

# UNTO THE LORD FAST

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DAY ONE

BRIAN GIBBS

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**I want to welcome everyone into this corporate fast as we begin this week of setting ourselves apart unto the Lord to pray, fast, go deeper, and press into God's heart. This week, we have chosen truth in love as the subject and emphasis of our fast. I believe throughout this week, we are going to be called to a higher place in God in our communion and consecration to Him, and to a higher place in our relationships to one another in the body of Christ.**

**We all must recognize the immense value and responsibility of relationships with one another in the Kingdom. It is in the soil of relationship that everything is tested, matured, and ultimately grown into the image of Christ.**

**Let's step back first and consider this reality. We live in a generation that is deluged with lies, misinformation, fake news, and propaganda. The social media construct is a superhighway for misinformation and half-truths that produce rotten fruit because many have grown accustomed to an appetite of lies and not testing all things to hold onto what is good (see 1 Thessalonians 5:21).**

**The Word of God, if properly and faithfully studied, will mature our discernment to divide between what is truth and what is fake. By applying our heart and mind to the open Word of God, our spirit man will mature and develop by the nurturing of the Holy Spirit, which Jesus called "the Spirit of Truth." Jesus specifically said in John 16:13 that when the Holy Spirit comes, "He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come" (NKJV).**

**Isn't it wonderful to know that God desires all His children to walk in the truth, love the truth, be guided in that truth, and not be snared in the traps of what is false, fake, or not of His Spirit.**

**As for me, I do not want anything to do with what is fake and phony. I deeply desire to be connected and bonded to that which is true and pure and from the Spirit of Jesus.**

**I say this all the time here at Victory – the Word of God has to be our final authority on all matters for life. And the truth of the Word is the ultimate anchor for our lives in a time when many are drifting because of lack of knowledge of truth or a lack of submission and obedience to it.**

**Before looking at the words that the Apostle Paul writes in Ephesians 4 about speaking the truth in love, which is our emphasis this week for the fast, it is important to remember that his writings are not just by human intellect but by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In 2 Timothy 3:16–17 (NIV), he writes, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”**

**In Ephesians 4, the Apostle Paul shares that the gifts given by Jesus of the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers are given for the equipping of all the saints for the work of the ministry and for edifying or building up the body of Christ (v. 12). He goes on to say that through these ministries we come into the unity of faith and into fullness and maturity so that we are not tricked or duped by all the deceptions and trickery that is so prevalent (v. 13). Then Paul comes to the statement, “Speaking the truth in love, [we] may grow up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ” (Ephesians 4:15 NKJV). Paul continues on, saying how vital this is so that we do not live like those who are captive to the spirit of this age, and to fully put off the old man and put on the new man which is created in true righteousness and holiness – that we should speak the truth to our neighbor because we are members of the family and Kingdom of God (see Ephesians 4:17–25). That is awesome.**

**In Ephesians 4:14, in The Passion Translation, Paul writes why it is so important to speak the truth in love because the goal is “And then our immaturity will end! And we will not be easily shaken by trouble, nor led astray by novel teachings or by the false doctrines of deceivers who teach clever lies.” Listen to it in the NLT Version: “Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won’t be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth.”**

**The aim for speaking the truth in love should come from a heart of compassion and caring towards others in the love of Christ that desires to nurture growth and maturity. Speaking the truth is never about belittling, hurting, or harming someone – the aim is for their benefit, clarity, and maturity. Speaking the truth in love will always lead to maturity for those who have the right heart to speak it and for those who have the right heart and the right ears to hear the truth and yield to its power.**

**Unfortunately, sometimes people just desire to be brutally honest, which in reality is often careless and reckless – and honestly, that kind of approach doesn’t do people much good in leading to growth and maturity. Being brutally honest is not the same as speaking the truth in love. Open and honest truth without compromise that is caring and gracious, “truth spoken in love,” opens the hearts of individuals to grow deeper in Christ and strengthens the body to grow stronger together. Speaking truth is always to help and not to hinder.**

**In Galatians 5:6 (NKJV), Paul writes that faith works by love. Love is the foundation of releasing all the gifts of the Spirit. With that in mind, we must recognize that speaking the truth to one another begins with loving others enough to practice the truth with one another, even when it is painful. It may cut but truth in love will also heal and redeem. The compassions of God within us will compel us to share the truth that will shield, defend, and protect others from the deceptions and lies that are shipwrecking people’s faith is this hour. If we don’t speak the truth, that is not love.**

**Part of the assignment that God has called us to carry in the family of God is speaking the truth, which is also part of preferring others above ourselves, which means serving others with the truth (see Philippians 2:3 NKJV).**

**God desires maturity, development, and growth in the body of Christ. Speaking truth in love is part of healing with open and hard conversations that cut past the surface level and get down to real heart and soul issues. Speaking the truth in love is what will always ultimately build the body and protect our unity. Part of our unity comes through the Lord's pruning process. It is the Word of truth that cuts away the things that must go so that we all mature and grow up into the Head, which is Christ.**

**Remember, the Apostle Paul tells us that, "For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12 NIV).**

**Remember in John chapter 8 when the woman that was caught in the act of adultery and was brought to Jesus? She was perfectly accepted by Jesus in love and with forgiveness. He did not condemn her, but he told her the truth in love that would save and keep her from that moment forward. Jesus instructed her "Go and sin no more." He did not condone her sin; he commanded her to leave it and never go back to it. The truth can hurt, but the truth is what has the power to save.**

**This week as we fast, pray, and draw closer to the Lord, we are going to be freshly encountered by the truth of God's Word. God is love. He is perfect love. Let His love and let His truth penetrate your heart and soul. Let Jesus nourish you and mature you this week as you allow Him to wash you with His Word.**

**In closing, let's go back to Ephesians chapter 4 and review our emphasis and the Lord's passion for us to mature together as one and to speak His truth in love.**

**And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ – 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 4:11–16 NKJV)**

**The Lord bless you, Victory family! And may day one of this fast be enveloped in the tangible presence of the Holy Spirit. Be Blessed**

**Pastor Brian**