

**Sermon Series – All You Need is Love**  
**Part 7 - “Love Speaks the Truth”**  
*Pastor Dale Campfield - October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2011*

**Intro:**

**Matt 28:19** “Go and make disciples of all nations...”

**ECC Process of Discipleship: Making an IMPACT...To Love...To Grow...To Serve**

We have 3 priorities – To love...which is expressed in our Sunday morning celebration and connection groups. To grow...which is expressed in our Path to Discipleship. To serve...which is expressed in our daily lives in the places we live, work and play; as well as through the local church. The vision of E.C.C. is to gather together weekly for corporate worship, loving God and each other; then to come together in small Connection Groups for discipleship and fellowship, and are regularly involved in reaching out to others with the love, acceptance, and forgiveness of Jesus Christ through community outreach. To Love...To Grow...To Serve!

We recently completed a sermon series in how to be a God Pleaser – by Living a Life of Faith. **Hebrews 11:6** “**Without faith, it is impossible to please God.**” Now what? Now that we know how to live by faith, what are we to do with it? The Bible tells us that if you are a follower of Christ, all that matters is your faith that makes you love other people! That’s what this next sermon series is all about. “All You Need is Love.”

**Sermon Series: “All You Need is Love”**

**Theme Verse: Galatians 5:6** “If you are a follower of Christ Jesus all that matters is your faith that makes you love others.”

**Today’s Sermon Title: Love Speaks the Truth**

Jesus always knew the right thing to do. If you studied His life, you’d find that sometimes Jesus avoided conflict, sometimes He resolved conflict and sometimes Jesus actually created conflict. He provoked it. He induced it. In your life, all three of those responses are sometimes going to be appropriate. Sometimes you need to avoid conflict. Sometimes you need to resolve conflict. But sometimes you need to create conflict.

Most people have a misunderstanding that keeping the peace means avoiding confrontation at all costs. It means swallow my hurts, hide my feelings, repress the truth, ignore problems in my

life, pretend that everything is OK. But the Bible says that only causes more problems. The Bible says that repressing the truth rather than dealing with the truth causes trouble.

### **Proverbs 10:10**

*“Someone who holds back the truth will cause trouble. But the one who openly confronts works for peace.”*

In theory, we all believe that honesty is the best policy. But in practicality, there are a lot of times in life when we don't think honesty is such a good idea. Speaking the truth is not such a positive thought.

For instance, “If I told my father the truth about him, he'd never speak to me again.” “If I told my husband how I really feel about our marriage, he'd blow up.” “If I told my boyfriend what I don't like about him, he'd leave me.” “If I told my wife about my frustration with our love life, she'd accuse me of a one-track mind.” “If I told my boss that what we're doing is unethical, I'd get fired.” “If I confronted my friend and told him he needed counseling, he'd never see me again.”

Love is not always easy. Love is not always fun. Love sometimes takes courage. Love sometimes is tough. And love sometimes includes a confrontation.

We've been in this series of “All We Need is Love” for seven weeks today. This is it. In two weeks we'll begin a series entitled, “Winning the BATTLE.” now, looking back, we've talked about some of the lighter areas of love like Love is kind, Love is patient, Love is respectful of others. But today we're going to another level of love. We're going to graduate-level loving. If you want to move out of grade-school loving and become a graduate-level lover, sometimes in life you're going to have to do what we talk to you about today. It's not an easy thing to talk about. This message should be rated **“For Mature Audiences Only.”** Because it's not easy what we're going to talk about today. *(put this on the slides)*

### **1 Corinthians 13:6**

*“Love rejoices with the truth.”*

### **Ephesians 4:15**

*“Speak the truth in a spirit of love.”*

Today we're going to talk about a skill that almost no one is good at. I'm certainly not good at it. And I doubt of any of you here are really professional in doing this skill. Because it's a skill that we never learn. We're never taught. Nobody sets us down and shows us the steps to doing it effectively.

It is how to confront someone you love in a loving attitude. How do you do that? How do you confront someone you love? If you want to have a better relationship, if you want to help other people, sometimes you have to say tough things that they don't want to hear but they need to hear it. And you, in love, need to share it.

