

Speaking the Truth in Love

Key Passage

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, **speaking the truth in love**, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. Eph 4:14-15

Getting on the Same Page

Christians are known for a lot of different things, most of which are unflattering: judgmental, legalistic rule followers, angry, anti-science, harsh, arrogant, antiquated, etc. Unfortunately, Christians in our current cultural context are rarely identified for the very thing that Jesus wanted us to be known for – how we love. What we come to discover as we live out the Christian life is that loving one another as He loves us makes our lives better and makes us better at doing life.

Maybe one of the least understood and most misapplied expressions of loving one another in Scripture is **speaking the truth in love**. We are called to love one another enough to admonish one another, challenge one another, and speak redemptive truth into each other's lives. Often, this expectation of the Christian life is either ignored or leveraged as a justification to harshly rebuke someone. Neither of these represents what it means to be for one another. This discussion is intended to help us understand what it means, what it looks like, and the implications of skillfully speaking truth to one another in love.

Discussion Questions

Getting Started

- Are you most prone to move toward or away from conflict with others? Why?
- How would you describe a courageous conversation? When was the last time you had one? How did it go?

Study Read Ephesians 4:11-16 & Col 3:16 Together

- Paul connects 'speaking the truth in love' to growing up in maturity, no longer being tossed about by every wind. How does having truth tellers in our lives help us grow?
- What heart should motivate 'speaking the truth in love?'
- What are some differences between being a 'truth speaker' and just being a jerk?
- What helps prepare your heart to receive admonishment/ correction from someone else?
- In John 8:32 Jesus said that the truth has the power to set us free. How does the truth set us free?

- How do we carry out the practice of speaking the truth in love?
- Why is it so difficult for us to be vulnerable enough to receive truth that is spoken to us?
- What barriers do we put in place to hide the truth from even ourselves?

Reflect

- *“Truth becomes hard if not softened by love. Love becomes soft if not strengthened by truth.”* John Stott
- *Often when we talk about truth telling, we think of correction. But the majority of truth telling should be affirming, reminding one another of who we are in Christ and what God desires for us to experience in our journey with Him.*
- *“Love without truth is sentimentality; it supports and affirms us but keeps us in denial about our flaws. Truth without love is harshness; it gives us information but in such a way that we cannot really hear it.”* Tim Keller

Apply

- On a 1(*weakness*) – 10(*strength*) scale, how skilled are you at speaking the truth in love? Explain your #
- What is most challenging for you when it comes to skillfully speaking the truth in love?
- Who have you given permission to speak truth to you?
- Is there a courageous conversation where truth needs to be spoken that you've been putting off? How can this group pray for you or help encourage you this week?