

Reproof

#0615

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—November 30, 1957

We have been studying in our Sabbath school lessons recently the lives of men that God has used in a special way. And among them, I'm sure, we've been impressed with the prominence of Moses and Elijah. Moses and Elijah, you remember, were especially chosen by the Father to send to the side of His Son there on the Mount of Transfiguration and encourage Him.

Moses and Elijah appear as the representatives of the great harvest of the saved, Moses as one who has been raised from the dead, Elijah as one who was translated to heaven without seeing death. These men are outstanding, Moses and Elijah, in their attitude toward sin and the method they used to deal with sin. God moved upon them to reprove sin, to rebuke sin, to deal very definitely with it.

This made them unpopular. They were opposed. The people liked Aaron very much better than Moses because Aaron was soft and yielding. But the smile of God rested upon Moses, while His *disapproval* was upon Aaron for his yielding compromise.

Elijah was confronted with the question from Ahab:

"...Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" 1 Kings 18:17.

But Elijah lost no time in saying:

"...I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim" 1 Kings 18:18.

Now this morning, in the light of the experience of these two men that God used so mightily and marvelously, I would like to study in a practical way this question of reproof and rebuke.

In the message to the Laodiceans, and you and I are numbered among those people that have received that special message of God's love, the Laodicean message, I read in Revelation the 3rd chapter and the 19th verse:

"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent" Revelation 3:19.

Does God love you? Well then, He will do what? He will rebuke you. That is, He will as long as there's any sin in your life. When the sin is all gone, the rebuke will be over. God takes no pleasure in rebuking anyone, much less His people. But there's one thing that hurts God far more than rebuking somebody, and that's to see

that person lost. And God deals with sin as the surgeon does with a skin cancer. He applies the knife of correction and rebuke that the deadly peril may be removed, eradicated.

There are millions today that have such views of the character of God as this. They think God is too loving to do anything drastic about sin. The sad fact is that many people have gotten that idea from the attitude of parents who were too loving to deal sternly and stiffly with transgression. They *thought* themselves too loving, the parents did.

You remember that in the last chapter of Malachi, it is Elijah the prophet who is to come just before the great and dreadful day of the Lord to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers [a paraphrase of Malachi 4:5–6]. And Aaron will never get it done, my friends, and Eli will never get it done. Elijah must come and do it. And it is the message of stern rebuke. There's love there, of course. And that's the point. It is love that prompts the reproof. It is love that motivates the correction.

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

If He loves you, He does what? Rebukes you.

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

What does "chasten" mean? What's a chastisement? Well, when I was a boy they called it a whipping. I'm sorry that it's largely out of the vocabulary of the present generation. I'm afraid there are many children today that have never gotten one. There's a certain school of psychology that holds that that isn't the thing. And of course, the psychologists are very, very wise, and God's Word is old-fashioned.

"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent" Revelation 3:19.

This is in what message? The Laodicean message.

In *Volume 3* of the testimonies in the chapter on the Laodicean church, I read on pages 254–255:

"I have been shown that the greatest reason why the people of God are now found in this state of spiritual blindness is that they will not receive correction"
Testimonies for the Church, Volume 3, page 255.

"...They will not receive correction" *Ibid.*

You notice that the verse that I have read, the one just before it points out the spiritual poverty, the spiritual nakedness and the spiritual blindness. God exhorts us:

“...Anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see” Revelation 3:18.

You’re blind. You don’t see. So, He says:

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

The main reason, the greatest reason why the people of God are now found in this state of spiritual blindness is:

“...That they will not receive correction”
Testimonies for the Church, Volume 3, page 255.

There is a philosophy that is gaining ground today along this line—that all that our people need is good positive messages of encouragement, speaking of the love of God and righteousness in a positive way, that they don’t need to be reproved, they don’t need to be rebuked.

The true Witness then is mistaken, isn’t He? Now, it’s true, friends, that we need to do a good deal of positive education. That’s true. But I call your attention to the fact that when God wrote the Ten Commandments for man in his fallen state, nearly every one of them begins with three words. What are they? “Thou shalt not,” “Thou shalt not.”

