

Engagement Project - Tour 7 Articles

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The Engagement Project

Tour 7-Part 1: Royal Vision - Engaging with Truth

Del Tackett's "Engagement Project" continues to challenge and equip believers in Tour 7, titled "The Royal Vision: Engaging with Truth." Part 1 lays a foundational emphasis on engaging with truth, drawing from biblical principles and real-life testimonies to illustrate how truth must be woven into relationships with grace, wisdom, and love. This segment not only recalls Christ's own testimony to truth but also urges modern Christians to embody it in an "epoch of engagement," where the Spirit of Truth empowers us to fulfill the royal law.

The session opens with a poignant reflection on Jesus standing before Pilate, as recorded in John 18:37. Jesus affirms, "For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth." Tackett stresses that truth is paramount, not as a weapon or abstract concept, but as the guiding force in our interactions. In this current epoch, following Christ's ascension, He has sent the Holy Spirit—the Spirit of Truth—to lead believers into all truth (John 16:13). This divine guidance is critical for carrying out the royal law, as outlined in James 2:8. Tackett explains that this involves three interconnected actions: building deep, meaningful relationships; engaging others with grace and wisdom; and boldly incorporating truth into these encounters. Without truth, our efforts risk becoming superficial or misleading.

To ground this vision, Tackett revisits key biblical verses that define the proper use of truth in engagement. First, 1 Peter 3:15 instructs believers to "always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect." This verse highlights preparation paired with a gentle demeanor, ensuring truth is delivered not aggressively but respectfully. Similarly, 2 Timothy 2:24-26 portrays the Lord's servant as one who must "gently instruct" opponents, with the hope that God will grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth. This gentle instruction aims to help others "come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil." Tackett connects these to Colossians 4:5-6, which advises, "Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time [redeeming the kairos moments]. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person." Learning to "season our speech with salt" means infusing conversations with truth that preserves and enhances, much like salt in food.

Central to Part 1 is the Ephesians 4:15 mandate: "Speaking the truth in love." Tackett emphasizes that truth and love are inseparable; one without the other distorts God's intent. Truth must be spoken "for the true good of the other," not to win arguments, gain power, or treat engagement as a "prize-fight." Instead, it should flow through layers of wisdom and grace, always in the context of an established relationship. Tackett warns of the pitfalls of being a "faithful" witness when it's self-centered—focusing on our own righteousness rather than the other's well-being. If we mistakenly view truth as the ultimate endgame, we might prioritize delivery over transformation, leading to alienating or harmful interactions.

In a culture rife with skepticism, building relationships of trust is essential for truth to land effectively. Tackett clarifies that the purpose of truth isn't mere dissemination but is "bound up in true agape love," which seeks the shalom (peace and wholeness) of others with sacrificial zeal. This relational foundation allows truth to penetrate hearts without immediate rejection.

The discussion then explores the emotional responses to speaking truth: excitement for some, fear for others. Those excited might rush to proclaim truth without love, echoing the "resounding gong or a clanging cymbal" from 1 Corinthians 13:1—noise without substance. Conversely, the fearful may equate love with silence, avoiding any declaration of "ought to" behaviors. Tackett critiques this cultural distortion, where love is redefined as non-judgmental affirmation that shies away from moral truths. Yet, both Old and New Testaments command honesty: Zechariah 8:16 urges, "Speak the truth to one another," and Ephesians 4:25 echoes, "Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor." The easy paths—truth without love or love without truth—lead to imbalance. Instead, believers must commit to speaking truth because the true good of others demands it, always mediated through wisdom, grace, and deep relationships.

A compelling highlight of Part 1 is the testimony of Rosaria Champagne Butterfield, a former lesbian activist and Syracuse University professor who experienced radical transformation. Tackett shares how Ken and Floy Smith, her Christian neighbors, invited her into their lives without agenda. Butterfield recounts, "I lived in rebellion for years and years and then the Lord sent a neighbor to come and get me." What began as simple conversations evolved into "500-plus meals" at the Smiths' home, fostering trust that allowed truth to emerge naturally. Tackett poses introspective questions to the audience: If we lived next door to someone like Dr. Butterfield—entrenched in opposing views—would we extend even one invitation? Would we speak to her at all? More probing still: Do we truly believe God can orchestrate such change? Not just in the neighbor, but through us? Tackett affirms resoundingly: Yes! Because believers possess everything needed—the truth of God and the indwelling Spirit of God.

This story exemplifies the principles discussed: relationships built over time, truth spoken as deep as the bond allows, and love that persists without ulterior motives. It challenges participants to examine their own willingness to engage skeptics, reminding them that God's power works through ordinary faithfulness.

In referencing Part 2 briefly for context, Tackett builds on this by reiterating that we have the Spirit, Word, and fellowship to sustain such efforts, but Part 1 stands alone in igniting the vision. It calls for a shift from fear or overzealousness to balanced, relational truth-sharing.

Ultimately, Part 1 of Tour 7 inspires a royal vision where truth isn't isolated but integrated into loving engagement. By building deep relationships and speaking with grace and wisdom, believers can testify to truth as Christ did—seeking others' eternal good. This approach counters cultural skepticism, empowers through the Spirit, and mirrors God's agape love. As groups process this over the week, it prompts self-reflection: Are we equipped and willing to let God use us in transformative ways? The answer, rooted in Scripture, is an emphatic yes.

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The Engagement Project

Tour 7, Part 1: The Royal Vision - Engaging with Truth

In Del Tackett's "Engagement Project," Tour 7 delves into "The Royal Vision: Engaging with Truth," emphasizing the pivotal role of truth in Christian engagement. Split into two parts for time constraints, Part 1 focuses on integrating truth with love, grace, and relationships in our interactions with others.

Tackett begins by recalling Jesus' encounter with Pilate, where Christ declares His purpose: to testify to the truth. This sets the stage for the "epoch of engagement," where Jesus departs but sends the Spirit of Truth to guide believers. Truth becomes essential for fulfilling the royal law—building deep relationships while engaging with grace, wisdom, and uncompromised truth.

Key Scriptures underscore this approach. In 1 Peter 3:15, believers are urged to defend their hope with gentleness and respect. 2 Timothy 2:24-26 calls for gentle instruction to lead others to truth, freeing them from the devil's trap. Colossians 4:5-6 advises wise conduct toward outsiders, with speech seasoned with salt to redeem opportune moments. Ephesians 4:15 ties it together: speak the truth in love.

Tackett warns against misusing truth. It should serve the true good of others, not personal victory or power. Speaking truth without love reduces one to a "resounding gong" (1 Corinthians 13:1), while fear might lead to withholding truth under the guise of love. Culture often equates love with avoiding moral "oughts," but Scripture commands truth-speaking to neighbors (Zechariah 8:16; Ephesians 4:25).

In a skeptical world, trust-built relationships enable truth-sharing. Truth isn't an endgame but is intertwined with agape love, seeking others' shalom with sacrificial zeal.

The session highlights Rosaria Champagne Butterfield's transformation through Ken and Floy Smith's hospitality—over 500 meals that dismantled her rebellion. Tackett poses challenging questions: Would we invite such a neighbor? Do we believe God can work through us? Affirmatively, yes—equipped with God's truth and Spirit.

Part 1 inspires believers to speak truth layered in wisdom and grace within deep relationships, fostering genuine engagement for others' ultimate good.

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