

“SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE” (EPH.4:15a)

1. The CONTEXT: Eph.4:1-16
 - a. Walk worthily (v1) - Principle: Your conduct should be consistent with your calling (ie – position) in Christ. See: Eph.5:2, IIIJn.3,4.
 - b. Five important attitudes (v2) – Principle: Right attitudes are essential for right conduct. See: Gal.5:22,23.
 - c. Unity is the guideline (v3) – Principle: Whatever is said or done should strengthen, not weaken, unity. See: Phil.2:2.
 - d. The minimum for doctrinal unity (v4-6) – Principle: Most Christians will not agree with you on every point of doctrine but, there is a basic minimum upon which you should stand. See: Eph.6:14.
 - e. The giving of the spiritual gifts (v7-10) – Principle: Every believer receives one or more spiritual gifts at the time of salvation. These determine where you fit and function in the body of Christ and the local church. See: ICor.12:1-31.
 - f. The four communication gifts (v11) – Principle: All the communication gifts are designed to teach Bible doctrine so Christians understand how to walk worthily in the Christian Way of Life (CWL). See: Rom.12:7,8.
 - g. The first purpose (pros) of the communication gifts (v12) – Principle: The purpose (eis) is to equip believers in two areas:
 - 1) For (eis) the work of serving the Lord;
 - 2) For (eis) the edification of the body of believers.
 - h. The ultimate purpose (mechri) of the communication
 - i. gifts (v13) – Principle: The ultimate purpose is to achieve four things:
 - 1). To (eis) the unity of the faith (BD);
 - 2). And (kai) to a full knowledge of Jesus Christ;
 - 3). To (eis) doctrinal maturity;
 - 4). To (eis) Christ-like character.
 - i. The desired results (v14) – Principle: Believers are to become strong, stable, secure and exercise discernment in the devil’s world.
 - j. The challenge (v15) – Principle: SPEAKING THE TRUTH should be IN LOVE. Both the MESSAGE (what you say) and the MANNER (how you say it) are important.
 - k. Unity and growth of the body (v16) – Principle: Unity in doctrine and the correct function of the spiritual gifts are like two keys. Speaking the truth in love is how to “turn these keys” in order to achieve growth in the CWL and the local church. See: ITim.3:15.
2. The CHALLENGE: Eph.4:15a.
 - a. Speaking the truth (aletheuontes) – mas, nom, sg, pres, act, ptc., aletheuo: mng – to speak the truth.

- 1). Idea - As used here and in the book of Ephesians, truth refers to divine viewpoint (DVPT), the Word of God (WOG): 1:13, 4:21,24,25, 5:9, 6:14 cp. Gal.4:19. See also: Jn.18:38 w/17:17. In a broader sense, it can refer to whatever is consistent or compatible with DVPT: Phil.4:8,9.
- b. In love (en agape) – dat. sg. of manner.
 - 1). Idea: This expression is used 3x in this context (v2,15,16) to teach MANNER, that is, HOW something is to be said or done.
 - 2). The five categories of love in Koine Greek:
 - a). Eros – physical, sensual love (only term not used in the Gk.N.T.) ;
 - b). Arkeo – love of materials things;
 - c). Storgeo – family love;
 - d). Phileo – friendship love and also of right man-right woman; a total-soul love;
 - e). Agapao – a mental attitude love, a specialized love of the soul.
 - 3). The six attributes of category one love (agapao): objective, non-emotional, impartial, unconditional, unchanging and unlimited.
- c. The Challenge: It is two-fold. First, to SPEAK THE TRUTH in love. And second, to speak the truth IN LOVE. Again, WHAT is said and HOW it is said are both important.

(SPEAKING THE TRUTH – GENERAL PRINCIPLES)

3. Strive to IMITATE JESUS CHRIST, our perfect role model, Who was FULL OF GRACE AND TRUTH: Jn.1:17 cp. Eph.5:1.
4. IMITATION REQUIRES doing at least two things that must work together.
 - a. Walk in the Spirit – This refers to being filled with or controlled by the Holy Spirit (Eph.5:18). The Rebound Technique is how to achieve getting back into fellowship and under His control (IJn.1:9). There is always this “push-pull” inside us between our OSN and the H.S. (Rom.7:12-8:4). But, only you decide which controls you: Gal.5:16-25. See also: Jn.14:17, 15:26, 16:13 cf. IJn.5:7 w/Rom.8:14-16.
 - b. Walk in the Truth – This combines both learning and applying God’s truths. The best scenario is every believer learning BD under the authority of their own pastor-teacher on a consistent basis in a local church. The right congregation will encourage you in making good application: IIIJn.4.
 - c. Sanctification: The whole process by which God teaches and trains us up to become just like His Son is called Sanctification. It is a lifelong process. But, its how we learn to imitate Christ: Jn.17:17,19, IIThess.2:13, Eph.4:20-24 cf. IJn.2:12-14. See: this category.

5. The PASTOR-TEACHER is the key communicator of BD in the Church Age. He is expected to both teach and to be a good example: Eph.4:11 cp. ITim.4:12-16, 6:11,12, IITim.1:7,13, 2:15,22, 3:10.
 - a. The four communication gifts: Pastor-teacher, teacher, exhortation and evangelism (only gift that targets the unbeliever). See: Eph.4:11, Rom.12:7,8.
 - b. Pastor-Teacher: See this category.