In some schools of psychology, they’d say, “That’s wrong right on the face of it, just wrong right to start with, telling people what they mustn’t do, because that’s right away what they’ll want to do is what they’re told they mustn’t do.”

Have you ever heard that argument? I heard a man once tell an audience of thousands of people that when Adam and Eve were told in the garden not to eat of that one tree, right away that was the tree they wanted to eat of. It was a mistake. He was speaking against prohibition of the liquor traffic, and that was his argument.

My dear friends, we need to beware lest as the serpent beguiled Eve, we also should be beguiled from the true, high standard that God has given us in His Word and in His testimonies of His Spirit. And that relates not only to truth but to the method of teaching truth and doing more than teaching it, seeing that it is carried out.

Eli taught. Eli said to his sons, “Oh, sons, I don’t hear good reports about you. These are bad things I hear about you. I wish you wouldn’t do that.”

If he was using some of the modern languages, I suppose he would say, “We don’t do that, boys. We don’t do that.”

But they went ahead and did it anyway, didn’t they? It will take more than a pious platitude. It will take more than mere pleading. It takes rebuke and reproof to get God’s people ready. And may I say, friends, we all need it, old and young. The children need it. The parents need it. The grandparents need it. We all need it till we are ready for the kingdom.

You know, these nine volumes of the testimonies have in them thousands of rebukes and reproofs. Some of them are found in personal testimonies to Brother A and Sister B and Brother C and Brother D. You can find them all through. But it's interesting how as you get to reading them, you wonder how so much that fits you was written down in a book before you were born.

I can turn to many a page here. I have no difficulty at all in reading *my* name. And oh, I'm so glad that all this is evidence of my Father's love.

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

Oh, I'm glad He loves me. And I'm glad that He hasn't left me without rebuke.

Why, do you know, friends, it's amazing how rapidly we could learn some lessons, if we'd just be willing to *get* rebuke and *do* something about it.

What is your idea of rebuke, anyway? Is it somebody getting so exasperated that they finally blow off the handle and tell you what they think of you? Is that your idea of rebuke? Well, if it is, you probably don't like it very well. That's one way to get rebuke. And I suppose if all other means fail, God may allow it sometimes, although I don't mean He inspires it.

But I *have* learned a lesson sometimes from people that I exasperated. It hard way to learn it, but it's better to learn it that way than not learn it at all, isn't it? But I don't think we should seek to follow that method, but when it's used on us, we ought to salvage all the good we can get out of it.

No, my friends' reproof and rebuke should be given in love. But that doesn't mean that they're to be watered down. It doesn't mean that the sharp edge is to be blunted or dulled.

And Nathan came to David, moved by the Spirit of God, and very wisely and tactfully he presented to him the parable of the poor man with the one ewe lamb, and the rich man, who passing by his numerous flocks and herds, took that poor man's *one* lamb to dress for the visitor.

And when David's righteous indignation arose at that, and he pronounced sentence, Nathan did not say, "Well now, David, it *might* be well for you to study that a little and see if you could get anything out of it."

He didn't do that.

Looking right at him, he said:

"...Thou art the man..." 2 Samuel 12:7.

"...Thou art the man..." 2 Samuel 12:7.

The Spirit of Prophecy says that if those words were not so rare today, we would see more of the power of God [a paraphrase of *Prophets and Kings*, page 141].

Of course, it's well when you start to point your finger at a man and say, "Thou art the man," to be sure you *know* that. Nathan *did*.

"...Thou art the man..." 2 Samuel 12:7.

But I'm not seeking to study so much this morning the matter of giving reproof, although that's very important and references to it will be made from time to time in our study. But I'm seeking especially this morning to study with you the receiving of reproof. And may I say to you that no person, old or young, is properly qualified to *give* reproof unless he has, I was about to say, gotten a master's degree in *receiving* reproof.

