

He That Being Often Reproved...

I. Introduction:

A. When we talk about being reproved in this study, we are talking about a Hebrew word [תוֹכַחַה] that means: “chastisement; figuratively (by words) correction, refutation, proof (even in defense): - argument, X chastened, correction, reasoning, rebuke, reproof, X be (often) reproved” (Strong’s # 8433). Here is how this word is translated in the book of Proverbs:

1. “Reproof” (**Proverbs 1:23; 1:25; 1:30; 5:12; 10:17; 12:1; 13:18; 15:5; 15:10; 15:31; 15:32; 29:15**).
2. “Correction” (**Proverbs 3:11**).
3. “Reproofs” (**Proverbs 6:23**).
4. “Rebuke” (**Proverbs 27:5**).

B. Another word we are going to talk about in this study is a Hebrew word [קָשָׁה] translated “hardeneth” which is defined as: “to be dense, that is, tough or severe (in various applications): - be cruel, be fiercer, make grievous, be ([ask a], be in, have, seem, would) hard (-en, [labour], -ly, thing), be sore, (be, make) stiff (-en, [-necked])” (Strong’s # 7185).

1. It is translated “stiffnecked” in **Deuteronomy 10:16**
2. Israel was like this in the past (**II Kings 17:9-14**).
3. It is the opposite of being yielding (**II Chronicles 30:8**).
4. For certain, a person who is hardened in this manner is not obedient (**Nehemiah 9:16-17**).
5. A person with a hardened heart will fall into mischief (**Proverbs 28:14**).

II. Body: **Proverbs 29:1**

A. The Scriptures exist, in part, for correction (**II Timothy 3:15-17**).

1. Think about the preaching of the word of God and the place for reproving [Strong’s # 1651] (**II Timothy 4:2**).
 - a. The Greek word translated “reprove” [ἐλέγχω] means: “to confute, admonish: - convict, convince, tell a fault, rebuke, reprove” (Strong’s # 1651).
 - b. The Scriptures below, in points 2-4, are all from this same Greek word.
2. This about telling someone their fault [Strong’s # 1651] (i.e. **Matthew 18:15**); giving a rebuke (**I Timothy 5:20**).
3. Think about what a qualified elder must do (**Titus 1:5-9**) [“convince” again; Strong’s # 1651].
4. Because of the points above, we cannot eliminate the necessity of correction (**Titus 1:13; 2:15** and **Revelation 3:19**).

B. On one hand, we must correct. On the other hand, if we correct we risk hardening someone. That is especially true if we correct that person often. There is a balance (**Jude 1:22-23**)? Let's think it through.

1. Can we ignore sin for fear that reproof will harden a person? No, (**Ephesians 5:6-11**).
2. What can we learn from **John 3:19-21**?
3. God has done things knowing it would harden a person or persons (**Exodus 4:21; 7:3; 7:13-14; 8:15; 8:19; 8:19; 9:7; 9:12; 9:34, I Samuel 6:6, and John 12:36-43**). So, what does that teach us (**Ephesians 5:1**)?
4. Consider how the faithful work of the prophets sometimes hardened hearts (**Jeremiah 7:21-27**).
5. Should we not care if we harden hearts? Isn't it sinful for a person to harden his or her heart (**Hebrews 3:8; 3:15; 4:7**)?
 - a. Since it is sinful, where does that leave that person (**Romans 6:23**)?
 - b. Shouldn't that make us thoroughly weigh our part in choosing to harden a person (**Luke 17:1-2**)?
 - c. The word translated "offend" in **Luke 17:2** has the idea of tripping up a person; causing them to stumble (Strong's # 4624).
6. With all of those thoughts in mind, consider also how we are to work with our brethren to attempt to keep them from having hardened hearts (**Hebrews 3:13**).

C. What about "picking your battles" (so to speak). What I mean is, what about choosing to back off on some matters of liberty (i.e. **I Corinthians 8:8**) because you have to correct the matters of sin with those that might be hardened by being corrected often?

1. Illustration: A brother and/or sister in Christ has multiple areas of their lives wherein they lack wise choices (wasteful spending, unhealthy lifestyle choices, unwise career decisions, unwise priorities, etc.). This person(s) is also a liar.
 - a. Though it may be painful to watch, a person is at liberty, in most cases, to spend his or her money in a manner that satisfies he or she (**I Timothy 6:17**).
 - b. Eating and health choices are liberties (**I Timothy 4:1-8**).
 - c. Work is commanded (**Ephesians 4:28** and **II Thessalonians 3:10**), but employment choices are in many cases a liberty.
 - d. As long as spiritual things are first (**Matthew 6:33** and **Colossians 3:1-4**), brethren have no authority to legislate the priorities of one another.
 - e. When it comes to lying, a person is lost when he or she is a liar (**Proverbs 19:5, Proverbs 19:9, Ephesians 4:25, Colossians 3:8-9, and Revelation 21:8**).
 - f. Now, what if you have exhausted a person with your corrections on on points a-d, and now you have to come to them again to talk about them being liars? This is where **Proverbs 29:1** applies.

2. We need to understand that in matters of liberty faithful Christians will be “fully persuaded in his own mind” (**Romans 14:5**) because the faithful understand **Romans 14:23**. If you choose to be in that brother or sister’s ear often in these matters of authorized liberties, you may not have his or her ear when it comes to something that matters most. Think on that!

D. What about when there are multiple things that need correction. Isn’t there times where you have to prioritize (i.e. **I Corinthians 11:34**)?

1. I am not implying one sin is greater than another (**James 2:10-12**).

2. However, teaching and growth is a matter of building one thing upon another and all things cannot be taught all at once (**Mark 4:33, John 16:12, I Corinthians 3:1-3, Hebrews 5:8-6:3, and II Peter 1:3-11**).

3. As an illustration, consider that a person has to understand matters such as authority before they can please God (**I Thessalonians 4:1-2**).

a. A person is doing things the word of God does not authorize. You start by correcting the specific issue, but the person does not understand that something is sinful if it is not authorized (**Matthew 28:20, Colossians 3:17, Revelation 22:18-19**, etc.). They believe they need a “thou shalt not” for something to be wrong. How will that go?

b. You want to address prayer, singing, and other matters of worship. However, the person you are talking to has no idea how to approach the Scriptures (i.e. that was written to Corinth, does it apply directly to me? How instructions to the Apostles do not apply to everyone, etc.). What has to come first? Don’t you need to teach the person how to study before you can even approach the specific? Can you teach someone who cannot handle the word of God aright (**II Timothy 2:15**)?

E. Now, let’s consider “without remedy” (**Zechariah 7:11-14**).

1. A hardened heart does not always mean a spiritual death sentence (**Mark 6:45-52 and Mark 8:14-21**; cf. **Acts 1:13-14**).

2. However, what if you could have chosen wisely when to speak, but decided to “beat the dead horse” on something not significant so much that when something significant arises your voice cannot be heard. Isn’t there a good possibility that you lose your soul over that (**Romans 14:13**)?

III. Conclusion: Even if a person might be hardened, we can never let something sinful go without dealing with it Scripturally (**I Corinthians 5:1-8, Galatians 6:1, and James 5:19-20**).