Fortunately we have two great models of this. Jesus and Paul. Paul is a particularly good example because he wrote two books that modeled this for us. We've been studying this 1 Corinthians 13 for 7 weeks. That chapter is right in the middle of two letters that Paul wrote – 1 and 2 Corinthians. Corinth is a city in Greece. Paul had started a church there, and he'd moved on, and he was writing back to friends who had major problems in their lives. These people had really messed up their lives. He wrote two very tough letters. He was brutally frank. Almost every chapter of 1 and 2 Corinthians is about a different problem. He says, you're blowing it here, you need help here, and you need to work on this... He had to deal with one issue after another in brutal honesty, speaking the truth in love. From these two tough letters that Paul wrote, we learn the four keys to speaking the truth in love. Four keys in confronting someone in love. We're going to look at them today.

### 4 KEYS TO CONFRONT SOMEONE YOU LOVE

Before you ever confront anybody in love, you...

#### **Key #1: Check Your Motives**

Check your motivation. You have to make sure you have pure motivation. Why do I need to talk to this person about this issue? Why do I want to confront this person with the truth? Honestly, there are a lot of bad motivations, bad reasons for confronting. You might want to confront somebody just because you're jealous of them. You might want to confront them because you're irritated by them, frustrated by them, annoyed by them, angry. You might want to confront somebody just to get even with them. You might want to point out something wrong in their life to make yourself feel spiritually superior. Or out of envy or many, many other wrong motivations.

One of the biggest motivations that is very common in our lives and we don't recognize it is we often criticize in other people the weakness we hate about ourselves. We do this all the time. If you know your weaknesses and you don't like them in you, you really don't like them in somebody else. So if you tend to be a gossip, you notice other people who gossip, and you really don't like it when they do that. If you tend to be prideful, you can pick out ego in a second. If you tend to be lazy, you notice other lazy people. We tend to criticize in other people the very thing we don't like in ourselves.

That's why Jesus says this in...

#### **Matthew 7:3-5**

*"Why worry about a speck in your friend's eyes when you have a log in your own? First get rid of the log in your own eye and then perhaps you'll see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye."*

Pretty good advice. He said make sure you're not doing the same thing. Before you confront anybody in the spirit of love, make sure you're not doing it yourself.

Make sure you're not guilty of the same thing. You don't have to be perfect to point out something that needs changing in somebody else's life. If that were true, you'd never point anything out, because is anybody perfect? No. If you are perfect, stand up, because I don't know anybody perfect and I'd like to meet you. Nobody's perfect. If you have to say, "My life has to be totally together before I can notice something wrong in a relationship to point it out or notice something wrong in your life and point it out." That's silly. You don't have to be perfect to speak the truth in love. You just have to make sure that you're not guilty of that exact same sin.

But doesn't Jesus say, "*Judge not lest you be judged.*" Yes, He does. And that is probably the most misused verse in the Bible and the most misunderstood verse in the Bible. When Jesus said don't judge, He was not saying ignore problems in a friend's life. He was not saying tolerate sin. He was not saying don't be discerning, set your brain on a shelf and let anything go on around you, never make any observations or corrections about it. He was not saying allow evil to exist. People want to say, "Judge not lest you be judged" means just let anybody do what they want to do. No, that's not at all what He was saying.

When Jesus said, "Don't judge," He was saying don't hypocritically condemn in other people the very thing that you yourself are doing at that moment. That's what He's talking about. He's saying you don't build yourself up by tearing other people down when you're doing the exact same thing. He's not saying don't be discerning and don't point out something that's wrong in a person's life, a relationship or in our society. You start with the correct motivation.

**Question: What is the right motive?**

**Answer: To help, not to hurt.**

The reason you speak the truth in love, you confront with a loving attitude, is to help the person, not to hurt them. You're doing it in love.

We see this in Paul's letter to the Corinthians. In 2 Corinthians 12, he has just brutally been honest with them about things that were out of whack in their lives. He says you need more commitment, this is wrong, it needs to be changed.

**2 Corinthians 12:19**, he says...

*"We tell you this as Christ's servants and everything we do dear friends is for your benefit."*

He says, I'm not saying this just to get a kick out of it. I'm saying it for your benefit.