Can you take reproof? Can you take reproof? Now, there are two kinds of reproof and rebuke. One is the kind you deserve, and the other is the kind you don't deserve. And usually, God lets us learn something about it on the first kind, but when we've fully mastered that, our lessons are not over. And then, we get a postgraduate course in the second kind. Of course, there's a mingling of the two all the way through.

But don't think that when you've gotten over everything that *deserves* reproof that you'll be past reproof. You'll get reproof for some things you don't deserve reproof for. And once you learn how, that's the easiest kind to take. Some people think it's the hardest kind to take, but it's really the easiest if you stop to think about it. It's the truth that hurts.

I'd much rather people would rebuke me for something I *haven't* done than something I *have* done. On many points, I'd much rather people would tell lies about me than tell the truth about me. See, I know quite a bit about myself.

But we must learn, dear friends, that whether the reproof is deserved or undeserved that God has a precious lesson in it for us, that God allows every rebuke that comes to us. Whether it comes to us as students in a school, helpers in an institution, members of a family, members of the church, whatever the relationship that brings about the occasion for reproof and rebuke, let us learn to know that it is a Father's love that allows that reproof and rebuke to come to us and that there's a precious lesson in it for us.

You know, if we had to *buy* praise and rebuke in the market and were buying them by the pound that they're valued if we paid a dollar a pound for sweet-smelling and sweet-tasting praises, we might have to pay twenty dollars a pound for rebuke. It's worth far more.

Now, I would like to notice some Bible verses. In fact, I'm going to let you help me in this for several reasons. One is because some people are a little sleepy apparently, and maybe if you'll hunt up a text, it'll keep you awake. I'm going to give

you a list of texts from Proverbs, and I wish that each one of you who will take a text would repeat it after me.

That is, I'll give a text and you can repeat it, if you take it. You might hold up your hand if you're going to take it, so that I'll see who it is.

Proverbs 5:11–13.

Proverbs 6:23.

Proverbs 9:8.

Proverbs 12:15.

Proverbs 13:1.

Proverbs 15:5.

Proverbs 15:10.

Proverbs 15:12.

Proverbs 16:32.

Proverbs 17:10.

Proverbs 23:13–14.

Proverbs 27:6.

Proverbs 29:1.

Proverbs 29:15.

Well now, these are some interesting proverbs, I can assure you, and we'll just see now what they say.

We'll start with this one in Proverbs 5:11–13. This is just going through the book, and we'll notice Solomon's comments on this matter of reproof. This first one shows what the sad result of not listening to reproof is.

One that has that, stand and read:

“And thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed, And say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof; And have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me” Proverbs 5:11–13.

What a sad picture, the end of the boy or the girl that doesn't like reproof and instruction and that wouldn't listen to their teacher.

"And thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed" Proverbs 5:11.

Even in this life, sad result.

Proverbs 6:23:

"For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life" Proverbs 6:23.

Reproofs are the way of what? Life. Isn't that wonderful? The way to live is to get some reproof.

Proverbs 9:8:

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

Are you a wise man? Well, you can tell whether you are or not. If somebody rebukes you and you love them, you're wise.

But if you say, "That person has it in for me, and I'm going to have it in for him now," that proves that you're not wise, and therefore you're what? Foolish.

"...Rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee" Proverbs 9:8.

By the way, why should a wise man need rebuke? Do you think wise men need rebuke? Why, certainly. Solomon was the wisest of men, and he really needed it by the tubful, didn't he? Yes. Too bad he hadn't listened to it more. There's never been a man in this world from the fall of Adam on, but what needed rebuke, my friends.

"...Rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee" Proverbs 9:8.

Proverbs 12:15:

"The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise" Proverbs 12:15.

Now, why is it that a foolish man doesn't want rebuke? Why, everything he does is what? Right in his own eyes, and so he thinks he doesn't need it. But did you know that's why we need rebuke sometimes is because what we do *is* right in our own eyes? We need to see how it looks to somebody else.

