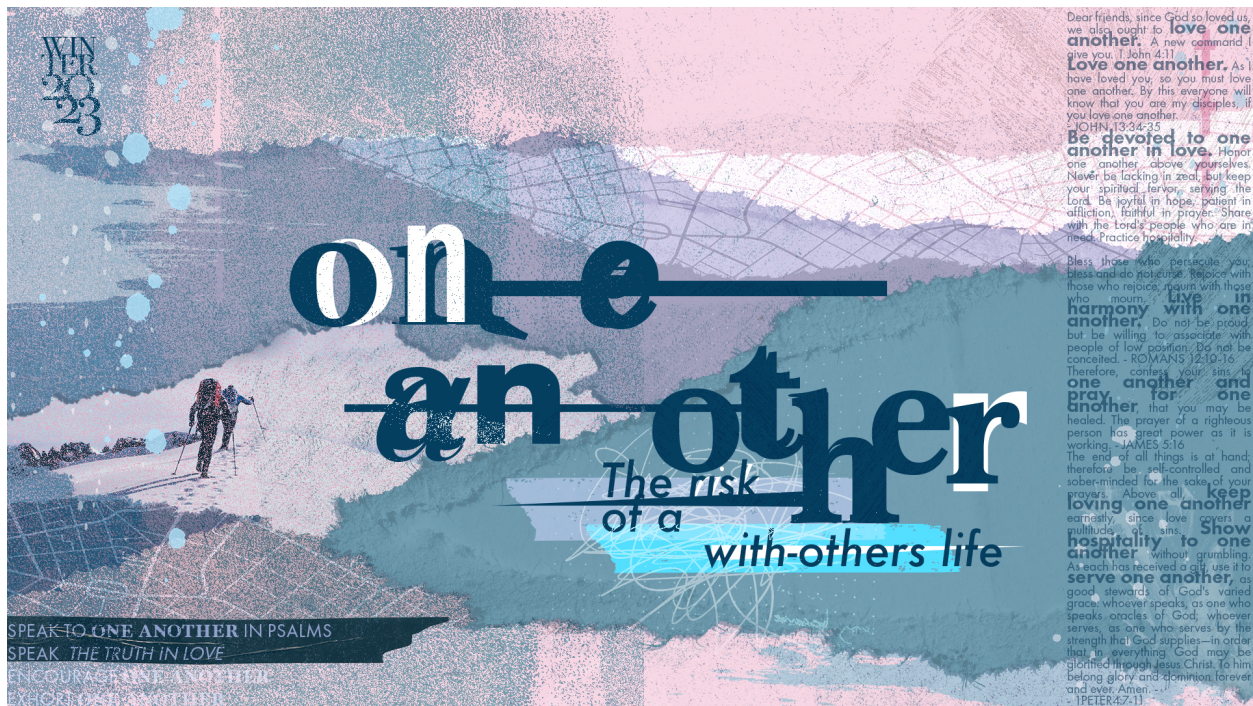




Thanks for checking out our sermon-based Study Guides! If you've never used our Study Guides before, you'll find some basic instructions beginning at the bottom of page 2.

NEW this year: These study guides will be written by thoughtful and experienced Life Group Leaders. As always, use these guides as a head-start in your own preparation as the needs and culture is different from each group. And of course, please continue to give us feedback.

LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE
for the Sermon given on January 22, 2023
by Pastor Bryan Wilkerson
"TALK TO ME" - Colossians 3:16-17, Ephesians 4-5



Question: How do we speak to each other in ways that are life-giving and faith-strengthening?

Bottom Line: We build each other up when we speak **truth, love, and faith** into each other's lives.

Welcome to our third message of our new series, **One Another: The Risk of a With-Others Life**. So far in our series we have discussed the journey from loneliness to love and from apathy to empathy. Today we will explore the journey from **tearing down** to **building up**. We will see what the Bible has to say about speaking to one another in ways that are LIFE-giving and FAITH-strengthening. We want to learn and practice better ways of communicating TO and WITH one another –in the church, at home, in the workplace and online.

Let's begin in prayer before we begin reading and discussing our text.

Main Scripture Readings:

Colossians 3:16-17

¹⁶ Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. ¹⁷ *And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

Ephesians 4:14-15

¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ *Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.*

Ephesians 4:29

²⁹ Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, *but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.*

Ephesians 5:19-20

¹⁹ speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, ²⁰ always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Group Discussion Questions

1. Based on the letters the Apostle Paul wrote, Pastor Bryan shared that the church in Colossae and the church in Ephesus also had problems with toxic communication. Pastor Bryan points out that Paul warns against two kinds of harmful speech: deceitful scheming and unwholesome talk.

