

The Old vs. the New Life

Ephesians 4:25-28:

²⁵Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. ²⁶"In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷and do not give the devil a foothold. ²⁸He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

Summary of Previous Week

As believers we live under two spiritual realities. And in many ways, how we live, and what we consider normality in the ways we speak, think, and act, reflect which two spiritual realities we belong to. We are like two trees; the kind of fruit we bear is a reflection of the kind of tree we are: **where the gospel has taken root, there you will find gospel fruit.**

Last week we saw that when you came to know Jesus, when you heard and responded to the gospel, and when God in His grace saved you, **He changed your reality.** The old reality (4:18-19) was a heart hardened against Him and a mind in darkness. You were living in ignorance instead of being alive towards Him; you lived to fuel and fill your sensuality, senses, passions, and desires in life; the movement of your life was towards everything and anything but God, and you lived as a pathological pleasure seeker in anything and everything but God.

In Ephesians 2:1-3 we read of the old reality that marked our lives. We were dead in our transgressions and sin, and enslaved to the world around us, the devil and his power, and our passions within. That's how we lived; we were dead to God and alive to anything and everything else. *And our lives - everything we did - reflected that old reality.* It was normal for us. **An old reality is matched by an old normality.**

But you now have the new reality (4:20-24). The old reality and its accompanying old normality has been removed; it has been crucified and put to death at the Cross (Rom.6:6-7), and in its place is a new self, a new creation (2 Cor.5:17), and a new person made in the image of Jesus, with new desires, passions, and affections, with a heart made alive towards God, and a mind that sees the beauty and value of God in His worth. We are no longer ignorant, but wise, in seeing what is true and false; no longer living like an animal driven by our urges or desires, but living instead to pursue the pleasures of God.

Or as Ephesians 2:5-6 puts it, we read of the new reality that marks our lives. We are made alive in Jesus, raised to new life with Jesus, seated with Jesus at the highest place possible, and given all His privileges and rights as a son in God's house. *And so our lives - everything we do - should now reflect that new reality;* there should be a new normal for us. **A new reality is matched by a new normality.**

And so here, Paul says, is the matching new normality for us as followers of Jesus; this is the spill over in our lives of saving grace, the overflow of saving grace in our lives. **God has made us new creations in the gospel;** we are created after the likeness of Jesus, and His workmanship in Jesus; with new natures and new hearts, called to make new choices, and called to now live out a new normality.

Here's the logic of gospel transformation: If the waters of the heart within has been cleansed, then the overflow of the waters of the heart must also be clean. A bad tree bears

bad fruit, and a good tree bears good fruit. Out of the overflow of the heart, we act, live, and speak.

So as we come to verses 25-32, Paul gives us a picture of the new normality. He tells us what we should be visibly putting on to match the new self, what should be flowing out of the new heart, and the new life we should pursue to match the new creation within, which the gospel has worked in us.

NOTE: We are not being called to live this way to secure our salvation, but to live out our salvation. We are not being called to do this to secure God's grace in our lives, but to live out the grace He has secured for us. *What we have here is the application of the gospel - the fruit of the gospel.*

Paul's Framework of New Normalities

Paul outlines for us three new normalities that are to mark our lives as believers. He does it by giving us a framework, which he repeats from verses 25-28:

- He gives us the **negative** – This is what we should not do; *that was the old normality.*
- He then gives us the **positive** – This is what we should do; *this is the new normality.*
- And he then **explains why.**

The frame work is: negative, positive, and the reason why: the old, the new, and the reason why.

Three New Normalities for the Believer

1) Put aside lying and speak the truth

25 Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.

Paul's framework:

The negative – Don't lie.

The positive – Speak the truth.

The reason – We are members of the body of Christ.

Colossians 3:9-10:

⁹Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices ¹⁰and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

It's straight forward, isn't it? **As new creation people, we must speak the truth to each other;** we're to rid ourselves of lies and always speak the truth. You may have a 'so what?' attitude towards lying. It seems to be a small issue, and it seems to be a small issue in a culture where lying is both the normality and acceptable.

People lie when it comes to business. People lie on their tax returns. Graduates lie on their resumes. Politicians lie to each other and to the public. (E.g. When Julia Gillard became Prime Minister of Australia, she said one thing the week before, and then broke her word the week after to challenge for the leadership, but no one batted an eyelid; not a single media outlet called her a liar.) Teenagers lie to their parents about where they've been. Men lie to women to get them into bed. Drivers lie about their traffic fines. Employers make false promises all the time. Employees lie about what they have or haven't done. Workers pass off work that isn't theirs. And students lie about late assignments.

