

UNTO THE LORD FAST

DAY FOUR

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Ephesians 4:15 instructs Christians to "speak the truth in love" to grow into maturity in Christ, who is the Head of the church. It emphasizes balancing honest, Godly truth with compassion, avoiding harshness or deception, building up the body of believers, and preventing being misled by false doctrines. Building each other up is our job. Unfortunately, there are some that destroy or build. Many are torn from love and truth. So, we need to be careful how we speak to others. Some always have the right point of view and some skirt the truth so that they avoid the truth in love.

For the Lord disciplines those He loves and punishes each one that He accepts as His child. (Hebrews 12:6 NLT)

We come to salvation by acknowledging that we are sinners. God corrects. His love leads us to repentance. One of the main reasons that we don't respond to Christ is that we carry hurts and wounds inside. He heals our wounds through His saving grace and by His precious blood that was shed for us.

Lord, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? He who walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart; he who does not backbite with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbor, nor does he take up a reproach against his friend; in whose eyes a vile person is despised, but he honors those who fear the Lord; he who swears to his own hurt and does not change; he who does not put out his money at usury, nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved. (Psalms 15:1-5 NKJV)

Who can serve in God's sanctuary/the church? The one who embodies truth in righteous relationships. Paul uses the Greek word for truth (aletheia), which means transparent, truthful, genuine, authentic, reliable, and sincere. The word describes a person who ministers from a heart of integrity and Christ-like, grace-oriented love. It pictures the person whose relational style is transparent and trustworthy. The word means to act according to and in alignment with truth. The greatest commandment is love. Truth is to love God wholeheartedly and to love others sacrificially.

In Matthew 22:35–40, one of the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced one of the Sadducees. One of them, an expert in the law, asked a question to test Jesus. He asked, "Teacher, which commandment in the Law is the greatest?" (v. 36 NKJV).

Jesus replied, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the prophets hang on these two commandments" (vv. 37–40).

What does God want from us? He wants us to speak truth into other people's lives in love. Sharing the truth in love means growing up in every way and learning how to interact with people and not hide your opinions. God wants to help us develop loving and joyful attitudes toward people. If we are loving people as Christ has loved us, we will not be critical of others. Life can be satisfying if we share the truth in love, without criticism.

Speaking the truth, or aletheia, describes our character. As we speak truth, we must ask ourselves if our lives are truthful, trustworthy, authentic, genuine, modeling, and living out the gospel, as examples of Christ's sacrificial love.

Love is the real secret of our success in this life. Christ, who is the Head, wants us to grow up, to know the whole truth, and to always express it in love, as Christ did in everything. We must take our lead from Christ, who is the source of everything we do.

He is the One who keeps us in step with one another. Jesus's very breath and blood flows through us, nourishing us so that we will grow up healthy in God and robust in love.

From whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love. (Ephesians 4:16 NKJV)

We were not all created alike. God created us in His image. Proverbs 3:5–6 (NKJV) states, "Trust in the Lord with all of your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths."

How often do you share your feelings and emotions with him? God wants our trust and intimacy, not just when we need something. Yes, God is our Heavenly Father, and we should always go to Him first with every need in our lives. He will protect us and guide us through every storm. He will never leave us or forsake us.

Speaking the truth involves communicating the gospel about grace-focused sanctification. We must speak in a manner that conveys the love of Christ in every relationship. We should strive to promote the unity and purity of Christ in our words and actions. We must display His glory in everything we do and speak.

Second Peter 2:10–16 deals with bold, arrogant people who blaspheme the Lord. They want to spread their poison so that there is suffering and harm. Beware of false teachers! They have gone astray by following false gods. These people are springs without water, mist driven by a whirlwind! The gloom of darkness has been reserved for them.

How can we correct this? We must respond with the truth but correct what is false. We must flee from evil teaching. We must be bold and stand up for our faith without wavering. If we do not defend any part of God's truth, the enemy will gain an advantage over us.

We cannot shy away from evil but stand firm with Word of God as our sword, rebuking the enemy that may try to rise up against us. Psalm 18:30; 34–35b (HCSB) says, "God, His way is perfect. The Word of the Lord is pure. He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him.... He trains my hands for war; my arms can bend a bow of bronze.... Your right hand upholds me."

As we embody the truth in love, Ephesians 4:15 states that we are to:

- **Speak wholesome words that build up rather than tear down and poison.**
- **Speak helpful words.**
- **Speak words that edify others according to their needs**
- **Speak words that actually benefit the listener.**
- **Speak words that do not grieve the Holy Spirit.**

First Corinthians 13:1 (NKJV) states, "If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal." If my speaking the truth fails to provide a wholesome, beneficial, loving atmosphere, then I am nothing but a sounding brass. When we speak the truth in love, we must not grieve the Holy Spirit.

All bitterness, anger, wrath, shouting, and slander must be removed from you along with all malice, and be kind, compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you in Christ. (Ephesians 4:31 HCSB)

If we know that a brother or sister are found in a fault, we should restore them in love. Galatians 6:1 states that if we find someone has fallen from grace, we are to restore them without judgement. And we should be careful not to fall into the same trap.

We must watch our words. Words frame our world. Think about the words you speak. They can bring either light or darkness into our lives or the lives of others. Sometimes it is better to express what we are feeling. If the situation pertains to us, and we know that something must be addressed, we must be honest and be guided by the Holy Spirit to lovingly say the right things.

In conclusion, truth and love go hand in hand. We must never add to or subtract from the truth. Take courage. Come face-to-face and speak the truth.

**Being confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.
(Philippians 1:6 NKJV)**

Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. (Joshua 1:7 KJV)

Father, thank You for the good work You are doing in our lives. I am absolutely convinced that You will keep developing and bringing it to full completion. Help me to stop being against myself and simply trust You with the process for further change. I declare that I am who You say I am. In Jesus's name, amen.

May the Lord bless and keep you. May He make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord look with favor upon you and give you peace. (See Numbers 6:24–26)