

be coddled so the truth is misunderstood. However, the Christian must discern the most appropriate approach to speak the truth. Combat boots are thick and tough, providing optimum protection for the wearer but they can devastate whatever they walk on! Honesty will be appreciated IF the appropriate “accent” is spoken (Proverbs 24:26; Ephesians 4:25). Truth communicated with love is accented with “kindness.”

Beware of one who comes to tell you “the honest truth” about something that has been bothering him that you did (*Spoiler Alert: Incoming!* This is the old log and speck rerun! Matthew 7:3). Honest communication neither weakens biblical doctrine nor crushes the spirits of others. Speaking the truth is never a license for rudeness, arrogance, and insensitivity.

There is an inescapable fact that some must be dealt with in harsh terms because they refuse to follow God, repudiate biblical doctrine, and live as blasphemers! The Christian is obligated to communicate with these in restricted directives—and ultimately there is to be no communication.

#### Some Concluding Questions

What are your motives in speaking “truth”? (Romans 12:10; Philippians 2:3)

Have you established the correctness of the “truth” you speak?

Has your mind twisted “truth” so it is different than reality?

Are you presenting “truth” from genuine love?

Do you need to verbalize “truth” at this time? (Proverbs 17:27, “One who withholds his words has knowledge, and one who has a cool spirit is a person of understanding”).

***“Speaking the truth in love, we will grow up into all things unto Him who is the Head, that is Christ” (Ephesians 4:15).***

Truth is accented with “kindness.” In the mid-1980s we were introduced to Lake Wobegon. The fictional town was the setting for many of Keillor's stories and novels. Highlighted in the stories were Florian and Myrtle Krebsbach. Married for 47 years their life was predictable. Every Friday night, Myrtle serves the same meal: breaded fish fillets. Every Friday night, Florian takes the first bite, savors it, and says, “Ah, that’s the best you ever did!” He would find something different to compliment, something that he had not previously noticed. He had almost 2,500 servings of breaded fish fillets and with each serving he found something new to compliment! That is kindness!



### Lesson Three: The Heart Speaking Truth Dalraida Church of Christ

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*“What is truth?” (John 18:38)*

Throughout civilization’s chronicles “truth” has been constantly attacked. In our modern culture we constantly hear about “gaslighting.” This term was introduced in the political realm but it is practiced in all aspects of communication. This is pervasive, dangerous and destructive. Gaslighting is a form of emotional abuse where someone manipulates a person into doubting their own sanity, memory, or perception of reality. It is a way to gain control by making the target question their own thoughts and beliefs, causing them to feel confused and dependent on the gaslighter. It is a deliberate attempt to distort reality and control the victim's thinking.

A tragic reality of communication is how people play games with the truth. Truth is contorted for selfish purposes. Politicians deftly craft their positions as “truth” so constituents will continue voting for them—and even when the devilish political lies are exposed, the spokesman for the politician spins the situation to be much less an evil.

A compromised truth erases a nation, corrupts culture, and even destroys a congregation! (Isaiah 59:14). How confident are we in hearing truth today? Do you always tell the truth? Do you believe everyone who tells you something? One study found that most people tell as many as FIFTY lies a day! It is frightening how easily a lie can slip through our lips! One of the most memorable sayings about truthful speaking that I remember: “Always tell the truth because you don’t have to remember so much!”

## Communicating Truth by the Divine Standard

Jesus Christ was truth in the flesh (John 7:46). The primary objective of Christ's mission was to reveal truth to mankind. Truth about God's grace and Judgment; man's sinful choices; man's limitations; man's possibilities.

Jesus Christ lived truth (John 14:6; 1:14). God always communicates with truth (Psalm 19:9; Romans 3:4). A commonsense conclusion—If God is always true and if His Son was truth incarnate, then it is only reasonable that those professing devotion to them should communicate with absolute truth!

