



Week Four

For a reminder on how to best use this Discussion Guide, see the bottom of this document.

Opening Prayers

God, thanks for giving us this time to grow in friendship and faith. As we wrap up this series on the power of our words, help us to grow into the kind of people who choose to use their words to bring life. Help us to hear what you have for each of us today.

Talk It Over

During today's talk we addressed the idea that blind spots are a normal human experience. None of us have a full and accurate scope of the whole picture or reality. Tell us about an incident, accident, or mistake you were a part of that easily could've been avoided had details been noticed more clearly in advance.

Read Ephesians 4:14-15 (New Living Translation)

While words spoken can bring death or life, we also need to remember that words unspoken can create a lot of damage too. We all thrive best when we have the right, mature people speaking honestly to us in love at the right moments. This isn't an excuse to simply say what we want to whomever we want, but rather to note, that our words spoken in love at the right time can bring health, healing, and life. Below are three tools we can use to help us speak the truth in love:

1. **Be filled with God's Words.** *This means our heart is aligned with God and our heart is genuinely for the other person. We are talking from a place of genuine love, not from our own brokenness. According to the Bible, if we cannot get our heart right we are disqualified to speak in love.*
 - Describe what it might look like to truly be for someone else.
 - In your own life, how can you tell when you are truly for someone else? Give us an example of someone you know you are for.
2. **It's to be done mutually.** *This is not about one person telling someone else how to live. We are never past correction; we must all be willing to receive correction if we want to give correction. A genuine posture of humility and respect are key components to speaking truth in love.*
 - Describe someone in your life who does a good job at seeing and treating others with mutual respect.

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- How difficult or easy is it for you to see others as equal to you? Is this sometimes harder for you to do? Tell us about what you see in yourself.
3. **It's done with grace and truth.** *Grace and truth need one another in order to reflect love. They aren't meant to be opposing forces. God is love and he offers us grace and truth. Grace and truth help us to grow into our best, freest, most true self. They both make us better. They both help us experience love.*
- Look at your closest relationships. Do you generally lean towards grace or truth? Why do you think that is the case?
 - Do you have any relationships that contain a beautiful balance of grace and truth? Tell us about that relationship.

Read Ezekiel 33:6

Speaking the truth in love can be awkward and vulnerable. Speaking the truth in love also requires hard work on the speaker's part; to speak truth in love we must earnestly lean into God for direction and get brutally honest about our own internal motives and narratives. Prior to trying to speak the truth in love, here are three questions to ask ourselves to ensure our heart is in the right place:

1. **Is my motive to help or hurt?** *The only way and reason we speak truth in love is because we desire to help and to bring good to others.*
 2. **What will my tone communicate?** *How we speak is as important as what we say. Our words and tone must be loving to do this well. Loving words spoken from a non-loving communicator don't get the job done.*
 3. **Am I building bridges or walls?** *This is not about us saying what needs to be said so we can get it off our chest. Truly speaking the truth in love will foster deeper respect, love, connection, honesty, and intimacy in a relationship.*
- When was the last time you spoke truth in love to someone you care about? If that situation went well, tell us about how you prepared your heart before hand. If that situation didn't go well, tell us what you could have done better?
 - Can you recall a time you chose to not speak truth in love to someone and later regretted it? Tell us about what you chose to do and what you wish you had done.

Read 2 Corinthians 7:8-9

- When is the last time someone spoke truth in love to you? If that situation didn't go well, tell us what went wrong. If that situation did go well, tell us about how the situation stung in moment and what good came in the long run.
- Who in your life has permission to speak the truth in love to you this season? Why are these people on your list?
- Are there any other people you might need to give permission to speak truth in love into your life? Consider giving these people some form of permission this week.

Closing Prayer

God, thank you for creating this space for us today. Help us to be the kind of people who are open to hearing truth from others. And help us to be the kind of people who know when and how to speak truth in love to others we care about. We want our words to bring life, connection, and healing. Amen.

How To Use this Discussion Guide

The guide is meant to serve you and your group as you intentionally create space to grow in friendship and faith. Use the guide as a tool to help your unique group connect in friendship and help you grow your faith.

With that in mind, consider reviewing the guide before your group to see if some content or question might resonate more or less with your group. Don't feel pressure to read all the content or to hit all the questions. The guide is not meant to be something you power through for the sake of completing. Pick to focus on what you think will help foster friendship and faith the most.

Spend sometime praying about your group, preparing your heart, and asking God for wisdom and guidance regarding your specific group.