

HOLDING TO TRUTH IN LOVE

Ephesians 4:15

But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,

It is very significant that truth and love are put together...Love and truth balance each other. Love makes people hot, whereas truth makes them cold. Love makes people foolish, whereas truth makes them clear. A person who merely has love may be hot yet foolish, and a person who merely has truth may be clear yet cold. We do not need to be cold or foolish; we need to be both burning and sober. Love can be compared to the fire in the boiler of a steam locomotive, which is the driving force of the train. Truth can be compared to the tracks by which the train is regulated. Combustion in the boiler generates the power that drives the train forward, and tracks keep the train safely on its path. This shows how Christians pursue the Lord and grow. When we have love within as our driving force and truth without as our regulating track, our pursuit of the Lord and our growth in life will be normal and free of problems.

At times fervent believers are not balanced by the truth; they go astray with their love and even run into trouble. This can be compared to starting the boiler in a train and setting the train in motion without laying the tracks. This train is bound to have an accident. Hence, we must have love, and we must have the truth; we must hold to truth in love if we are to continue growing in the Lord in order for our service to cause the genuine building up of the Body of Christ.

To hold to truth in love is to hold the truth, whether concerning God or man, with fervent love, not coldly. This is a great principle. Suppose a young brother wants to marry an unbelieving woman. As those who are learning to serve in the church, how should we help him? We cannot be cold and condemn him, saying, "Do not become dissimilarly yoked with an unbeliever; believers cannot marry unbelievers. If you do, you will violate the Scriptures and offend the Lord." If we merely measure and condemn him with the truth, using the truth to deal with him, we are not holding to truth in love. We might think that we are helping the brother with the truth, but because of our lack of love, we will not obtain good results; rather, we will stumble those whom we are trying to help.

If we want to help ourselves and others, we must have love every time we hold to truth. In order to help this young brother, we need not necessarily say, "Do not become dissimilarly yoked with an unbeliever," but we must have a fervent love for him. We must love this young brother and sense that the Lord has entrusted him into our care. Hence, we want him to be graced and to grow up into the Head, Christ, in this matter. Such a realization is necessary. Then we might not say much concerning how we feel, but we can lead him to pray and bring this matter to the Lord so that he can touch the Lord's will. Then he will see the truth and receive help. In doing this, we will not only hold to truth, but we will hold to truth in love.

Another group of believers may care only for love but neglect the truth. This is the case with many sisters, who are often more loving than brothers but do not stand as firmly in the truth. Take the matter of marriage as an example. An older sister may be concerned for the marriage of a young sister and want to introduce an unbelieving friend to her. The older sister may consider that the young unbeliever has a good temper, comes from a good family, has a good education, and hence, in every respect is better than the brothers. The older sister may say, "I have met a young man who is truly gentle and in every respect is better than the young brothers among us. Out of my concern and love for this young sister, I feel that I should introduce this young man to her." Although this older sister has a loving heart, she does not have the truth. The brothers often have the truth but are cold and lack a loving heart, but the sisters often are burning with love but unclear concerning the truth. The overemphasis of either truth or love will cause a loss to the Body of Christ.

Therefore, we must hold to truth in love. The brothers cannot have truth without love when they render help to others, and the sisters cannot have love without truth when they render help to others. We must always hold to truth in love. If we apply this principle to all things, we will daily grow in life, and those under our care will receive genuine help. (*Service for the building up of the church*, Chap. 1, pp. 1-3)