

## **Love, Know, Speak, Do** **Ephesians 4:11-16**

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This evening we begin a series titled “helping with troubles”. The series will help equip the saints in our church to be able to disciple and come alongside people with issues of life. It’s not a series on in-depth biblical counseling, but its aim is for all believers at the Chapel to be able to know how to open the Bible on a given set of common issues that many of us face.

Christians have a unique opportunity to come along side other believers who are hurting and suffering in their walk with Christ. In his well-known book, Paul David Tripp calls this being an instrument in the redeemer’s hands.

Sometimes we want to help but we simply don’t know how. That’s what this summer series is all about. Sometimes we just need some instruction ourselves on how to best love one another, and how we can help each other to change.

The things that we will look at this summer are intensely Christ centered because we know that in him are hidden “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Colossians 2:3).

I was flying to Los Angeles on United and had to change planes in Chicago. My plane was late arriving, and I had only 10 minutes to make my connection. In Chicago there are 2 separate terminals. You can walk or take a shuttle bus. I had just missed the shuttle and the next one wasn’t due to arrive for 5 minutes. I wouldn’t make it.

So...I grabbed my briefcase and my coat, and my bag and I started running thru the terminal to the other side. And as I began running, I began noticing something. I was flying by other people who were walking fast. I was speeding by people who were even running. In fact, I made it to the terminal before the shuttle I had just missed!

Where did I get this speed?

Where did I get this ability with all the baggage I was carrying?

And I wasn’t even sweating that much?

How in the world could I achieve it?

I’ll tell you how! Because when I started running, underneath me was a moving sidewalk. I was running, but underneath me, the sidewalk was moving too.

That’s one way God helps in our service to others as we focus on love shown for his name. He’s your moving sidewalk. So that when you come along side others in need:

- You will find that the love of Christ compels you
- That the Holy Spirit will take you to where you need to serve
- The justice of the Father gets you there when you need to be there

So, let us love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and for the sake of his name let us serve one another!

This evening we will begin with what it takes to help others change through the difficult circumstances of life.

Over the course of this evening and following weeks will be answering three basic questions:

1. Why do people do the things they do?
2. How does lasting change take place?
3. And how can I come alongside my brother or sister and help them understand the Bible in a way that the Holy Spirit will use to bring change in their lives.

All of us are both people in need of help and people who have been positioned by God to provide his help to other people. We are all either going into a problem, in the midst of a problem, or coming out of a problem. And so many of us are struggling with issues of life and need helpers and friends who have a firm understanding of the process of biblical change and how God's word applies.

During the summer we may use the word helper, advocate, or counselor interchangeably. What do we mean by these terms?

A helper/counselor/advocate is a person who is trusted by another, needing help, to have the love, wisdom, and answers to provide that help.

We all come across situations in our own lives where we don't know what to say or do. We are perplexed. We may be suffering. Others around us may be suffering. It is in these moments that we are confronted with the reality that God has not given us a neat system of instructions that we can always figure out on our own. Our hope for ourselves and for others can only be found in the work of Jesus Christ. And so both the advocate and the person in need must depend on the wisdom of God and the power of the Holy Spirit for change.

Our culture tells us that if we need counsel to change that we require the help of a professional trained in those areas. But the Bible has a much fuller and much more hopeful perspective and understanding of human beings. The Bible teaches that personal transformation takes place as our hearts are changed and our minds are renewed by the Holy Spirit. Paul Tripp writes, "... the two instruments that the Holy Spirit uses are the word of God and the people of God."

Turn to Ephesians 4:11-16.

This is God's goal for all believers. God has given us one another to help us grow to spiritual maturity. God intends to do something amazingly transformational in us when we:

- Allow the Holy Spirit to apply God's word to our hearts and when we
- Allow God's people to encourage, guide, support, pray for, and challenge us in biblical ways.

So, how does this all work? Was the focus of biblical transformation?

Turn to Luke 6:43-46

Let's unpack Jesus' illustration.

In his example, **fruit equals behavior**. The behavior in this passage is speaking. Christ says something very powerful about our words. Our words are literally the heart overflowing. People don't make us say what we say. Situations don't make us say what we say. Our words are shaped and controlled by our hearts. Fruit is what the tree produces, just as our behavior is what our hearts produce. You and I recognize a tree by the kind of fruit it produces.

The second part of the word picture is equally important but not as obvious. In Christ's example, **the roots of the tree equal the heart**. This is what is underground. It is not as clearly seen or easily understood. The power of Jesus metaphor is in the connection it makes between the root and the fruit. Jesus is saying that the tree has the kind of fruit it does because of the kind of roots it has. The application to us is this: we speak and act the way we do because of what is in our hearts.

So, what does this have to do with us as we come alongside one another? It's simple. **Change that does not reach the heart rarely lasts; it is temporary and cosmetic because it is only a change of behavior and not a change of heart**. Therefore, as we come alongside and help one another heart change is always our goal.

Most people want things to change, but they seldom have their hearts in view. They want to change in their circumstances, a change in another person, or a change in their emotions. They think that if things would change, they would be much better. But the result, is seldom more than temporary and superficial. Our goal is to help people into a deeper, fuller view of change. We know that lasting change always takes place to the pathway of the heart. The heart is our target. **Heart change is our goal**.

Although we cannot see a person's heart, the Bible will expose it to us. The Bible by its very nature is heart revealing. For that reason, Scripture must be our central tool in personal growth and ministry. It alone can expose and analyze where change needs to take place in our hearts. Remember, heart change must take place if we really want changes in our behavior to last.