I'm going to read you an interesting little statement here from the book *Historical Sketches*, page 213. This is a talk that Sister White gave over in Norway many years ago:

“I remember when we were looking for the Saviour to come in 1844 how great was the anxiety of each to know that his own heart was right before God. When we met together the question would be asked by one and another, Brethren, have you seen anything in me that is not right? I know that we are often blind to our own faults, and if you have seen anything wrong in me I want you to tell me” *Historical Sketches*, page 213.

Would you dare do that if somebody asks you to do it? I remember years ago a woman that asked for something like this, and when she got it, oh my, she felt awful.

You know, it's possible to ask for criticism and what you're hoping for is bouquets. It has been done.

It's possible to say, “Oh, I know the way I did wasn't good at all. Have you any suggestions,” hoping that somebody will say, “Oh, you just did so fine. It's just wonderful.”

“...Brethren, have you seen anything in me that is not right? I know that we are often blind to our own faults, and if you have seen anything wrong in me I want you to tell me. Sometimes errors would be pointed out, and we would all bow before God and seek forgiveness. If any variance or alienation existed we felt that we could not separate until all were in harmony. Sometimes brethren who had difficulty would be seen going away together to some secret place to plead with God, and they would return with their hearts knit together in love. The sweet spirit of peace was in our assemblies, and the glory of God was around us. The faces of the believers shone with the light of heaven” *Ibid*.

Brethren, was it worth it? Do you think we'll ever get that glory without getting down to business and seeking reproof and correction? I don't think so.

Proverbs 13:1:

“A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke” Proverbs 13:1.

Are you a wise son? Some sons are so wise they can't listen to their father. But is that real wisdom? Why, no, that isn't. That's the kind of knowledge that Paul says “puffeth up.” Love buildeth up, but knowledge puffeth up” [a paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 8:1]. And some young men get very puffed up.

An American author told about how when he first went to college and came home, and his father didn't seem to know anything. But several years later, he came

back and he said it was amazing how much his father had learned in those few years. Of course, it was the boy that had gotten a bit of the conceit out of him.

But my dear friends, you who are young and in your teens, let me tell you, God knows you, and I don't have to go through those periods of conceit and foolish arrogance. John the Baptist didn't, I'm sure of it, and I know the Lord Jesus didn't. This idea that certain follies are necessary to certain ages is simply not so. Dear children, you don't have to be fools just because you're adolescents. You don't have to be.

The world does. That's the road they're on. That's the bus they're traveling on. But dear children, if you'll take the Bible as your guide and listen to these proverbs we're studying this morning, what a world of heartache you can be saved, and what a world of heartache you save your parents and teachers.

"A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke" Proverbs 13:1.

Let's listen. What do you say? And we who are older, we still have in the providence of God those who reprove and rebuke us. All right.

Proverbs 15:5:

"A fool despiseth his father's instruction: but he that regardeth reproof is prudent" Proverbs 15:5.

Now, you notice these two verses, how they go together:

"A wise son..." Proverbs 13:1.

Does what?

"...heareth his father's instruction..." Proverbs 13:1.

But:

"A fool..." Proverbs 15:5.

Does what?

"...despiseth his father's instruction..." Proverbs 15:5.

There you have it. And yet, isn't it interesting how human wisdom thinks that it's a mark of wisdom to resent and refuse reproof and correction? And it's supposed that it would be a mark of ignorance or acknowledging that we don't know much to admit that the reproof is correct.

"A wise son heareth his father's instruction..." Proverbs 13:1.

"A fool despiseth his father's instruction..." Proverbs 15:5.

Proverbs 15:10:

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

What’s going to happen to the man that hates reproof? He’s going to die. But Sister Payton read a little while ago:

“...Reproofs of instruction are the way of life” Proverbs 6:23.

If you want to live, you must be reproofed. If you don’t listen, you will die.

Now, Proverbs 15:12:

“A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him: neither will
he go unto the wise” Proverbs 15:12.

Does this indicate that we shouldn’t always wait for the reproof to come to us? Should we wait for the reproof to come to us? Are there times that we should do what? Seek it out. That’s what I read here from *Historical Sketches*. There are some reproofs, friends, some of the most valuable you will ever get, you can get only by going after them.

