



Small Group Study:
Speaking Truth in the Moment

6:30 – 8:00 pm

We live in a world that is hostile to the authoritative Source of absolute truth. Our cultural tolerance tempts us to be silent, or at least to soften the Message. But Jesus' obedience to The Father was neither silent nor soft. We are called to speak truth to family, friends, co-workers, & strangers! Join us as we look at four effective ways each of us can and should be speaking to change our own lives and the lives of those around us.

An eight-week study

#1: A Private Conversation



#2: A Public Witness



#3: A Positive Influence



#4: A Priestly Responsibility



PLANT His Words deeply into your life → **P**ray, **L**isten, **A**pply and **N**urture **T**ruth in your mind and heart continually.

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Study #1:

A Private Conversation

Prepare your heart: Setting the stage for this week's lesson

"What is truth?" Pilate asked. John 18:38a

"Then the Lord called Samuel. Samuel answered, 'Here I am.'

And he ran to Eli and said 'Here I am; you called me.'

But Eli said, 'I did not call; go back and lie down.' So he went and lay down.

Again the Lord called, 'Samuel!'

And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, 'Here I am; you called me.'

'My son,' Eli said, 'I did not call; go back and lie down.'

Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord: The word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him.

The Lord called Samuel a third time, and Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, 'Here I am; you called me.'

Then Eli realized that the Lord was calling the boy. So Eli told Samuel, 'Go and lie down, and if He calls you, say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.' So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

The Lord came and stood there, calling as at the other times, 'Samuel! Samuel!'

Then Samuel said, 'Speak, for Your servant is listening.'" 1 Samuel 3: 4-10

When He [God] speaks, we are to hear with the profoundest respect. What He says is more important than any other words we may hear. Indeed, His words judge all the affairs of human beings (John 12:48). The truth of His words then must be our most fundamental conviction, our most basic commitment. We may also describe the commitment as our most ultimate presupposition, for we bring that commitment into all our thought, seeking to bring all our ideas in conformity to it. That presupposition is therefore our ultimate criterion of truth. We measure and evaluate all other sources of knowledge by it. We bring every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor 10:5). John Frame, "Presuppositional Apologetics", p 209

"Apply your heart to instruction and your ears to words of knowledge." Proverbs 23:12

"Sanctify them by the truth; Your Word is truth." John 17:17

"Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?' declares the Lord. 'This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at My Word.'" Isaiah 66:2

"I am unworthy – how can I reply to you? I put my hand over my mouth.'" Job 40:4

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Study #1: A Private Conversation

The Bible is not a text book to be debated; it is a fountain for spiritual thirst, food for the soul, a revelation of God, a living power and a two-edged sword. But none of that changes this fact: apart from the discipline of reading and hearing the words, the Bible is as powerless as paper.

1. Truth isn't **relative**.

Read: 2 Timothy 3:16; John 14:6; Hebrews 6:18

The Source of truth is clear. Truth is **absolute**. God's words are **authoritative**.

God Himself wrote down everything He wants us to know about Him (for now) and yes, everything we NEED to know.

Read Isaiah 66:2

What does this tell us about God? What does this say about how we should come before Him?

2. We have a COMPLETE revelation of Him. However, my understanding is **progressive**.

How does my understanding of God progress? Am I growing in the truth?

Read: Romans 12:2; Proverbs 23:12

My **mind** must be **transformed** to the mind of **Christ**. How does it happen?

3. The **quality** of my spiritual life is directly related to the health of my **thoughts**. What occupies my mind?

Read: Philippians 4:8

Is what I am reading, watching, listening to and thinking about complementing God's truth in my life....or are they at odds with it?

What are the practical implications of these passages to my life?

- Which TV programs compromise our response to God's Word? Specifically WHY or in WHAT way do they mitigate the truth? Are you being a prude for turning them off, or are you just being **obedient** to bringing every thought captive to Christ?
 - Are you tempted to watch, say or do something you know is contrary to the truth? The 'power of His resurrection' provides us the power to kill the temptation, obey Him and opt to do truth instead. But only if we are willing to **sacrifice that moment** to Him (our **living sacrifice**) long enough for Him to provide the power to obey.
4. **KEY MESSAGE:** God speaks **Truth** into the moments of your life if you have **repentance** in your *heart and* ears to hear. He speaks truth into you as you prayerfully read Scripture and obey what it says! Are you diligently and fearfully reading His very words? As one of His chosen, they are meant **for you**. Are you having a moment by moment private and personal conversation with the King of Kings, your Savior?
5. Finally: Is this a dialogue? What do you say in this conversation?
Psalm 46:10 "Be still and know that I am God"
Job 40:4 "I put my hand over my mouth".

PRAY: For a renewed commitment to revere Him, obey Him, seek Him, to grow in Him, to obtain His mind, His worldview; for a deeper desire to know Him, understand His ways and obey Him.

