

That all of them may be ONE

ONENESS GUIDE #7

TOWARD ONENESS

October 24, 2010

Ephesians 4:14-32

DESTINED FOR UNITY...
WITH GOD
In Jesus Christ Our Lord
WITH EACH OTHER
In The Church
WITH EACH OTHER
In Our Family

Unity: Practical Help Toward Oneness IV

EPHESIANS 4:14-32

SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE

4 ¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.

¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

¹⁷ So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. ¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. ¹⁹ Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.

...that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

- Jesus (John 17:21)



Ephesians 4:14-15, 20-25, 29 - Uncompromising Commitment to Truth & Love

²⁰ You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. ²¹ Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. ²² You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³ to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.

²⁵ Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. ²⁶ “In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷ and do not give the devil a foothold. ²⁸ He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

²⁹ Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³² Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Jesus went to the Cross for both Truth (God's Law satisfied) and Love (God's Love satisfied and unleashed)!

- Tim Keller

Self Study in Oneness for Week Seven

YOUR WORD IS A LAMP TO MY FEET AND A LIGHT TO MY PATH. - PSALM 119:105

Day **Look:** Read Ephesians 4:14-32

1 Ask: 1. In this passage about living as God's children several things are said about how we “speak” to each other? Write down all the phrases that deal with our speech behaviors. How would you summarize them?

2. To what is “speaking the truth in love” (v.15) a healthy alternative (see v.14)?

3. In v.29 we are warned not to let any “unwholesome” (= “rotten”) talk come out of our mouths. How does the rest of this verse help us understand what kind of talk is “rotten” and what kind is good? What is the motivation for “good” talk?

Meditate: What does it mean to “speak the truth?” Can we say words that are true and yet still be deceptive? What does it mean to “speak the truth in love.” How does the “in love” phrase change or deepen our understanding of “speaking the truth?” How do people use “truth” in unloving ways? How might they be “loving” in order to avoid uncomfortable truths?

Pray: *Each day* - Take a hard look at conversations and interactions you have had with people this week. Ask God to forgive you for all the ways you have done less than “speak the truth in love.” Ask Him to help you stop being blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.

Thank God for His Word and ask Him to help you understand and apply it this week.

Today - Thank God for the people in your life who have built you up and benefitted you by the things they have said (even things that were difficult for you to hear).

Day 2 **Look:** Read Ephesians 4:14-32 (esp. vv.14-15, 20-25 & 29)

Ask: According to Tim Keller, pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City, “speaking the truth” involves three important decisions on our part. In light of our passage for this week, what does each of these phrases mean to you?

1. Refusing to Deceive
2. Making and Keeping Promises
3. Maintaining Integrity of our “Selves” (being the same person wherever we are--in public as in private, with Joe as with Mary, at work as at church, etc.)

Meditate: Is yours a world of “speaking the truth in love” or a world of “deception?” Why? Is ours as world of “promise making & promise keeping” or of avoiding commitment and breaking promises? Why? Was Jesus “the same person” wherever He went? Are you? Why/Why not?

Pray: *Today* - Think of a time when you told the truth even though it was hard. Thank God for helping you to do that.

Day 3 **Look:** Read Ephesians 4:14-32 (esp. vv.14-15, 20-25 & 29) & James 3:1-12

Ask: 1. What wisdom does James offer concerning the things we say (our “tongues”)? What are they like? What do these images suggest about the power and importance of our words?

2. How do the words of James help us understand the significance of what Paul says in Ephesians 4 about how we speak and especially how our words can help create or destroy our Oneness with others and with God?

Meditate: Think about and respond to the four quotes on the back page regarding “speaking the truth in love.” How do they help bring out the meaning of the verses we’ve been reading? How do they help us see the importance of “speaking the truth in love” for our unity?

Pray: *Today*- Ask Jesus to help you love Him more, trusting that so doing will make you more able to “speak the truth in love.”

Day 4 **Look:** Read Ephesians 4:14-32 (esp. vv.14-15, 20-25 & 29) & John 18:19-40

Ask: In Jesus’ interactions with the high priest and with Governor Pilate, who spoke the truth in love? Who failed to do so? How did others respond to the truth Jesus spoke? Why?

Meditate: It has been said that Truth without Love is not really Truth, that Love without Truth is not really Love and that without each other both Truth & Love are not themselves. Do you agree with these ideas? In your life how have you seen “Truth & Love” working together?

Pray: *Today* - Think of the important truths that God has revealed to you about Himself, about Jesus, and about yourself? Say “Yes” to each one of these truths as they come to mind, and thank God for each one by name.

