

Administering and Receiving Reproof

by John Hames

The sermon emphasizes the significance of reproof in the Christian life, providing guidelines for both administering and receiving it with grace and humility.

Scripture: Psalm 141:5, Proverbs 15:1, Proverbs 29:1, Matthew 18:15, Romans 2:21, James 3:17

Topics: "Christian Discipline", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

John Hames preaches on the importance of receiving reproof with humility and gratitude, highlighting how reproof is a valuable tool in the Christian's journey towards holiness. He emphasizes that reproof serves as a mirror to reflect our faults, confirms God's gentle guidance, and acts as a warning signal to prevent spiritual destruction. Hames stresses the need for administering reproof with wisdom, ensuring it is deserved and given in a gentle, private manner, following the biblical principles outlined in Proverbs and Matthew.

Transcript

"Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head" (Psalm 141:5).

One of the surest signs that we are progressing in the divine life and growing in grace is that we have a hearty relish for reproof and also retain a high esteem for those who reprove us.

Reproof is one of the greatest helps to holy living found in the catalog of the Christian's experience for three reasons.

1. It serves as a mirror to reflect the full image of ourselves. No one can see himself as others do, no one can detect his faults as quickly as another, therefore, it should be considered a great kindness when a friend or even an enemy has courage enough to call our attention to them.

No man becomes displeased with his neighbor for informing him of the fact that his house is on fire or that the cattle are destroying his corn; neither should we become displeased over being told of those faults which are destroying our Christian influence.

2. Being reproved by a fellow creature, oftentimes, helps to confirm what God has been trying to tell us for some time. The Holy Spirit deals so tenderly and gently with us that it usually takes quite a while for us to fully understand what He means.

3. Reproof to the Christian is what the red lights and danger signals are to the railroad man. It is considered a serious crime for an engineer to heedlessly run his train past a red light. It is by far more dangerous for a human soul to heedlessly rush by the faithful warnings of a Christian friend. Solomon said: "He, that being often reproofed hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy" (Prov. 29:1).

In view of the foregoing remarks it can readily be seen that reproof is of no small value to the earnest Christian. However, it would be well right here to submit to the convert a few simple rules on how to administer and receive reproof, for, even though it be an excellent oil, there is great danger of it working harm if improperly administered.

We should never reprove a person while he is a trial or temptation to us, if so, we are quite likely to manifest the wrong spirit or either say more than is strictly necessary. Many a Christian has lost the inner victory by having too much to say to the person with whom he was tried.

It is not using the best judgment to reprove a person while he is tempted or undergoing pressure. Even worldly physicians, when compelled to perform an operation on a patient, usually select a time when the patient is strongest and feeling the most cheerful.

Before proceeding to administer reproof to a fellow creature we should be sure that he deserves it. There is hardly anything that will confuse a convert more quickly than to reprove him for something of which he is not guilty. It would also be well before proceeding to reprove a fellow creature to look the field of personal conduct over from (a) to (z) and see if you yourself are in any way guilty of the same thing.

"Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?" (Rom. 2:21,22)

Reproof should never be administered in public unless the offense was committed in public. Even then, great wisdom is to be used. Jesus said, "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone" (Matt. 18:15).

Reproof should be administered in a mild manner, a gentle tone of voice and a sweet, lowly spirit and never in a blustery, denunciatory manner. Solomon said, "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger" (Prov. 15:1).

Reproof should be received in the same spirit that we receive commendation and applause, namely, without self-defense or retaliation, but thankfully and humbly.

James said: "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (James 3:17).

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