You say, “It’s normal Euge” ... Or is it?

Here is the overwhelming testimony of the scripture. (Proverbs 6:16-17; 12:22; 21:6; Rev.21:7-8.) **Lying is not a grey area in the Scriptures. There’s no such thing as a white lie**, you’re either speaking the truth or you’re lying. **God is not indifferent to lies.** And if we’ve been born again, and remade in the image of Jesus who is grace and truth, the way, and the truth and the life (John 1:17; 14:6), then we are to be a people marked by truth.

The pressure to lie comes from two places:

- **Greed** - We lie because we’re greedy. We’re looking to gain some advantage, and a lie gives us that advantage.
- **Fear** - Or we lie because we’re afraid. We want to avoid certain consequences, and a lie gets us out of a difficult situation.

So people lie either out of greed or out of fear; to gain or to avoid consequences. **We lie because we’re thinking of ourselves** - protecting our reputation, looking out for our interests, and enhancing our position.

Biblical examples:

- **Acts 5: 1-11 (Ananias and Sapphira):** Ananias and Sapphira sold property that they owned and gave it to the apostles for ministry, but they kept some of it back for themselves. They lied because they presented the money as if it was the whole amount, making themselves look more generous than they actually were, and seeking to gain praise and approval in their lie. In their personal greed, they lied. In **Acts 5:3** Peter says, *‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?’*
- **Matthew 21: 23-27 (Jesus and His question to a bunch of religious leaders):** The group of religious leaders has been opposing Jesus, and they question His authority by asking, *‘By what authority do you do these things?’* (**Matthew 21:23**) In response Jesus asks them a question, *‘John’s baptism, where did it come from? Was it from heaven or from men?’* (**Matthew 21:25**) They’re not interested in the truth, and they lie to protect themselves; their reputation was more important than the truth. *They lied out of fear:* the fear of losing the crowds approval, the fear of being made to look inconsistent, and the fear of being physically abused by the listening crowd.

Isn’t that why we lie so easily, without thinking? We lie on our tax return because we’re greedy for gain. We lie about work we haven’t completed because we’re afraid of looking bad. We lie in our business to gain a material advantage under the guise of negotiations. We lie as students passing off other peoples work as ours because we’re afraid of failing.

Where is lying the normality for you? Where is lying the expedient response for you, either for greed or gain, or for fear?

Under the old reality, lying is the normality because, under the old reality, you and I are enslaved to the devil (Eph.2:1-3), who is a liar and the father of lies (John 8:44). And to those whose normality is lying, we’re told that they’re doing what we expect of them; lying is just part of their character because their father is the devil; they are only doing what is consistent with their old self.

But under the new reality, we're to speak the truth because we've been born again in the image of Jesus, who is the truth. **Jesus said to let your yes be yes, and your no be no** (Matt.5:37). A promise is no greater than my normal word if I am a believer, because my word should always be true. At school, kids tend to make promises: 'please can you do this?' and 'I promise to do this for you'. The impression is that a promise is greater than my normal word, and a promise is more binding than my normal word. **But as believers, our word is binding; a promise is no more binding than our word.** My yes is yes, and my no is no. If I said I would do it, then I do it. *As a believer, people shouldn't have to second guess my word.*

And so Paul says, in place of lying, here is the new normality we are to pursue in our lives: *let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor. (v.25)* **Putting aside lying, and speaking the truth, can be applied in many relationships.** E.g. your relationship at home (to your parents and your spouse), at work (to your employer or employees), to the government, and at university (to your lecturer or fellow students).

Paul focuses on one area where speaking the truth must reign: **we must speak the truth in our relationships to each other in our church community.** And why are we to do this? Because we are members of one another; we are body parts of one another. **We are members of the one body, and belong to each other** (1:23; 2:16; 3:6; 4:16; 5:28–30).

