

Able to Admonish

by Rick Leibee

Rick Leibee's sermon emphasizes the importance of admonishing one another within the church for spiritual growth and accountability.

Duration: 1:37:15

Scripture: Romans 15:4, 1 Thessalonians 5:12, 2 Timothy 4:2, Titus 2:15

Topics: "Church Discipline", "Spiritual Guidance"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of having a burden before taking action. He advises against reacting impulsively and encourages listeners to pause and pray before making decisions. The speaker also highlights the significance of appropriate timing when addressing issues or concerns within the church community. The sermon references 2 Timothy 4:2, where Paul instructs Timothy to preach the word. The speaker raises questions about how to handle various situations within the church, such as someone not being faithful in their devotional life or wearing a covering as a fashion statement instead of a symbol of submission.

Transcript

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Turn with me in your Bibles to Romans chapter 15. To Romans chapter 15. Just look at one verse here for a moment as a beginning text.

Then I have a few other words of introduction for the message today. Romans chapter 15, verse 14. Paul writes here, And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled

with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

Able also to admonish one another. The title of the message this morning is, Able to Admonish. Now this message is somewhat three different things at once.

It is a teaching this morning on this subject of admonishing one another. And notice that it does say here, one another. This is one of those 38 one another verses in the New Testament.

So it is a teaching on that, but it is also an appeal to you this morning to consider your own heart, your own life in the church here. But may I say, the message this morning is also a bit of an admonishment from me to you. And I am allowed to do that.

I am commanded to do that actually. Just look at a verse. There are many verses we could look at, but I just want to show you this one.

From me to you, that is part of this message. Turn to 1 Thessalonians 5. This does a little side verse here. Because this is part of the message.

It is an admonishment to you. Look what it says here in verse 12 of chapter 5 of 1 Thessalonians. And it says, And we beseech you brethren, so this is to you, to know them which labor among you.

It is speaking as you look at your ministers. And are over you in the Lord, your ministers. Look at the last part.

And admonish you. And so, Paul gives it here that this is a duty, this is a commandment of ministers. But, go back now over to Romans chapter 15 again in verse 14.

And we see here this phrase, able to admonish. Now, the word admonish here is used quite a bit in the New Testament. And it is given to us in three or four different words.

The word warn or warning is the same word. The word admonish, the word correct, the word reprove, and the word rebuke. In the New Testament are essentially the same word.

You can look it up in the Greek or in different ways in vines. And they are all in the same family of words and meanings. And basically they mean to reprove, to rebuke, to correct, to enlighten, to bring to light something in someone else's life.

And teach them and warn them and bring correction. Bring them back to the place where they need to be. And there is an inference there that the way that you are going is not going to come out right.

It is not going to come out right. So that is part of this. And the word able here is, may I say, a little bit surprising what it means, but it is also very wonderful too if we understand it.

It is one of those words that has its root in that word dudamos, which means power. It is dudamehi I think in the Greek. And it basically means to have in you the power to get something done.

It is kind of like that. Like there is something in you that is able to get this job done. And so he is saying, I am persuaded that in you there is this power, this ability to be able to admonish one another.

So he is operating in faith, isn't he? He is having faith in the brethren that you can do this because in our own selves we would be tempted to doubt. Well, I can't do anything like that. That is a big thing to do.

I am going to leave that for the ministry. I don't want to touch that. And all these other things.

And so he is writing them here to say, I am persuaded you are able to admonish. And so that is the title of the message. And this is one of those messages that I would have to say that I have had a burden to teach on this subject for over a year now.

And I have been waiting for a time when I felt free in the Lord to share this. Today is that day. And as we pick up this, one of the things I want you to keep in the back of your mind, one of the foundations I want you to keep laid in your heart, is that as you can see here in Paul's context of one another, that this is an important part of our relationship with the church and with one another.

It's not just some separate little thing we tuck over here. It is part of the flow of our relationship. And so therefore we must see that part of my relationship with God involves my relationship with you.

And to fail in one is to fail in the other. You know, in this New Testament church age, we cannot separate those two. We would like to, wouldn't we? At times it's very convenient to segregate those things in our mind, in our spiritual life we think.

But you read the New Testament through and you're not able to do that. I'm sorry. I don't have time to do a whole teaching on that today.

I did that about a year and a half ago. But if you understand that, you'll understand why this thing can flow the way it is. The other thing I'd like to say is as I was preparing this message, I thought of many reasons for sharing this message.

Obviously it's in the Word of God. It's on the heart of God. But there's something I thought of which is perhaps a bit unique to us.

Not totally, but perhaps a bit unique to us in our church, in our church circles, and in our church here as well. And as you know, in our circles, in our church here, we believe in a holy life. We believe in a godly life.

We believe in having godly convictions, godly standards, godly beliefs, and ways of not just reading the Word of God, but actually incorporating them into our life and trying to walk in a way that is pleasing to our God. Not to get salvation, but after we are born again, because we love God, and we love the things of God, and we love what He loves, we want to do things that are pleasing to Him. Right? That's part of what we believe.

But what is unique about us compared to other Anabaptist groups is most Anabaptist groups have written standards. They've taken this same thought, this same spiritual truth, and put it into written standards. And I can stand here and say I have nothing against that.

I respect those. I have brothers in the Lord I know in those churches. And I am thankful for them taking a stand and for the heart in which they do it.

However, we have chosen not to do that. We have chosen to have some of the same beliefs, some of the same thoughts, but thinking, no, we don't want to reduce those to a written standard. We want things written on the tables of our heart.

And we want to go what we think, what we hope, and what we pray is a better way where we have self-examination rather than a list to refer to. Where we have the Spirit of God alive and working, we hope, in the breast, in the heart, in the life of each man and sister, each brother and sister in the church. And I am not at fault with us for choosing this way.

I am at peace. I am blessed. Yet, we must also admit that just because we have chosen that way, doesn't mean we don't have potential for some problems.

Isn't that right? We have problems too. We don't have all the answers. And as I was thinking about this a little bit, you know, you have a group of churches, basically, usually Anabaptists, that have written standards.

And then you have, way over here, the rest of what we might call evangelical Protestantism of today, which for the most part, and I am generalizing here, and I cannot balance everything, but I've been in many of those churches, so I know somewhat of which I speak. For the most part, it's not that they just don't have written standards. They basically don't have standards.

Divorce from your marriage? It's fine. Whatever you want to wear to church? It's fine. I mean, you just go down the list.

Basically, every man is his own master. What does it say in Judges? And every man did what was right in his own sight. You know? That is basically, for the most part, and again, please allow me to generalize here.

So, I would just say over here, no standards. That is a generalization. And that is basically, you know, these two.

So, if I would say to you, do you want to live here? Most of you would say, no. If I would say, do you want to live in this kind of church? Most of you would say, no. That's why I'm here.

So, if you don't want to live here, and you don't want to live there, I would say to you that one of the requirements, one of the conditions of being in a church where we don't have this, and we don't want to go here, but we want to live in a church that does have beliefs, that does have practices, that does have standards, that does have teaching from the Bible, you must be willing. You must have, in effect, in our midst, admonishing, rebuking, correcting. You must be open to going to one another, and you must go to one another, or you will not make it.

