

52: SPEAKING TRUTH WITH GRACE

By John Leavy

In Week 11: Discipleship in Relationships

3 Min read



“Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,” — Ephesians 4:15

Most men have a natural bend toward one side of the trail or the other. Some pride themselves on “telling it like it is.” They speak directly, quickly, and without hesitation. Others avoid difficult conversations altogether. They keep peace by staying silent, softening hard truths, or pretending problems do not exist. Both approaches miss something important.

Ephesians 4:15 calls believers to speak “the truth in love.” Truth and grace are not competing values. They are traveling companions. Separate them and both become dangerous. Truth without grace becomes a hammer. Grace without truth becomes permission to stay where you are.

One of the things often left unsaid is that many men use truth as a disguise for frustration, pride, or anger. They claim they are simply being honest when what they are really doing is venting irritation. Others use grace as a disguise for fear. They avoid necessary conversations because they do not want conflict, rejection, or discomfort. In both cases, the issue is not communication. The issue is the heart.

A skilled trail guide knows when to encourage and when to correct. If a hiker drifts toward danger, silence is not kindness. But neither is shouting him down. The goal is not winning the conversation. The goal is helping someone stay on the trail toward growth and maturity.

APPLICATION

Speaking truth with grace requires more than choosing the right words. It requires the right motive. Before speaking, a wise man asks himself an important question: “Am I trying to help this person, or am I trying to prove something?” That question often exposes what is really happening beneath the surface. Is my motivation pure?

Many difficult conversations fail before they begin because the speaker has already made himself the center of the discussion. He wants to be right. He wants to be heard. He wants to correct. He wants to win. Ephesians 4:15 points in a different direction. The purpose of truth is growth. The purpose of grace is restoration. Both serve the good of the other person.

This becomes especially important in families, friendships, workplaces, and churches. A husband may need to address a concern with his wife. A friend may need to confront unhealthy choices. A leader may need to correct behavior. Truth is necessary in every one of those situations. But truth delivered without humility often creates resistance rather than change.

The trail provides a useful picture. When someone stumbles on rough ground, the guide does not ignore the danger. He points it out. Yet he does so with the intention of helping the hiker move forward safely. The same should be true of our conversations. Speak honestly. Speak clearly. Speak courageously. But make sure the person hears both the truth and the love behind it.

LIVE IT OUT

This week, pay attention to your motive before difficult conversations. Ask whether your goal is correction, control, or restoration. Speak honestly, but do so with humility and care. Truth and grace travel together. When they remain together, people are more likely to hear, grow, and respond well.

PRAY THIS...

“Lord, keep my motivations pure as I try to lead the other person to the truth in love.

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