

(2) How To Know When The Truth Is NOT Being Spoken in Love

Reminder:

Was it James who coined the expression: “Speaking out of both sides of your mouth” or was it someone else? (James 3:7-12) 1 Corinthians 13:1-7, still the ultimate standard of reference for defining love!

- **When the speaking is marked by rivalry (1 Corinthians 3:3-7)**
 - >> Christianity is not a competition but a cooperative effort in doing God’s will
 - >> the standard for resolving disagreements must always be the Word of God

- **When the speaking is characterized by rudeness (Ephesians 4:29-31)**
 - >> there is a reason why trash talk is called trash talk
 - >> it belongs in the garbage can and not in the pulpit

- **When the speaking is blatantly self-centered (1 Corinthians 10:31-33)**
 - >> the goal of proclaiming God’s truth: make God and not yourself, look good
 - >> why? So that people might be drawn to God and not you

- **When the speaking manifests legalistic narrow-mindedness (1 Corinthians 10:28-30)**
 - >> news alert #1: every Christian possesses a conscience that interacts w/Holy Spirit
 - >> news alert #2: due to that interaction, they are a work in progress, just like you!
 - >> news alert #3: primary form of bullying in evangelical circles (1 Cor. 10:29b)

- **When the speaking is judgmentally mean-spirited (Romans 14:1-12)**
 - >> the theme of Romans 14:1-12 is that of mutual acceptance in those “grey areas”
 - >> mutual acceptance is practiced when mutual accountability is understood
 - >> if it isn’t a sin and it isn’t a crime; leave it alone, let it go! mind your own business!

Conclusion:

Unfortunately, Ephesians 4:15 is practiced far less often within the body of Christ than it should be. Even more tragic, “speaking truth in love” has become a rare occurrence when the Church engages a world which it is seeking to convert to its Savior (1 Corinthians 5:9-13). In the event that you have to deal with a person that fits the five factors listed above, why not lovingly confront them with the following question: **“Did you know, are you even remotely aware, that you violate Ephesians 4:15 on a regular basis? Don’t you think it’s time to change your ways and begin speaking God’s truth, with an attitude of love?”**