

"To Abide and To Serve"
Darren Johnson



Background

Join us this Sunday as we conclude our “Church as Family” series. We’ll take a bit of a broader approach this Sunday by looking at a couple of different age groups. We’ll talk about the joys and complexities of parenting adult children, as well as how we are called to effectively care for and honor our aging parents. We’ll also talk about how to effectively care for one another within the church body collectively, no matter what generation we belong to.

To help us approach these topics, we’ll spend time exploring the importance of developing an abiding relationship with Jesus which will provide the foundation for our relational efforts. We’ll also look at some practical attitudes and actions that Paul lays out for us in Ephesians 4:25-5:2.

Sermon Text Ephesians 4:25-5:2

²⁵ Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. ²⁶ “In your anger do not sin”^[a]: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷ and do not give the devil a

foothold. ²⁸ 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.

²⁹ Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³² Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. 5 ¹ Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children ² and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Discussion Questions

1. Preparation

- What is one thing you hoped to talk about today/tonight?
- What question(s) did you come away with from the sermon?
- What is the best thing you heard on Sunday?

2. Sunday Questions:

1. **Abiding vs. Self-Effort (John 15:5):** Pastor Darren notes that trying to fulfill biblical relational standards in our own strength leads to burnout unless we first "abide" and "get sunburned by Jesus" through daily exposure to His presence. In your own life, how can you tell when you are attempting to love or serve others through sheer self-effort rather than out of daily connection with Christ? What daily practices help you truly remain connected to the Vine?
2. **Navigating Evolving Family Dynamics:** The sermon illustrates shifts in parenting adult children—granting freedom, extending grace during mistakes, and later stepping in to care for aging parents dealing with memory loss. How do you navigate the tension between respecting independence and offering loving, firm guidance or care within your family or church relationships? Where might God be calling you to adjust your approach?

3. **Speaking Truth in Love (Ephesians 4:25):** Paul commands believers to put off falsehood and speak truth to one another, which requires stepping into difficult conversations with both grace and firmness. What makes speaking truth "in love" so challenging in family or church contexts? How can we test our motives to ensure our directness is intended to build others up rather than react out of emotion?
4. **Patience, Anger, and Reconciliation (Ephesians 4:26–27, 32):** The sermon addresses handling natural human anger, preventing alienation, and navigating painful situations such as relational breakdowns or "no contact". How do we balance an active commitment to pursue restoration with the patient trust that God often works on a different timetable than ours?
5. **Multi-Generational Responsibility as a Church Family:** Pastor Darren emphasizes that we are responsible for the growth and health of those both younger and older than us in the church body. What is one tangible way you can be more generous with your time, presence, or encouragement across generations this week?