Day 5 **Look:** Read Ephesians 4:14-32 (esp. vv.14-15, 20-25 & 29) & Luke 23:32-49

Ask: 1. As Jesus hung on the cross, who spoke the truth in love? Who failed to do so? How is Jesus an enormous example of the proper life commended to us in Ephesians 4?

2. Respond to these quotes from Tim Keller:
“Jesus went to the Cross for both Truth (God’s Law satisfied) and Love (God’s Love satisfied and unleashed)!”

“The Cross of Christ keeps us from both fear and pride--fear of the truth and pride with the truth.”

Meditate: Why is it so difficult for us to tell the truth? Why are we afraid of telling the truth? And then on the other hand, when we have it “on our side” why do we use truth as a weapon against others? How do our fear and our pride work against us and against others and against our “speaking the truth in love?”

Pray: *Today* - Thank Jesus Christ Our Lord that He has always spoken the truth in love for us, and that His goal has always been to build us up according to our needs and to benefit us!



Notes

Ephesians 4:14-32 - In this section the ethical realities of our calling to Christ (“live a life worthy...”) continue to be in view, but there is a shift of focus from cultivating *community unity* to maintaining *personal purity*. Indeed, efforts in each of these directions will benefit the other. Personal purity promotes corporate unity, and our unity with one another helps us toward greater purity as individual followers of Jesus. Many types of behavior are mentioned by Paul in this section, but none is more important than “speaking the truth in love.”

No longer live as the Gentiles do (vv.17-19) - the pagan lifestyle is a spiraling into unsatisfiable desire and darkness that comes the root problem of a heart hardened against God...

Put on the new self (vv.20-24) - Like putting on a new set of clothes, we are called to put

ourselves into lives that are the alternative to deadly and deadening paganism. Such lives demonstrate both a personal acceptance of the truth of Jesus Christ and a dedication to follow hard after God and His righteousness & holiness... **Put off falsehood and speak truthfully** (v.25) - First on Paul’s list of things to do as we “put off the old self” (v.22) and put on the new is to shun “falsehood” (literally, “the lie”) and instead to tell the truth to one another. Why? Because we are part of the same “body.” Can you imagine how your physical body would be in trouble if various parts started sending false signals to each

other? Bending truth breaks fellowship. Lies destroy unity. **Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths** (v.29) - The word for “unwholesome” means “rotten” (like “rotten” fruit). Words that wound others, that tear them down, should not escape our lips even if they are, technically, “true.” What kind of words should be coming from us instead? Those that edify (“build others up”), that are appropriate (“according to their needs”) that bring grace (this is the literal meaning of the word “benefit”) and that please rather than “distress” the Holy Spirit (v.30). **Brawling and slander** (v.31) - These refer to “loud self-assertion or screaming arguments” and “insulting others behind their backs.” They are speech behaviors we must “get rid of” if we are going to “speak the truth in love.”

SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE

Truth as a goal and a guide cannot be dispensed with. The all-doubting skeptics only pretend to do without it. A society, however pluralist, needs some beliefs in common and will not trust them unless they are labeled as truth. - Jacques Barzun

Truthfulness is one more invisible fiber that holds people together in humane community. When we cannot assume that people communicating with us are truthful, we cannot live with them in trust that they will respect our right to freedom to respond to reality. Therefore, when God sounds the trumpet for truthfulness, he summons us to live humanly; he provides a survival guideline for community. - Lewis Smedes

Christians are to stand for both truth and love. Both are necessary. Truth without love becomes harsh. Love without truth becomes weak. - Richard Peace

Jesus is the same for the “truth-party” moralist and the “love-party” relativist. And they both hate him and kill him, because they are both mainly interested in power. - Tim Keller



Small Group Guide

Hearing About Us - 1. Are you a “dress up whenever I can” or a “wear grubbies as often as possible” kind of person? 2. How old were you when you started choosing your own clothes to wear?

Heeding God’s Word - 1. How does Ephesians 4 help us understand what the phrase “speak the truth in love” means? Can you think of real-life examples that show how hard this can be? 2. Why is truthfulness so important to unity among us? 3. As time permits share what you learned and experienced in your personal Bible Study in Oneness this week.

Helping One Another in Prayer to God - Share a time when someone told you a lie (or you told them one) that hurt you and/or divided you from them. Ask someone in your group to pray for God to forgive that person (or you) and help them (or you) “speak the truth in love” today? Share additional prayer requests and pray for one another.