Proverbs 15:32:

“He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he
that heareth reproof getteth understanding” Proverbs 15:32.

Oh, yes. We sometimes think that we are working for our own interest and against others when we despise reproof, but it’s the other way around, friends. We are sinning against our own souls when we despise reproof.

Now, this 17:10 is an interesting thing. Listen carefully while Brother Foote reads it:

“A reproof entereth more into a wise man than an
hundred stripes into a fool” Proverbs 17:10.

Now, I want you to notice the wording of Solomon. He doesn’t just say that it’ll do him more good, although probably it will. And probably that’s what he’s thinking of. But I want you to notice the precise wording of it. What does he say that reproof does?

“A reproof entereth more into a wise man than an
hundred stripes into a fool” Proverbs 17:10.

A hundred stripes laid on the back of a fool ought to teach him something, but sometimes all they do is just get on his back. But a wise man will take a reproof, and

it'll enter in how deep? Clear into his mind and heart, and he'll do something about it.

But I want to tell you something, friends. Reproof hurts. And there are some souls (and God knows it) that a reproof hurts them more than a whipping would do. And I think it ought to be that way. I don't think there's anything wrong with reproof hurting us. I'd hate to get so hard-shelled like a turtle that it didn't hurt. It *ought* to hurt. I mean reproof for sin because if it would hurt us bad enough, we'd never do it again. Is that correct?

And I don't think we need to do too much of trying to sweeten up reproof in the sense of making it a palatable potion. It ought to be given in love, friend, but it's still castor oil.

"A reproof entereth more into a wise man than an hundred stripes into a fool" Proverbs 17:10.

Parents need to watch this with children. There are some children that, just to know that their parents disapprove or are disappointed in what they've done, hurts them more than a whipping would hurt some other child. There are some children, the *only* way they learn it is to have it put, as a friend of mine says, an application of the board of education to the seat of learning.

But people are different, children are different, and some can learn merely by reproof. And the wiser we are, the less of the physical it takes, and the more of the mental reproof can be received.

Proverbs 23:13–14:

"Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell"
Proverbs 23:13–14.

I wonder why Solomon put that in:

"Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die" Proverbs 23:13.

Why do you suppose he put that in? As a sort of an irony, perhaps? Well, I suppose that some of us might remember when we got something that made us *feel* like we were going to die.

But Solomon says to the parent, "No. Don't need to worry. It won't kill him. In fact, instead of killing him, it's going to deliver his soul from hell."

Do you believe that, friends? Do you? Do you parents believe that? That beating children with a rod will deliver them from hell? Oh, I know there are some references to balance it, but those references need balancing with *this*.

And inspiration says this:

“Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell” Proverbs 23:14.

I fear that the popular philosophy of this day has made its impression even upon the remnant people. I fear that there’s a philosophy in vogue today that looks upon whipping as being very undesirable and more or less a confession of failure on the part of the parent.

Like every other good thing, it has been abused. Like every other good thing, whipping can be overused. Children can be given too much food. But I haven’t heard it yet advocated that because some children were fed too much that children shouldn’t get any food at all. No, there’s a proper amount of food.

Most children somewhere along the line need the correction that is administered in a physical way. I think those who have studied it in the light of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy and human experience will agree that much of it could be given at an early age when it would be most efficacious.

Someone was telling me of some of our missionaries in a foreign field who have some very well-behaved children. Early in the life of one of the children, the grandfather, who was a doctor, came to visit. And this visit may have had something to do with how well the children have behaved as they’ve come along.

This grandfather, who was a doctor, came in and his daughter, the mother of the babe, was there, and the child was crying, making a racket.

And presently, the father said to the daughter, he said, “What about this?”

So, being a doctor, he got busy. He asked a few questions. He made a diagnosis.

He said, “Is it time for the child to eat?”

“No. Been fed.”

“Is the child dry?”

“Yes.”

“None of its clothes are too tight?”

“No.”