Understand this: **relationships cannot function without truth.** *The body cannot function without truth.* What if the eye lies to the hand about where the mouth is, and the hand is holding a fork? The hand might stab the nose, or worst, the eye. What if the eye lies about what it sees, and doesn't tell the truth about the fire that the hand is about to touch? The hand gets burned. **Without truth, we cannot function as a church, because where there is no truth, there is no trust.**

And when trust disappears: when I cannot trust your word, when I doubt your intentions, and when I think you have a hidden agenda, then our relationship comes to a grinding halt. **Relationships of trust are the wheels on which the ministry of the church move, and the strength of those relationships are built on trust.**

We're not just a community that has been given the responsibility to proclaim the truth of the gospel; **we're also supposed to be a community where truth reigns, and where the truth marks us and our every relationship.** In fact, because lying is the normality under the old reality, how much more must we strive to be a community where the truth reigns? That's what it means to be salt and light in the world, that's what it means for us to be a new city within the city of Sydney, a new culture within culture, and a new people within the people groups in our city, *to make the truth attractive by the way we live.*

Resolve to put away every form of lying in our church community, and in our relationships, because that is not who we are in the Lord Jesus. We are a community transformed by grace, remade in the image of Jesus, and clothed in Jesus right now. Resolve to do away with lying, hypocrisy, duplicity, covering up, deception, and making things up. In every meeting, in every conversation, in every relationship, in every community group, and in every discussion, *let's learn to speak the truth in love.* Pursue honesty, speak plainly, openly, accurately, without misrepresentation, without hidden agendas, without manipulation, and always be truthful. *Let our speech be light to each other.* Speak truthfully and speak the truth. For this is who we are: **we are no longer children of the father of lies, but children of the father of truth.**

2) Put off ungodly anger and pursue righteous anger

26 Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and give no opportunity to the devil.

Notice what Paul does not say in this passage: he doesn't say that as believers we should never get angry. *Paul never says Christians must never get angry.* In fact, **to not be angry is not just impossible, but it would also be ungodly. There are times when anger is right** (E.g. in the face of injustice, cruelty, or unfairness. They all stir God's anger, and should also stir our anger as men and women made in His image.) Anger is sometimes right. **What Paul is doing here is making sure that our anger is expressed rightly;** he's making sure that under the new reality, and under Jesus, we deal with our anger rightly. He's making sure that our anger will not lead us to sin; he's making sure that a new normality matches our new reality, as new creations in Jesus.

Under the old reality, you get angry. And under the new reality, you get angry. **The difference is how you deal with, and express, that anger.** Under the old reality, when you get angry, you look to get even; you look for payback and you seek revenge. Under the old reality, when you angry, you get bitter; you brood and carry a grudge, and it breeds hatred. **Under the old reality, you got angry for two reasons: either because your rights have been trampled, or your ego's been bruised.** It's the reason why anger is very personal for people; it affects us deeply.

So under the old reality, we are moved to anger primarily because circumstances have not gone our way, or people haven't given us what we want. **So the basis of my anger, under the old reality, is what? It's me, myself, and I: my desires, my wants, and my rights.** It's the reason why - in the West, and in our culture, where we are ferociously individualistic - we are more angered when things don't go our way (E.g. when our kids aren't listening to us and cut into our schedules, or when people inconvenience us) than when we hear of human brokenness and tragedy. That's the old reality; that's how the old self lived. **The old normality was self at the centre, where you fed it, fuelled it, and worshiped it.**

Paul says there are two things about anger under the new reality that you must understand and pursue as your new normality:

1. **There is a righteous anger (as opposed to a sinful anger)**
2. **Anger must never be harboured for long**

So firstly, notice in **v.26** Paul says to be angry, but do not sin (*in your anger, do not sin*). **What's the difference between righteous anger and sinful anger?** There is such a thing as Christian anger that is right, good, and godly, but how can you tell if your expression of anger is good?

If we are people created and born again in the image of Jesus, after His Father, then **we look to Him to work out what righteous anger looks like:** the kind of anger that we should identify with. **And as you open up the Scriptures, we're told what moved the Father and the Son to anger.**

Psalm 119:53: *Anger grips me because of the wicked who have forsaken my law.* **God is angered by those who break His law and disregard His ways.** When you look around at the moral abuses in our culture, and the injustices in our society, are you moved to anger? We

should be as men and women who live under a new reality, as new creatures in Jesus, but most of us are apathetic.

We get angrier at the slowness of the queue at McDonalds than hearing that 32% of 12-17 year olds in our state have been reported to the Department of Community Services (DoCS), either because of abuse or neglect. We get angrier about the lateness of the train than the short jail term given to a surgeon responsible for three deaths.

