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Pearls From Proverbs: Frankness Finds Favor

By Irvin Himmel

"He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favor than he that flattereth with the tongue" (Proverbs 28:23).

Although there are people who do not care what others think about them, most of us desire the esteem and good will of our acquaintances. Our words and actions toward others reflect our inclination to find favor with them.

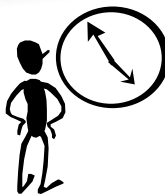
On the surface it seems that rebuking someone is not the way to gain his respect and admiration, but frankness finds more favor than flattery.

Rebuke

The Hebrew word for "rebuke" (*yakach*) in this proverb means to decide, judge, reprove, or correct. We rebuke a person when we take him to task or reprimand him.

1.Rebuking requires courage. It is much easier to brag on someone than to tell him that he is wrong. When God charged Nathan the prophet to go to David and convict him of the sin of adultery, it took boldness on Nathan's part to fulfill the assignment (II Samuel 12). David was the king of Israel. He had great power. Already he had arranged to dispose of Uriah the Hittite. If he became angry toward Nathan, the prophet might be imprisoned or put to death. Nathan courageously went to David and pointed out his sinfulness.

2.Rebuking may be painful. Possibly there are some who relish telling another his faults, but a conscientious person, keenly aware of his own shortcomings, finds no pleasure in confronting another about his transgressions. "Nothing is more irritating or hardening than to be rebuked by one who evidently enjoys his office. But if the one who points out our fault is evidently deeply pained himself, we must be



Time of
Assembly

Sunday:

Bible Study 4:00 p.m.

Worship 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 p. m.

very obdurate if we are insensible to such an appeal. The wayward child is conquered, not by the rod in his mother's hand, but by the tears in her eyes" (E. Hurndall).

3. Rebuking shows love. Paul found it painful to rebuke his brethren but love compelled him. He expressed his feelings this way: *"For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you"* (II Corinthians 2:4).

4. Rebuking is commanded. God told the Israelites, *"Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him"* (Leviticus 19:17). The command to rebuke one who sins was to avoid developing hatred toward him and to avoid complicity in his sin. Jesus taught that if a brother trespasses against thee, *"go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone"* (Matthew 18:15). Again, Jesus commanded, *"if thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him"* (Luke 17:3).

5. A rebuke is a call to repentance. The aim in castigating someone is to produce godly sorrow which in turn brings about repentance. The design of a rebuke is not punishment. Read Paul's remarks in II Corinthians 7:8-10 on this point. A rebuke may cause temporary displeasure. The one who is reprovved may not like his medicine. He may get angry and attempt to justify his misconduct.

Favor Afterwards

In the long run rebuke is more likely to bring admiration and respect than displeasure. "We are so prone to self-love, and pride, that the most prudent, and needful rebukes are apt to create transient displeasure. Yet upon reflection most men will have a better opinion of a faithful reprovver, than of a soothing flatterer, and will show him more favor" (T. Scott).

When the rebuked person comes to his senses, his heart will be grateful toward the individual who pointed out his fault and convicted him of his sin.

Failure of Flattery

As Proverbs 26:28 states it, *"a flattering mouth worketh ruin."* How many people do you know who have been brought to repentance through flattery? The real friend is not the flatterer but one who rebukes in the spirit of love.

"He who gives us kisses when he ought to give us reproof, or who holds back deserved rebuke from cowardice, is more cruel than if he withheld from us an indispensable medicine simply because it had a bitter taste. And if a wound is to be probed it is surely better for the patient that it should be done by a skillful and tender hand than by one who has no sympathy with us and no acquaintance with our inner life" (W. Harris).

Firm, frank, and kind rebuke finds more favor than flattery will ever produce.

