
Words of Truth

If You Don't Like Correction...

By: Brian A. Yeager

Imagine for a moment that, after a long day away from your home, you are at home cooking something yummy to eat. You are exhausted from your long day. You get things going on the stove and sit down. You fall asleep. You awaken to find your house full of smoke. You then see the flames. You are trapped. You cannot get to a door or a window. You are scared. You notice someone on the other side of the wall of fire and smoke. It is a fireman. Will you tell him to go away and leave you alone? Will you tell him that you are offended that he is there to try and help? Will you tell him that you feel like he is attacking you?

I don't want to be wrong. Do you? Likely not. Being wrong has serious implications when it comes to spiritual matters (Ezekiel 18:20, Romans 6:23, Galatians 6:7-8, James 1:13-15, and Revelation 21:8). Eternal damnation is not something to be dealt with lightly. In fact, it is worse than the house fire we began our study talking about. You may die in a house fire, but your soul will go on to Paradise and ultimately to Heaven if you've lived aright (Luke 16:19-31 and John 5:28-29).

Understanding that your soul is more precious than your flesh, why would you treat someone who cares about saving your soul worse than someone who is trying to save your flesh? Aside from people attempting suicide, the fire department is a welcomed sight during a fire. Why aren't faithful Christians and Gospel preachers viewed in a greater light when they come trying to save someone from eternal fire?

Trying to teach someone to be saved is an act of love regardless of the tone being used to do so (Revelation 3:19). Yet, the messenger is not always received as someone who loves. Many times people will accuse you of attacking them when you're just trying to do the same thing as a fireman is trying to do – save them. Paul was perceived as an enemy for teaching the truth to the Galatians (Galatians 4:16). The more Paul showed love to some of the erring saints in Corinth he was loved less in return (II Corinthians 12:15). What does it say of a person who does not want to hear correction? What does it say of a person who does not want to be told when they are wrong? Let's see what God says about those types of people.

God's View Of Those Who Refuse Correction

Consider God's point of view: *"My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth... Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof is brutish... A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke... Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way: and he that hateth reproof shall die... Woe to her that is filthy and polluted, to*

the oppressing city! She obeyed not the voice; she received not correction; she trusted not in the LORD; she drew not near to her God... Then began he to upbraid the cities where in most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee... Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God” (Proverbs 3:11-12, Proverbs 12:1, Proverbs 13:1, Proverbs 15:10, Zephaniah 3:1-2, Matthew 11:20-24, and Romans 2:4-5).

Having people that refuse to hear correction is not a new problem (Jeremiah 7:25-28). People that refuse correction have been known to literally kill the messenger (Acts 7:51-58). We’ve seen that God is not going to be forgiving of people who are stubborn (Proverbs 1:24-31 and Proverbs 29:1). So, what should we do with that information?

Applying It To Me

We know that God does not want us to do anything wrong (II Corinthians 7:1). Yet, IF we do, we have to correct it (Luke 13:3 and I John 1:9-2:1). Sometimes we fail to see our own shortcomings. While that in itself is wrong (II Corinthians 13:5), it can still happen. Thus, let’s say I (you think of you here) do something sinful. One of my brethren notices it. The Scriptures teach that brother or sister in Christ to act on what they see to help me to be saved (Matthew 18:15-17, Luke 17:3-4, Galatians 6:1, and James 5:19-20). How am I (you think of you here) going to receive the brother or sister in Christ who comes to correct me (you think of you here)? Will I (you think of you here) view this brother or sister as an attacker or as someone who cares about me enough to help me be saved?

Many times, the brother or sister in Christ who is correcting the erring is not received so well. We need to make sure that is not our attitude towards brethren who care enough to help us out of our sins. We should be thankful. If you understand the seriousness of sin and the consequences, you cannot possibly miss the favor someone is doing for you by correcting you (Proverbs 9:8).

Conclusion

Don’t hate correction for that is the very purpose of the Scriptures and the teaching of the Scriptures (II Timothy 3:15-4:2). If you have sinned, and someone corrected you, be thankful for that person (Proverbs 28:23). If someone in the future comes to correct you, regardless of his or her approach, be thankful. Be thankful even if their motives aren’t right. Even when it may be a public correction, which needs to occur at times (Galatians 2:11-17 and I Timothy 5:20), be receptive to words that will save you. Consider this in conclusion: *“Open rebuke is better than secret love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful”* (Proverbs 27:5-6).