### Mis-Communicating Trust in Truth

The Devil's cunning design is to "cover up" lies by a pretended truth. An interesting example in the history of "cover-ups," is seen in Russia's "Potemkin villages." As Russian big wigs and International Delegations visited various locations, the local administration would hang fabric over the structure with fake images of well-kept buildings. In 2013 President Putin was visiting a town in Russia. The administration to disguise the buildings decay and boards inside the buildings to create the illusion of residency. The cars drove past quickly so that all was blurred and the media filmed a thriving town! One, aware of the scheme said, "[But these] facades no longer speak the truth. They are not what is painted on them, they never were and never will be."

In today's culture, very little trust is held that people will be truthful. The majority of the world's population will ask with Pilate, "What is truth?" Confidence in truth has cratered for the politicians, news media, and basically any person or institution. Tragically, even churches have lost trust because it has accepted a fluid truth in doctrinal issues (Isaiah 59:15).

Our culture has devolved from the times when absolute assurance was held "because so-and-so gave me his word." Today's degenerate culture is now passed to our children and grandchildren. Are they being taught to "honor their word" even if it is going to cost them financially?

Who are the "truth-tellers" with integrity in their speech and life? How can absolute truth be communicated so we will emulate God and Christ in telling the truth? If I wear the name of Christ I should also be "full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). What will your associates and business partners say about your truthfulness?

### Communicating Truth Verbally

Christ directs His followers to govern their communication by a simple principle (Matthew 5:33-37). Christ rebukes the "oaths" of His day. The need for an oath presumes that the person is known for two kinds of statements—one backed by an oath is true and the other, not backed by an oath is not

necessarily true! The one making an oath backed statement is saying, "Ordinarily you can't take me at my word, but this time it is different!"

The Lord's Disciples do not need external guarantees of integrity. Your personal integrity is what your word stands upon! Do not play word games that in reality are truth games. Speak truthfully at ALL times!

### Communicating A Compromised Truth Five Ways

Satan's native language—a deliberate lie (John 8:44). The lie is for Satan while the truth is for God. Lying is the most flagrant violation of communication's integrity. To lie is to make a deliberate statement intended to deceive. It uses words to take the hearer away from the truth. When we lie, we allow ourselves to become Satan's co-worker and evil fills our hearts (Acts 5:3). Why do people lie?

- ◆ *Pride*—it seeks to create a false impression in others that we are important. Pride seeks to cover up selfishness or mistakes.
- ◆ *Laziness*—to avoid responsibility
- ◆ *Defense*—there is an automatic defensiveness that prods lying. "I didn't mean to hurt your feelings." "I didn't know that bothered you."
- ◆ *Fear*—we are afraid to accept responsibility for our words or actions.

Lies begin a destructive chain reaction. Damage compounds as one lie leads to another (Proverbs 12:22).

The "white" lie—most agree that a "bold-faced lie" is immoral. It is a really "BIG" sin. But Christians have embraced a curious species of untruth that is christened "the little white lie." The white lie is sanctioned socially. It is supposedly "victimless." At what point does the "fib or white lie" become a full-fledged lie? Eventually our characters will be discredited, and we move closer to the darkness of the Evil one.

The empty promises—The Christian is NOT to be wishy-washy and undependable. The Christian is known as one whose word is his unbreakable bond (2 Corinthians 1:17). Good intentions will commit to something but are quickly redirected. Good words and promises are made but no follow-through occur. **The undependable are untruthful!** (Matthew 12:36-7)

Flattery—This communication uses excessive, untrue, insincere compliments or attention (Psalm 12:3; 2 Peter 2:3; Jeremiah 6:14; 5:31; Proverbs 29:5). Paul's communication is our pattern for avoiding flattery (1 Thessalonians 2:4-5; Galatians 4:16)

Honesty in combat boots—The Christian has no choice but to be honest in speaking the truth. None are to be exempt from hearing the truth; none are to