**Proverbs 27:6**

*"Wounds made by a friend are intended to help."*

Before we can talk about how to confront someone in love, the issue is...

**Question: Who do I confront?**

**Answer: The people you care about.**

The answer is real simple – only people you care about. If you don't care about the person, you don't go around making yourself the policeman of the world or pointing out error in stranger's lives. That's not your job. But if you have proven you love a person, you have a right to point out things that would be for their best. You only do it for people you love. So you only do it with people you want to have a relationship with. If you don't want a relationship, you don't do it. You just avoid it. You don't confront the clerk who's being a jerk, you just avoid him. Or you point out things in people you deeply care about, you see them heading the wrong direction and wasting their life.

If you never confront anyone, you're never going to be close to anyone. **Because closeness only comes through conflict and confrontation.** We talked about this so many times, but let's review it again.

In life, there are two kinds of relationships. On one side you have shallow, superficial relationships. That's what most of the people in the world are – shallow, superficial relationships.

On the other side, you have meaningful, deep, significant, intimate relationships. Soul-to-soul bonding and connection.

How do you get from superficial relationship to intimacy whether in a friendship, a marriage, a partnership, whatever? How do you get from superficial to deep, close, intimate connection with another person?

There's only one way. That is to go down through the **tunnel of truth**. In the tunnel of truth, you deal with all the issues of the relationship you really don't want to deal with. "Let's push that aside... Let's not talk about that... Let's have happy smiles..." You push it down. But in the tunnel of truth, you have chaos, you have conflict and you have confrontation. And it's not fun. When you leave a shallow relationship and say, "We're going to take this relationship to a new level," and you go into that tunnel of truth, it's going to scare you to death. It's dark, it's dank, and it's scary. Sometimes it's painful. Sometimes it can get a little loud. Everything in your body in the middle of the conversation says, "Let's just back out to the shallow side and smooth over it and stay out. It's a whole lot easier. Let's just preserve the status quo, and don't rock the boat."

But if you will stay in that tunnel of truth and deal with those issues and come to some compromise, deal with some issues in a person's life that need to be confronted, you will eventually come up on the other side into genuine intimacy.

You only confront people you want to be close to.

This is the first step. There are three other steps, but this one is foundational. We must hold to pure motives and show that we care before we speak the truth in love.

If you want to move out of grade-school loving and move into graduate-school loving, you're going to have to learn this skill of how to confront issues in your relationship that are keeping

you from being closer. If you want to move from superficial relationships and shallowness to deep, intimate, meaningful relationships, you're going to have to learn how to confront issues that scare you to death. And you have to learn how to do it in love. First you check your motivation. "Am I doing it for the right reason?" How do you know if you're doing it for the right reason? You're doing it for their benefit. You're not doing it for your own. Ask yourself, "If I say this, who's getting the most benefit from it? Me, because I'm venting, I'm unloading, I'm letting go of some steam and pressure, and I'll feel a whole lot better. Or am I saying this for their benefit? If it's for your benefit, it's not in love.

Once you have checked and corrected your motivation, you know you're doing this because you genuinely care about the relationship or genuinely care about your better or good, then you do the second thing....

## **Key #2: Plan Your Presentation**

You think through what you're going to say before you say it.

### **Proverbs 16:23**

*"Intelligent people think before they speak. What they say then is more persuasive."*

If you want to be persuasive in a presentation, you must think through what you're going to say in advance. Paul did this when he had some painful truths to present to people, his friends in Corinth. He says this in...

### **2 Corinthians 2:4**

*"I wrote you out of great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears. Not to grieve you but to let you know the depth of my love for you."*

Paul says, I had some tough things I had to write to you about. But this wasn't impulsive. I didn't just sit down and blast off an e-mail. Have you discovered how dangerous an e-mail can be? You can vent real quickly, hit the button and it's gone. And then you wish you could pull it back.

Paul says, "No, I sat down and thought about this. I agonized. I wept. That's how much I care about you. When I had to say some tough things that you didn't want to hear, but you really need to hear because your life is messed up, I really thought about it. I planned, I grieved, I agonized."

