

King James Bible Study Correspondence Course

An Outreach of Highway Evangelistic Ministries
5311 Windridge lane ~ Lockhart, Florida 32810 ~ USA

Fruit of the Spirit
Lesson 4B
Speaking the Truth in Love

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Next consider James 1:23-24 ***For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.***

There are people walking about who obviously do not recall what they saw when they looked in the mirror last. They should display shamefacedness and sobriety for their own self-respect. When I look in the mirror, I can see my flesh, my skin, hair, eyes, teeth, etc. I can observe my posture, check for flaws and blemishes, but all that I can behold is that which is natural. There is my face in that glass. What I cannot see is what manner of man I am. The mirror does not show me what is in my heart, the thoughts inside my mind, or the motives and desires that move me in one direction or another.

Some people read the Bible or hear preaching from the Bible, and they learn how to wear their hair, what type of clothing is appropriate, or how to conduct themselves so as to appear righteous unto men. The babe in Christ must learn to govern the outer man by the force of scripture, preaching, fellowship, and the will. But this is not the end of the matter. The mature Christian will learn to live so that the natural man has but a distant, whispering voice holding virtually no power to influence or control. The English language has a lot of peculiarities. (I suppose they all do.) Flesh spelled backwards is h-self. There is certainly a lot of self in the flesh and vice versa.

Knowledge and love must increase together. Remember what we read in 2 Peter 1:8 about unfruitful knowledge, where there is an increase in knowledge without a corresponding increase in love.

Our study of the Bible and our acquisition of more Biblical facts can make us worse instead of better. Increased knowledge without Spirit-controlled growth can make one a critical, proud, fault-finding, self-righteous, rude, stubborn person that is a plague to a church or family. Growing in knowledge without growing in grace will increase your ability to sin because you will be able to find enough verses about grace, forgiveness, and pardon that will help your flesh justify its sin or make light of the harm it does to others.

If knowledge increases without a corresponding increase in love, one can become a monster.

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Look what the Lord says in Philippians 1:9 ***And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment;*** The request is not that just our knowledge will abound but our knowledge laced with judgment each will find equal abundance of love to keep that knowledge under Holy Spirit control.

A bitter man can shout submission verses at his wife. A stubborn woman may hurl character verses at her husband. Church members have some passage or another to support any untoward action in which they might engage. We need more love with more knowledge, not either without the other, both together.

No one would deny that Jesus spoke truth. Nor can any deny that His words were not motivated entirely by love. When He reigns within, we will not just say what is factual and correct but will speak with a heartfelt concern for the person to whom we are speaking. Some of God's people feel they must address every fault, failure, or shortcoming they see in another. Their justification for such a critical spirit is that they must speak the truth. The Holy Spirit would compel one to also speak words of kindness, encouragement, support, and hope. To the lost, to our families, to the wayward, to our friends, let us speak truth based on knowledge but never without love controlling.

One of the first verses anyone learns is that Jesus Christ is the truth (John 14:6). Every saved person knows that lying is no longer acceptable. It may still happen from time to time, owing to the flesh-spirit conflict, but born-again people know instantly that they are supposed to tell the truth.

Think of how many saved people can attend, instruct, rebuke, and work but can never say to their co-laborer, "I love you." One answers, "I am a man, and that is not a manly thing." So, Jesus is not manly? You had better be careful. The man Christ Jesus loved. The man Christ Jesus told me that He loves me. The reason I can work, preach, pray, fellowship, distribute tracts with you but cannot look you in the eye and say, "I love you," is that I have grown in knowledge but not in love.

Let me give you an example, Matthew 4:18-20 ***And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.*** Peter takes a lot of criticism for many of his words and deeds, but the man left all that he had to follow Jesus. For that he deserves some credit. He had enough courage to be the first to ask Jesus if he could walk on the sea, mentioned in Matthew 14:25, 28-29, ***And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come.*** Peter

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was one of the only two people in the history of the world who have walked on water.

Peter left all to follow Jesus. He walked on the water. He had the right profession before men. Then, after following and serving God manifest in the flesh for over three years, we read, ***Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.*** (Mark 10:28). He had not gone back. He had not burned out. He had not turned aside to the world. He is still sold out to Jesus Christ, following Him all the way, Peter had one little problem: he was still trusting in himself, not the Lord.

