that he's had in your life. Verse 30 says, "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption". And dealing with my anger, and dealing with my speech, and dealing with my taking what's not mine, dealing with all of that, is part of the rescue plan. Dealing with it, not grieving the Holy Spirit of God. What does it feel like when somebody grieves? What does it feel like when they're made heavy with sorrow and sadness? What does that feel like? God's Spirit, that's why this is big, the Holy Spirit of God in us, grieved, that's an amazing thing. This is the creator of the universe and he is so involved, that he has an emotional response to our grieving the Spirit of

God, by choosing those things that he tells us to "put off" and not replacing them. "I'll never do it again." That's not the idea. It's to be reminded of the "put ons". That's the idea.

And so he gives us a list, a big list here, of "put offs", verse 31. Now basically, these are all attitudinal things that come out in action, that's what these are, they're all attitudinal things that come out in action and he gives us six of them here. And I'm just going to go through them so you can see how pervasive these are. The six inner man "put offs", he says, are 1) bitterness-distaste being carried around, 2) wrath-blowing up/I'm mad! expression, 3) anger-an on going, simmering upset that's going on in your heart, 4) clamor-continuing to always have a case against somebody, 5) slander-injurious comments to or about someone, 6) malice-ill will/the nose out of joint with or about someone or thing. This is saddening to the Holy Spirit of God that dwells in us. It's saddening.

So Paul give us these big "put ons" in its place. "I'll never do it again!" No, that's not it, we will. It's just that it brings us to the "put ons" in verse 32. There are three inner man "put ons". 1) Be kind-intentionally serve other people/be helpful. You know, there was an incident where I was learning this, and actually trying to do this in relationships at home. So that there's growing taking place. And one night, my wife was in the living room, and I came in and there was this pile of clothes sitting there. So I got them out. And I started folding them, which I never did before. I started to fold them and put them up. And she was sitting there and saw that I was doing this. And she looked over at me and said, So are you mad at me right now? And I said, How did you know that!? I was intentionally trying to put this on, to service, to benefit. And you know, it actually was a benefit, because we got to talk about it. And now, on more frequent occasions, I actually do those kinds of things without being mad at her. "Put on" this service that's helpful in a pleasant way. 2) Be tender hearted-being touched by your heart being responsive to the individual, put this on. God in the New Covenant has taken away our heart of stone, and given us a heart of flesh that is responsive to another person. 3) Be forgiving-gracing it with the person. I'd like to talk about forgiveness, but we're out of time. It's forgiveness, that's modeled after what God did for us in Christ. These three are presented to us as being big.

So we can avoid grief in our life by this balance, the counterbalance of "put offs" and "put ons". Did anybody find something that was maybe a little bit useful and helpful to you in this? Amen! Every time I go through it, it's like, Oh, yeah. Amen. But here is the real thing. There really is a way to go at this. Not that "I'll never do it again". Get away from that, that idea is a perfectionism that doesn't carry out, it doesn't play out. It's to be reminded to put these on, I would suggest that you memorize verse 29 and whatever other verse that is in this it's particularly helpful, as a "put on", to be putting it on, because the Holy Spirit of God is in on this.

Father in heaven, we come to you and we're grateful for redemption. That it's definite and it's assured and we can respond in gratitude by putting on these things that you tell us. Because Lord you, you are God. In Jesus name, amen.