We will not make it. We will have serious consequences if we are not open to this concept. And though we do not have, again, written standards, we do have beliefs, practices, may I say general understandings of the heartbeat of the brotherhood that have evolved out of the teachings, and brothers' meetings, and everything else over the last, whatever it's been, 22 years now, I guess almost, of how we're going to walk some biblical truths out in the Bible.

But, what do we do if someone drifts, or someone is not with us, or someone is beginning to sin, or beginning to move away from these beliefs and practices? What if someone chooses to go toward the world and you notice it? What if someone chooses to start wearing clothing that you know is immodest and is not in keeping with our beliefs? What do you do? What if a young man chooses a car that is, frankly, carnal, and you know why he chose it? What do you do? What do you say? You just mumble it home? What do you do? What if someone begins watching videos? What if they're not faithful in their

devotional life and you know it? What if they begin wearing a covering that's a fashion statement, with lace and all these other things, instead of a modest symbol of submission that it is? What do you say? What do you say? What do you say when someone is divisive? What do you say when someone is covetous? What do you say? What do you do when they have a flat spot there in their life and they begin to drift? What do you say when a young man begins to wear country western cowboy clothes? You know, what do you say? Nothing? Do you run and tell five people? What do you do? What do you do? What should you do? And the list could go on. The point is, what do we do as a church to bring correction when we don't want this, but we don't want to live here either? Well, we need to help someone in that situation I just described to see they're going the wrong way. A way that will lead to serious consequences in their life and, may I say, to very serious consequences in the life of the church.

Because what one does affects us all. We understand that concept, don't we, in the New Testament age that we live in? Things that pull one brother in the brotherhood down begin to have an effect on the rest of us. And I believe that you would agree with me that if we look through our sermons and doctrine and teaching of the last 22 years, there has been very good messages on everything I just mentioned and 50 other things I didn't even mention, haven't there? There's very good messages on all those subjects.

And you could say, well, I hope they'll just go listen to a tape. I'll just give them a tape. Well, that's not a bad thing.

But is that all? Is that all? I would say, despite all the wonderful teaching that we have had here, and I've heard much of it myself, I don't want to say I've listened to all of it, but I've heard a lot of teaching before I came here and since I have, that one area that there's been a very serious lack is this area of personal one-on-one among the brethren, admonishing, warning, correcting and reproving among us. And so that is part of my admonishment and my appeal to you today. So what do we do? I believe that, again, this way of approaching church life is a bit unique among us.

But if we fail to admonish one another and we do not have written standards, it's not going to work. Our church life is just going to drift and drift and drift. It's not going to work.

So, one of the beauties of not having written standards, if I may say it this way, is to recognize and understand that I love my brother and I am responsible for him and he for me. We are connected. We are members fitly joined.

And the key word is joined. There is something in him of me and in me of him. And I must see that.

And I am responsible to have input into his life, not to just give him a list. I'm responsible to love him enough to speak to him concerning his or her life. I have noticed here, and I know you have too, that many of us here, when we testify for sometimes just for salvation's sake, a testimony or for baptism or for membership especially, many of us here say things like, I would really appreciate and I really desire to have input and correction and admonishment into my life.

How many have ever said anything like that up in front of the congregation or maybe even in a prayer group or something? Okay, over half the group. Yet, I wonder how often this really happens. How do we do it? How do you receive it if it does happen? Who should do it? You know, there's questions that come.

And today my prayer is that God, through the preaching of His Word and through His Spirit, would speak to your heart and my heart today. Well, now a moment ago I did mention, I just want to show you one thing

here. The preaching and teaching, the bank of tapes we have here on all of these subjects of our beliefs and practices.

But, you know, there's something we need to see even in that. I want to turn over to 2 Timothy for just a moment. 2 Timothy 4. 2 Timothy 4, let's see, verse 2, it says here, Paul is writing to Timothy about his job.

He says, preach the Word. Well, that's been done. Be instant in season, out of season.

Reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. So, it seems here that Paul recognized that just preaching the Word, may I say, this was written to the church, is not enough. That after preaching and teaching, there naturally the pattern follows what? Reprove and rebuke.

And it's not said here, but we know it is. It is part of the Christian life. After reproof and rebuke happens, and it's brought to the light, what happens? Hopefully, repentance, and then grace, and forgiveness, and restoration, all those things.

So, if you can see this, it's not just, we can't just say, well, we have the teaching, we have the preaching, and amen for that. But after that, by definition of preaching, there needs follow, if the pattern is right here, and it is, reproof and rebuke. And then with that, when we see that we have erred or we're off, repentance, and then of course, grace and forgiveness, and those things follow.

Turn over, since we're close to there, to Titus 2.15. I'm just giving you a couple of New Testament verses here to just add a little weight to your thoughts here this morning. And there's dozens and dozens of verses we could go to, but for sake of time, I won't. Titus 2.15 Titus 2.15 says, These things speak and exhort and rebuke with all authority.

Let no man despise thee. This is strong medicine, isn't it? These aren't willy-nilly words, are they? You know, this isn't like, maybe should I do this or whatever. I mean, this is like rebuke with all authority.

I mean, this is strong medicine. Turn back over to 1 Thessalonians. We looked at this a minute ago, but now I want you to see something else there in chapter 5. You know, the preacher is supposed to admonish, but look down in verse 14.

Remembering that the word warn and rebuke and reprove and admonish are the same words here, same meanings. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly. Comfort the feeble-minded and so on.

And so here's a New Testament, and this is only one of many, commandment telling you, brethren, which includes the sisters, to admonish. To warn them. And what does unruly mean? Those that are out of order.

Those that are not going the right way. Those that are drifting. Those that are off.

Warn them. Which means to admonish or rebuke or reprove. And I could go on and on with a lot of other verses in the New Testament, but I won't do that right now for sake of time.

I would like to look in Proverbs where many of these verses are found, but I wanted to set a New Testament foundation in your thinking. But there is something here that is very easy to look at. I don't think I'll have you look.

I think I'll just read from my list to go a little bit quicker. But you just listen and make a note of this list. I'm going to give you five things, five biblical reasons why you must embrace, not just receive, but you must

embrace rebuke or reproof in your life.

Five biblical reasons. You write these down and you write down these verses quickly. Number one, these are five biblical reasons why you need to embrace rebuke.

Number one, it will keep you out of ignorance. And I'm speaking of these things in a spiritual sense today. There's a physical side to this which we could talk about, but I won't today for sake of time.

But you make the applications. But I'm talking about spiritual issues. It will keep you out of ignorance.

And I could ask you the question today, brothers and sisters, and I know your theology is right, but I'll ask you anyway. Spiritually speaking, do you want to remain ignorant? I mean, really, in your heart, do you want to remain ignorant? I don't think so. Proverbs 12 says, Whoso loveth instruction, loveth knowledge.

But he that hateth reproof is brutish. And brutish means ignorant, dull. So if you don't like it, if you cringe, you know, if you start sweating when somebody comes to you, I'm sorry, the Bible says you're brutish.

God says that. Those are strong words, aren't they? Number two, well, there's another verse here. Proverbs 15, 31 and 32.

Write that down. I'm just going to read 32. He that refuseth instruction, despiseth his own soul.

But he that heareth reproof, getteth understanding. You following? So that's number one. It will keep you out of ignorance.

Number two, it will prosper your way spiritually. It will prosper your way spiritually. Proverbs 13, 18.