When you plan to have a loving confrontation with your husband, your wife, a son, a daughter, a parent, a friend, a co-worker, a relative who's kind of dysfunctional what you need to do is plan three things.

- You plan **when** you'll say it.

### **Proverbs 25:12**

*"A wise friend's kindly reprimand is like a gold ring slipped on your finger."*

If you're wise, if you're a wise friend, when you talk to your friend about a tough issue, you choose the right timing – a timely reprimand. That's a beautiful thing to see.

When you have a tough issue to deal with in a relationship, have you discovered that timing is everything? Bringing up a tough thing: You don't want to bring it up when they're tired. You don't want to bring it up when they're under pressure. You don't want to bring it up when they're in a hurry. You may be ready to deal with the issue. You may be ready to unload. But they're not ready to hear it.

Columbia University did a study and discovered that more arguments occur right before dinner than any other time of day. That makes sense. We're tired, we're cranky, we have low blood sugar, we're hungry. That's not a good time to bring up a major issue – right before dinner. The point is this: You don't ever drop a bomb. If you're doing this in love, you think about the best timing for them, when they're rested and when they're ready to hear it.

- You plan **what** you'll say.

The second thing you do is to plan what you're going to say.

**Proverbs 25:11**

*“The right word at the right time is like precious gold set in silver.”*

If you're going to plan what you're going to say to this friend, maybe they're just heading in a direction they should not go that way or maybe there's something that's hurting your relationship, [you want to plan two things: introduction and illustrations](#). [You want to plan your introduction and you want to plan your illustrations](#).

Introduction is very important. How you introduce a touchy subject will determine whether it's going to be received well or whether it's going to be rejected. In other words, if you want to talk about how the house needs to be cleaner, you wouldn't start by saying, “The roaches are begging for Raid!” Or “This place is a pigsty.” Or some other sarcastic remark. Sarcasm never, ever, ever works. You choose the right introduction. How am I going to broach this subject?

Then you need to have some good examples ready. For instance... Have your illustrations ready. But you need to choose illustrations that that person understands, not just ones that you particularly like. If you've never read anything about this, a good book is [The Language of Love](#). It talks about seven different kinds of love languages. We all hear things differently. You need to choose the illustrations that are appropriate for the person you're trying to deal with. Plan what you're going to say in advance.

- You plan **how** you'll say it.

Three, you plan how you're going to say it. That's very important.

### **Proverbs 12:18**

*"Thoughtless words can wound as deeply as any sword. Wisely spoken words can heal."*

It's all in the way you say it. If you say it thoughtlessly, it's probably going to hurt them. But if you think it through and think how you're going to say it and when and what you're going to say, then that has the potential to heal them.

I've discovered that there are three things that work for the best response. Three ways to say it if you want the message to get through to the person you love.

#### **A. You say it tactfully.**

##### **Proverbs 16:21**

*"A wise mature person is known for his understanding. The more pleasant his words the more persuasive he is."*

Do you want to be persuasive? Here's the point: I'm never persuasive when I'm abrasive. If you want to get the message across, you don't say it offensively. That will be received defensively. You don't say it rudely, arrogantly, angrily, in frustration, in irritation, in annoyance. You don't say it like that. You say it pleasantly. The more pleasant your words, the more persuasive you'll be. You say it with tact. You let it come out but let it come out in a way that is pleasant and pleasing and positive.

#### **B. Say it lovingly.**

Paul had some brutal truths he had to share with the people at Corinth, his friends. The Bible tells us...

##### **2 Corinthians 6:13**

*"I'm speaking as plainly as I can with great affection."*

He spoke it in a loving way. You never use truth as a club. You never beat people up with the truth. You never hit them over the head with it. You say it in a loving way. And how do you know if you're saying it in a loving way? It's for their benefit, not yours. If you feel good in saying it, you're probably saying it for your own benefit.

By the way, you never confront anonymously. That's unloving. Cards and letters that come to me in the office, I never read them. I never, ever read an anonymous letter or card. Why? Because it's unloving. If a person doesn't have the courage to confront and say who they are, how can you respond to them? You never ever confront anybody anonymously. That's the coward's way out. If you're doing it anonymously, it means you're not doing it in love. You're doing it in anger or irritation.

