

# Wounds of a Friend

#0049

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—June 29, 1979

This took place on a road that went under a railroad track, and a truck had gotten stuck there. It wasn't quite high enough to get through, the opening wasn't, and they were trying to get the truck out. It couldn't go ahead, and it had somehow gotten wedged in there, and it couldn't get back either. And so different men were trying to advise what to do, and they were trying various things. Finally, a little boy came along, and he looked at it and he said, "Maybe if you let some of the air out of the tires, it would lower it enough so it could get through." And they tried it, and sure enough, it worked!

Now that didn't mean that the little boy was promoted to be the chief engineer of that company right off, but it *does* point out this important fact that even little folks can teach us something. This little fellow would like to make a suggestion tonight as simple as letting some of the air out of the tires, and if some folks can get hold of it tonight, it's going to help us to get out of many a hard situation.

This study that I have for you tonight really began some evenings ago when I was about to come on the platform, and a good friend of mine adjusted my collar. I couldn't see where the collar wasn't fitting right, but he could, so he did it. And I didn't hit him. [Laughter] I didn't even frown. Do you know what I said? I said, "Thank you." And of course, I remarked, and this set me to thinking, "Wouldn't it be nice if we were as appreciative of suggestions about some other things besides the matter of our collar being awry or some speck of dirt or lint on our clothes or something like that?" Wouldn't it?

You know, interestingly enough, we would all agree (perhaps I shouldn't say everybody; I'll leave room for somebody that doesn't want to), *most* of us would agree that we're not infallible, that we're not perfect. Wouldn't you agree about that about yourself? And most of us would agree that we want to *reach* perfection, wouldn't we? Well, how in the world are we going to do it? Well, somewhere along the line, we'll have to be changed, but the only way to *be* changed is to recognize what it is that needs changing in us. And my friend that thought my collar needed changing set about doing it.

It's interesting how much we pay for that kind of advice in certain matters. For example, I was having some trouble with my car sometime back, and I had a friend of mine look at it and listen to it and take it out and drive it. He said, "What you need is so-and-so," and he was kind enough to do it for me. But do you know what it cost me? Well, it cost me the better part of \$100 before I got through. And isn't it interesting, I was willing to pay that. What for? To discover what was the matter with the car and

how to improve it. But it cost me something. But I didn't frown at him; I *thanked* him. You'd do the same with your car, wouldn't you? Yes.

We do it in physical matters. When we go to a doctor, we really want him to point out what's the matter with us, aren't we? And we don't get our feelings hurt, even if we get our feelings hurt. [Laughter] We say, "Well, that's what I came to the doctor for," and we may even pay him money.

But when it comes to our life habits and our personal (what do they call them?) idiosyncrasies, our peculiarities, our dispositional problems, it takes more than ordinary grace to either *seek* reproof or *accept* it when it's given. By the same token, it takes more than ordinary grace to *give* that reproof or that suggestion in a way that will be appreciated and accepted.

We all probably recognize everything that I've said so far. But brethren and sisters, somewhere along the line, some people are going to get so anxious to get ready for Heaven, to get ready for the Latter Rain that closes this work before Christ can come, that they are going to be pressing into an experience to get these lessons learned as rapidly as possible. And there's no way to do it in a *painless* situation.

The dear friend who took my gallbladder out... it caused me some pain beforehand and afterward. It's not hurting me any now, thank the Lord. There are some gallbladders here tonight that perhaps need to be worked on. Let's ask God to help us to be willing to have some surgery done, what do you say?

[Audience responds] Amen.

We'll turn to Psalm 141. The man who wrote this had had quite a bit of experience in being reproofed and in giving reproof. Psalm 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 in their calamities" Psalm 141:5.

"Let the righteous..." do what? Smite me. Why, a righteous man wouldn't smite anybody, would he? He might if it needed to be done.

I'm told that there's a snake down in South America that is so poisonous that if a man is bitten by that snake on the hand if there's some friend there, he'll take his machete and cut the hand off at once before the poison can get into the body because it will bring death so soon. That would take quite a bit of kindness, wouldn't it? Quite a bit of kindness... One of our missionaries was telling about seeing a young man whose hand had been cut off by his father because he had been bitten by that terribly poisonous snake. Oh, brethren, when we get so anxious to get rid of the bite of the serpent of sin, when we get as anxious as that, we'll appreciate the goodness of God, even if it takes a machete to do the work, what do you say?

“Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness...”  
Psalm 141:5.

Proverbs, the ninth chapter, and the eighth verse. I might introduce this text by saying, be careful who you try reproof on. Be careful. Everyone doesn't appreciate it. That's what Solomon is saying:

“Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee” Proverbs 9:8.

Well, if he's a wise man, why does he need rebuke? We *all* need it, friends. I need my brethren. I need the help of people who will adjust my collar and help me with my automobile and help me with my gallbladder and my eyes and a few other areas. And I need brethren who will look me in the face and say, “Brother Frazee, you need help in some matters of conduct, in the way you handle your work...”

I think of dear old Elder Tindall, the man who trained me in the ministry. He was like a father to me, and he called me his boy. He used to live up here at the house called Hillside in his older years. I was handling administrative work in those days. One day I was walking past Haskell Hall, where our office used to be, and he was standing there at Hillside, and he called me over.

In his characteristic way, he said, “Bill, I want to talk with you.” If you ever saw Elder Tindall, he was a man with a square jaw, and all that indicated. He said, “Bill, I want to tell you something. I see some things in you at times that I don't like.” He said, “Bill, your power is not in using authority.” He thought I needed to be kinder, you understand. And then he went on to say, “Now Bill, I know you haven't always seen *me* doing what I'm telling you about, I know.” He said, “But Bill, I don't want you to be like me. I want you to be perfect.” [Laughter] Thank God for friends. Thank God for friends.

Proverbs, the 27<sup>th</sup> chapter, and the 6<sup>th</sup> verse:

“Faithful are the wounds of a friend...” Proverbs 27:6.

How many words? Count them all. How many?

[Audience responds] Seven.

Seven. Now I want you to say them with me: “Faithful are the wounds of a friend.” The wounds of who?

[Audience responds] A friend.

Do enemies sometimes make wounds? Yes, they do. But I'll tell you a little secret. If you don't let your friends take care of your problems, God, in mercy, may let your enemies start in on you. And they may not be quite so nice about it either.

Isn't it too bad that sometimes the only way we can hear the truth about the impression we make is through somebody that blows off steam when the pressure gets too great? Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could get the benefit of what our friends, our *real* friends, our dear friends, what they *really* think, what they *really* know about the impressions we make? Wouldn't it be? Why friends, we could move so *rapidly* in character development. But really, it's amazing if some of us can take it once a month. You'd starve to death on that kind of nutrition. Oh, let us enter into God's purpose to be hewed by the prophets, to be pruned by our brothers and sisters. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." Shall we say it again together? "Faithful are the wounds of a friend."

Now, some of you dear folks here tonight, are students. In a sense, we all are, I trust. Here is something that was written many years ago, back before anybody here tonight was born, I expect. You'll find it in *Medical Ministry*, page 211. Speaking of the instructor in a medical missionary training institution, the prophet says:

"He should kindly point out their errors, and they, in turn, should be grateful for a friend so faithful as to tell them their faults and how to correct them" *Medical Ministry*, page 211.

Dear students, if you were paying a large tuition here, if you were, one of the greatest things you could receive is something that money cannot buy, but which you can get if you're willing. You can get the faithful advice, suggestions, criticism, and reproof, rebuke, from somebody who loves you and will help you. We all need it. What a shame to become *stereotyped* in a wrong way of doing something, to become fixed in a *habit* that must either be broken later on or else it will make us handicapped all our lives. What a wonderful thing it is in the morning of our years to get as many as possible of those lessons learned. And they can't be learned merely by reading books or attending classes or by attending vesper services Friday night. There are lessons, my dear friends, that if you learn them, the *only way* you learn them is for somebody who loves you to say, "Brother, Sister, Friend, here's something that if you are willing for Jesus to change in your life, your ministry will be more effectual. You'll be more winsome. You'll be more successful." Wouldn't you like to learn something like that?

If there were some slot machine that you could go and put in a quarter and get the answer (like these folks that get their horoscope, you know, and all that), if you could get the *real* answer to your dispositional problems, what it is that needs changing and how to do it, would you pay the quarter? Well, you can get it cheaper than that. Of course, it's more expensive, perhaps, to your feelings to have someone sit down with you (or stand up *to* you) and tell you the truth. All who attempt to do it need this oil that David speaks of—*excellent* oil. The oil that he was talking about was not soft soap. It wasn't flattery. It was telling the truth.