And again, do you want to grow? It's the same sort of question. Do you want to grow spiritually? You want to stay where you're at or do you want to grow? Proverbs 13, 18 says, Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction. But he that regardeth reproof shall be honored.

And the word honored there means it'll be multiplied unto him. There will be gain and increase. And make this spiritual application.

To regard means to want it, to desire it, to look for it, actually. I wonder how many of us look for reproof. Three, and again, I'm making a spiritual application.

It will keep you alive. Reproof will keep you alive. Do you want to be spiritually alive? Or do you want to be dead? Proverbs 15, 10 says, Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way.

And he that hateth reproof shall die. Again, strong words, aren't they? Strong words. Four, it will keep you in God's will for your life.

Talking about reproof and rebuke. It will keep you in God's will for your life. I know your theology.

Again, if I were to ask you, Do you want to be in God's will today? Everybody would raise their hand, wouldn't you? Well, the Bible says in Proverbs 10, 17, He is in the way of life that keepeth instruction. But he that refuseth reproof erreth. Meaning, you will not find the way of life, the will of God, if you refuse.

Reproof. You won't. You know, it's a Bible truth.

Five, desiring to embrace rebuke and reproof. It is a proof of your maturity. It is a sign of your growth and your maturity.

Proverbs 17, A reproof entereth more into a wise man than a hundred stripes unto a fool. Proverbs 15, 12, A scorner, and a scorner is one who doesn't want reproof. A scorner loveth not the one that reproofeth him.

Neither will he go unto the wise. Many verses. So many verses.

So much of the heart of God in these things. Now, I do want to go back to the New Testament and show you a verse in Revelation so that we can again undergird ourselves and our thinking. On this side of the cross to make sure that we're seeing the heart of God and what God is trying to accomplish.

Revelation 3, 19. Revelation chapter 3, verse 19. And here, if you know anything about the first three or four or five verses of the book of Revelation, it's written to the church and to things the church either should be doing or should not be doing.

And Jesus speaks here in Revelation 3, 19 and He says, As many as I love, and notice the word love, okay? This is where we are on this side of the cross and we're understanding how God deals with us and the reason and the motivation behind why He does things. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Be zealous, therefore, and repent.

And as I understand what Jesus is saying here, He means that most of this rebuking that is done in the New Testament age, and if you read all these information He gives about the church, is done by who? Directly by Jesus? Some is done that way. The Holy Spirit can rebuke us, can't He? But you know, it doesn't always work that way. Often it comes from the church.

Often from other people in the church. Yes, from a sermon sometimes, but also from one another. And Jesus is saying, As many as I love, I rebuke.

Who is His mouthpiece? Who are His hands? Who are His feet? Who does He use to rebuke and reprove? He uses you and I. He uses vessels fit for the Master's use. Think of this scene. Don't turn there.

Think of this scene and just make an application here in John 13 there, where Jesus just finished washing the disciples' feet, and He says, Now you go and do likewise. You go and do likewise. And the application I want you to make is, one way in which disciples wash one another's disciples' feet is reproving and rebuking and warning and admonishing.

Just as in physically, just as in the physical, when I wash a brother's feet, I don't want to get the water too hot and scald him, do I? But neither do I want to make it so cool and cold, it doesn't do the job and remove the dirt and the grime that's there. The point is, I need to humble myself and go to them and serve them and wash their feet and help them remove those things out of their lives. We must do that.

So for a few minutes now, I want to look at the one who goes. I'm going to talk today about the one who goes a little bit, and I'm also going to talk about when it's our turn to receive. Because in the church, there should be both of those things happening in our life, right? Going and also then receiving.

First, I'll talk about going. Talk about the one who sees the sin in his brother or sister's life. The one who sees the flat spot, sees the straying, sees the drifting, sees that there's an area in the life and practice of

this brother or sister in the church that is not right.

And first, I think we need to admit, in our flesh, in our flesh, in our human tendency or weakness, none of us like to go, do we? You know, that's not the job we would sign up for. Or I hope it's not in your flesh. I mean, you know, in your weakness.

That, you know, I don't want to do that. But I think if we will look at our own heart, we will have to admit that the root of that is fear of man. That's one of the problems, isn't it? We don't like to rock the boat.

We want people to like us. And beyond that, if we pull the veil back really deep on our own heart, the real truth is that you may not realize, but I'm hoping you'll hear it today and get on the other side of it, is the real problem is too often we love ourselves more than our brother and sister. We do.

We love ourselves more than our brother and sister. Because Jesus says, those that I love, I rebuke. Or as many as I loved.

How many do you love here? Just one? How many do you say you love? I remember, let me illustrate it this way. I remember back a number of years ago, I was living in Florida and I had a friend. And he and his wife had children later in life and for various reasons and had a little girl.

Her name was Mandy. And oh my, he was quote unquote proud of that little girl. And she got older and like little girls do, she suddenly wasn't the little angel she was when she was two months old.

And she got to be two and three and she was getting worse and worse. And you know, finally, I was talking to him and you know, just about children and all this. And he just kind of admitted.

He said, well, you know, the problem is really, I just can't. And you got to understand he's Southern. So he said, I just can't whoop her.

I mean, that was his way he talked. So I just can't whoop her. I just can't do it, Rick.

And I said, why? And he goes, I just love her too much. But you know, he didn't. He loved himself.

And she grew up a spoiled little girl. He just wouldn't do it. Why wouldn't he do it? Well, the problem was he didn't love her too much.

He loved himself. And he didn't want to do it. He didn't want to do, because we know what does the Bible say about that? If you love them, you will chase them for their sake.

But he didn't do it for his own sake, you know. And so, we need to see this tendency in all of us. We need to see that as Christians, we are actually disobeying God when we do not go to our brother or sister.

We actually have a responsibility to go. And when we don't go, admonish. We're disobeying God.

In Ezekiel 33.7, God says, So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman over the house of Israel. And we can make the spiritual application. God's house today is the church, right? Therefore, thou shalt hear the word at my mouth.

And what? Warn them. And if you look it up, it means admonish and rebuke. Warn them from me.

And the next verse goes on to say, And if you don't, and they perish, their blood is on your hands. Now those are strong words again from the Old Testament. But we're allowed to look back at the Old Testament as examples, the New Testament says, and see the spiritual principle here that God, that there is a responsibility and an accountability that comes in the house of God, that comes in the church.

And we see that we have a responsibility to do this. Now, I can think of, I just have to confess, I can think of failures of my own, and I can think of failures of our own as a church here at Ephrata and both when we were all back at charity, of individuals. You know, if you think of the watchman, what is he supposed to do? He's on the walls and he's watching.

He's alert. He's attentive. He's focused.

He's going to warn them for the sake of the whole village. It's not just for his sake. He's watching for dangers.

But what if he doesn't warn because, well, he either fell asleep or maybe he just thought, you know, this doesn't look like that big of a danger coming. They'll laugh at me. They'll think I'm being foolish.

They'll misunderstand me. I think this time I'm going to let it go. But then the danger comes in and several people perish because of those thoughts and that attitude he had.

What do you think they would think of that watchman after that? They'd say, shame on you. Why didn't you come? And what I was starting to say a minute ago, I would have to say, I've seen examples here in our church and when we were all together at charity where that very thing happened where some of us saw something that was off in someone's life. They were strained, you know.

And usually, we give ourselves away in outward things. I can't see your heart, can I? But I can because the Bible says that what's in your heart is going to come out. And you notice a different attitude, a difference in dress, starting to listen to other music, the car changes, start missing church.

