



**SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD**

**Thursday, February 11, 2021**

**Scripture: Ephesians 4: 24-28**

**TITLE: Stop and Go**

In the 1990's, comedian Dennis Leary had a skit, where he called himself Dr. Leary. He was a doctor, who would provide straightforward solutions to real-world problems. For example, a patient comes in and says, "When I drink too much, I wake up with massive headaches and major regrets. What should I do?" Dr. Leary would say, "Stop it! Stop drinking! Stop it!" Another patient would come in and say, "Doctor, my relationship's a mess. My wife complains about not having enough quality time. She says I spend too much time at work and golfing with buddies. What should I do?" Dr. Leary's prescription was, "Stop it! Stop robbing your wife of her time. Stop it!"

It was a hilarious skit, but he was exactly right. Did you know that the Apostle Paul had a similar approach to the problems we create for ourselves? It's true. Listen to what Paul says in Ephesians 4:25-28 (NLT):

So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. <sup>26</sup> And "don't sin by letting anger control you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, <sup>27</sup> for anger gives a foothold to the devil.

<sup>28</sup> If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need.

Dr. Paul was to the point! If it's damaging, stop it. If it's destructive, stop it. If it hurts, stop it.

Sin is always a choice. Today, you may be struggling with sex, pornography, greed, anger, stealing, alcohol, or something else. Paul's advice: "Stop it."

Now, before we get too far, there are addictions in this world. Some bondages aren't so easy to fix. Paul wouldn't deny that. Neither would I. If you are truly addicted to alcohol, drugs, sex, pornography, contact a pastor or a counselor, and get some help. But even that first step is your "stop it" moment.

But for the rest of us, who aren't battling addiction, we need to draw a line in the sand and say, "Enough! Stop it!"

Your job may stink. Your boss may be horrible. Your wife may be a nag. Your husband may be lazy. Your world may be overrun by a virus. Those things you can't change. What you can change is your response. You don't have to lie to get your way. You don't have to sin, by allowing anger to destroy other people. You don't need to steal to advance yourself.

Paul's prescription wasn't just the negative: not just stop, but **GO** – go and do something good. Don't lie; Tell the truth. Don't get angry; Give mercy and grace. Don't steal; Instead, give generously.

My challenge for you today is to admit your struggles and then do the opposite of them:

If you're tempted to lie, tell the truth in love.

If you're tempted to steal, give someone something, with excitement.

If you're tempted to get angry, give an encouraging word.

If you're tempted to worry, choose to spread hope.

Whatever it is you are tempted to do, admit it, and then do the opposite of it.

I can't wait to hear the results.