We are compromised beings, aren't we? *The stains of our old self are so deep that we don't get angry over the right things; our anger doesn't reflect the new creation in us.* **In the face of blatant evil, wickedness, and injustice we read and hear about, we should be furious and angry, not tolerant and apathetic.** If God hates sin, injustice, and wickedness, then His people should hate it with the same ferocity. If evil fires God's anger, it should fire our anger as well. *That is a righteous anger because it reflects the heart and mind of Jesus, which God has clothed us with.* What other reaction can there be, in those who love God, in the face of injustice and wickedness? That is what warrants anger: anger over wickedness, evil, injustice, and sin, which are grounded in God's righteousness.

And so you go to read in **James 1:19-20**: *¹⁹Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.* **James calls us to be slow to anger because when anger comes it comes fast,** doesn't it? The fires of anger are often explosive. So when we feel the onset of anger, we have to be slow to anger, rule our emotions, and be discerning. We need to ask ourselves: 'Is it a righteous anger after God, or is it my human emotions?'

But we're called to be slow to anger so that we might respond rightly in our anger, so that our anger might be ruled by God, so that our anger might be shaped by what honours Him, so that our anger might be ruled by what dishonours him, and so that our anger might be directed by His righteousness, justice, and standards, and not ours. **Righteous anger, and good anger, is grounded in God and not us.**

But even more than that, **righteous anger must be coupled with grief and compassion.** In **Mark 3:5**, Jesus enters a synagogue and encounters a man who has a withered hand. It's the Sabbath, which is the Jewish day of rest that prohibited work. The religious leaders were waiting and watching to catch Jesus out, to see whether He would heal the man with the withered hand, so that they might accuse Him. And we read in v.5 that Jesus *'looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored.'*

Notice that Jesus' anger at their sinfulness, wickedness, and evil, was matched by grief. *Righteous anger is not just anger that burns against injustice, evil, and wickedness, it also grieves for the perpetrator, expresses compassion for the wicked, and is moved to mourning for the sinner: 'Jesus looked at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart.'* **(Mark 3:5)**

This is where we so often fail: **our grief, mourning, and compassion for the sinner gets consumed by the zeal of our anger over their sin.** When someone wrongs you, you'll get rightly angry, but there is no grieving over their hardness of heart. Or when someone rips you off, you'll get rightly angry, but there is no grieving over their blindness. Our politicians lie to us, and we get angry, but there is no grieving over their sinfulness. We read of incredible

acts of violence and abuse of children, and we get angry, but there is no grieving for the wickedness of the perpetrators. That's not a good anger; that's not a heart that reflects the mercy and grace of Jesus who so dwells in our hearts through faith and clothes us. **Anger that is righteous is directed at the wicked, the unjust, and the sinner, but it is coupled with grief for the wicked, compassion for the unjust, and mercy for the sinner.**

There is a good anger, but notice what Paul goes on to say in **v.26: *do not let the sun go down on your anger.*** This is the second thing about good anger: **under the new reality, anger must not be harboured for long.** Paul is *NOT* saying that you have a right to stay angry until the sun sets, where you can fuel your anger, and stoke until the sun sets. Do I check the weather report, find out that the sun sets at 5.15pm today, and decide to burn until 5.15pm? That's not what Paul is saying.

Brendan came back from Sweden last week where the sun sets at 10.15pm; does that mean you have an additional five hours to burn with anger there? Or at Greenland, where they don't get a setting sun for four months of the year; does it mean that they can foster anger for four months? Of course not!

Paul's point is that even good anger and righteous anger must not be harboured for long. We must not nurse our anger for long. If you keep burning with anger, pretty soon it'll build into a grudge; it'll begin to foster bitterness in your heart, it'll overflow into hate and malice, and all sorts of wickedness will come out in your speech, thinking, and actions. You read in Genesis 4 of Cain's anger at his brother, whose anger leads to hate and violence (1 John 3:12) **The ongoing harbouring of anger will damage your heart; the ongoing fostering of a grudge will fill your heart with bitterness,** and this is the reason why we are to not foster anger.

Read with me in **v.27, *'and give no opportunity to the devil – do not give the devil a foothold.'*** **Holding on to, and the nursing of, anger is the devil's entry point in your life.** You and I know that when we get angry, no matter how righteous our anger is, it can easily cross over into unrighteous anger. When someone deals with me unjustly, I will get rightly angry, but if I keep nursing that anger, it'll lead to unrighteous anger. If I'm honest with myself, I know what I'm like, I'll become *self righteous* - I start to think of myself as better than the other person, I'll become *judgmental* - I start *assuming God's place*, and I'll *justify my anger* – I start coming up with good, and even biblical, reasons why I am right to think and feel this way.