Just things just start happening and you start going, something is wrong. But what if you don't go to that person? Well, I have seen situations in our own churches here where they end up falling into terrible sin. And yes, shame on them for the sin, but you know what? The Bible would say, God would say, shame on you, church.

You failed. You failed. We join in some of that failure.

And we need to see this as a serious thing. And just let me help you here. I don't have time to balance everything in what I need to say today, so you just give me some grace and pray that the Spirit of God would fill in the gaps in your minds.

But we should see ourselves not in this role as a watchman, we should see ourselves not as accusers, but counselors. Okay? And there's a difference. We're not lawyers.

We're counselors. Counselors that rely on the Word of God to take it to somebody and try to bring light and understanding because obviously, they're not seeing something here. There's something wrong happening here.

There's some sin happening here that's causing them to go in this way. And so we need to see ourselves as counselors. That we are not to present ourselves as a prosecuting attorney with a case to win, but

rather we are coming to restore in love for the right reason.

And the way that we urge them to repent and to see this sin is very important. Our response to the sin in their life should be carried out on the basis of Revelation 3.19. Jesus said, as many as I love. In other words, if that cannot be part of the motivation in your heart, warning, danger, there's something wrong with your heart.

Because we're not an attorney. Think of it this way for a minute. God wants us to be... You can either be a lifeguard or you can be a judge.

Both deal with somebody that's doing something wrong. One pronounces a sentence and puts them away. The other sees them in trouble, goes out and rescues them to bring them back to shore, but tells them, don't ever do that again.

But there's that first attempt to rescue them. Think of Jesus and the Pharisees with the woman caught in adultery. Many people read that story and they miss the whole point of the story.

Did you realize that both Jesus and the Pharisees were after the exact same thing? They both wanted the same thing. They wanted her to sin no more. Jesus even finishes the whole thing there with the woman caught in adultery by saying, go and sin no more.

And what does no more mean? He wasn't being soft milk toast. He was saying no more. But He was being more of a lifeguard.

He was rescuing her. He says, I don't condemn you. He offered her forgiveness.

He offered her grace. He offered her life. A lifeguard deals in life.

A judge deals in putting people away. The Pharisees wanted her to sin no more, so they used the law, which was okay. This is sin.

And the law demanded death. We'll put her away. We know how to deal with sin.

We'll just put them away. Jesus also said, no more sin. But He wanted to rescue.

So, you know, you need to see yourself as a lifeguard rather than a judge. May we see these things rightly. That's in John 8, if you want to look at it sometime.

Verses 10 and 11, I think. Now, I want to go on here and I want to get very practical, I'll call it, very real, and just give you... Don't already have your pen and paper out. Get it out, okay? Get it out.

Don't come to listen to one of Brother Rick's sermons without pen and paper. How's that? You know you're going to get a list sooner or later, right? So, get your pen and paper out. Now, I've already mentioned some of the things I'm going to go over on this list, but take some notes on these things about the, may I say, the loving, biblical, proper way to go to someone who is straying, who is sinning, who is blind, who does have a flat spot, who is drifting, however you want to say it, away from the heart of the brotherhood and from the way that God wants them to go in their life.

Now, if this sermon... I just want to give a warning to you because I know somebody's sitting here like this. If this sermon is scaring you, thinking, oh no, Brother Rick is going to pave the way for people to start

coming to my life, you're already thinking wrong. You should be thinking, great! This means I can be more like Christ.

This means I'm going to be in the way. This means I'm going to grow. Remember those five things? Why you need to embrace rebuke? Keep those back there.

Don't forget that, okay? Don't forget that. Praise God. We get to be more like Jesus.

Okay, here's the list. Number one, pray, pray, pray. Pray.

Go to God. Seek God. Pray, first of all, that God would help you to remove the beam from your own eye, right? That you would cleanse your own heart.

God needs to use pure vessels. Not perfect. Not meaning that you and I are sinless.

But we do need to clean our own heart up. Make sure that your heart is pure and your motive is pure. And you can only do that, I think, if you start by praying.

Number two, seek biblical confirmation. Number two, seek biblical confirmation. Trust the Word of God.

Ask God to show you in the Bible. When you see somebody straying or in sin or drifting and you're just thinking, what's wrong here? Go to the Word of God. Seek confirmation.

Seek affirmation in the Word of God. The power of the Word of God to restore the wayward should never be underestimated. Number three, do not discuss with others.

Do not discuss with others. You're still not hearing me. Do not discuss with others.

Okay? Even with me. Don't come tell me until you've gone to them. Don't come and tell the ministry.

Go to them. Go to them. You don't need my approval.

You don't. Go to them. You need God.

You need to pray. And if you're clear, go. Now, the only exception I'll make for this is husbands and wives.

Now, realizing that husbands and wives are one, sometimes you do need to make sure your heart is clear. And you know, with spouses, I understand those things. We're one and all that.

But to go tell other people in the church, even the ministry, may I say, please don't do that. It doesn't bear any good fruit. It really doesn't.

Four, get a burden for the person. Number four, get a burden for the person. Remember the lifeguard example.

When the lifeguard sees the person beyond the ropes where they're supposed to be, they've broken the rules, does he sit there and write up a report about the person breaking the rule? Or does his heart go, oh no, they're in trouble and there's an immediate burden, right? He doesn't have to get a burden. It just comes upon him. Sometimes you and I aren't that good.

We need to get a burden. Well, I don't know how you do it, but you can get a burden from God. God can help you get the right burden for somebody's heart.

Weep for their sin. You're not a judge. Feel the weight of the issue in light of eternity in the Kingdom of God.

Feel your love for them. Do not go as a judge in a critical manner. Get a burden.

Five, do not be reactionary. Do not just react, in other words. In other words, sometimes you see something and you just sort of have a knee-jerk reaction.

You just run and go do something. And I've found often that it just doesn't work out that way. It's just maybe, that's why you need to go back to number one and pray.

You know, sometimes people see something and they just kind of react and you don't know what's going on. You haven't seen the whole picture yet. And I know none of us can ever see the whole picture, so I'm not using this one to get out of going.

But I'm just saying, you know, can you just pause long enough to make sure you've prayed and you have a burden? You know, just take your time. Six, and this one goes along, seek appropriate timing. You know, don't go up in the middle of a bunch of other people and, you know, boom, boom, boom, hit somebody with something.

You know, seek appropriate timing and place. And by timing, I don't just mean take too much time. I also mean don't wait too long.

Because sometimes people see something in somebody's life and they wait and they wait and they wait. And you know one of the problems with waiting, besides the person's getting further away, is the more you wait, you get actually, I've seen in some people's hearts, and even in my own heart, you almost develop a critical spirit the longer you wait. Isn't that sad? I don't know why that is.

Human beings are strange creatures, some of the things we do. But in the flesh, those things can happen. Don't let it... In other words, it festers.

You know what I mean by festering? You ever let a sore fester? Don't take too long. You need to find your balance in this thing. Okay, seven, now you've gone to see them, pray with the person first.

Before you talk to them, if at all possible, pause for prayer together. You need somebody else there besides the two of you. You need God there.

You need Christ there. And you need to invite Him to come for His wisdom and His grace and His mercy and His love. Number eight, affirm your love for them.

