



Job 6:29a How forceful are honest words!

“Well, to be honest with you...”

I struggle with these words! (full disclosure: I have said it myself many times). I love the people who say it very much. The semantics bother me greatly. Perhaps this is due to my failings as a former English major or trying, and many times failing, to be a wordsmith. It is the implication that bothers me. “Well, to be honest with you...” implies that up to that moment, everything else has not been honest at all! I know that isn’t true, but that’s the implication of the phrase. I believe what people really want is a different phrase, namely, “Well, to be frank with you” [frank: *open and direct in speech or writing, especially when dealing with unpalatable matters.*] I think people dislike this phrase because they don’t want to be a person named Frank, unless their name is Frank, which, if that is your name, is a great name!

Should we be honest or frank? Frankly, I do prefer when people will be open and direct with me, especially when dealing with unpalatable matters.

What do the scriptures say? from the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5:33-37: “33“Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord.’ 34But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, 35or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. 37Let your word be ‘Yes, Yes’ or ‘No, No’; anything more than this comes from the evil one.”

So, maybe we can agree that speaking honestly with each other is good. Or is it? Honesty is truth, and truth is good, right? Well, that’s almost right. Scripture says more on the subject from Ephesians 4:14-16: “14We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people’s trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. 15But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16from whom the whole body, joined and knitted together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love.”

Speaking the truth in love sounds much better to me than mere honesty, especially in the church. Our church, much like the one in Ephesus, needs care and healing. This does not come from mere honesty, but rather it comes from speaking the truth in love so that we can grow up in every way. This promotes the body of the church’s growth, building itself up in love.

Honest words are forceful. Yes, let us be truthful.

I want us to build each other up, speaking the truth in love. I believe this is possible.

In Christ’s Love, Ron Watson

This Week’s Daily Bible Readings					
<i>Growing with God’s Word in Wisdom and Strength</i>			Wednesday	September 19	Proverbs 24: 1-34
Sunday	September 16	Proverbs 18: 1-24	Thursday	September 20	Ecclesiastes 1: 1-18
Monday	September 17	Proverbs 22: 1-29	Friday	September 21	Ecclesiastes 2: 1-26
Tuesday	September 18	Proverbs 23: 1-35	Saturday	September 22	Ecclesiastes 3: 1-22