

OPENING SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 4:11-15

“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:” Ephesians 4:15

*Everybody presumes to speak the truth in love—but **what does it mean** to speak the truth in love? And, **how do we know** when we are speaking the truth in love?*

Speaking the Truth in Love

What does it mean to speak the truth in love? How do we know when we ARE speaking the truth in love?

1. Speaking the truth in love begins with a love for the truth!

*It sounds trite, but speaking the truth in love begins with a sincere love of the truth itself!
In other words, no one who is unconcerned about the truth is going to be concerned about speaking the truth—in love!*

2. So, what does it mean to speak the truth in love? *Is speaking the truth in love telling like it is or is it telling it by the Spirit and in the Spirit?*

3. How do we know when we’re speaking the truth in love?

What speaking the truth in love is NOT:

1. **Is it speaking quietly or softly?**
2. **Is it to do so void of emotion? Is it to do so with timidity?**
3. **Some people think as long as we don’t offend anyone, we’re speaking the truth in love.**
 - Jesus loved perfectly, but did He offend anyone? *Did He ever set out to offend or hurt anyone?*
 - “Then the disciples came to him and asked, “**Do you realize you offended the Pharisees by what you just said?**” Matthew 15:1-14

4. Speaking the truth in love means speaking the truth out of love—love for God and sincere love for the people we’re speaking to!

Who can worship in the heavenly tabernacle; who can get into God’s presence? David asked and answered his own question: “*Those who lead blameless lives and do what is right, speaking the truth from sincere hearts...*” Psalm 15:1-4

“How painful it was to write that letter! Heartbroken, I cried over it. I didn’t want to hurt you, but I wanted you to know how very much I love you.” 2 Corinthians 2:4

“You see, we are not like those hucksters--and there are many of them--who preach just to make money. We preach God’s message with sincerity and with Christ’s authority. And we know that the God who sent us is watching us.” 2 Corinthians 2:17

“But you know what I teach, Timothy, and how I live, and what my purpose in life is. You know my faith and how long I have suffered. You know my love and my patient endurance.” 2 Timothy 3:10

These 7 things should help us to know when someone is speaking the truth in love, and help us to receive from those who speak the truth to us in love! We should be able to apply each of these 7 things to our own lives when we’re speaking to others.

5. An example of one believer speaking the truth in love to another believer. Galatians 2:11-21

Gal 2:11 But when Peter came to Antioch, I had to oppose him publicly, speaking strongly against what he was doing, for it was very wrong.

Gal 2:12 When he first arrived, he ate with the Gentile Christians, who don't bother with circumcision. But afterward, when some Jewish friends of James came, Peter wouldn't eat with the Gentiles anymore because he was afraid of what these [Jewish] legalists would say.

Gal 2:13 Then the other Jewish Christians followed Peter's hypocrisy, and even Barnabas was influenced to join them in their hypocrisy.

Gal 2:14 When I saw that they were not following the truth of the Good News, I said to Peter in front of all the others, "Since you, a Jew by birth, have discarded the Jewish laws and are living like a Gentile, why are you trying to make these Gentiles obey the Jewish laws you abandoned?"

Gal 2:15 You and I are Jews by birth, not 'sinners' like the Gentiles.

Gal 2:16 And yet we Jewish Christians know that we become right with God, not by doing what the law commands, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be accepted by God because of our faith in Christ--and not because we have obeyed the law. For no one will ever be saved by obeying the law."

Gal 2:17 But what if we seek to be made right with God through faith in Christ and then find out that we are still sinners? Has Christ led us into sin? Of course not!

Gal 2:18 Rather, I make myself guilty if I rebuild the old system I already tore down.

Gal 2:19 For when I tried to keep the law, I realized I could never earn God's approval. So I died to the law so that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ.

Gal 2:20 I myself no longer live, but Christ lives in me. So I live my life in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Gal 2:21 I am not one of those who treats the grace of God as meaningless. For if we could be saved by keeping the law, then there was no need for Christ to die.

6. When Paul confronted Peter, he did so for at least 3 reasons—all IMPERSONAL and all ETERNAL LIFE issues: *Is this the standard by which we judge a thing and confront other Christians?*

1. What he [Peter] was doing was very wrong. 2:11

2. Souls were at stake: *presently and in the future.*

- Souls were at stake because the issue was how people get right with God. 2:16, 2:19
- In fact, some were already moving away from the truth because of Peter. 2:13

3. Most of all, Truth itself was on the line. 2:14

Peter's hypocrisy...

- Called God's generosity and free gift (grace) into question as meaningless, and
- Minimized Christ's sacrificial and atoning death as unnecessary. 2:21

In closing, we speak the truth in love...to those we love...because of the One we love!

"So whenever you speak, or whatever you do, remember that you will be judged by the law of love, the law that set you free." James 2:12