And I don't know how you do this, but your spirit and your words need to affirm that you care for them, that you're concerned for them. You care about them as a person. You're not just there to boom, boom, boom, lay down this issue, but you're there because you care about them as a person.

Number nine, be humble. You know, there's a spiritual principle in the Bible in James where it says, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. You know, that's true between people.

You know, it's hard to resist a humble man, isn't it? If somebody comes to you and they're humble, it's almost like you can't help it. You're going to hear what they have to say because their spirit is humble and it's like you just give them grace, don't you? We're that way too. There's a spiritual dynamic that happens

even between you and I. So be humble.

Realize as you go, and in the back of your mind, I know you know this, but do you know when you go, you have some flat spots too? You know? And you're not there to talk about yours, but I'm just saying, know who you are as you go too. You know? And if you know that, that'll help you be humble. Number 10.

I'm not sure how to make this one a short one. This sort of goes along with something I already said about affirming love, but show that you're interested in their life. Maybe this is something you do before you go.

Make sure that you go in your mind with specific things that you actually appreciate about that person's life and even respect them about their life. Because nobody, even if they're doing one part of their life is off, does that mean that they're all bad? No. And sometimes we get so focused on the negative thing, and it is wrong, and it does need admonishing that we don't open our eyes to see the whole person.

And I find that it helps me get out of this tunnel vision thing if I can go, well, you know, actually, I really appreciate this person and, you know, you can make a list very easily. I've learned from this person like that. And somehow that just sort of gives you a balance in your heart and allows you to go with more freedom and grace in your heart.

Number 11. Try to be specific when you go. Try to give examples.

Try not to generalize. You know, it's pretty rough when you go to someone and say, well, I've just noticed things aren't right in your life. And they'll say, what are you talking about? Well, just things aren't right, you know.

And that happens sometimes, but it doesn't work. Now, you don't go with 20 examples because you're going to overwhelm them. Okay, I can't balance everything I'm saying today, but, you know, use some, not just common sense, but be sensitive in your heart.

But you need to be specific enough that they understand because see, think of it this way. It's a blind spot because if they're a spiritual person and they're walking with God and they saw it, you don't have to go to them. The problem with a blind spot, if it's back here, guess what? I can't see it.

And so when you go, don't be surprised if they don't see it at first because they're blind or they're making themselves. If it's really a serious root of sin, they're purposefully not seeing it, but they're still not seeing it. Okay, number 12.

Encourage and exhort as you share. Did you notice when he was talking to Timothy there and he said preach on it, but the word exhort was in there and I think in another verse we read. And the word exhort and encourage means at the same time that there's rebuking and reproofing, there's also some encouragement given there, you know, about their life and about who they are and how they're needed in the body of Christ.

And, you know, there's words of exhortation and come on, yeah, you know, given with that because they need to hear all those things as well. 13, and this one goes together, go in faith. Go in faith.

Don't go with a defeated attitude. They can read you like a book. You know, go in faith.

Believing better things of them. Being persuaded in faith that they will see what God needs them to see. Brother Dean, that they'll see it.

Go in faith that they'll see it. Not just hear, but that they'll see it. Have some faith.

Be persuaded of better things of them. Don't go thinking, you know what? They're not going to see this. You know, if you're like that, I'm sorry.

There's something wrong with your heart. Go in faith. Go in faith.

14, do not exaggerate to try to make a point. Don't use broad, sweeping statements like, well, I've noticed that you always... fill in the blank. Or you never... because first of all, nobody always does anything, do they? You know, so once you start doing that, they're going to shut you off and think this person doesn't know me.

Because I don't always... whatever it is that they're coming to rebuke you about. You know, don't exaggerate. Now, sometimes as humans, we're so tempted to try to make our point, we want to drive it home, we think we have to add some juice to it, you know.

We have the Holy Spirit. Right? We have the Bible. You don't need to do that.

Let God do that. Because if God doesn't come, and the Spirit of God isn't at work anyway, it doesn't matter what you say, you know. Number 15, pray.

Pray with them at the end if you can, and afterwards, you pray. That God will finish the work. Because you want God to do the work, don't you? You may be God's mouthpiece.

You may be the one God is using to do this, but pray that God will do the work. That God will finish the work. For that person's sake, but also for the sake of the church, right? Amen? Okay.

Alright, now, throw the switch with me. Can we leave that for... just leave that list. Let's just throw the switch now.

Get on the other side. Now, receiving. Receiving admonishment, correction, rebuke.

Someone comes to you and you hear that phrase, I have something to share with you. I would like to talk with you sometime. Unfortunately, most of us in our flesh, our heart begins to flutter.

Our neck muscles tighten. Breathing becomes a little difficult for a few minutes. Because most of us in our flesh, we don't like to be shown in an unfavorable light, do we? It's uncomfortable.

It doesn't feel good. We want people to think the best of us. We want to be shown in a favorable light.

The truth is, in our old man, we have a distaste for correction. How many people really like to be told that they're wrong in the flesh or in the old man? It's just not there. We do not always appreciate someone telling us that we have erred.

But there's a very important principle you need to get, beloved, here. This doesn't work. There's a very important principle you need to get here.

Constructive correction, I'll call it, admonishment, but I'll use the phrase constructive correction, is going to do one of two things. It's going to devastate or develop. It depends... Now here's the key.

It depends totally on you. Not on the person that comes. I'm sorry, you can't put it off on them.

It depends on you, on how you choose to receive it. Whether it will devastate you or develop you. But it is your choice.

It is not the choice of the person. It is not the way they delivered it. It is not everything they said or didn't say.

The choice of whether constructive criticism or correction devastates you or develops you is up to you. How you choose. You know, I know your theology is right.

Most of us would say we're open to correction, but again, the sad truth is too many of you and me, we are too easily bruised. We're too easily bruised. You know, I can think of my own life.

Sometimes after I preach a message, someone can say to me, oh, you know, our emotions that are part of the old man anyway are tricky things. Someone can say to me, oh, your message was good. It really changed my life.

Well, spiritually I'm blessed, but sometimes my emotions get involved and I go, oh, good. You know, three minutes later though, I've had somebody come up to me on the same message and say, I didn't agree with the thing you've said. You're wrong.

And my emotions want to go, boom, right down. Emotions are, they're not stable. You cannot trust those things.

And if you do, you will find yourself too easily bruised. It happens. But we're spiritual.

We want to walk in the new man. We want to make the right choices by the Spirit of God and by the power of God. Remember, you're not able to admonish, but may I say, you are able to receive it.

God would not give you something you couldn't handle. There wouldn't be all these commandments to give it if God knew it was just going to crush and devastate everybody. You ever think about it that way? God knows you not only need it, you can handle it.

If you choose to develop rather than devastate. We need to see these things right. Turn to Proverbs 3. Proverbs 3. Verse 11 and 12.

Proverbs 3, 11 and 12. Why don't we stand? Why don't you stand with me? Proverbs 3, 11 and 12. And let's read these two verses together.

Proverbs 3, 11 and 12. 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.

Isn't that wonderful? Okay, you may be seated. Now, the word despise here means put it off or throw it away. So He's saying, My son, don't throw this stuff away.

Don't throw it away, the chastening and the correction of the Lord. Because when He brings it your way, He's doing it because He delighteth in you. Our thinking with our emotions are all wrong.

We're thinking, Oh no, woe is me, poor me. I'm getting picked on. And God is saying, No, I'm delighting in you.

