

# WORD AT WORK

## THE POWER OF RELATIONSHIP II

MONDAY, September 1

Scripture: Matthew 5:20-22

Matthew chapter 5 presents a vignette about relationships beginning with man to God but ending with man to man. The Sermon on the Mount lays down principles we would do well to heed. Verse 20 says, “For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.” Apparently the religious system of that day placed very little emphasis on relationships. If you had an irreconcilable disagreement with someone then you separated with a parting of the ways being completely acceptable to all. If you were in leadership, and had a disagreement, then you could separate starting your own church, school, training center or ministry - sound familiar? This possibly accounts for the competing schools of theology and philosophy such as the Sadducees, Pharisees, Essenes, or schools of Hillel, Shammai and Akiha and others. Have we learned anything from history or do we still function similarly? We would do well to look at our religious heritage and marvel at how little things have changed. When we have disagreements with leadership or elders in our churches do we separate and find another church, or do we stay there and try to work it out? If we do not adopt a commitment to work out our relational differences, we can easily find ourselves paralleling the scribes and Pharisees, disqualifying ourselves from receiving the major blessings of the kingdom. Confrontation is never fun but necessary in the kingdom. There are legitimate necessities of separation. When any individual refuses reproof separation is inevitable. First Corinthians 11:19 in the Amplified version is a very real part of the picture.

TUESDAY, September 2

Scripture: Mark 9:42-44

When possible (it not always is) if we adopt a determination not to be scribes and Pharisees, splitting doctrinal hairs and going our own way because of differences, then we move toward step two in relationships, which is the inevitable fire of individual confrontation. Once again Jesus, addressing relational problems because of wrong motivation, speaks to us about our activities and attitudes which cause other people to stumble. Jesus was very clear in outlining a biblical response we must take when personal faults and offenses are revealed. He said in verse 43, “And if your hand makes you sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched....” The sin of one individual can destroy the fruitfulness of a body and, according to this passage, has eternal consequences. The Lord plants us in churches so that we can grow up, but if we never stay and face the fruit of our activity we rob ourselves of the opportunity to mature through confrontation. The other side of the coin is some Pastors leave a river of devastated wounded people in their wake. Such a stream speaks volumes about where the real problem resides! The quickest way to impede maturity is to run to a new church or new relationships every time things get hot and unpleasant in the current ones. To continually run away in the face of opposition is blatantly refusing to deal with issues and motivations of heart. Can you really afford a slow-growth posture? Fruit in eternity demands maturity now. It is time to face the adversary, or as Beetle Bailey’s cartoon once said, “We have met the enemy – they are us!”

### WEDNESDAY, September 3

Scripture: Mark 9:42-44; Matthew 5:23-25

Jesus said in Mark 9, “If your hand makes you sin, cut it off...” He never meant the literal amputation of any body part, but spoke a spiritual truth demanding drastic action when we recognize offensive things in motivation, life-style, or personality. The Greek word translated “cut it off” is **apo-kopto** which means to “amputate or take immediate drastic action.” Matthew 5:23-25 shows us why drastic action is necessary. Jesus said, “Agree with your adversary quickly...” because if you don’t you will be delivered to the judge and then thrown into prison and you’ll not be able to get out.” There is a physical, financial, spiritual, emotional prison which results from a refusal to face our own attitude and offensive behaviors and activities. When we run from a situation and refuse to face circumstances we coddle the flesh allowing continued offensive activity, rather than facing the fruit of our actions and choosing the drastic action of **apo-kopto**. Fruitfulness in eternity demands consistent pruning of attitude and behavior here! Are we willing to be drastic with our flesh or will we pamper it and lose eternal reward? The choice is ours.

### THURSDAY, September 4

Scripture: Mark 9:42-44

The Greek word for “stumble” is **skan-da-lid-zo**. It means, “To put an impediment in the way” or “to cause a person to distrust and desert one he ought to trust and obey.” The root word **skan-da-lon** means “A moveable stick” or “trigger of a trap,” “to snare” or “cause to stumble.” These definitions should point to a major warfare that is continuous for each one of us. The enemy triggers a trap that can bring a snare for each one of us through our relationships with each other. God intended that we stay in relationship working out our differences nose to nose and face to face. But when we take a pharisaical attitude such as, “I’ve done everything right, while we’ve done everything wrong,” we close ourselves off to correction and never open the door to the recognition of our own offensive attitudes, traits, and faults. This is a dangerous position before God but common for most of us because of the blinding ability of the enemy.

