



November 12, 2018

When our children were young, we would record their growth by placing a mark on the wall just above their heads. Once they stepped away from the wall, the first thing they did was to compare the difference between the previous mark and the current one. Then they would exclaim, “Look how much I’ve grown!” Growing meant that they could do more, and that was a thrill for them and for me as a parent. Growth is an exciting aspect of life. God, the Author of life and our heavenly Father, wants us to grow not only physically, but spiritually. In His Word He has given us a means by which we can grow up in Christ.

Ephesians 4:15:

But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.

By speaking the truth in love, we can grow up into Christ and become more like him. The words “may grow up” in Ephesians 4:15 are translated from a Greek word that means to increase and grow from the vitality inside, from stage to stage, without being compelled or forced to grow. Our growth and development in Christ happens this way, just like a child’s growth.

Once we are born again and reconciled to God, we have the privilege and responsibility to help reconcile others to Him by speaking the truth in love to them.

II Corinthians 5:18-20:

And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.

To reconcile means to bring back together that which has been separated. People get reconnected, or reconciled, when they are born again of God's spirit.

Born-again believers reach out with God's Word as ambassadors for Christ to encourage others to believe so they too can be born again and reconciled to God. An ambassador is an authorized representative or messenger. God reconciled us to Himself by way of Jesus Christ. And when He did, He gave us the ministry of reconciliation. An ambassador for Christ has been authorized by God to represent Jesus Christ, to function in his stead, to do the work that he would do if he were here on earth—manifesting his love and compassion and bringing people to the knowledge of the truth that reconciles them to God when they believe.

Colossians 2:6:

As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.

As we speak the truth in love, we can grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ—we become more like him.

II Corinthians 5:17:

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

What are some indicators of growth as a result of speaking the truth in love?

- We can expect it to get easier every time we do it. Our confidence increases because each time we speak the truth in love, we learn more about how to do it. Our ability to speak God's Word to others grows.
- We can expect our recognition and trust that God truly does work in us (Philippians 2:13) to increase. When we put ourselves in a position to need God's power, He is faithful to give it to us. Our trust in God grows.
- We can expect to seek more opportunities to speak the truth in love. It becomes our lifestyle. Our desire to speak grows.

I recently had a conversation with someone who just completed our ministry's Disciples of the Way Outreach Program. The first thing that struck me was how much this individual had grown as a result of spending six months reaching out full time to reconcile others to God. What differences did I see in my friend? He manifested more confidence, more trust in God, and greater joy than I had ever seen in him before. He told me that before being a Way Disciple, he was apprehensive about speaking the Word to people he didn't know. But that had all changed. Now, speaking the truth in love is one of his favorite things to do. Look at how much he's grown!

God has given us a path by which we can grow up in Christ. When we decide to speak the truth in love, we get to experience growth that happens from the inside, stage to stage, without compulsion, just like that of a growing child. We'll recognize that growth when it gets easier and easier to speak the Word to others, when we trust even greater that God will work in us to be successful in speaking His Word, and when it becomes our habit to speak the Word. We have been reconciled back to our heavenly Father. Now it's our turn—it's our privilege and responsibility to reconcile others to God by speaking the truth in love. Then we can each say, "Look how much I've grown!"

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