Speak the Truth…

By Shari Miller

[For Bible study leader notes and Bible passages, click on the Quarterly icon at www.lwml.org or contact the LWML Office.]

Introduction: Have you ever been caught in a lie (honestly)? What were the consequences of that lie? Whom did it affect? Share your memories with a partner or in small groups.

If time permits, share with the group your definition of a “white lie” and a “bald-faced lie.”

Opening Prayer

O Lord, let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in Your sight! Be with us as we study Your Word. We give You thanks and praise for this opportunity as we remember that Your Word is truth. We boldly speak to You in Jesus’ Name. Amen.

In a popular movie, a courtroom scene pictures a young, ambitious military attorney questioning an older, more experienced officer about the truth behind the death of a young military man. After much badgering, the older officer finally yells at the younger man, “You can’t handle the truth!” When do you find it hard to handle the truth? Choose one or more from the following and explain why.

The truth would:

☐ hurt my reputation
☐ damage my relationship with someone I love
☐ cause punishment or pain or both for me or someone I love
☐ be devastating
☐ ___________________________ (your own answer)

Speak the Truth

What does God command in Exodus 20:16?

What does God forbid in this command?

1. Zechariah 8:16–17; Psalm 34:13; Proverbs 19:5; Ephesians 4:25
2. Proverbs 11:13; Matthew 26:21–24, 47–50

Read Proverbs 8:6–7. What kind of speech does God instruct us to use?

Read the following passages and identify characteristics of worthy speech:

1 Corinthians 13:1 and 7; Ephesians 4:15; 1 Peter 4:8b

Proverbs 12:18; Proverbs 31:8–9

Hebrews 3:13a

Deuteronomy 32:1–3; Psalm 51:15; Ephesians 5:19 (See also Psalm 71:8 and Psalm 145:10–12, 21)

Psalm 49:3; Proverbs 20:15; Proverbs 31:26

Acts 4:29; Acts 28:31

James 1:26; Hebrews 12:5–11

Discuss: What makes it difficult to speak words of chastisement or reprimand?

If time permits, share with a partner or the group a “truth-ism” that is a favorite for you (this could include a Bible verse, hymn verse, pithy saying, or the like).

Speak the Truth … about THE TRUTH

Jesus says in John 14:6: I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. What do the following verses encourage Spirit-filled believers to do?

Isaiah 52:7

Psalm 40:10

Psalm 71:15

Acts 4:20

Matthew 28:18–20

Words are the way we verbally express ourselves to one another. They can encourage or discourage; they can be eloquent or misunderstood. Read 1 Corinthians 2:13. What words does the Spirit enable us to speak?

What “faith-words” does the Spirit help us to share with those around us? See Ephesians 1:7–8; Psalm 30:10–12; Philippians 4:7; Exodus 15:2; Ephesians 2:8–10, and John 3:16 for six words of faith. What additional words could be added to the list?

If time permits, share with a partner a new word you have recently learned, and share an old word of faith with that partner at the same time.

Challenge: Learn a new word this week and share it with a friend. Share an old word of faith with that friend at the same time.

Speak the Truth … by living the truth

Words have little meaning if not accompanied by action. See 1 John 3:18.

Read Colossians 3:12–17. Paul’s word-picture in this passage beautifully illustrates the connection between words and actions. How should all our words and actions be done (v.17)?
Let it not be so among us

By Barbara Brunworth

Open with prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to reveal God’s Word to you.

Read together the words of Psalm 7:9: O righteous God, who searches minds and hearts, bring to an end the violence of the wicked and make the righteous secure.

The statistics are eye-opening: Did you know that the most dangerous place for a woman is the home? The 1991 FBI Uniform Crime Reports said, “Domestic violence is the leading cause of injury to women between ages 15 and 44 in the United States.”1 Reports from the U.S. Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Statistics indicate 1,159 females and 385 males were murdered by intimate partners in 2004.

When I began my counseling practice 30 years ago, I counseled with Christian women whose pastors told them it was their duty as a wife to submit, no matter what her husband’s behavior toward her was. This attitude is rarer in Christian circles today. Most pastors now are firm against any kind of abuse in the home and abusive men are not excused on any biblical ground. Many congregations support women’s shelters available in communities.

Abuse can be defined as intimidation or harm verbally, emotionally, physically, or sexually of another person. This can include unrelenting criticism, destruction of one’s personhood with name calling, being the object of rage and threats, demanding the right to be served physically or sexually, as well as actual physical harm.

Most women don’t believe they are marrying an abuser. They want to be loved. They meet a man who appears to have enough good qualities to ignore whatever warning signs may be apparent. The man’s behavior may be extremely subtle and not be readily observable. It may be hidden until after marriage.2

When a woman marries a man who affiliates himself with the Christian community and is abusive, she may have an extra measure of confused feelings about what she as a Christian can and should do. She may feel compelled to forgive and even be told by him that this is her responsibility as a Christian.

Counselors — Christian and secular alike — can help in understanding the cycle of abuse and its impact. They can also help determine whether the marriage might be

If time permits, discuss what we can learn about our speech-actions from the following:

1 Corinthians 1:4–7
Colossians 4:6, Matthew 5:13
Philippians 1:14
1 Peter 3:8–9
James 1:19–20
James 2:12

If time permits, discuss:

Why is it important to speak words of forgiveness and not just say, “That’s okay”?

Challenge: Memorize a new verse from the Bible and rejoice with the Psalmist in 119:11a: I have hidden Your Word in my heart…

Prayer

Your Word, O Lord, is a lamp to our feet and a light for our paths. Father, we confess that our speech is often not worthy — or is even unwholesome — and does not give You glory. Forgive us because of the saving work of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Help us to keep our conversation and actions salt and spicy even when situations arise that make it uncomfortable for us to speak. Enable us by the power of Your Spirit, to share our faith-words with those who need to hear. In the Name of Jesus, the Word made flesh for us. Amen.

Sing

“Thy Word” (LSB Accompaniment Edition, #973) or “Lord Jesus Christ, with Us Abide” (LSB 585; also found in TLH 292 and LW 344)

Shari Miller, wife of Rev. Larry and mother of Joshua and Johanna, is the appointed Chairman of the LWML Bible Study Task Force, which has completed its assigned task of evaluating current LWML Bible studies. She lives in Helena, Montana, and has written various articles and studies for the LWML.