### FRIDAY, September 5

Scripture: Mark 9:33-35

Mark’s account seems to be a perfect example of **skan-da-lon** where the “trigger of a trap” has been pulled and relational division settles upon the twelve. In verse 33 Jesus said, “What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?” Verse 34 says that they were disputing about who would be the greatest. Infighting over position creates distress, deception, and eventually death. Self-promotion and pride were alive and well within the twelve and probably more intensive within the three that got to go places the others didn’t. Peter, James, and John would have had some reason to believe they were chosen for a larger wider ministry than the others because of their unique preparation. You can almost see an impediment emerging, causing each one to distrust the other. How can you have team ministry when you are suspicious that the motivation of your team mate is to grab the chief position out of selfish ambition in order to rule over the others. Such a situation demands confrontation. If any one of the twelve had decided to split and run, he would have forfeited his future in God. Have you ever forfeited a measure of your future in God by refusing to face the fruit of your flesh?

### SATURDAY, September 6

Scripture: Mark 9:35-37

A most interesting aspect of Jesus confronting the disciples is how he dramatically switches gears. The twelve had been fighting over who would ascend to the leadership role after Jesus departure. Jesus began to speak to them about servanthood. Then He made a dramatic move by taking a little child, setting him in their midst, and talking about receiving from each other. Verse 37 says, “Whoever receives one of these little children

in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me.” The biggest problem in offenses is they close us off in our ability to receive a correction or reproof from the offending individual. The offense generally overshadows any correction or insight they might have into our activity; and suddenly we find ourselves locked in a position where we discount, disparage, or disregard any insight they have for us in the area of correction. Jesus went directly to the core of the matter. The worst result in His mind was the closing off of a voice of reproof, and consequently the refusal to receive from God. Can you think of anyone who has been so offensive to you in one area of life that you could not receive correction and insight they had for any area?

### SUNDAY, September 7

Scripture: Mark 9:38-41

In the next twist of events in this passage, John begins to explain how he saw someone who was moving in the power of the Spirit but **didn't follow them**, so he shut him down. Jesus' response was immediate and unreserved, “Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me. For he who is not against us is on our side.” John's refusal to allow a stranger to continue ministering because he wasn't a member of the twelve is reflective of a denominational attitude very prevalent today. In many ways this same attitude has infiltrated many independent churches and demonstrates itself quite frequently. We need to ask the Lord for His opinion, before we completely dismiss ministries. It is entirely possible to dismiss and disregard those God still speaks through, regardless of the magnitude or manifestation of their flesh. The warning of verse 42 was for John and his attitude because he cut somebody off who was not part of his group. God looks for motivation of heart. It had already been manifested in the fighting over who was going to be the greatest. We can never afford to get into a place where we refuse to receive reproof and correction just because we see a lot of flesh. God calls us to confront in love and speak the truth. Its easier for the flesh to run, but it is not eternally fruitful.

### MONDAY, September 8

Scripture: Mark 9:42-48

There are three specific things Jesus mentions in His reproof and correction over the attitude of heart and refusal of the twelve to be able to receive from each other. He said, starting in verse 43, “...if your hand makes you sin, cut it off.” “...if your foot makes you sin, cut it off.” “...if your eye makes you sin, pluck it out.” The hand, foot and eye portray aspects of life which are to be impacted by these principles. The hand speaks of everything we **do** for God. God has ordained, before the foundation of the earth, works we should **do**. The enemy takes pleasure in hindering the eternal doings of God in our assignments, and he does that through disrupting relationships. It is time we stopped his activity in this area. Verse 45 speaks of the foot, and the foot is a type of where we **go** for God. The enemy loves to stop us from **going** to the very places of greatest fruitfulness God has ordained. He often hinders by destroying necessary relationships. I would hate to miss some of the eternally fruitful places God wants me to go because of broken relationships, especially if it was my fault. Finally in verse 47 Jesus spoke concerning the eye. The eye foreshadows the revelation and all those prophetic pictures God longs for us to see. The enemy loves to keep the Church in the dark and blinded from what God wants to show. Amazingly enough the same hindrance the enemy uses in the other two areas he uses in the third one. If he can keep us out of relationship, out of harmony with each other, refusing to receive each other's reproof and correction, then he can hinder the seeing, discerning, and knowing the Lord longs for us to have. If our prophetic vision seems blurry it is time to get relationships straight. Have we been to our spiritual optometrist lately?