Next week: A Public Witness. I need to be serious about personally growing in the knowledge of Him, in the renewal of my mind as the old person dies and the new person grows and is sanctified. However, God also calls us to play an active role in growing His kingdom. He calls us to share the Good News. For any number of reasons, we may not feel comfortable or equipped to share with others. But there really aren't any excuses. Jesus tells us the comforting, yet convicting, truth about evangelization.

See you next week!

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Study #2: A Public Witness

Prepare your heart: Setting the stage for this week's lesson

I need to be serious about personally growing in the knowledge of Him, in the renewal of my mind as the old person dies and the new person grows and is sanctified. However, God also calls us to play an active role in growing His kingdom. He calls us to share the Good News. For any number of reasons, we may not feel comfortable or equipped to share with others, but there really aren't any excuses.

Participation in the kingdom is decided by the conformity of my life to the will of God through "*obedience that comes from faith*" [ref Romans 1:5]

"...Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?" Luke 13:23

Evangelism is not soul-winning.

Evangelism is simply announcing, declaring, or preaching the Good News, which is the person of Christ Himself. The Gospel is never expressed apart from Him. The God Message and the God-Man are always connected. The Gospel is always the person of Christ, and His message. To proclaim Christ through my words and my actions is evangelism.

To proclaim 'truth' whatever the topic under discussion, is evangelism. To verbally state that homosexuality is sin during a commercial for 'Modern Family' is evangelism. There is no distinction between the 'living truth' (Christ) and the 'written truth' (Scripture).

"But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect...." 1Peter 3:15

"How, then, can they call on the One they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the One of Whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'" Romans 10:14-15

"...I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke, encourage –with great patience and careful instruction." 2 Timothy 4:1b-2

What is a reliable gauge for true faith? - "A Humble, broken-hearted love for God." Jonathan Edwards, A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections, (Philadelphia: G. Goodman, 1821), p266. True Christianity is always obvious. There is no such thing as an anonymous Christian.

Because love for God always manifests itself in obedience to Christ, evangelism is one of the quickest ways to check the pulse of our love. We must never neglect the unbelievers whom God has sovereignly chosen to place in our lives.

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Study #2: A Public Witness

Evangelism is not just one thing that Christians are called to do; it is the primary task. All other tasks are intermediate. The wonder of the Gospel is that it is God's doing. Our job is not to impart life, only to implant the seed. We must be committed to sowing the seeds! Once we have done that, we can rest in the sovereign power of God.

1. As Christians, what are we called to do with the truth in our hearts?

Read 2 Timothy 4:1-2; Romans 10:14-17; Acts 1:8

What stops you from sharing?

Only when believers are **obedient** to the command to **evangelize** will they truly be **imitators** of God's **heart** for the world.

2. *Read Mark 4: 3-8, 14-20, 26-29*

What adjectives are used to describe the farmer's style or skill?

Does the farmer understand the science behind the growing process? How selective is the farmer in where he sows?

- o The evangelist (that's us!) scatters the seed—that is, explains the Gospel to people—and some of those people believe and receive life. The **same seed** goes out to all. Only **some** take root.

Read 1 Thess 1:4-5, 1 Peter 1:23

It is the **Spirit of God** who raises souls from death to life, not the methods or techniques of the **messenger**.

God is in control of what **grows** and what doesn't. But the **seeds** must be **sown**!

Read 1 Corinthians 3:6

Paul **planted**, Apollos **watered**, but God made it **grow**.

Sowing the seed is **speaking** truth, **doing** truth, **living** truth.

3. The farmer doesn't try to **alter** the seed to enhance its ability to grow in various kinds of soil. The **seed** isn't a variable in the story. The **soil** is.

We must **NEVER tamper** with the message just to make it more appealing...softer...easier....or "seeker friendly". 2 John 9-11

2 Cor 7:8-10a *"Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it – I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while—yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended.... Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation..."*

4. **KEY MESSAGE:** Our job is to **speak truth** plainly to the world. Be His **public witness**. We don't know who the father will draw. **"Heart Work"** is God's domain, but we are commanded to faithfully share the Person of Christ. Then let the Word do its job. He alone convicts (John 16:8-15), regenerates (John 3:3-8), and justifies (Gal 5:22-23). His Word will always either **save** or **judge**. So evangelize humbly, obediently, personally and confidently. Evangelize with humility, out of a **loving obedience** to God.

PRAY: For confidence to speak the plain truth to the people that God has purposed to walk in my path this week!

Next week : A Positive Influence. Although it's up to God to save, He does call on us to be an effective influence in this world. We are to model, speak, and reflect the light of Truth in order to be effective instruments of delivering His message. Everything we do and say, and how we do it, is evangelism. God uses **doing** truth just the same as **speaking** truth to save the lost. As believers, we must guard the challenge to be effectual doers of the Word and not merely hearers (James 1:22-26). It's not enough to clinically know the facts of the Gospel. We must strive for Christlike humility. The consistent example of a changed life is compelling and influential proof of salvation - that's what being salt and light means, as we'll see next week.

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