Because there is a fine line between righteous anger and unrighteous anger, Satan lurks around angry Christians, trying to exploit their anger, and provoke them into bitterness, hatred, revenge, violence, or disunity. If you let your anger smolder, nurse your anger, or hold a grudge, you'll give the devil a foothold in your life. He'll fill your heart with bitterness that will overflow into your life, drive your decisions, shape the direction of your life, and determine your course.

Resolve to be slow to anger, to learn to pursue righteous anger. **Learn to assess your anger rather than give in to your anger.** When you feel anger rising within, remind yourself of the new reality, of who you are: a new creation clothed in Jesus. Ask yourself: what's the new normality when it comes to your anger? Like anything else in life, **you have to anticipate how you will respond to anger in a godly way.**

In the City to Surf, everyone knows that 6 km in you will hit Heartbreak Hill, a 2 km winding ascent. Most people prepare for it, anticipate it, and work out how they will navigate it, but some don't, and struggle; some haven't prepared and go too hard and then end up on the side. It's the same when responding to anger. **You've got to work out the places where you are most prone to anger. *If you don't, you will drift into the old normality.***

So you have to be slow to anger, and you have to resolve to be angered by the things that offend God and moves Jesus to anger. Resolve to put aside your personal anger, and pursue a godly anger; do it while grieving for the wicked, the unjust, and the sinner. Pursue a godly anger with a heart of mercy and compassion for the blind. As you do that, keep it short. Don't nurse it, don't fuel your anger, and don't let it smolder, because the devil longs to gain a foothold in your life, and he'll use it if you keep nursing your anger.

Notice what Paul goes on to say in **verses 31-32:** *³¹Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³²Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.* **What do you replace anger with? What do you replace the old normality with? *You replace it with kindness, tenderheartedness, forgiveness, and in being grounded in Jesus and His dealings with you.*** Paul goes back to the gospel, doesn't he? If you've put on Jesus and He dwells in your heart through faith, and you're growing to see His ever expanding love for undeserving sinners like us more and more, then what should overflow in our lives is more of Jesus – His kindness, His tenderheartedness, and His forgiveness. **If you don't fill the anger with the new self and the new normality in Jesus, Satan will fill it for you in your life.**

3) Stop stealing; instead, work to give

28 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.

Paul's framework:

The negative – Stop stealing.

The positive – To work.

The reason – So that you might be able to give to, and help, those in need.

Under the old reality, stealing is the normality. 'I am doing all I can for me, and to gain for myself, regardless of how I get there.' **Under the new reality, we are working to give. Meeting the needs of others is the new normality.**

In life, there are two paths you can walk or live to acquire what you want, and get what you want in life. Firstly, you can *steal* to get what you want, and secondly, you can *work* to get what you want. But Paul's not even telling us to do that as God's new creation, and as people clothed with Jesus. **Paul says there is a third way: he tells us to work to give it away.**

The first two ways, stealing or working to get what you want, are both legal and illegal ways to get what you want in life. Why does someone steal? Do you know anyone who steals something they don't want, or something that doesn't bring them happiness? **People steal and work for what fills them and gives them personal happiness.** So under the old reality, who do people steal and work for? It is for themselves; to feed their desires, wants, and passions. They do what they do to satisfy their personal greed. Whether your greed makes

you steal or a hard worker – one might be against the law and the other legal - **under the old reality, if you live to feed your greed (legally or illegally), it's sinful.**

Here's the problem: we live in a culture where we're told to work to get what we want; you deserve what you work for, and no one should deny you what you've worked for. And if, in the process, you can get away with shortcuts and it's not going to get you thrown in jail, or you don't get caught, it's fine. Under the old reality, you work to get what you want legally or illegally. And that's how work is seen and viewed in our culture. **It's me at the centre, living to my sensuality, and to satisfy my senses. That's the old life outside of Jesus.**

But under the new reality, we work to meet the needs of others. Even our work is being touched by the grace of the gospel; it is transforming our work! What a radical transformation that goes against everything in our culture and nature! **To work, no longer for ourselves, but for others.** But that shouldn't surprise us, because isn't that a reflection of the new reality under Jesus, whom we're told came, not to be served but to serve, and give His life for many (Mark 10:45); whom we're told, though He was rich, for our sakes became poor, so that through His poverty we might become rich (2 Cor.8:9)?