Don't put it away. Don't let your emotions rule you. God is saying you need in your Christian life Proverbs 3, 11 moments.

I've had them. Have you had any Proverbs 3, 11 moments in your Christian life which have defined and changed and put a juncture, a change in the direction of your Christian life? I have. And I can say that I'm different because God has delighted in me with some Proverbs 3, 11 moments when I've seen it as the hand of God reaching down, delighting in me.

And it's changed. Even since I've been in the ministry, I remember I've made some mistakes. The first sermon I ever preached, I made a mistake on.

It was a bad mistake. And poor brother Aaron had to come to me. Sweet brother Aaron.

And rebuke me. You know, how'd you like that for you to be your first sermon at charity? And he had to rebuke me. And I made a mistake.

And you know, at first I was like, Whoa, whoa, whoa. But then I went, okay, wait a minute. And it was a Proverbs 3, 11.

I saw it as the hand of God. And I needed it. And I thank God for that moment in my life, that Proverbs 3, 11 moment.

I've had others in the ministry. I've had others in my life. And I'm thankful for those moments.

Even in my job, in my work life, I've had it. Okay, well, I need to move on here. But remember this whole thing.

You need these Proverbs 3, 11 moments in your life. You should be very worried if you don't have very many. If you can think back over the last five years and you've only had one or two, there's something wrong with you, but there's something wrong with our church too.

And that's why I'm preaching this message. There's something wrong with our church. That's the admonishment.

There's something wrong. There's something wrong. Now again, I want to try to make this as practical as I can with this list.

So keep your pen and paper out. Now I'm going to try as I do this. I spoke to my wife a couple of days ago.

I think it was two or three days ago because I felt that there's a tendency in how we receive things that sometimes I've noted over the years. And I checked it with her and she said I was right. That women and men have certain tendencies when they receive rebuke.

Many of them are the same, but there's some that are a bit more unique. Although again, a lot of them cross over. So I'm going to divide these up at times a little bit between the men and the women.

But if it applies to you anyway, don't let that exclude you because some cross over. And so remember, this is not just a list. This one especially more than the other list is a searching.

It is a searching from the heart of God to your heart. It is a searching. And there's going to be people in this room I know that need to repent.

You know, I just tell you, I know some of you need to as you hear this list, you need to allow the Spirit of God to search your heart and you need to repent. Because you want, you need, I beg of you, to let God delight in you so that you can have a Proverbs 31 moment. You do.

Okay, number one. Having an unapproachable attitude. Did you know that people can tell whether or not you're approachable? People can tell whether or not you're touchable? People can tell.

You don't have to say a word and people can tell by the Spirit you give off. I'm satisfied with my life. Do not speak into my... It's like you're wearing a sign.

Do not touch me. We give off those vibrations. We can't.

Isn't that sad that we can do that? Shame on us. But you know, and I'm not generalizing here or out there. I'm saying in our church, in our churches, in our circles, in this church, there are people that have this attitude.

Do not touch me. Now, they've never said that. Their theology would be perfect.

They would never dare to say that. But they give off that attitude. Do not touch me.

Oh, you need to repent. Oh, you need to repent. You know, I'm just going to stick my neck out and just tell you, please, beg you, you need to repent.

Because you think nobody knows, but you'd be surprised how many people know. And you've never said a word. But they read you.

They read your spirit. Do you need to repent? Can you truly say you want correction? As you're sitting here, can you say you are touchable? Can you say that before God honestly? Number two, crying out of hurt. And this one tends to be a tendency of the sisters a bit more.

Crying out of hurt. They shed tears immediately upon the rebuke coming, not of repentance, not of sorrow over sin, but of bruised feelings and hurt. And when somebody starts doing that, it's hard to finish.

May I say? Because what they're really saying is, don't touch me. Because their feelings are bruised. I've watched Helen train our girls in the home, our older girls, not to do this as she goes to them or I go to them, because she says, girls, someday, Lord willing, you'll have a husband.

And can you imagine you have this wonderful, tenderhearted husband, and every time he tries to come to you, you start crying because your feelings are hurt. You know, after two or three times, you know what he's going to do? He's going to stop coming. And then your life is really going to be a mess because you've just blocked the person closest to you from coming to you.

Because he's tenderhearted. I mean, he's not going to make you cry. What husband wants to make his wife cry? You know? It's not right.

It's not right. God can help you overcome that, sisters. God can.

Number three. I'll just call this one being personally offended. Being personally offended.

And I'll explain it here. I think the root of this is somewhat pride. But you're offended at the person for even coming to you.

This one, men tend to, I think, have a little bit more. And you can tell they're offended just that you came even before you're halfway done. And they stop hearing you.

They might even cut you off or cut you short and say things like, I'm offended. I'm offended. And you know, as you hear what God wants for rebuke, there is no room in there for offense.

I'm sorry. Because once you do that, you've just cut off the flow of God admonishing and speaking into your life. You've chosen to be devastated instead of to be developed.

You've made a choice. You know, you can choose whether you're offended or not. It doesn't just fall on your head and hit you.

You've made a choice. Don't be offended. You need a Proverbs 311 moment.

You need to see God wants to delight in you. Number four. Now, this is probably, this number four, these are not necessarily in order.

This one is probably one of the big, I don't know how to rate these things. I don't think I can, but I will rate this one at the top of the heap. Finding fault in the person who comes.

Finding fault in the person that comes. You know, we fault their attitude for the way they come. We fault that they don't have all the stories straight.

We even begin to see flat spots in their life and before they're done rebuking us, we start telling them things that aren't really right about their life. And we do it very subtly. You know, people do that.

They just kind of drop little hints. Well, I don't know, you know. And they make comments about your life or they make comments about the ministry or about the church.

Well, this church doesn't, you know. And then they bring out their list. This is not a debate, okay? This is not a time to play lawyer, okay? This is a time for a Proverbs 3.11 moment where you sit and you listen and you receive and you get really quiet before God.

Because as long as you're firing shots back out, you're not receiving what you need to hear. This is a big one. I can just say personally, I've had this happen to me many times.

Many times. And I've talked to others and they have the same problem. This is a problem that we people have.

Someone comes and immediately something rises up and we want to see fault in them. Well, you don't do and you've not done. And please don't do that.

These are common mistakes that people make. Number five, explaining or justifying action or situation. Explaining or justifying action or situation.

You know, somebody comes and suddenly you have a list of all the reasons of why you're behaving a certain way or doing a certain thing. Again, it's time to listen. Don't talk too much.

Listen. You know, maybe ask a few questions so that you can understand, because you probably don't see it. Pray.

Ask God to help you hear and see it. Because again, if you probably already saw it, they wouldn't have had to come. But if you start giving a list of reasons why you're doing this or why, well, my music isn't that bad.

Let me tell you all the good things about it. Or, well, I wore that, I know. And I know the church doesn't approve, but it isn't going to work.

You're not going to receive that love and that delight that He wants to bring in your life. Number six, doubting that it's true. Doubting that it's true.

You know, immediately somebody comes and you think, well, this isn't true. Again, I talked about it already. This is the blind spot problem.

If you saw it, you wouldn't need them to come. People think, well, I don't see that about my life. Well, of course you don't see that.

That's why somebody else has to come. And so you doubt it's not true. And the minute you doubt it's not true, you think, well, thoughts like, well, they don't really understand me.