During the last few hours before His crucifixion we read Mark 14:27-29 ***And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee. But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I.*** What would seem a bold testimony of deep devotion is actually an accusation that Jesus is not speaking the truth. While Peter seems to be expressing his full surrender to Jesus, he is also declaring that he considers himself a cut above the other disciples at that table. He denied Jesus three times before that night was over. This man thought, "I can handle it. I can do it. You can count on me. I'm selling out. I've walked on water. I've left everything. I am a better man than you think I am." He had to find out that desire, determination, and knowledge were not sufficient to win victory over the flesh. The next time we look at Peter, he is weeping bitterly.

He thought he was something special, as compared to other men. After three and one-half years of being something, he came to the cold hard reality that he was nothing. Now that he knows he is just a nothing, he thinks it is all over, back to the fishing boat. In his mind he had failed the test, and God would never use him.

Then in John 21 the Lord met up with His disciples. They were out fishing and did not catch a thing. Jesus told them where to throw the net, and the net filled to the breaking point. John said, "It is the Lord." They came to shore and enjoyed the breakfast Jesus had made for them. In John 21:15 ***So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.*** Why had Peter failed so miserably, with all that he knew? He lacked love. When he was standing around that fire, after having been rebuked for drawing his sword, filled with the fear and anguish of seeing his Master carried away, all he had were raw emotions. He had been overcome by self-will.

Now the resurrected Jesus sat with him by a different fire. The Lord would use him in a few short weeks to preach to multitudes. Jesus would build His church on Peter's profession of faith. Peter had to understand that

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without love he would fail every time. ***He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.***

When Peter said, ***Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*** (Matthew 16:16), Jesus did not say, "Feed my lambs." When Peter walked on the water, Jesus did not say, "Now feed my lambs." When Peter said, "We have left all and followed you," Jesus did not say, "Feed my lambs." But when Peter could look Jesus in the eye and from his heart say, "I love you," then Jesus could say, "Peter, now I can use you." John 21:16-17 ***He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because...*** If you have a double dose of love, you can not only teach a Sunday school class, God can let you preach to the big folks. If you can handle lambs with love, then God can let you try the sheep. The little ones are easier to love than the grown ones, for sure. ***he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.*** Christian, lovest thou me? Feed my sheep

Peter was grieved, that is emotion, Peter was grieved... He is insulted to be interrogated in this matter. "Come on, Lord, 3 times? Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." Peter now had something that could override his feelings and emotions. He is being reminded of his failures. He is being questioned about the condition of his heart. He is being shown a measure of distrust or disrespect. Yet he answers graciously. Love has taken him where knowledge did not. With that settled, ***Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.***

Look what happens down the road. In Galatians 2 Paul rebuked Peter for failing to stand firmly against a Judaizing influence in the church. Peter took it with grace and went right on serving God. He referred to the Apostle Paul as his beloved brother (2 Peter 3:15). He did not get in the flesh. He did not defend himself. He did not boast of all he had done for Christ while Paul was Saul and persecuting the saints.

Peter was a prominent man. He was greatly used at Jerusalem. It hurts to be rebuked publicly before your brethren. But Peter got something when he went out and wept bitterly. He found out he needed more than Peter serving Jesus. He needed Jesus controlling Peter.

The Holy Ghost wants to reproduce God's love in us. That love will supersede our feelings and our emotions. It will keep our flesh under control. The only way to mortify the deeds of the flesh is to set your affections on things above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God (Colossians 3:1-2).

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We can preach to sheep. We can scold sheep. We can lead sheep. Only when God's love rules in our hearts can we feed His sheep.

Notes

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Name _____

Note: (*) An asterisk indicates you must include scripture with your answers.

1. What was Peter's problem?
2. What can we not see when we look in the mirror?
3. What was Peter implying when he told Jesus that he would never deny Him?
4. How do we know that Peter grew up in the Lord?
5. What is the real reason that we will not tell a brother in the Lord that we love him?
6. Why is it important to always look your best for Jesus? (the answer is not in the lesson)
7. When you approach a lost person with a Gospel tract, what is his/her first impression? Explain how you can improve for their sakes.
8. What happens to the Christian that is all knowledge and no love?

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9. Explain 2 Peter 1:8 about unfruitful knowledge.
10. When learning, what will keep the Holy Spirit in control of our lives? *
11. Explain about failure using Philippians 3:13-14.
12. What was Peter's future after he denied the Lord 3 times? Explain in detail. *
13. What character trait will you need to be effective in preaching to a group of people, lost or saved?

True/false

- I can serve the Lord looking like a slob if I feel like it.
- I love people; they know it. I joke around with them. I do not need to tell them I love them too.
- The Holy Spirit wants to produce God's love in us.



Scripture memorization

James 1:23-24; Philippians 1:9; 2 Timothy 4:2

Write out these verses on the back on this page: (must be in KJV)

any questions?