### TUESDAY, September 9

Scripture: Ephesians 5:1-21

The New Testament principles which govern relationships within the Church and between leaders are outlined for us in Ephesians. Verse 6 says, “Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these

things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.” Verse 11 says, “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.” Verse 13 says, “But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light.” Verse 21 says, “...submitting to one another in the fear of God.” Light comes whenever we share one with the other, when we have the freedom to speak clearly, open up our heart, and are willing to do it in the love of God with a purpose for restoration and not condemnation. Mutual submission was ordained by God. The problem we read about in the hearts of the twelve in Mark 9 was allowing self-promotion and pride to culminate in position-seeking. In the process they could not receive from each other and found themselves oblivious to any word of correction. That place was dangerous and could have cost them eternal fruit. Jesus made this principle clear in His response and emphasized it three times by saying, “...where ‘their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.’” God-given relationships are perhaps some of the most important things we have for contributing to growth and maturity. It is time we begin to see them the way God does and treat them accordingly.

### WEDNESDAY, September 10

Scripture: Matthew 18:1-5

Matthew’s account adds a bit more depth than what we see in Mark 9, over the issue of servanthood. Jesus makes the point of calling the child and “...setting him in the midst of them...” and making a bold statement about a conversion. He said, “Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.” This is not the conversion we call salvation by believing Jesus to be the Son of God. They had already made that step. Jesus had spoken explicitly about their position in God when the seventy returned rejoicing that devils were subject to them. He said, “Rejoice that your names are written in the Lamb’s book of Life.” These men were what we would call “saved” so the needed conversion had to be of motivation of heart. Jesus highlighted the need for that conversion by demonstration with the little child. The child demonstrated the humility required of the twelve. The child humbled himself in three ways. First he was listening daily and continually for the Lord’s voice. Second, when the call came, he immediately responded; which speaks of his determination for obedience regardless of the situation. Third, he allowed Jesus to place him exactly where the Lord desired. This demonstrated humility required in the kingdom. We are not allowed to draw the perimeters, borders, or boundaries of our own ministry but must allow the Lord to do that according to His purpose, pleasure, and timing. If the Lord gives you the goods with the anointing, wisdom, and revelation yet keeps you in hiding, every ounce of your flesh is tested to the maximum. You may know you can be every bit as much of a blessing to the body as those who have national ministries, and yet the Lord has you locked up locally or regionally. The humility required is waiting patiently without complaint. Demonstrating a humble heart is very important for fulfilling eternal purposes. God structures the times and seasons and we have to patiently wait for their fulfillment even unto the graying of our hair.

### THURSDAY, September 11

Scripture: Matthew 18:6-10

In verses 6-10, Jesus expands on the idea of receiving from one another being especially difficult when the individual is well below you in achievement, education, position or experience. The twelve had been trained by Jesus Himself, and at this point in time could be considered as those who had graduated from the finest seminary in the world. They had the experience of healing the sick, raising the dead, cleansing the lepers, and casting out devils. And they had position with the Master Himself. Yet Jesus uses a little child who has not been to their school, has not had their experience, nor attained their spiritual maturity as an example. In every level, at every juncture, the little child is well beneath the station and position of the twelve, but Jesus made it clear that in the kingdom if they could not humble themselves and receive from a child they could not receive from Him. In verse 10 He says, ‘Take heed that you do not despise...(the word in Greek means “to think little or nothing of”)...one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in Heaven.’ The issue is clear and the parameters have been set in cement. God’s kingdom, when it comes to reproof and correction, functions through relationship and humility. If you do not have humility you will most

likely reject the very word God wants to give and find yourself marching on in pride rather than amputating those offensive attitudes of the flesh. God is calling us to make choices on these issues.

