

# RESISTING THE REPROOF OF LIFE

*Posted by Pastor Del Wray*

Ps.141:5 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: for yet my prayer also shall be (for them)in their calamities.

When someone confronts you about a sin or fault in such a way that you feel "caught", but the sin you are accused of looks SO defamatory that it frightens you; are you willing to yield and seek repentance out and away from your sin? Or are you more likely to be outraged, that some other "imperfect person" dares to find fault with you? When someone continues to remind you of your "besetting sin", can you just say "Amen, Lord have mercy", or do you seek opportunity for revenge? Do you invite reproof as a kindness, an excellent oil? Or do you like to think that only a self-righteous and critical person would ever dare to criticize you? Is it so, that anyone who dares to mention your "mote in your eye ", ought to be immediately reminded that their attempt to reprove you is only the evidence of the "beam in their own eye"?

Jesus prophesied, "[Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.](#)" One of the most visible evidences of the fulfillment of this prophecy is that even among Christians, reproof is not welcome. Do you ever submit to reproof from anyone who has no carnal power to punish you for resisting? Are you unwilling to confront anyone else for their sins or errors, unless you are sure that there is no way for them punish you for doing so? Do you "fellowship in the light", or are you party to a multitude of "unspoken agreements", in which you will tolerate someone else's faults and errors, if only they will tolerate YOURS?

If someone complains about the terrible circumstances of their life, almost everyone will volunteer to pray for them, but only so they can escape from the inquiry into WHY such trouble came. If, as is usually expected, there is no answer to their prayer, they can remember that they prayed and excuse themselves from any further involvement. Even if the connection between this person's sins and the consequences of his sins are clearly seen, there will probably be no open rebuke for fear of reprisals. If they face this troubled person again, they can always reassure them that God loves them, thereby making it "all God's fault", Who supposedly, didn't do anything to help. But what we really have here, is the case in which God did intervene by placing the word of correction in YOUR heart and mouth, even though He knew you wouldn't risk that other person's wrath by confronting them. So, in the end, you are judged as unfaithful and cowardly for failing to confront your brother, and the word of reproof is denied to the brother who needed to hear it because he was unteachable. Besides, it is now commonly held, that anyone who would be so bold as to point out to someone else their sins has no love, or is guilty of unrighteous judging.

Prov.15:31 The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise.

There is no such thing as the fellowship of the saints without the reproof of life. Without it, all that is left is deception, guile, and alienation which are then relabeled as "patience, mercy, and tolerance". Everyone is careful not to step on anyone else's toes, lest they be accused of "the pot calling the kettle, black." Hence, you and everyone else are left in your sins and errors for years, while you excuse yourselves in the knowledge that "nobody's perfect". What then? Is mercy nothing more than the self-serving willingness to

wink at evil, dishonesty, hardheartedness, pride and stubbornness? Is the silent tolerance of one another's faults the expression of the love of God? Or is it rather, that all correction is grievous to you, and you hate reproof? Jesus described the reality of the matter when he said:

John 3:19 *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*

That which makes manifest, is light. Therefore, one who walks in the light seeks to be exposed, and seeks also to surround himself with others who will speak the truth to him rather than flatteries. Those who seek for the kingdom of God and His righteousness do not despise the reproof of life: neither the giving of it, nor the receiving of it. Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness will heed the Words of our Saviour, who commanded us to love one another even as He loved us. In His own Words, He said, "*As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten...*" (Rev. 3:19).

Certainly, if you go about sticking your nose into other people's business, you are inviting them to do the same to you, but Jesus also said, "*All things therefore that ye would that men SHOULD do to you, do ye even so unto them, for this is the law and the prophets*" (Matt.7:12). And to many, this means, "I'll leave you alone, so that you will leave me alone". You refuse to confront others about their sins and errors, because you refuse to receive reproof yourself. But, if you love God with all your heart, mind and soul, and your neighbor as yourself, you will turn your ear to receive reproof, and you will do your utmost to extend the rule of Truth over all those around you, even if you can only do so at the risk of rejection and slander.

Isaiah 29:15 *Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?*

But no, you testify against yourself that your own deeds are evil, by avoiding the light, and letting everyone else live in the darkness also, with a depraved indifference to the consequences that they may suffer for their sins, as long as you get to maintain your reputation as a nice guy. You will let those who are living in destruction because of their sins, believe that it is God who is ignoring them, instead of you. And if anyone dares to confront you about your sins, you have already treasured up in the secret darkness of your heart all of the charges that you can bring against this person in retaliation. You are glad that THEY are NOT PERFECT, for you think that gives you the right to refuse any reproof from them. You can always find SOME REASON to deny that you are being smitten by a RIGHTEOUS man, and then account your freedom to snub and dismiss him as Divine vindication. If your counter-charges don't shut him up or make him go away, you can always feign hurt and injury, in the hope that he will be afraid of sinning against you, or that someone else will come rushing to your defense. How CONVENIENT it is to presume that this self-righteous, unloving, and malicious accuser, doesn't have any idea how much you have been through!