“All right,” he said, “then there’s no reason for it to cry.”

And he went over, and he administered what Solomon is talking about here. As you know, there weren’t very many times necessary. That little child learned the little child learned. A few years later, when it got to the age when it could remember,

it never remembered that. It got it early enough to implant the lesson deep in its little heart.

And so, this morning, I want to appeal to every parent, remember Solomon's counsel:

"Withhold not correction from the child ..." Proverbs 23:13.

And oh, let me tell you, friend, parents who withhold that correction from the child, thinking that they're doing them a service of love, they only postpone the hour of chastisement.

And dear father and mother, that whipping that you wouldn't give to the *little* child he must get out in society, as he meets the angry looks and the frowns and the rebuffs of people that don't love him, but they're whipping him because of his disagreeable traits of character that you were too kind to prune away.

Sooner or later, the child is going to get it. It may be in a prison cell. It may be in a reformatory. It may be in the electric chair or on the gallows that he will get that whipping which some fond mother, some dear father was too lenient, too loving to administer. Believe me, friends, there's a retribution.

Well, you go on now to the next text, Proverbs 27:6:

"Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful" Proverbs 27:6.

A good friend will wound you now and then. It's too bad to terminate a friendship because of a rebuke, friend. That ought to be the thing that ties friendships together. I do appreciate friends. I have a few, I thank the Lord. I don't think any man ever gets more than a few of this kind of friend, friends that love him enough to tell him the truth as they see it.

A few weeks ago I was visiting with a friend of mine, and I'm planning to write him a letter, and I'm planning to write the letter and say this:

"Dear So and So, I want to thank you for two things. First of all, you told me exactly how you looked at something I was doing. Second, you gave me a chance to be equally frank with you."

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

Proverbs 29:1:

"He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy"
Proverbs 29:1.

Ah, yes. This is the text that the Lord set ringing in my ears during the night last night that led me to present these things this morning. Over and over again, it went through my mind.

“He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy”
Proverbs 29:1.

Oh, dear one, young or old, has God reproved you on a certain point again and again, through a parent or a teacher, through a minister or some fellow church member, or through circumstances?

Has He brought you again and again to a certain point, but have you bowed up and stiffened your neck and said, “Nobody’s going to tell me what to do”?

Listen:

“He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck...”
Proverbs 29:1.

He gets a hard neck all right. He can hold up his head. He doesn’t bow down in humility or in sorrow or repentance or meekness, no. Stiff neck; he can hold his head high and boast of the fact that nobody is going to run his life or tell him what to do.

What happens?

“...shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy”
Proverbs 29:1.

Look at Judas. What was the matter with Judas? He would not receive reproof. What was the matter with King Saul? He would not be corrected. And when the prophet of God came to him again and again and pointed out what he had done that was wrong, he stood up and defended himself excused his transgressions.

Finally, God said, “Saul, that’s all. I can’t use you.”

David, a man that committed sins far more grievous, as we would say, and they were terrible, David God could use because David got down on his knees and on his face, he accepted the reproof, he cried to God. He got forgiveness. He admitted his sins when the rebuke came instead of standing there in self-righteousness and defending himself.

“He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy”
Proverbs 29:1.

Believe me, brethren, as I have pointed out, this is for all of us. We *all* need reproof. We *all* need rebuke. We *all* need correction. Oh, let’s ask God to take it and thank Him for it.

Proverbs 29:15:

“The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame” Proverbs 29:15.

The Spirit of Prophecy says:

“Any child that is permitted to have his own way will dishonor God and bring his father and mother to shame”
Testimonies for the Church, Volume 5, page 325.

And yet I see parents asking little ones, *little* ones, what they want to do about this, and what they want to do about that.

And right in the presence of the child, they will say to older ones, “Oh, she won’t *take* that,” or “She won’t *do* that.” “She won’t *eat* that.” “She won’t *go* there.” No.” To be ascertained what her royal highness will allow.

“...A child left to himself...” Proverbs 29:15.

Does what?