#### FRIDAY, September 12

Scripture: Matthew 10:26-27

When Jesus sent out the twelve He gave them explicit marching orders. We would do well to remember these marching orders because they still apply today. They are being demonstrated before us, hopefully through leadership, as Jesus begins to fulfill in our day a word spoken to the twelve. Verse 26 says, "Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops." Everything that needs to be dealt with is being dealt with, and it is coming out into the open where it can no longer be hidden. Such is the working of our God. We are in a season of judgment and correction. We need to recognize it and act accordingly. If we do, we will be prepared when personal correction comes regardless of the uniqueness of the vessel.

#### SATURDAY, September 13

Scripture: Matthew 10:24-28

As we look at the expanded context of verses 26 and 27, it becomes obvious that Jesus wants the twelve to know in every measure their life will parallel His. This point is emphasized by verses 24-25, "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they call those of his household!" The same persecution and devaluation the religious system showed Jesus will in a measure be declared to all who walk in the Spirit in the last days. This is inevitable. The key is to discern the difference between that which comes against us by a religious spirit and that which is spoken because of an offense from our flesh. This demands openness to the whole spectrum of input that comes our way. We must seriously pray about every reproof and correction brought to us. When we get serious about reproof we will be ready for what the Lord has and discern that which is His voice and that which is of another spirit. We need to be ready in the last days, and we must be ruthless with our flesh.

#### SUNDAY, September 14

Scripture: II Timothy 2:20-22

We are admonished by the Holy Spirit to participate in a season of cleansing, purification, and sanctification in order that we may be useful for the purpose of God and prepared in the season of His ordination. Verse 22 says we are to flee the passions of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. The word "pursue" is a tenacious word and we are called to hang onto those relationships, to believe God for them, to work with them, and bring them into the place of blessing and usefulness. To pursue, you have to hang on at all costs, even when it appears there is disruption and sometimes disfellowship. It is time we took the issue of "pursuing" righteousness soberly and began to move in that direction. The training of our religious system allows us to separate and go the other way at the drop of a hat, but God's word charts an entirely different course. Are you on the course the Master has outlined?

#### MONDAY, September 15

Scripture: II Timothy 2:20-26

When it comes to reproof and correction this passage says it as well as any in the New Testament. Verse 24 states, "And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do

his will.” Reproof and correction is an “iffy” proposition and we have to face it in faith, believing that God is going to move in our behalf.. We must be willing to sacrifice the relationship if necessary because we are going to fulfill the commandment of God. “If God perhaps...” is a statement that forms a foundation for all reproof and correction. We must pray and intercede but then move lovingly in that direction knowing that we are required to face each other and speak the truth in love. It is time to quit running from situations that are hard to face and stand up and let the Lord grow us up in the middle of tough times and circumstances. The season for maturity is here and it is time to move with the Holy Spirit.

#### TUESDAY, September 16

Scripture: Matthew 18:11-15

Jesus outlined the process for restoring relationships. He has a procedure for cleansing vessels, dealing with faults, and calling each other to account. The initial phase is one-on-one. The Greek word translated “fault” pretty much describes what takes place at this one-on-one meeting. **El-eng-kho** (verb form), or “fault,” means in the Greek “to bring to light, expose with conviction, to correct, call to account, admonish, reprove, rebuke, to reprehend severely, or demand an explanation.” When we go for a Matthew eighteen one-on-one meeting the issue begins by bringing to light, then moves to exposing with correction, calling to account, and finally demanding an explanation. This process is never fun; it is not easy; but the Lord demands it. The first thing we need to ask ourselves simply is, “Does **el-eng-kho** have a place in our life? Do we use this principle or do we turn away and run from confrontation along with the world?”

#### WEDNESDAY, September 17

Scripture: Proverbs 10:17

The Book of Proverbs has much to say about the issue of reproof and correction. The Hebrew word translated “instruction” here is **moo-sahr**. It means “reproof or warning, correction, discipline, self-control; essentially it is a bond, a checking restraint, i.e. correction which results in education.” Proverbs 10:17 speaks to us about an attitude of opening our hearts and lives to receive and keep words of correction which result in our education and maturity. It also shows us what happens if we refuse reproof. The Hebrew description for this inaction is going “astray” - **ta-ah**. It means “to vacillate, or be deceived.” Proverbs 10:17 gives us a complete picture of both acceptance and rejection of reproof. If we turn our heart to receive it, the promise is life. But if we refuse it, we open the door to deception by choosing to do our own thing.

