

GRACE AND TRUTH

John 1.1: In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ Λόγος, καὶ ὁ Λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ Λόγος.

John 1.14: The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Some of us are “gracers” by nature: our natural inclination is to love people and to feel _____ for them.

Others of us are “truthers” by nature: we believe people need the truth because it’s the truth that sets us free.

To live like Jesus we must work to exhibit grace and truth together in equal measure.

WHY COMPASSION FOR PEOPLE (GRACE) MATTERS

1. JESUS _____ US TO BE COMPASSIONATE.

Mark 12.31: Love your neighbor as yourself.

Matthew 7.12: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

John 13.35: By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

Francis Schaeffer: There is nothing more ugly than an orthodoxy without understanding or without compassion.

Proclaiming and defending the truth without compassion doesn’t make us faithful disciples – it makes us ugly and hard and mean.

Richard Needham: The man who is brutally honest enjoys the brutality quite as much as the honesty. Possibly more.

2. THE TRUTH SPOKEN WITHOUT LOVE IS A _____.

God doesn’t give us discernment about another person’s mistakes so we can blast him, but so we can _____ him, not so we can stand over him and wag a finger in his face, but so we can stand beside him and put an arm around his shoulder.

3. PEOPLE DON’T _____ HOW MUCH YOU KNOW UNTIL THEY KNOW HOW MUCH YOU CARE.

Who was most open to Jesus when he walked the earth?

The people who had the most to feel _____ about – the ones that Pharisees called “sinners”.

Why did “sinners” listen to Jesus?

Because he spent time with them; when others condemned them, he _____ for them; and when life broke their bodies or their spirits, he healed them.

4. WE ARE FOLLOWERS OF JESUS AND HE WAS MOTIVATED BY COMPASSION.

When Jesus fed the hungry (Matthew 15.32), healed a man with leprosy (Mark 1.40-42), raised a widow’s son from the dead (Luke 7.13-15), and healed the masses (Matthew 14.14), we are told that he did so because he was “moved by compassion.”

Mark 6.34: When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, **he had compassion on them**, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So, he began teaching them many things.

Compassion caused Jesus to _____ to people who needed to hear it.

WHY TRUTH IS ESSENTIAL

1. SPIRITUAL AND EMOTIONAL _____ REQUIRE TRUTH.

John 8.11: Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.”

Luke 12:15: Watch out. Be on guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.

John 5.14: Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, "See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you."

Why did Jesus at times speak truth so bluntly and so straightforwardly?

Because people will do all they can to _____ the truth they need to hear.

Herbert Agar: The truth that makes men free is for the most part the truth which men prefer not to hear.

The cornerstone of genuine spiritual and emotional growth is _____.

The Big Book: Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path. Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program, usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves.

Mark 1.15: The time has come. The Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!

“Repent” means to get honest about where you are and where you’re headed; and where you’re wrong, _____.

There are times when I need someone to speak the truth to me and there are times when I need to speak the truth to someone else.

That’s how we grow and help others to grow.

2. IDEAS HAVE _____.

James Allen: You are today where your thoughts have brought you. You will be tomorrow where your thoughts take you.

Romans 12.1-2a: Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

1. **Positively:** Offer your bodies as living, holy and pleasing sacrifices to God – behave in such a way that you please God.
2. **Negatively:** Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world – don't live the way you see everyone else living.

How is this going to happen?

Be transformed by the renewing of your _____.

Our lives begin to change when our thinking changes because ideas and beliefs have consequences.

Ralph Waldo Emerson: Sow a thought and you reap an action; sow an act and you reap a habit; sow a habit and you reap a character; sow a character and you reap a destiny.

Thoughts that are true and right will lead to lives that are true and right.

Thoughts and beliefs that are false and wrong will lead to lives that are false and wrong.

3. A LIE UNCHALLENGED OFTEN BECOMES ACCEPTED AS _____.

Vladimir Lenin: A lie told often enough becomes the truth.

I Corinthians 5.6: Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough?

Falsehoods about who God is, or what is right, or what it means to live the good life act like parasites – they look for a _____, usually the weak, and the unsuspecting and the innocent.

Then they infect their victims and destroy them from the inside.

John Donne: No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.

Donne: Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.

When a lie is accepted as reality and is woven into the social fabric, all of society is _____ just a bit.

When morality is changed to fit the moment, then it is cheapened for all of us. And if no one speaks the truth, then the bell tolls for all of us because all of us have been diminished.

4. TRUTH IS AN ESSENTIAL WEAPON IN OUR ARSENAL AGAINST _____.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn: Every sentence “scorched the air like gunpowder. How those people have yearned for truth. Oh God, how badly they wanted to hear the truth.”

Os Guinness: (They) saw there were only two ways to bring down the mighty Soviet tyranny. One was to trump Soviet force physically, which was impossible for a tiny handful of dissidents. The other was to counter physical force with moral, staking their stand of the conviction that truth would outweigh lies and the whole machinery of propaganda, deception and terror. They chose the latter, and the unthinkable happened. They won.

Solzhenitsyn: One word of truth outweighs the entire world.

The power of Moral Truth is that it allows us to recognize and condemn evil for what it is, it convicts us that we cannot be neutral toward evil, and it empowers us to make the sacrifices necessary to defeat evil.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn: Let the lie come into the world, even dominate the world, but not through me.