From an enslaved and self-centered greedy person, that old nature has been removed. That's not who you are. You are now clothed in Jesus, you're a servant to others just like Jesus. That new person now lives in you. **So what's the new normality? What's the new normality when it comes to work? I now work to serve others rather than myself. I now work to meet the needs of others rather than myself. In place of greed, there is now generosity.**

So **Paul says we must stop stealing.** Those who download illegal mp3s, games, videos, and software must stop stealing. Those who spend their hours on the internet while at work are ripping off their employers, they must stop stealing. Those who steal office stationery must stop stealing. Those who lie on their tax return must stop stealing. Those who cheat their employees out of their work benefits must stop stealing. Those who are lazy and avoid doing work in their workplace must stop stealing.

Stealing is more common place in our Christian culture than we realize, and there are two reasons why we don't bat an eyelid, why our consciences are not pricked, and why we don't care: **either we are still enslaved and under the old reality** (hardened heart, dark minds, ignorant, and living to fill our sensuality), **or we are under the new reality, but the stains of the old life hasn't been dealt with; we haven't begun to live out the new normality.**

But Paul doesn't just tell us to stop stealing; he says work, **v.28, so that you may have something to share with anyone in need.** That's right. Don't just stop downloading that mp3, but work to buy it legally for someone else who needs it. Don't just stop being lazy at work, but work hard at work to help others at work. Don't just work to buy yourself a brand new TV, but work to provide a new TV for others who need it. **The goal of work under the new normality is so that you might be able to share (v.28).** It is to gain so that you might SHARE. Under the new reality, we move from being takers to givers, from being consumers to providers, and from greed to generosity.

Once we worked to deprive others for our good, now we seek to share with others for their good, just like Jesus. **One of the biggest tests of gospel transformation is the way we use our money because our view of money, and how hard we are holding on to it, is a reflection of whether we still living under the old reality ourselves, or under the new**

reality for others. It's the test of whether we are living out, and overflowing the grace of, the gospel.

Biblical examples:

- **Luke 19:1-10:** Zacchaeus was a tax collector. He was wealthy, and a thief who made his money legally and illegally. He gets saved, and we read that he gives away half his possessions and pays back four times those he has cheated.
- **2 Timothy 6:17-19:** Paul's instructions to Timothy to the church at Ephesus:
¹⁷As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. ¹⁸They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, ¹⁹thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life. (2 Timothy 6:17-19)

This is reminder to us that we are either people who are putting our hopes in money, or on God, and so we will either be hoarders or generous sharers of what we have.

There are no tightwads in God's economy or in God's house because the gospel is the benchmark.

Resolve to stop stealing, whether you are a student, worker, employer/boss, or employee.

Resolve to work, not for yourself, but to share what you have with those in need, to begin to see your work as an opportunity to earn to share with others. Resolve to see every paycheck not as yours, but as what God has given you to share with others. E.g. some people bring a packet of M&M's, Starburst, or chips to community groups. It's normal, isn't it, when you pass around and share with others what you bought? The same principle applies with your money. It should be no different to passing around your wallet in community group and saying, 'Help yourself if you need some money' But that is the new normality. We are not just sharing the bag of Starburst that we bought, but our wallet.

Resolve to look to meet the needs of others with your finances. Next year we face new challenges. We'll soon be moving out of here, but to keep meeting at 5pm in Burwood will cost us money: to rent a new place to meet for evening church in Burwood. We want to add new staff to help grow the ministry of the gospel at GracePoint: it's going to cost us to financially support Pastors Simon Wong and Andrew Ku. It seems like a challenge. But under the new reality, that should be the new normality because the gospel demands it, because we're new creations in Jesus, with new priorities, new attitudes, and new hearts; we are no longer greedy but generous, no longer takers but givers, and no longer thieves but sharers using all that God has given us to meet the needs of others and the ministry of the gospel.

Conclusion

Here is the overflow of the gospel in the life of God's people under the new reality; there is now a new normality.

Here's the logic of gospel transformation: If the waters of the heart within has been cleansed, then the overflow of the waters of the heart must also be clean. A bad tree bears bad fruit, and a good tree bears good fruit. Out of the overflow of the heart, we act, live, and speak.

Application

So here is the new normality that should now be flowing out of the new heart - the new life that matches the new creation that the gospel has worked in us:

1. **Put aside lying and speak the truth** – as people clothed in the truth of Jesus
2. **Put off ungodly anger and pursue righteous anger** – as people who have put on the righteousness of Jesus
3. **Stop stealing; instead, work to give** – as people overflowing with the grace of Jesus