How can we help people's hearts change? We believe that to be an instrument in someone's life there are four things we need to do. These things are known as: Love, Know, Speak, and Do.

Look at the diagram on the screen. Don't think of this as learning a four-step process. The four circles represent four aspects of a personal ministry relationship, for ways to get involved in someone's life. His God gives you ministry opportunities, you will be doing all four things simultaneously.

Let's look at these it a bit more detail.

## **Love.**

The love circle represents the importance of our relationship to one another. Biblical change often takes place in the context of a relationship. God has a relationship with us. He has committed himself to being our God, and he has taken us as his people. And so, in the context of that relationship, God accomplishes his work of changing us. It doesn't take long for a Christian to understand that this lifelong process of change must take place through our relationship with Christ. And so, we mimic that in our relationship to one another. We must learn to build significant relationships with other believers in our Fellowship.

What does this look like in action?

1. **We enter into a person's world.** Hebrews chapter 2:10-18 reminds us that Jesus himself entered into our world to become our brother, and because he did that, he can understand what we go through in our lives. We do that by looking for entry gates into the particular person's experience of their problem.
2. **We try and listen well.** What are our friends saying? What are their emotions? What are they saying about themselves? What are they saying about God?
3. **We incarnate the love of Christ.** Listen to Colossians 3:12-17. True godly love for people will understand and feel the needs, hurts, hardships and difficult experiences of others. If what the people you are working with does not affect you, you should repent of being hardhearted and uncompassionate.
4. **Tell and show the mighty, life changing love and grace of God in your own life.** For many people, your own changed and growing life will become the strongest message and evidence of God's power and thus they will gain hope.

## **Know.**

The Know circle has to do with really getting acquainted with the people around us. Many people that sit around us every Sunday are people we really don't know. Even people in our flocks are probably strangers to us more than we would like to admit. We might know some facts about them like their children's names, whether they have pets, where they work, and some things they like or dislike, but we really don't know the person well.

Knowing a person really means knowing their heart. And so when I say I'm getting to know you better, I'm not gaining more intimate knowledge of your likes and dislikes. I'm getting to know more about your beliefs and goals, your hopes and dreams, your values and desires. When I really get to know you, I'll be able to almost predict what you will think and how you'll feel in given circumstances. It's really developing a heart to heart relationship.

What does this look like in action?

1. Ask questions and listen to their answers. Don't commit "assumicide". Learn to ask good questions. **THE CHART ON THE SCREEN IS HELPFUL<sup>1</sup>**
2. You are not on a sin hunt. –You want to really understand the person, especially the heart. Insightful people are those who ask the right questions. What is God doing and why don't they see it?
3. Help your friend know themselves biblically. They may be asking, "Why isn't God working in my life?", when the biblical question is, "What is God trying to accomplish in my life?"

**Speak.**

Speaking involves bringing God's Word to bear on your friend in their situation and trusting that the Holy Spirit will use that word for change in their heart. This is very difficult for most of us because we are in essence saying, "What does God want this person to see that he or she is not seeing? How can I help him see it?"

When we read the Gospels, we see many examples of Jesus helping people see the truth. He uses stories and questions to break through their spiritual blindness and help them see the reality of who they were and what he could do for them.

Paul reminds the Ephesians in chapter 4 that we always speak the truth in love. It means we help our friends see their life clearly. Because in order for heart change to take place, a person must see himself accurately in the mirror of God's word.

What does this look like in action?

1. Our speech to them is always rooted in the gospel. Too often our confrontation when we speak is based on our agendas, our anger, and our impatience with our friend.
2. Our speech to them always seeks to comfort.
3. Our speech to them always seeks to call them to repentance.
4. Our speech to them is always aimed at bringing them to accept responsibility before God. Where does my friend need to admit responsibility and make confession before God and others?
5. Our speech to them is always an instrument to help them see life from God's perspective.

**Do.**

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*Certain questions uncover particular kinds of information*

Question	Data
What?	Basic info
How?	Mechanics/way done
What for?	Purpose/motivation
When/how often?	Themes/pattern
When?	Order of events

\*\*\*\* What do I not know about what I know? \*\*\*

The final circle is the “Do” circle. Doing it, is helping our friend apply the insights that God has given him or her and do something about it. Unlike what our psychologized world tells us, “The more you know” is not sufficient. Insight alone is not change; it is the beginning of change.

God calls us not to simply be hearers of the word but to be doers of the word as well. And so, we help others put into action the things that God is showing them they need to change.

What does this look like in action?

1. Remember, our goal here is to apply change to the everyday situations and relationships in their life.
2. Help them clarify the differences between their responsibility and God’s responsibility. Help them see that while, many things are important to them, many of those things are not their responsibility or within their ability to accomplish. Those are to be left in the hands of God. On the other hand, there are things God has called them to do that they cannot give to anyone else.
3. Help give them guidance using scriptural directives.
4. Give them encouragement.
5. Give them oversight.
6. Give them practical resources and help that will assist them in making this change.
7. Instill in them the confidence that their identity is in Christ.

Look at 2 Peter 1:3-11 with me.

Why are we ineffective and unproductive? Because we don’t possess the qualities in verses 3-7  
Why don’t we have these qualities? Because we are blind, nearsighted, and forgetful.

### **REFLECT AND RESPOND:**

The issue is the heart; we aim for repentance and change there first.

People you are ministering to will not discuss the issues that will open their hearts unless they trust you.

If they trust you ( L o v e ), they will answer your questions ( K n o w ), be confronted with God’s truth ( S p e a k ) and respond with godly actions ( D o )