They don't really understand my situation. They're being too hard on me. And what you're really doing, may I say, is you're having sort of a little bit of a pity party on the inside.

This is not the time for a pity party. You know, you may not see it. And I acknowledge that.

And sometimes you may just need to go away and pray and fast for a day or two. I don't know. It doesn't always work out that you go to somebody and they see it the minute you say it.

It just doesn't always work that way. But don't doubt that it's not true just because you don't immediately see it. Number seven, no right to come.

No right to come. Sometimes thoughts come to people like, well, they don't really have any right to come to me. You know, and you're a little bit indignant.

You're thinking they're not qualified. And they don't really have a right to do that. They're not in the ministry and all these other things.

And again, hopefully after today's message, you won't have that thought anymore. They do have a right to come. In fact, they have an obligation to come.

In fact, they're commanded of God to come. So you don't want to get between them and a commandment of God, I hope. Number eight, it works this way too.

Telling others. Talking to others. After they come to you, do you immediately run and tell three or four or five of your best friends? And how do you tell the story when you tell it? Do you tell it in such a way as to draw pity? Do you tell what happened like it really happened? Do you say things like to your friends, am I really that bad? I mean, how can they answer that question? You put them in a corner.

Don't go running to your friends and tell three or four friends. Take it to your Father in Heaven. He's the One bringing this in your life.

He's the One you need to be talking to. Number nine, this one again is a little bit more, may I say, on the sister's side, but not entirely. I'm not going to put it all on your side.

It's hopeless. It's hopeless. Somebody comes and then you find yourself saying things like, I can't ever live up to the standards of the church.

I can't ever please anybody. Nothing I do pleases the church. And just big exclamations of hopelessness.

Well, first of all, it's not true. It's a lie, you know. The devil is whispering condemnation into your ear and you're agreeing with the wrong guy.

You're agreeing with the devil. That's the devil. And you're agreeing with him.

You don't want to agree with the devil, do you? But that's just an emotional response that sometimes, oh, it's hopeless. I can never do anything right, you know. And all those emotions and things start coming.

It's the devil. It's the devil. Don't fall prey to his condemnation.

Number ten, this is similar. Making yourself a victim. Making yourself look like the victim.

Again, afterwards when you retell the story, do you use words like, they really hurt me with the things they said. They made me feel so bad. As you're telling all your friends.

Men sometimes say things like, oh, he really plowed into me. He raked me over the coals. Well, you know, immediately when you start talking like that, you're making yourself the victim.

And we all feel sorry for victims, don't we? I mean, somebody's in a car wreck. They're a victim of getting hit. I mean, poor thing.

But see, you're not a victim here. Somebody's trying to restore you where you need to be in the church and with God. Number eleven, this is one that is definitely on the men's side, although I think some women do it too, but it's definitely on the brother's side.

Since some is incorrect, all is incorrect. Men are great lawyers. For example, somebody comes to you and 80% of what they have to say is either not true or it's really there's something wrong with it.

But 20% of it is accurate. And men are good at this. We weigh it in the balance of our mind.

Let's see, 80% off, 20% sort of true. Probably the whole thing is wrong. And we just pitch it in the trash.

That's bad theology. That's bad Christian life. Because that 20% may be the most important thing in your life that you ever see.

And it may be this is your chance to see it. And you've just pitched the whole thing out. Number twelve, pushing it off.

Pushing it off. We let time pass. We decide to put it all on the back burner and say, well, someday I'll see it, maybe.

And time goes by. Weeks, months, months, months. And during that time, we find ourselves doing things like avoiding the person.

Who came to us. When we walk down the hall, our eyes go down the other way. You know, things like that.

And we actually, strangely enough, begin to accumulate a little bit of a list in our mind of their faults. You know, rather than dealing with what God is trying to teach us. Don't let time go by.

If you need to take off a couple of days from work and pray and fast. If you need to, you know, seek the Lord. You need to search the Bible.

This is serious. You need to take it as a warning. As an admonishment.

As a rebuke from God. Fourteen, rejecting the delivery. Rejecting the delivery.

You judge the one that comes, not by what they say, but by the delivery. Maybe they didn't hear the first part of the message today. And maybe they don't come and say everything just right.

Maybe they don't affirm their love for you. Maybe they even say it in the wrong spirit. I don't know.

People make mistakes, don't they? And so you say, well, you know what? Their attitude was wrong. I can tell that there's something wrong with the way they're thinking about me. And you just pitch the whole thing away.

Danger. That's very dangerous. You know, human vessels make mistakes.

And just because the delivery isn't picture perfect, I don't think gives you or I the right to pitch the whole thing out. And I've heard this one so many times. Well, if you could have heard their attitude, Brother Rick, you'd know why I didn't hear that one.

Well, you know, maybe their attitude was wrong. I can't defend that. I don't know.

I don't know. But I do know that God does use imperfect vessels. And sometimes we don't say things the right way.

Sometimes we don't have the right attitude. But I don't believe it gives you the right to pitch it all out. I believe you're doing yourself and your church a grave injustice.

Well, I know the time is moving on here. I got started a little bit late this morning. With the service, I've just got a little bit here and I'm going to close.

I know some of these overlap. And I know more could be said on some of these things. But I hope you get a little bit of an idea of some things.

And I hope God has stirred your heart this morning, some of you here, to repentance. That you can see there's something wrong in my heart in this whole area. And that you can see that God is waiting to delight in you and give you these, again, Proverbs 3.11 moments in your life.

But you've been dodging them. You've been dodging them. You've been avoiding them.

You've been shoving them under the rug or doing whatever it is with them. And it's not going well with you. You know, it is not going well with you.

My dear beloved, we must not let the devil have the advantage over us in this area. This is an area the devil, I think, has a joyride among us. You know, of all the misunderstanding of the heart of God in this and the misunderstanding both how to give and receive warnings and corrections and admonishments in the church.

Go over these things and study them for yourself. And I believe you'll see that this is part of loving the brethren. This is part of one anothering.

And again, we must see that this is part of my relationship with God and my relationship with you. And again, if I fail in one part, in effect, I fail in the other. These things will and do strike at your true attitude towards the church.

They do. They strike at your real attitude towards the church and your maturity and your willingness to submit yourself to God's ways. You know, are we willing to do that? Let me just in closing, read a final verse here.

Turn to Psalm 141. Psalm 141. And here is verse 5. Turn to Psalm 141, verse 5. And look at this verse here with me for just a moment.

This is a wonderful verse that I hope will open your heart as the Spirit of God will speak it to you. It says, Let the righteous smite me. Isn't that an interesting verse? Sometimes people feel like they've been hit.

Well, this says, Let the righteous smite me. It shall be a kindness. Yeah, their delivery may not be just right.

But you know what? It's a kindness to you. And let him reprove me. It shall be, watch, an excellent oil.

Do you think of that? When you think of somebody coming to admonish you, do you think of it as an excellent oil? Or do you get all tense and nervous? Look at the last of it. Which shall not break my head. Them reproving you will not break you.

It will not cause you damage. If you don't hear it, if you don't hear it, that is damage. Because constructive correction is either going to devastate you or develop you.

And if you allow it to devastate you, there will be destruction. There will be problems in your life. I can say, brothers and sisters, this morning with all my heart, I love you.

I do very much. I love you. And I love God's ways.