#### THURSDAY, September 18

Scripture: Isaiah 53:1-6

In the prophetic plan for redemption, outlined in Isaiah 53, it is interesting to note that the principle of Proverbs 10:17, whether to accept or reject reproof, is such an important issue to all of human existence that the Lord made provision for this weakness as outlined in this passage. Verse 6 graciously sums it up by saying, “All we like sheep have gone astray (**ta-ah**); We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” To walk in **ta-ah** is to refuse reproof, do your own thing, go your own way, and as a consequence be captured by deception. It is so common to human nature that Jesus received the fruit of this attitude in His own body on the cross to redeem us. We desperately need redemption from the attitude that leads us **ta-ah** (astray).

#### FRIDAY, September 19

Scripture: Proverbs 12:1

Proverbs 12:1 says, “Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge, But he who hates reproof is stupid.” The Hebrew word for “reproof” here is **toh-hah-hath**. It means “showing and maintaining the right, to argue, to

rebuke, correct, reprove and chastise.” The Hebrew word for “instruction” is the familiar word **moo-sahr**, meaning “reproof, correction, discipline or self control.” If we love reproof then we demonstrate to God that we love knowledge, but if we hate it, this verse says, we are stupid. The Hebrew word for “stupid” is **baw-ar**. It means “to consume by fire, departure or wither away from a lack of food.” The picture given to us in this verse says that in affect the doorway to new pasture many times is through a reproof that comes our way. But we have to set our heart to receive that reproof and walk through the door. If we choose not to receive the correction then we open the possibility of being consumed by fire or withering away from the lack of food. The issue of receiving or rejecting reproof is a major one in Scripture and at many different junctures appears to determine a quality of our future in God. Have you set yourself to receive the reproof the Lord will bring, regardless of the vessel it comes through?

#### SATURDAY, September 20

Scripture: Proverbs 1:1-7

What we do with reproof and instruction greatly affects the quality of our future in God. The whole pursuit of Solomon was to open his life to this issue of **moo-sahr**. As you recall that Hebrew word means “reproof, or warning, correction, discipline, self-control; essentially it is a bond, a checking restraint, i.e. correction which results in education.” In the English speaking world when we read the word “instruction” we think of a teacher standing before a class imparting knowledge. But this Hebrew word translated “instruction” has the very root meaning of correction or reproof in it. It is not just imparting facts but it is bringing a correction which results in education. Verses 2 and 3 of Proverbs 1 shows the very heart of Solomon in his desire to receive **moo-sahr** and therefore be corrected and grow in wisdom and understanding. Verse 5 says, “A wise man will hear and increase learning....” Are we increasing in learning?

#### SUNDAY, September 21

Scripture: Proverbs 1:8-19

Once again in verse 8, we find the word **moo-sahr** translated “instruction” with a plea for the son to hear the wisdom of his parents. One of the things that prophetically characterizes the end-time generation is rebellion and disobedience toward parents. Any one that walks in the dimension of being open for **moo-sahr** is walking in a completely different direction from what we see prophesied about the end-time generations. Wisdom dictates that we open our life to reproof. The time is here. Choices have to be made.

#### MONDAY, September 22

Scripture: Proverbs 1:20-33

“Wisdom calls aloud...it raises its voice...,” it comes to people. Verse 23 says, “Turn at my reproof....” The fruit is outlined here for those who refuse to heed the wisdom, reproof and correction of God. Verse 26 gives God’s promise to those who refuse to receive His correction, “I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your terror comes, When your terror comes like a storm, And your destruction comes like a whirlwind, When distress and anguish come upon you. Then they will call on me, but I will not answer;; They will seek me diligently, but they will not find me. Because they hated knowledge And did not choose the fear of the Lord, They would have none of my counsel And despised all my reproof. Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way, And be filled to the full with their own fancies. For the turning away of the simple will slay them, And the complacency of fools will destroy them;....” How we respond to reproof is a life and death issue, emotionally, relationally, financially, and physically. It is time to open up to God.