Consider specific examples of “deceitful scheming” or “unwholesome talk” that you have read/heard about over the past week. Then discuss the impact this information has on yourself and your relationships with others: Was this information helpful and life-giving? Or hurtful and destructive?

2. Pastor Bryan preached that “we build each other up when we speak truth, love, and faith into each other’s lives.” Words can make someone a better person, “a healthier, happier person, a more Christ-like person.”

Take a moment to reflect how someone’s words impacted your life for the better, building you up to become the person you are today. What is one takeaway you learned from that positive interaction?

3. Pastor Bryan preached that Paul offers us three simple ways of speaking into other’s lives that build us up individually and collectively:
 1. **Worship:** singing to one another when we gather (Eph 5:18)
 2. **Teaching:** offering God’s wisdom to one another (Col 3:16)
 3. **Testimony:** looking for opportunity to talk about what God has done for you and how real Christ is to you (Col 3:16-17)

Pick one of the three to focus on for the week. Share with your group to keep each other accountable.

4. How can Ephesians 4:29 help you to give constructive feedback to your child, spouse, employees, colleagues, or your brothers and sisters in Christ?
5. Is God prompting you to have a conversation with someone you care about this week? How would you incorporate truth, love and faith into your message?
6. Would anyone like to share a story of God’s work in their life?

Take Home Message:

By thinking about what we are going to say before we say it, and choosing our words carefully, we have the power to make someone a better person, a healthier, happier, more Christ-like person.

Homework Until Next Time:

Ask the members of your LG to complete the Discipleship Planning Tool and the GPS Assessment Tool before your next meeting. Here is some fresh language:

We’re all on a journey; where is yours taking you?

The beauty of the way of Jesus is that it’s not just good for us, it’s good for the world around us. But that kind of beautiful life doesn’t come from just hearing the words of Jesus; it comes from putting them into practice. Three kinds of practice, actually:

- The with-God life of our personal habits and routines;
- The with-others life of our genuine and life-changing relationships; and
- The for-the-world life that makes an impact beyond our immediate homes and families, into our communities and beyond.

Growing as disciples of Jesus will make a Kingdom difference in our world and a transformative difference in our lives as believers and as a group. And these resources are helpful in identifying the next steps for our journeys.

Let's Pray

Support for the Leader (These Teaching Points are provided to help the group leader make connections from the message to their group with both insights from the Biblical text and also opportunities in the life of our church).

Teaching Points:

- 3 guidelines for helpful speech:
 - **Truth:** Speaking the truth
 - Straight talk (reality, facts, data)
 - **Love:** Speaking the truth in love
 - When we want to say hard things in a kind way consider:
 - Timing
 - Word choice
 - Using “I” rather than “you” statements
 - Tone of voice
 - **Faith:** Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus
- 3 ways of speaking into each other's lives that build us up, individually and collectively (the church):
 - **Worship:** *“speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit”* (Ephesians 5:18)
 - **Teaching:** *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another”* (Ephesians 3:16)
 - **Testimony:** *“And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”* (Colossians 3:16-17)
- If you are not already part of a group, January is a great time to try one of our Short Term groups or even jump into an ongoing Life Group. Go to our group finder at www.grace.org/groups

For Further Biblical Study:

Colossians 3:8

⁸ But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.

Titus 3:2

² to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and always to be gentle toward everyone.

James 1:19-20

¹⁹ My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, ²⁰ because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.

1Thessalonians 5:11

To answer before listening—
that is folly and shame.

Proverbs 18:2

Fools find no pleasure in understanding
but delight in airing their own opinions.

Ephesians 4:15

¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.

Colossians 4:6

⁶ Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Proverbs 16:24

Gracious words are a honeycomb,
sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.

Proverbs 18:21

The tongue has the power of life and death,
and those who love it will eat its fruit.

How to Use These Study Guides:

- Consider sending out the Scripture passage to your group members ahead of time.
- Begin each meeting with a short time of checking in with one another.
- You may want to begin the discussion by reading the Scripture passage together out loud, or by summarizing the passage if everyone has read it ahead of time.
- Don't feel like you need to discuss every question included in the Study Guide. Pick one or two to start with, and see how the conversation flows.
- If your group meets over Zoom:
 - You may need to do more overt facilitating over Zoom than you would in person. Feel free to call on people to invite them to share.
 - Try to be sensitive to attention spans over Zoom—keep the meetings shorter than they would be in person.
- Be sure to set aside time for sharing prayer requests and praying together.

Group Leader Support: Please reach out to your Campus Pastor or your Coach if you have any questions about leading your group or concerns about your group dynamic. If you have questions about or feedback on the Study Guides, please reach out to Pastor Tim or Grace Lee from the Group Life team.