“...bringeth his mother to shame” Proverbs 29:15.

Well, these are our texts now in Proverbs. And I leave them with you, friends. I hope you’ve made a list of them, dealing with this question of reproof and correction.

And now, I want to give just a thought on our attitude toward others who are receiving reproof, for this is very important. I’ve spoken about the way we give reproof and especially the way we should take reproof, but what about other people who are getting reproof?

Historical Sketches, 137:

“Whenever reproofs are given, the enemy seeks to create in those reproofed a desire for human sympathy”
Historical Sketches, page 137.

What does the reproofed heart naturally want? Sympathy, yes. Oh yes, you can see it in a family that’s not properly organized. Perhaps the father has given the child a chastisement.

And the little one runs to the mother, “Oh, oh, Daddy hurt me, Daddy hurt me.”

And God pity the child when the mother says, “Naughty Daddy, naughty Daddy. Daddy whipped the baby. Mama won’t let him whip the baby.”

It has been done, friends. But if that's a sad picture in a three-year-old, what is it, my friends, in a thirty-year-old or a fifty-year-old? There's many a soul going to burn in the lake of fire because some church member sympathized with that soul when they were under reproof.

One of the brightest lights in this denomination, Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, we're told through the Spirit of Prophecy that he would have accepted the reproof in the crisis hour if it had not been for those who were close to him who sympathized with him under reproof and held up his hands against the Spirit of Prophecy. Isn't that a sad thing, friends? Isn't that a sad thing? Sympathy.

"Ah," you say, but sympathy is Godlike."

Sometimes it's devilish, my friends. Why, go back before this world was created. Do you know that if Lucifer had not had the unsanctified sympathy of some of those angels in heaven, he never would have gone to the length in rebellion that he did.

It's because one-third of those bright beings finally rallied around him, and he looked over the group, and he thought, "Why my, I've got millions here with me. And they're telling me I'm right. I must *be* right. They're telling me that God is wrong to rebuke me in this way. God must be wrong."

The worst enemies a man has are his friends who sympathize with him when he's under reproof when they ought to say, "Brother, you needed that reproof. Accept it, and God will bless your soul for it."

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

But:

"Whenever reproofs are given, the enemy seeks to create in those reproofed a desire for human sympathy"
Historical Sketches, page 137.

Now, you'll find something very similar here in *Volume 3* of the testimonies, page 329:

"Reproof always hurts human nature. Many are the souls that have been destroyed by the unwise sympathy of their brethren; for, because the brethren sympathized with them, they thought they must indeed have been abused, and that the reprover was all wrong and had a bad spirit" *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 3*, page 329.

Do you know, it's a hard thing today for parents to reprove and rebuke their children, without friends and neighbors and relatives and everybody else stepping in between the parent and the child and telling the child that it's abused. It's a hard thing.

“Those who step in to destroy the edge of sharp reproof that God sends, saying that the reprover was partly wrong and the reproof was not just right, please the enemy... Some will lay blame upon the one whom God has sent with a message of warning, saying, He is too severe; and in so doing they become responsible for the soul of the sinner whom God desired to save... These false sympathizers will have an account to settle with the Master by and by for their work of death” *Ibid*.

So, my friends, reproof is like surgery. It pains, as surgery does. And like surgery, it's not something that's to be done *all* the time. No doctor with a knowledge of the human body would be taking a knife out every time he saw a patient. And no parent and no teacher who understands rightly the subject that we've studied this morning will be reproofing and rebuking *all* the time. That's this picking and pecking, and it makes a raw sore that never heals, my friends.

Let no one take license from the study we have had this morning to be perpetually pecking at people. That is not a healthful thing in a home, a church, or anywhere else. Let us go to God, the faithful Reprover, and let us learn from Him how to give reproof and how to deal wisely with others who are under reproof.

And let us plead with Him when we are reproofed that we may cultivate a spirit of appreciation, remembering the words of the True Witness to the Laodiceans:

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

I'd like to hear from anyone who has received a special blessing this morning that you'd like to thank God for.

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