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

"He should kindly point out their errors, and they, in turn, should be grateful for a friend so faithful as to tell them their

faults and how to correct them...We are all fallible and need the pity and consideration and forgiveness of one another" *Medical Ministry*, page 211.

We all need it, friends.

One of the most wonderful things that happens in a properly-matched married couple is that each one of them can feel free to make suggestions to the other. Of course, if it gets to the place where every time one sees the other, the snipping begins, that can get old after a while, and it ceases to have its value, it's blessing. But when there's real love, that's what I'm talking about.

I'm so thankful, dear friends, for a wife who can tell me things that perhaps nobody else would notice or nobody else would dare tell me if they *did* notice it. Any of you men have a wife like that? Tell her you appreciate it. Don't cut her off; don't cut her down; don't make her wish she'd kept still. Tell her you appreciate it. And if it hurts to do it, do it anyway. Remember, even if she tells you something about yourself that you don't think is quite that way, remember that whether what she sees is a fact, the fact that she sees it is a fact. [Laughter] After all, life is dependent upon the impressions we make, isn't it, our influences? And of course, any of you dear wives have a husband who can graciously, or even if he doesn't know how to do it graciously, can in a bungling way, try to help you, thank him for it. [Elder Frazee laughs.] Thank him for it. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend."

Now on the *giving* side of reproof... You know, Jesus says in Revelation 3:19:

"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten..." Revelation 3:19.

"Oh, if somebody loved me, they wouldn't rebuke and chasten me, would they?"

Yes, Jesus does. Oh, I long to do it as Jesus does. I long to do it as Jesus does. And may I tell you, one of the greatest helps in learning that, to me, has been dear friends who have done it *to me* the way Jesus would. So parents, let's do it that way with our children, what do you say? And husbands and wives, let's do it with our spouses that way. Teachers and students, church officers and members, everybody—let's practice on one another the *love* of Jesus, the *winsomeness* of Jesus. But remember: "Faithful are the wounds of a friend."

"He should kindly point out their errors, and they, in turn, should be grateful for a friend so faithful as to tell them their faults and how to correct them" *Medical Ministry*, page 211.

A very practical point: what shall I do when someone comes to me and points out something, and I don't think they're correct? The least I can do is to thank them anyway, isn't it? They mean to help me. Would it be a good thing to pray about it? Might it be appropriate to ask them to pray with me that God will help me to see it if I don't see it? And if there's been some misunderstanding, maybe it can be cleared up. Oh, let us never shoot back an *angry* answer or return a *sullen* answer. Believe me,

brothers and sisters, if we're really in earnest to get ready for Heaven, we're going to do what those disciples did in the upper room the ten days before Pentecost. They continued with one accord in prayer and supplication. They had weaknesses and faults and mistakes and sins that needed to be pointed out, and God used one to help another. Isn't it nice that we can learn it this way on the giving and receiving hand?

Over 50 years ago, when I was a student at Loma Linda, one of the first classes that I went to was a class in hydrotherapy and massage. We would study the little book, and we'd come together in class. Then we'd pair off and one of the boys would work on me, and then I'd work on him. And another night, we'd come together and have another treatment to learn. How do you suppose we learned it? Well, I worked on him, and he worked on me. That's the way to learn this. That's what the home is for; that's what the church is for; that's what *every* relationship of life is for. And I thank God that Jesus is still at the mercy seat, holding up His wounded hands, interceding for us while we learn our lessons. What do you say?

Anybody tonight got something? Is anybody tonight thankful? Instead of having a testimony meeting tonight, we're going to look at some beautiful pictures that Brother Wilson's going to show us. But I'd like to have you make an appointment to have a testimony meeting with Jesus before you go to bed tonight. If you are really thankful for what you got, thank Him, and ask Him to help you to be faster to show your appreciation for reproof and more gentle and loving and winsome in giving it. How many would like to do that, may I see your hands? The Lord will be pleased. I know He will.

[Elder Frazee begins singing "Blessed Be the Tie That Binds," and the audience joins him.]

You know, dear ones, if we'd had a picnic lunch and you had missed, you hadn't gotten a thing, you'd feel left out, wouldn't you? If there's anybody here that hasn't had any help from anybody in learning your faults and weaknesses and you really want some, why not ask the Lord to help you to get on the receiving end, and then get in line and pass your plate in so that you can get some help.

God bless you.

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