6. Nine DANGEROUS RESPONSES to the truth.
 - a. Idea: Such responses may be by you as a believer or by those to whom you are speaking.
 - b. List:
 - 1). Suppress it – Rom.1:18 (smother it with human good)
 - 2). Change/exchange it – Rom.1:25 (for a lie)
 - 3). Contentious regarding it– Rom.2:8 (antagonistic bickering)
 - 4). Disobey it– Gal.3:1, 5:7
 - 5). Not believe it – Heb.2:13, IIThess.2:12
 - 6). No love for it – IIThess.2:10
 - 7). Adulterate it – IICor.4:2 (mix truth with lie)
 - 8). Rebel against it – Titus 1:10
 - 9). Malign it – IIPt.2:2 (speak evil of it).

7. Beware of the POTENTIAL REACTIONS to the truth.
 - a. By unbelievers - Jn.15:18-27 cp. IITim.3:1-8, Titus 1:10-16
 - b. By believers – ITim.4:1-5, 6:3-10, IITim.2:16-18, 4:4, Heb.10:26-31 (warning).

8. PAUL, AS AN ILLUSTRATION of a believer who always spoke the truth: Rom.9:1, ICor.5:8, IICor.6:11, 7:14, 10:11, 12:6, ITim.2:7.

9. The single MOST IMPORTANT MENTAL ATTITUDE towards the truth is to “REJOICE with the truth.” ICor.13:6.

10. The GREAT AXIOM regarding the truth is stated in IICor.13:8, “For we can do nothing against the truth, but only for the truth.”

(IN LOVE – GENERAL PRINCIPLES)

11. The CONNECTION between truth and love is stated in IJn.2:5, “...but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected.”
 - a. Idea: If you really understand the Word of God and are willing to apply it, then the manner in which you say whatever you say, will be said in love. If you think you understand the Word of God, but how you say whatever you say is not in love, then you still don’t really understand the Word of God. See: ICor.8:1,2 cp. IIJn.3,6.

12. Love is part of the FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: Gal.5:22,23.
13. The SIGNIFICANCE OF LOVE in the Christian Way of life is explained in IJn.4:7-21.
14. SIX REASONS WHY the truth is to be spoken in love:
 - a. Love covers a multitude of sins – Jas.5:19,20, IPt.4:8
 - b. Love brings consolation (comfort, hope, acceptance) – Phil.2:1,2
 - c. Love is the perfect bond of unity – Col.3:14
 - d. Love is the best possible motivation – Phil.1:9
 - e. Love is the quintessential of all the Christian virtues – ICor.13:13cp. Jn.13:34, 15:12, IPt.1:7
 - f. Love is evidence of the Grace Mindset (GMS) – Phil.2:5, Rom.12:9-21.
15. The MANNER which should characterize category one love includes:
 - a. Sincere and fervent – IICor.8:8, IPt.1:22
 - b. In doctrine and deed – IJn.3:18
 - c. In truth – IIIJn.1:1
 - d. Controlled – IICor.5:14
 - e. Genuine – IICor.6:6
 - f. Abound – IICor.8:7, Phil.1:9
 - g. Proven – IICor.8:24
 - h. With faith – Gal.5:6, Eph.6:23, IThess.3:6, 5:8, IIThess.1:3,
 - i. In spirit – Col.1:8
 - j. With a pure heart – ITim.1:5.
 - k. Without envy or strife – Phil.1:15,16
 - l. Without hypocrisy – Rom.12:9
 - m. Without ill intent – Rom.13:10
 - n. Without hurting – Rom.14:15
16. The MANNER should never allow an opportunity for sinning: Eph.4:25-27cp. Jas.3:14 cf. IThess. 3:12.
17. The case for TOUGH LOVE when speaking the truth.
 - a. Paul opposed Peter – Gal.2:11-21
 - b. When dealing with “difficult types” – IITim.2:24-26, Jas.5:19,20 cf. ICor.4:14-21.
18. The TWO BARRIERS to speaking the truth in love are carnality and immaturity: ICor.3:1-3 cf. Heb.5:11-6:12.
 - a. CARNALITY – See this category

- b. BELIEVERS: “Three Stages of Growth.” See: IJn.2:12-14.
19. Love is confirmed as the MORE EXCELLENT WAY: ICor.12:31-13:13 cp. Eph.3:17-19, Phil.2:1,2.
20. CONCLUSION: “Let all that you do be done in love:” ICor.16:14.
21. ADDENDUM: Twenty one guiding principles for effective communication.
- a. With grace (apply the grace policy) – Col.4:6a
 - b. Seasoned with salt (doctrine) – Col.4:6b
 - c. With the truth – Eph.4:15a, ICor.2:7
 - d. In love – Eph.4:15b
 - e. Without hypocrisy – Rom.12:9
 - f. Without pretense – Phil.1:18
 - g. In simple terms – Mt.18:3 (child-like)
 - h. Age appropriate – ICor.13:11 (child vs. adult)
 - i. Adjust to the “listening zone” of your listeners – Mt.13:3 (signs vs. parables)
 - j. Optimistically – Eph.5:19
 - k. With confidence – Eph.6:20, Titus 3:8
 - l. With caution and care – Jas.1:19,20 (truth can hurt)
 - m. Without judging or criticism – Jas.4:11
 - n. Without arrogance – IIPt.2:18
 - o. Timing – Acts 21:37-22:2 (context)
 - p. Readiness – IPt.3:15
 - q. From the heart – Ps.15:2
 - r. With humor – Gal.5:12 (example)
 - s. In their lingo – Acts 21:40, 22:2
 - t. With a spirit of forgiveness – Eph.4:32 cp. IICor.5:19
 - u. Encourage others to do the same – Heb.10:24.