

## Love and Truth - "The Inseparable Combination"

Written by K B Napier

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Some claim love is paramount. Others claim truth must prevail. Those who concentrate only on love tend to reject, denigrate, or make light of truth, calling it 'Pharisaical' or 'legalistic'. Those who concentrate on truth look upon the others as experiential but ignorant. In reality, both love and truth are inseparable and are always combined in the mind of God. One without the other is useless, and will send adherents off on an unscriptural tangent.

Sadly, those who claim love is all (such as charismatics), tend to be very sharp and harsh towards people like us – Reformed Christians who know the value of truth. And many Reformed folks tend to be very cold towards those who do not understand truth. This is because both groups operate without one half of the equation. Yet, Jesus said He was the *"way, the truth, and the life"*... and we all know 'God is love'! If we look properly, we will find many other correlates of 'love' and 'truth'.

***"My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."* (1 John 3:18)**

*"Grace be with you, mercy, (and) peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love."* (2 John 1:3)

*"The elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth."* (3 John 1:1)

Notice – love must be 'in truth'... not truth 'in love'! Truth is the chief here, not love. Truth is the objective fact of God's word. If truth does not exist, all the love in the world will not make up for it or be a substitute. Indeed, whilst love is part of truth, it is truth that is featured prominently in scripture. This is exemplified in the text: *"If ye love me, keep my commandments"* (John 14:15); very clearly love is qualified by keeping the commandments: the doctrine or new law of Christ. That is – the truth!

We can put it this way: Love depends on truth, but truth does not depend on love. Love should be a result of truth, not leading it by the nose. Love is contained within truth and is not a separate element.

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In Exodus 18:21, there was a call for “men of truth”, NOT ‘men of love’. This is because truth is objective, and love ON ITS OWN is subjective. Throughout the Old Testament it is truth and not love that prevails. Deuteronomy 32:14 no doubt acknowledges God as love, but the text does not mention it: *“He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.”* Love is a sub-section of truth, so it is part of genuine faith. To separate it from truth is to lessen its force and importance.

1 Samuel 12:24, *“Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you.”* No mention of love, because love is subject to truth and should be expected of a man who fears God.

Psalm 25:5, *“Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.”* This was written by David. Why do you think he does not mention love, when we KNOW he loved the Lord? He did not mention it because it was a forgone conclusion! That is why he did not need to talk about it. When modern day Christians separate love from truth, it is for a tainted reason – it means they prefer love to truth, and think truth gets in the way of what they wish to do... which is based on heresy. As David later said, God’s lovingkindness is always before him, contained within His truth (Psalm 40:11). There was no need to mention the obvious!

When the Word was made flesh, the Son was “full of grace and truth”. Jesus became man because of God’s love for the elect. Love did not come about because of truth, as a separate entity. And it is truth that sets us free, not love (John 8:32). Many men today, professing to proclaim the ‘love’ of God, dismiss truth, as if it were inferior. This is not what I see in scripture, where love is always allied to truth as a secondary, but vital, component. When the Comforter was sent, He was described as the “Spirit of truth”; love was not mentioned. Indeed, in the New Testament, ‘love’ is not spoken of much, *unless* it is linked to truth. Which is why, in 1 Corinthians 13:6, we are urged to “rejoice in the truth”, and not in ‘love’.

Yes, love is important, but it is useless and even questionable, where there is no truth (2 Corinthians 4:2 implies this). And Ephesians 4:15 says we must “(speak) the truth in love...”, thus emphasising the true order of things. And it is why putting love before truth has dubious results: 2 Thessalonians 2:10, where people perish, NOT because of lack of love itself, but because of lack of “love of the truth”.

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Lack of love requires true heart-searching, but it does not cause a man to enter hell, whereas a man who has no truth is condemned already, for he is of “corrupt mind” (1 Timothy 6:5). One can work on lack of love, but cannot work on lack of truth, because lack of truth shows a rejection of God’s word (2 Timothy 3:8, 4:4 etc).

As Jesus said Himself: *“If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”* (John 14:23). In other words, if we profess love for Christ we will base that love on truth (His words). Without this, a profession of love is worthless and false. The ONLY fact is – love is a product of truth. Truth is NOT a product of love, because love can be subjective and misleading.

(Note: This Outline is only an introduction).

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