

Some People (and *Brethren* unfortunately!) Are...

Erosive. They *grate* on you and wear you down. They are *biting*, *abrasive*, and *abusive in speech* (Col.3:8) and conduct, and often complaining, condescending and arrogate to boot!

Corrosive. They're typically judgmentally *harsh* and critically *acidic*, and even take pleasure in creating *enmity* and *strife* that eventually rots, rusts, and consumes, Gal.5:20a. And let's not forget,

Explosive. They're *factious*, and prone to "*outbursts of anger*" as well as *disputes* and *dissensions*, Gal.5:20b. They're not only seemingly always "ready for a fight," they look for and evidently enjoy them!

Obviously, this is NOT how Jesus expects us to be or treat one another, and yet the world is full of just such people... and some congregations have more than their fair share of them too. While the world will always have such *destructive* people who seem to think that *tearing others down* somehow *builds them up*, purported "followers of Christ" just can't be (or be allowed to continue to be) such people. Jesus, our supreme example, was "*gentle and humble in heart*"- the very antithesis of such attitudes and conduct, Matt.11:29.

So instead of *erosive*, *corrosive*, and/or *explosive*, let's note and work toward developing the qualities and characteristics highlighted in **Ephesians 4:**

- **Walking worthily of the calling, v.1.** The next time you're tempted to say something *erosive* or *corrosive*, or *explode* on someone, remember Whom you serve and how He felt about and treated others. Are your thoughts, attitudes, and actions *worthy* of Him and the "*calling*" to be *Christ-like*? Do they **build up** (*edify*) the same in others, or **erode** it away?
- **With all humility and gentleness, v.2a.** *Humility* is an attitude toward self that is somewhat hard to define without deprecation. I think the Holy Spirit through Paul does it best in Phil.2:3-4 as *regarding others "as more important than himself"* and *not merely looking out for "your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."* Such an attitude *toward self* is manifested in and motivates "*gentleness toward others*." How you regard *self* determines how you treat *others*. Are your attitudes and activities **corrosive** or **soothing** and **healing**?
- **With patience, showing forbearance, v.2b.** Again, *attitude* dictates *conduct*. If you are Spirit-filled and thus *patient* (cf. Gal.5:22), you will be *forbearing* (being *tolerant* or *longsuffering*) rather than **explosively impatient** and **intolerant**.

We all must choose what kind of *people*, and indeed what kind of *Christian*, we will be. None of us exempted by genetics or circumstances; we **decide** and thus **determine** our *attitudes* toward ourselves and others, and thus how we interact with one another. Choose wisely for God is watching, "*The good man out of his good treasure brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth what is evil. And I say to you, that every careless word that men shall speak, they shall render account for in the day of judgment. For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned,*" Matthew 12:35-37. (Philip C. Strong; Viking Drive Church of Christ; 3791 Viking Drive, Bossier City, LA; online at vikingdrivechurchofchrist.com; email to mrpcstrong@hotmail.com)