

5 | BUILDING BLOCK 5 – TRUTH SETS FREE



Building blocks for Good Relationships | Truth sets Free

Speaking the truth in love has become the most important building block for me to maintain good relationships. I have often felt like a Jacob. And so I was. Jacob wanted the blessing and favor of God. But his great weakness was cheating. Jacob even made his father Isaac believe he was Esau's older brother. Jacob had dressed up as Esau, so his father would believe he was Esau. How can you deceive someone who is blind?

I recognized this attitude from Jacob. Secretly, I was someone very different from what I wanted the outside world to believe. The inside was lonely. That put me in a fake world where I was comforting myself through my teenage lusts.

These sparked thoughts of suicide. I wanted to live according to God's laws, but the opposite happened. I had learned to be someone else on the outside. Nobody knew what was inside me.

This affected all the relationships I had. With my girlfriend, later my wife, my friends, later my brothers of faith and also at my various workplaces. Everything had to look beautiful.

One day Jesus began to teach me that the knowing the truth would set me free. The first thought was that if anyone knew who I was and what I was doing, no one would love me anymore. The opposite turned out to be true.

Truth sets free

John 8:31-35 (You will know the truth and the truth sets you free).

In the discussion that arises, the real problem becomes clear. The Jews thought they were free because they were a descendant of Abraham. Many of us also think that if we are born Christians, Buddhists, or Muslims, we are free. Jesus here says that anyone who sins is a slave to sin. This has nothing to do with our origins. Anyone who is a slave to a particular sin will experience its effect on his or her relationships. Having a good relationship with someone means that you feel safe with this person, that you feel at home. This is disturbed by sin. For example, if you lie to someone, something that you cannot see will happen between you and that person. A wall that you can't see is built. It hinders a good and healthy relationship. Jesus also gives a very clear answer on how to become free. Namely by the truth.

Let's go back to Jacob. As soon as he betrayed his father, Esau became enraged with his brother. Jacob got scared and fled. He lived in another country for more than 20 years. Even when he returned at God's urging, Jacob was still afraid of his brother. This is an example for many of us who do not want to live in the truth; you are going to flee, at the expense of family or friendly relationships.

Who is the truth and what does it mean?

John 14: 6 (Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father except through him)

Jesus makes it clear that no one can come back to the Father except by accepting Jesus as the way to the Father. By believing that Jesus is the truth, you start to walk to the Father. If you allow Him, it will bring life back to your relationships. First in your relationship with your Heavenly Father, but then with others as well. The truth which Jesus is also reveals to us our sins. However, Jesus came to forgive our sins. This is grace. You can't earn it; you don't have to make it up by being really nice to Him. It's grace and nothing else. That is the truth. The debt has been paid and you are given another chance. You were a slave to sin, bound to it, now you are free.

The truth changes your life

John 4:15-18

The woman wants the living water that Jesus is talking about. Jesus asks about her husband. The woman confesses that she is now living with someone and that she has had five other husbands. She becomes free by confessing the truth, but more importantly by recognizing that Jesus is the Messiah. Messiah means: He is my King.

John 21:15-18

Peter denied Jesus. Peter walks among the others with a great sense of guilt and darkness in his heart. Perhaps others knew what Peter had done. But above all, how did Jesus feel about him?

Jesus chose not to speak openly about the situation that had arisen, but to restore Peter three times by asking a question. Jesus knew all that had happened, yet he did not condemn Peter, but gave a truth that set him free. Jesus made the point. Namely if Peter loved him! The focus was to love Jesus and not to deny Jesus. Recovery instead of rejection.

Jac 5:14-16

Here we see the same principles. If anyone is sick, call the elders, their prayer of faith heals the sickness and his sin will be forgiven. The emphasis here is on faith.

It then says that we must confess our sin to each other and then pray for healing and healing will follow. The meaning of the word sin (pa'raptoma) is: a deviation from the truth and sincerity.

James tells us how important it is to correct that deviation from the truth by confessing the truth to one another.

Eph 4:25

(put away the lie and speak the truth)

Paul speaks to Christians about the importance of a new life. One part of that is getting rid of the lie and speaking the truth. In the next chapter, Paul speaks about walking the way of love. It is these two words that are linked together: love and truth.

John 1:17

(For the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ)

Truth can be built up, but you can also break it down. Moses came with the law, many rules. The result was that there was also judgment with the rules. The law was given so that we would know our sins. This knowing of sin does not solve anything, it leads to death.

Jesus came with truth and grace. This is the big difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament. In the OT people tried to keep the rules to get close to God. However, this turned out not to work at all. In the NT we see that Jesus shows that God the Father wants to be with us and communicate with us. He wants us to trust Him and live with Him every day. Sometimes He says things we don't like, but they are true nonetheless.

Example

For several months I had prayed to God that I might see my heart as God saw it. I will not soon forget the afternoon I was doing my job in a room. Jesus was there when I came in. I felt it. He spoke very kindly to me and spoke about my heart. He showed me that my heart was full of self-righteousness. I remember very well that I did not understand, but after those words my heart was filled with grace. I was so happy, so free.

The same day I tried to find out what self-righteousness meant. I soon learned that I was trying to earn God's love by living according to the law. Tears ran down my face, tears of deep remorse. Still, it felt very light inside. Love and grace conquered guilt and rejection. That day my life with God began to change. The truth was harsh, but the love was greater.

Another moment was between me and my wife when we talked about our daughter's school. I really wanted her to go to a strict Christian school, which our daughter absolutely did not want. All her friends went to a different school. I stubbornly held on to my point of view. My wife spoke the truth very lovingly one night. She told me I had to learn to let go of my daughter into God's hand and not hold onto herself by controlling her life. I was the one who always talked about trusting God. Now my wife showed my real motive. I believed in strict rules more than in a relationship with my Heavenly Father. My wife was right, even though it was hard for me to admit.



GROUP EXERCISE:

Discuss with each other what barriers exist between you and a friend that you need to open up about.

Discuss how you deal with the truth. For example, when should you be quiet and when should you speak?

Study the appendix that contains scriptures from the Gospel of John about the truth