This is God's way. Can we not combine our love for each other with God's ways and open this area up in our lives between each other in love for each other? I think we can. I'm persuaded of better things, just like Paul said in Romans 15-14, that you are able to admonish.

Amen. May God add His blessings and applications in your life and in mine. Thank you.

Excuse me, please. I had some announcement about Africa to deal with. Well, amen.

I have to think this morning that there are probably some of you sitting in your seats this morning like Rick said that need to repent. And as I was sitting here listening, I think there's a qualification that God gives for the perfect man when He's talking about elders. It's called easily entreated.

Ever been challenged by that word? Easily entreated. A person that's easy to go to. Oh, I know he'll respond right.

I know he just doesn't see it, but when I come to him, I'm sure that it'll be a blessing. We'll both get a blessing out of it. Do you know of very many people like that? Easily entreated? Are you a person like that? How is it with you this morning? Can we just ask that question right off? How is it with you? I almost hesitate to just go on and not do something with a message like that.

Because like Rick said, this is the command of God. This is a problem that we have in the church. Maybe I could just ask, how many of you would raise your hand and have been admonished this last year? Have been admonished? Personally, someone's come to you and admonished you about something in your life? More than I expected.

Maybe a quarter of us. Well, praise God. How many of you have admonished someone else about an area in their life? Maybe you could raise your hand.

About the same. Do you feel the need that we should do anything? Or should we just take it home, brother? Alright, well, maybe the thing that we could do here is let's just open it up. And if God has spoken to your life this morning and you feel like you would like to stand to your feet and give testimony, either something to add to this message, but especially if you have a failure in your life in this area and you see it this morning, and you'd like to repent publicly, just stand to your feet and repent.

Let's do that. And be healed. And bring a health to this congregation.

Can we do that this morning? Just raise your hand and we'll get a microphone to you and stand to your feet. Anyone? I have built a wall around my life and I have tried to keep people at bay so they wouldn't share with me things that they see in my life. And I want to, with the Lord's grace this week, to work in that and deal with that in my life.

Amen. Thank you. For the grace of God be upon you.

Alex? First of all, I'd like to really thank brother Rick for sharing that message, a very, very needful message. And I give a hearty amen to it. I've certainly been guilty of having a harsh spirit sometimes and using words like always and never.

I've done that too. I appreciate the admonishment in that area. And I do repent.

Amen. Thank you, brother. Go ahead and stand up if you would.

Yeah, I too appreciate brother Rick's message. I want to thank him and pray that God would just bless him for sharing these things. I'm sure it's just as hard to do that as it is for us to go to someone else and entreat them.

I know in my own heart, it seems like it's very hard for me to... Well, I just appreciate the first point he gave us. Pray, pray, pray. And I've been doing that in the last little while here is praying for a lot of you.

And I bless God for the burdens He gives me, but I also see that many times when He gives me a burden, I go and share it with someone else instead of talking to the person about the burden that comes upon my heart. And I want to repent of that this morning. And my wife and others in my family have been reminding me for a long time that I talk too much.

And so I would like for you all to pray for me that when I do talk, it would be from God, from the will of God instead of just out of the frustration of my own heart. I know I have a need for that verse that says, set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth and keep the door of my lips. And so I'd just like to repent of that this morning.

I need a mind that's purified and a heart that's set on the things that God would have me to speak to others. Thank you. Amen.

I'd encourage us all to take those two lists to our prayer closet tomorrow morning. I intend to do that myself. Just look over that list in prayer before God.

Brother Roy. Amen. I just want to express my appreciation for the message this morning.

I was blessed. I feel like I was admonished. Doing what we heard this morning is not something that comes naturally to the man, natural man.

And I believe it's an area that we all need to grow in if we're really honest with ourselves. What we heard this morning was wisdom. The writer in Galatians said, Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such in one in the spirit of meekness.

And who of us this morning would like to acknowledge we're carnal? I think we would all like to admit we're spiritual. Well then, we have a command, do we not? And I just feel like I need to repent. You know, it's something that at times I've seen.

Maybe a brother needs some direction, but it's too easy to look the other way. And well, maybe somebody else will take care of that. No.

We have a responsibility. And I appreciate those that have shared with me needs in my life. And maybe it didn't always come in the right way.

But I am so grateful that God had given me grace at times to accept it anyway and see and hear and listen and amen. What we heard this morning was right. And if we do that and listen with our hearts and hear, God will show us those blind spots.

They are blind spots. And we all have them. I just pray.

I want to have an open heart to hear what God has for me as we walk together here in this congregation. I want to have an open heart. Whether admonition comes in a right way or a wrong way.

Oh, I just want to, by God's grace, be able to listen and to allow that to develop me and not devastate me. Go ahead, Steve. Down here in the front.

Brother Lawrence. Danny. Okay, Steve, go ahead.

I feel I need to confess in this area of giving admonition that I have grown weary in well-doing. And for a while I've noticed, and I know I've shared it with a few of the brethren, that I've become dull. And I think that the Lord is answering why I've become dull.

Because there's no reason to show me anything if I'm not going to do anything about it. So, may the Lord give us grace and restore us to continue to walk with Him. Daniel.

Yes, I need to share. I don't know how much. This was a very, very timely message for me just Friday evening, and yesterday I failed the test.

First of all, I want to repent of every brother and sister here that I've said any derogatory, harsh statements of the church that were left a couple of years ago. I'm very sorry. I know that I don't feel that I have that much of a problem accepting admonition of things that are truth in my life.

But just to clarify what I failed in, Friday night I had a brother come to me and said that he's hearing that in a doctor's office this past summer that I was to another old grandma from... Well, it's just not a dad. It was a grandma that I really railed against the church. Is that true? And I said, I'll search my heart.

They were trying to get... It had to do with their granddaughter and a bunch of stuff. I said, we had already left when these things happened. I said, I choose... I know very, very little about it, and I choose not to know anything about it.

And that's how I thought I had responded. Now, the brother that came to me Friday said that it's all over, how terrible I talked about the church to this lady. And she was trying and trying to get out of me why we left, why we did this, why we did that.

I said, we're not talking about it. That wasn't so bad. But I should have let it at that.

Last night I had to call my friend up and tell him all this, what they're doing to me. I'm very, very sorry. I repent of it.

Please forgive me. Thank you for opening up there. Anyone else? Have one right up here in the front.

Anyone else, get your hand up if you'd like. Yeah, I was really blessed by the message this morning. One thing, one word of testimony for me is growing up, I never had that admonishment.

And being in the home that I am now, that God has placed me in, I'm really blessed by having it. And one attitude that I found in coming into it when mom and dad come and say they have something to talk to me about, just having a thankful attitude. I don't quite see it right now, but thank you for telling me.

I look into it, I search my heart. And just having that thankful attitude, I think God just really pours a blessing upon you and gives you strength to overcome. Praise God.

Thank you, Brother Billy. Yeah, that's a testimony to all our homes. This is a perfect topic to take home and talk as a family.

Take it home and talk with your family about it. Anyone else? Lingering? Feel like you should say something, but there's not enough time? Right up here. Go ahead, Gordon.

I just felt like maybe I should share. I was here during Bible school, was not a student, but sorry for the attitude I ran around with here. It was just the attitude that I had everything under control.

And I was at peace inside, but I was not displaying an attitude that I probably could have been approached if there was something wrong. So I ask your forgiveness. Amen.

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