One Sinner Destroys Much Good

By Ron Daly

Wisdom is better than weapons of war; but one sinner destroys much good.
(Ecclesiastes 9:18)

The title of this article comes from a statement of the writer of the book of Ecclesiastes in chapter 9, verse 18. It conveys a thought that each of us must consider. It tells us that a sinner wields a lot of influence, but it is the wrong kind and it is destructive! Notice that the text doesn't say that "many sinners destroy much good," but "one sinner destroys much good." Many times one sinner does more harm to the cause of good, than one righteous person does to a stampeding herd of ungodliness.

A preacher may be a very effective pulpiteer and he may have a firm grasp on the truth of scripture, but if he doesn't believe what he preaches enough to live it, he is himself a sinner who destroys any good that he achieves (I Timothy 4:11-12).

An elder may have tremendous leadership skills coupled with a broad knowledge of God's word, but if he doesn't practice what he requires about honesty, controlling the tongue, moral purity, and all else, he isn't fit for the position of overseer. He will destroy any good that he accomplishes (I Timothy 5:20; Titus 1:7).

A Bible class teacher may be kind, knowledgeable, and very practical in his application of scripture, but if he is a gossip, quick tempered, listens to slander, and never asks forgiveness from those against whom he has sinned, any good that he accomplishes will be destroyed by his sins (Romans 2:19-24).

If one hundred people obey the gospel every week and gather for worship and if they see people in the assembly who also claim to be Christians, but frequent drug houses, strip clubs, bars, prostitution and gambling houses, receive and conceal stolen property, and swindle others out of their belongings, any good that is accomplished by the congregation will be destroyed (Hebrews 10:26-29).

We should promote good instead of destroying it. If our lives are not what God says they should be we are destroying the good that we or other saints seem to be achieving. We must repent of our sins and start anew. Grieving in sin isn't the answer. We've got to get over the "self-pity complex." If there is sin in your life, stop it and turn to God. Then and only then will the good that we and others are trying to do will not be destroyed.



Why Should You Think It Incredible?

By Hugh DeLong

The death of Jesus was a stumbling block. The resurrection of Jesus also causes many to stumble. In preaching to the Athenian philosophers, Paul testified that God had raised Jesus from the dead. *"Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked"* (Acts 17:34).

When Paul stood before King Agrippa, he stated: *"King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe"* (Acts 26:27). Earlier Paul had said: *"Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead?"* (Acts 26:8). To believe in the prophets is to believe in God. Believing in God makes the raising of the dead credible.

Beginning with God, it is **not** hard to believe in a resurrection. In the beginning, He made a body out of dust and breathed into it the breath of life. Surely it is not more difficult to raise a dead body than it was to create it in the first place.

With such belief in the resurrection of Jesus, it becomes easy to affirm the rest of the story. The virgin birth? Such is no more difficult than the resurrection from the dead. Healing the lame, blind, and infirm? Casting out demons? Calming a storm? Walking on water? Believing in the resurrection of the dead is a belief in the very power and ability of God.

Modern man has begun at the wrong point as they think about Jesus. Many scholars start with the denial of **any** and **all** miracles. Such is purely unbelief in the nature and power of God. Beginning with the denial of miracle leads them to a denial of the resurrection of Jesus. With the denial of the resurrection of Jesus, they end up denying **our** resurrection.

I find it incredible that men would believe in God and **not** believe in the resurrection. Paul wrote: *"For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied"* (I Corinthians 15:16-19).

Unbelief in the resurrection leaves us in the same hopeless situation as unbelievers in God. We live, we die, and we perish forever. There is nothing to hope for beyond dying. There is no justice against those who do evil. There is no reward for living godly. It matters not in the whole scheme of things whether one lives godly like Paul or completely wickedly like Stalin. Life is futile.

But, Christ has risen. God does exist. There will be a resurrection of the just and the unjust. There is eternal life in the presence of God. Thanks be to the Lord who was raised from the dead.



Thanks to Wilma Melendez (See Kings 11:1-9) 01-05-2001
ALTHOUGH SOLOMON WAS THE WISEST MAN ON EARTH HE COULD NOT FIGURE AN EASY SOLUTION FOR HAVING HUNDREDS OF MOTHERS-IN-LAW