### **C. Say it gently.**

The third way to say it so it would be received is gently.

You might even lower your voice when you talk about it. Say it gently.

#### **Galatians 6:1**

*“If someone is trapped in sin, you should gently lead that person back to the right path.”  
“A soft answer turns away wrath.”*

Part of that means just being humble. Maybe even qualifying your approach: “I may be totally wrong about this, but...” or “I may be totally off base, I may not have all the facts, I’m certainly not perfect. I’ve got a lot of problems in my life...” You set it up being humble yourself. You’re not coming in as the schoolteacher, the authority, the disciplinarian. You’re saying, “We all need help. I need help in some areas of my life.” Say it in a gentle and humble way, so that it can be received in a humble way.

**There is an equation that goes like this:  
Truth plus Tact plus Timing equals Transformation.**

If you want your marriage transformed, if you want your friendship transformed, if you want a relationship with anybody transformed, if you want to help somebody change, if you want to see that life transformed, it takes more than truth. It takes truth plus tactfulness plus the right timing to create the transformation in that person’s life or in your relationship. And you have to say it in a gentle way.

Paul says to the Corinthians...

#### **1Corinthians 14:14**

*“I’m writing these things not to shame you, but to warn you as my beloved children.”*

Hear the compassion in his voice? He says, “I know I’m having to beat you up a little bit right now. I know I’m having to point out things you don’t want to hear. It’s probably ticking you off. It’s probably making you angry. But I’m not doing this to shame you. I’m doing this because I genuinely care about you. I’m speaking the truth in love.”

You plan your presentation.

The next thing you do is...

#### **Key #3: Give Them Affirmation**

That’s very important in speaking the truth in love. Give them affirmation. **You need to understand that a healthy, strong relationship is always built on two legs.** Two legs help the relationship stand. **Confronting in truth, affirming in love.** If you want to have a healthy

friendship, if you want to have a healthy marriage – or anything else – you must have both of these in the relationship. Confronting in truth and affirming in love. If you only have one, you've got a one-legged relationship and it isn't going to stand. It will fall over at anything. To have a strong marriage, you must be able to confront in truth and affirm in love.

**Illus:** Show this example on the screen of a two legged person...

The Bible says that the truth will set you free. When you go through that tunnel of truth, it does free you to the deeper level relationship. The truth will set you free, but first it will make you miserable. If I were to come to you today and say, "Let's go have some coffee. I want to point out the areas that need changing," you would not be thanking me for it. You'd be going, "Who do you think you are?" You'd be resentful, rebellious, resistant, determined, stubborn. You wouldn't be going, "This is great! Tell me the areas I need to work on! Tell me the areas that are messed up in my life." No. You would be miserable. Because when you share the truth, it first hurts. Sometimes a surgeon has to cut out a cancer, has to hurt, in order to heal.

Because the truth often does hurt, we must speak it in love, and you couch it in affirmations. You put affirmations on either side of it.

### **Proverbs 12:25**

*"A word of encouragement does wonders."*

When you are having a speaking-the-truth-in-love session with somebody, you want to affirm three things:

- A. You want to affirm that you deeply love and care for them.**
- B. You want to affirm that you will pray for them and help them.**
- C. You want to affirm that you believe they can change.**

And you believe that the relationship can be better. You believe that you can be even closer as a result of this confrontation.

You affirm these things. You state your faith. *"A word of encouragement does wonders."* You begin and you end the conversation on a positive note.

Paul did this.

**Paul Began:** *"I always thank God for you..."* 1 Cor 1:4 (NIV)

**Ended:** *"My love to all of you in Christ Jesus"* 1 Cor. 16:24 (NIV)

I wish I had time to take you through both of these books, 1 and 2 Corinthians. In both books, he begins with affirmation and he ends with affirmation. Example: In 1 Corinthians 1:4, Paul begins his letter by saying *"I always thank God for you."* And at the end of the book he says, *"My love to all of you in Christ Jesus."* Between that he's dealing with some very tough truths. So you sandwich the difficult truth between affirmations. Affirmation – tough truth –

affirmation. Paul does this in his books. He begins and ends on a positive note. Exit notes are very important.