Thus, what we have among "Christians" now, instead of fellowship, is UNREPENTANCE reinforced by some presumed "right of privacy" that is supposed to protect and justify a heart full of darkness, errors, and wounds. And THIS, is just another example of the rejection of the Words of our Lord Jesus Christ, who said, "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.*" No, you have already decided that anyone who complains to you about your attitudes, doctrines, or actions, could not possibly be sent by Jesus Christ for your benefit. It will be quickly pointed out that nobody is perfect, meaning that since I am not perfect, I have no right to stick my nose into your business. Were the Apostles PERFECT? Are you also prepared to insist that Jesus would never send someone to warn you about your sins and errors? And what if you are the one who is being sent to confront your brother about his sins? Do you refuse on the grounds that he is likely to

retaliate, just like you would? Will you leave him in his error or his sin, with a complete disregard for the ruin that he could suffer for it? Will you END UP JUDGING the command of the Holy Ghost to confront this brother, as a temptation to either sin or bring needless trouble on yourself? Do you want to be reconciled to your brother? or do you wish he would "just go away" so that you will not be burdened or inconvenienced by him?

If you habitually refuse to hear those around you, and instead, regard their complaints about you as nothing more than their own carnal and personal dislikes, how many times do you suppose you have been guilty of rejecting "the reproof of life"? How many times have you realized a conviction that you should go and reprove your brother, and you refused, and even judged the command of the Holy Ghost as a provocation to do evil? We are warned that we will not be excused for this offence.

#### EXAMPLE

You are a respected and honored Bible teacher in your church. Your brethren in the congregation recognize you as a blessing and a faithful laborer. Some are even awed by your knowledge of the Bible and wouldn't miss a chance to hear you teach. These same people also see problems in your marriage. They have heard you criticize her, and they have heard her dismiss you with contempt. Your brethren don't say anything to you or her about this, because they are afraid that you will denounce them for challenging your authority, warn them to "mind their own business", or retaliate by "meddling" in their affairs. They justify themselves under the guise of being merciful and forgiving, and all the while, the situation between you and your wife continues to deteriorate.

One day, out of the blue, your wife announces to you that she has filed for a divorce. In a panic, and more out of a fear for your reputation than anything else, you call these "friends" and ask them to pray....for your wife, OF COURSE, who is in the process of committing this very great sin against you. They all solemnly promise to pray for you and her, asking God to restore your marriage and heal your relationship. And still, they refuse to reprove you for your pride, malice, and vengefulness, because to do so now, would be to reveal that they KNEW all along, but were too cowardly and selfish to "get involved".

And of course, all the while these things have been going on, you have noticed the sins of your brethren; but you haven't said anything either, and for the same reason: The NEED to maintain that unwritten and unspoken wicked agreement to not meddle in each other's affairs: and you will continue to insist that this mutual toleration of sin and error is a some kind of "fruit of the Spirit".

Then, when your divorce is final, there will be expressions of sympathy, but no one is likely to take into account that their prayers were unanswered, or why. Your brethren, who are now full of opinions about what you did wrong, will likely listen patiently and silently while you justify yourself of any wrongdoing in the matter. They will be relieved when you finally judge that you just fell victim to "one of those things" that befall men in this world. They will be relieved when you make this judgement, because now they don't have to worry about being accused for their treachery against you and your wife, for not speaking the truth to you about your errors, in the first place.

What a despicable and horrifying pretence of religion this is, where men will refuse to reprove or be reproved, about ANYTHING. The church in this example is your typical, FRIENDLY church, where everyone is duly sympathetic and where no one is likely to confront you for your ongoing, unrepented of sins, unless they reach the category of scandal: in which case, they can take the courage to criticize you from the crowd at their back. There is no fellowship of the saints because no one will grant to anyone else the right to interfere with their so-called "personal business", and no one is willing endure any rejection or persecution for righteousness sake.

So, marriages fail, children turn away in bitterness and rebellion, tragedies strike, and the beat goes on: Sunday after Sunday, without letup, without repentance, without deliverance, and without salvation from the common miseries of this life. Rather, you are accounted righteous if you maintain your calm and steadfast exterior while sicknesses take their toll and disasters or failure ruin your dreams. Those who are accounted the most righteous, are those who patiently endure the wages of sin without putting anyone else on the spot to answer the question: Why?

Scenarios like this are played out without interruption in the churches of Christendom: reproof is despised, and there is no seeking after the righteousness of God. It is no wonder that the prophet wrote:

Isa.26:18 We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen.

This flight from righteousness and responsibility has been going on for so long that no one takes account of the fact that the presence and power of the Holy Spirit is rarely, if ever, realized. No one dares to say the things that the Holy Spirit of God will inspire, so the Spirit is quenched, grieved, and eventually ceases from His striving with us. We want miracles of deliverance, and healing of sicknesses, but not if that means delivering the reproof of life to someone who may resent it. For instance, you know someone whose health problems are intimately connected to their obesity BUT rather than reprove this person for gluttony, you will only be willing to pray for this person's health and then blame them or yourself for a lack of faith when your prayer is ignored. Neither are we willing to speak a word that may drive away the insincere or the hypocrite. Therefore we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen. And this is a sufficient explanation as to why the churches and even the pulpits of Christendom are full of unbelievers who never had any intention of obeying whatsoever Christ has commanded us. BUT NO, all kinds of bogus explanations will be proffered to explain why we are powerless, and everything gets blamed on some kind of 'mysterious' problem for which there is no answer.

Prov.15:10 Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way: and he that hateth reproof shall die.

Where does this hatred of correction lead us? It leads us to failure and corruption, because correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way. Hatred of correction, unchecked and unrepented of, leads finally to the sin of blaspheming the Holy Spirit. The influence of the Spirit will be rejected on the grounds that "the Holy Spirit would never say that to me!", or, "the Holy Spirit would never tell me to say that to him!"

Despising the reproof of life is a sure road to a dry, powerless and frustrating religion, and ultimately, the path to ruin. In spite of all your religious profession, if you despise, refuse, and reject the reproof of life, the Bible says that you have forsaken the way that leads to life.