



Ephesians 4:28-29

Practical Admonitions for Change

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December 15, 2019

Stop Robbing and Start Working

Ephesians 4:28a (LEB)

The one who steals **must steal no longer**, but instead **must labor**...

- There is a negated imperative and a positive imperative (steal...labor)
- This implies objective, practical change
- "Steals" is *klepto* and labor is *kopiao*
- *kopiao* means "labor to the point of exhaustion" (see Luke 5:5, Acts 20:35)

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Be a Giver, Not a Robber

Ephesians 4:28b (LEB)

...**working with his own hands** what is good, so that he may have something to share with the one who has need.

- Hard work benefits the worker and those around him
- Having something to give enhances the sense of serving the body and belonging
- "What is good" implies meaningful labor

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Our Words Must Edify, Not Rot

Ephesians 4:29 (LEB)

No rotten word must proceed from your mouth, **but only something good** for the building up of the need, in order that it may give grace to those who hear

- How we speak to one another matters
- "Not proceed" is imperative
- "But" is a strong adversative and shows the alternative to "rotten"

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Implications and Applications

- Christians need to have a biblical worldview about work
- We need to deal with speech at its source: the heart

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Work for Adam Before the Fall

Genesis 2:5 (NASB)

Now no shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the LORD God had not sent rain upon the earth, and there was no man to cultivate the ground.

Genesis 2:15 (NASB)

Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden **to cultivate it and keep it.**

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Work After the Fall

Genesis 3:17b-19 (NASB)

“Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field; **By the sweat of your face You will eat bread,** Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return.”

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The OT Work Ethic

Proverbs 16:26 (NASB)

A worker's appetite works for him, For his hunger urges him on.

Proverbs 14:23 (NASB)

In all labor there is profit, But mere talk leads only to poverty.

Proverbs 13:4 (NASB)

The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, But the soul of the diligent is made fat.

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The NT Work Ethic

2 Thessalonians 3:10-12 (NASB)

For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either. For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, **doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies**. Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread.

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Rotten Fruit

Luke 6:43, 44 (NASB)

“For there is no good tree which produces bad fruit, nor, on the other hand, a bad tree which produces good fruit. For each tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they pick grapes from a briar bush.”

- “Bad” is *sapros* (rotten) and “bad fruit” is *karpon sapron*

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Speech Reveals the Heart

Luke 6:45 (LEB)

The good person out of the good treasury of his heart brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasury brings forth evil. **For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.**

- Religious talk will not avail or last if the heart has not been changed (vs 46)
- Those who know Christ build on rock and all others build on sand (vss 48, 49)

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