**A tip: Never use the word “but” in a confrontation.** The moment you use the word “but,” whatever you say before or after will be totally ignored and invalidated. “I think you’re a great person, but...” “You’ve got a lot going for you, but...” “We’ve got a great marriage, but...” “We’ve been friends a long time, but...” You can say all kinds of compliments before that one word. When you use that word “but,” people tune out.

Instead use the word “and.” “You’re a great person, and I believe you can be even better.” “We’ve got a great marriage/relationship, and I believe there’s some things we need to work on.” “God is using you in a great way, and there’s some areas you might want to think about.” Not “but.” Use the word “and.” And make affirmation.

## **2 Corinthians 7:4**

*“I have great confidence in you, and I have a lot of reasons to be proud of you.”*

He says this right in the middle of some very tough truths, where he’s saying, “This is some stuff you need to work on.” He’s leveling with them. He’s not pulling any punches. But in the middle of it, he says in affirmation, “I have great confidence in you, and I have a lot of reasons to be proud of you.”

If you want to move from grade-school loving to graduate-level loving, if you want to be a master at the art of love, you have to learn in a relationship to be both realistic and optimistic at the same time. Realistic and optimistic. Point out what’s really good and what isn’t so good that needs to be better. You say, “I believe with God’s help you can change... I believe with God’s help we can have a stronger relationship... I believe with God’s help there can be a different closeness and level of intimacy together...”

This issue of speaking the truth in love is still something that you learn from practice. When Butch and I started in our marriage, we had a lot to learn about this. Over the years we’ve gotten a little bit better at speaking the truth in love and at receiving the truth in love. But it’s a skill you learn from practice. You get better at it.

**Sometimes people just aren’t going to listen.** No matter what you do, they’re just not going to listen to you. So you have to maybe bring in some other people. This is called an **intervention**. An intervention is when you get other people, not just strangers off the street, but four or five really close people, people who love that person the most, they deeply love and they’re committed to that person’s growth and success and you get them in a room together and together you speak the truth in love. It’s kind of last-ditch attempt for desperate situations. They won’t listen to one person so you get everybody who’s significant in their life and do an intervention. That helps speak the truth in love.

This, friends, is graduate-level loving. It’s not for the faint of heart. It’s not for the weakling. It’s not for people who subsist in shallow relationships. If there is somebody in your life who is

destroying their life and you need help with an intervention, Eastgate can help you. Come talk to one of our pastoral staff or altar team members and they'll get you started on the right path.

This doesn't happen all the time. This is rare. It's for desperate, last chance, no hope situations where nothing else has worked. You probably are not going to be involved in an intervention maybe once or a couple times in a lifetime. That's pretty rare. But every day all of us have less dramatic opportunities to speak the truth in love on much smaller issues. Whether it's a big problem in the relationship or a little problem whether it's a major issue or it's a minor issue, you're going to have to take this last step if you want to be a graduate-level lover.

#### **Key #4: Risk Their Rejection**

Paul did this in...

#### **2 Corinthians 7:8-11**

*"I know I have distressed you greatly with my letter and although I felt awful at the time I don't feel bad now that I see how it's turned out. The letter upset you but only for a while and you were jarred into turning things around. You let the distress bring you to God. And that's what I was hoping for in the first place when I wrote the letter."*

It's scary to speak the truth in love. The reason why we stuff our emotions and stuff our feelings and we don't speak the truth and hide the issues in our relationship that we're bugged about but we don't want to bring them up is because we fear the possible consequences. Cowardice keeps us from speaking the truth in love. We let fear become greater than our love. The truth is, it's scary to do a speaking-the-truth-in-love to somebody. We don't know how they're going to react. They may get mad. They may walk out. They may misjudge your motivation. They may attack you. You don't know what's going to happen. So it's scary, and you're taking a great risk.

And because we don't want to take that risk, we settle for superficial, shallow relationships.

Listen to this testimony, "My wife and I were pros at this early in our marriage. We repressed the truth, we hid our feelings, we ignored issues, we swept everything under the carpet to try to maintain the status quo of our marriage. We'd sweep it under the carpet and sweep it under the carpet and sweep it under the carpet and that mound under the carpet kept getting bigger and bigger and bigger and bigger until one day it went *kaboom!*"

You must be willing to risk rejection because you love that person. You must be willing to absorb the initial anger because you love that person. It takes enormous courage.

Some of you have not felt loving toward a loved one for weeks or months or maybe even years. You have a parent, a husband or wife, a partner, a brother or sister or some relative, but you don't love them and you don't feel any love toward them. Because you're stuffing your feelings. You're stuffing the truth. You're pushing it down. You're not speaking the truth in love, you're not dealing with it and you are killing the relationship.

Margaret Becker wrote a song called *Honesty*. Part of it goes like this, “Tonight by the glow of the firelight you found the courage to speak your mind and tear down the walls you’ve been hiding behind. So many of us spend so much of our time smoothing things over and pretending they’re fine.”

Who do you need to have an honest conversation with? Who do you need to speak the truth in love to? Somebody in your neighborhood? Somebody in your connection group? Do you see a teen-ager heading down the wrong direction, getting involved in things they have no business getting involved in and you know that their parents aren’t going to do anything about it. Will you? Will you care enough to speak the truth in love? As a friend. What are you pretending isn’t a problem in your relationships? What are you pretending not to know? What is the pink elephant in the center of your living room?

Let me ask this: What excuses have you been giving to procrastinate bringing up the issue that everybody needs to deal with? “I don’t want to make it worse!” Being quiet will make it worse. “I don’t want to be judgmental.” We talked about this. It isn’t about being judgmental. It’s about being loving. “I don’t know what to say. I don’t know the answer.” You don’t have to know the answer. You only have to point out the problem. God will take care of step two. God has not called you to solve everybody’s problem in the whole world. You don’t have to solve everybody’s problem, but you do have to care enough when you see the problem of somebody you love to point it out. That’s called love. Graduate-level loving. You care enough to not be quiet. You speak up.

You say, “It’s not my place. It’s none of my business. Who am I to point that out?” The phrase “It’s none of my business” is one of the most selfish statements ever created. Basically, the person who says, “It’s none of my business,” is saying, “The rest of the world can go to hell in a handbag. I don’t care.” It’s an incredibly selfish statement. Love demands that sometimes you confront. Love demands that sometimes you say, “This isn’t working out. Stop this. Let me help you.” Will you care enough to confront?

I realize that what I’m talking about is for mature audiences only. You can’t handle this unless you’ve got a level of maturity. This is so counter culture. Our culture basically says, “Let everybody do what they want to do and don’t worry about it. It’s no skin off my nose. If they want to mess up their lives, if they want to destroy their marriage, their life, fine.” The real issue is, are you willing to be used by God?

### **Proverbs 24:26**

*“An honest answer is the sign of a true friendship.”*

Real friends speak the truth. They tell their friends what they need to hear not what they’d like to hear. Sometimes love must be tough. Sometimes love hurts. It hurt Jesus to die. That’s the kind of love Jesus had to die for you. But the end results were worth it.

### **Proverbs 28:23**

*“In the end, people appreciate frankness more than flattery.”*

Circle, star, underline “in the end” – because they never appreciate it in the beginning. They don’t. If I were to point out things in your life that needed some correction, you wouldn’t appreciate it. You would be resentful. You’d be rebellious. You’d be stubborn about it. So would I. We never appreciate it at the start. It’s only in the end that we appreciate it.

**Conclusion:**

Who do you need to bring up the issue with? Whoever it is, don’t delay. Don’t wait. Don’t put it off. Don’t procrastinate. Do it now. Don’t wait until next year. Do it now. Why? You don’t know when things are going to change. It could get worse.

By the way, I have learned when somebody says, “It’s no big deal,” it’s already a big deal. If somebody came to me and said, “Dave, this in your life doesn’t look right,” I’d be going, “I don’t even want there to be a hint in my life. Thank you for telling me.” But if somebody says, “This doesn’t look right,” and I say, “It’s no big deal,” it’s already a big deal.

Who do you need to speak the truth in love to? Will you be a graduate-level lover?

Remember: All You Need is Love – God’s Love – so confront those you love.

And when you do: You watch...you wait... you’ll see!