## TUESDAY, September 23

Scripture: Proverbs 3:11-26

Chastening, correction, and reproof are part of an education in Godly wisdom. We honor and recognize people in our society who have degrees from accredited schools and universities, but God honors those who have a degree from developing a love for correction and reproof and opening their lives to it. When we graduate from His school, we have found the fruit of wisdom and humility. Verse 14 says, ‘For her proceeds are better than the profits of silver, And her gain than fine gold.’ Verse 16 promises “Length of days in her right hand, In her left hand riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, And all her paths are peace.” God has a school we need to graduate from. Three of the primary courses are chastening, correction, and reproof. Passing the final depends on our attitude.

## WEDNESDAY, September 24

Scripture: Proverbs 5:1-14

Proverbs 5 speaks reproof and correction over the issue of sexual morality. Verse 14, to me, describes a condition of our nation on the issue of biblical reproof: “I was on the verge of total ruin, In the midst of the congregation and assembly.” The total ruin of American society looms before us as documented by the following statistics. (1) 3,000 teenagers become pregnant daily, 1.1 million per year. (2) 400,000 teen pregnancies end in abortion; 137,000 in miscarriage. (3) Of 490,000 births to teens 270,000 are to unwed mothers, 60% of which will be pregnant within two years. (4) 80% of pregnant teens drop out of high school. (5) 96% of those giving birth out of wedlock will divorce in five years. (6) 60% of teens marrying because of pregnancy will be divorced in five years. (7) Since the popular push for contraceptives for teens, sexual activity and pregnancy has increased 400%. (8) In 1990 fifteen million Americans were infected with sexually transmitted diseases (STD’s). (9) 42,000 Americans contract one of fifty STD’s daily. (10) One in four Americans aged 15 to 45 will get at least one STD each year. (11) It is estimated that one in four high-schoolers will get at least one STD by graduation. The current national statistics scream the truth of Proverbs 5:12-14, “How I have hated instruction, And my heart despised reproof! I have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, Nor inclined my ear to those who instructed me! I was on the verge of total ruin, In the midst of the congregation and assembly.” Purity will be a necessity for survival as we enter the 21<sup>st</sup> Century!

## THURSDAY, September 25

Scripture: Proverbs 6:20-23

Verse 23 says, “For the commandment is a lamp, And the law is light; Reproofs of instruction are the way of life,....” “Reproofs” is the Hebrew **toh-hah-hath** meaning “rebuke, correction, reproof, or chastisement, to show or maintain the right while arguing down if necessary.” Can it be any clearer than the statement of verse 23? Reproof and correction is a way of life. The question we need to ask ourselves is: “Have we incorporated it individually into our daily life?” To incorporate reproof as part of an individual’s life, several steps have to be taken. In the first place we have to open the door to it. At times, we have to actively seek it. When we attend services, we need to make the first application of the word we hear, not to our friends and acquaintances but, to ourselves individually. In many of our personal relationships, we need to demonstrate a willingness to receive reproof and correction. For those in five-fold team ministry, the relationships almost always deepen and sometimes start when we voice our openness to receive reproof and corrections from each other. Have you opened the doors for reproof and correction?



## FRIDAY, September 26

Scripture: Proverbs 1:1-33

Proverbs one incorporates many of the Hebrew words we have looked at. The word “instruction” in the first few verses is the Hebrew word **moo-sahr** which means “reproof or warning, essentially it is a bond, a checking restraint, i.e. correction which results in education.” Proverbs continually exhorts us to receive instruction. Verse 23 says, “Turn at my reproof.” The Hebrew word here is **toh-hah-hath** meaning “retaining and maintaining the right, arguing down if necessary, rebuke, correction, reproof, and chastisement.” Proverbs 1 has one of the strongest statements in the Bible guaranteeing what happens to those who reject reproof and correction as God sends it. Verse 25 says, “Because you disdained all my counsel, And would have none of my reproof, I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your terror comes, When your terror comes like a storm, And your destruction comes like a whirlwind, When distress and anguish come upon you.” Verses 28-31 describe a position of judgment that no one would ever welcome. Yet it comes to all those who do not open their life to personal reproof. “Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; They will seek me diligently, but they will not find me. Because they hated knowledge And did not choose the fear of the Lord, They would have none of my counsel And despised all my reproof, Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way, And be filled to the full with their own fancies.” Have you opened your life to reproof?

## SATURDAY, September 27

Scripture: Proverbs 15:10-12

“Harsh correction is for him who forsakes the way, And he who hates reproof will die. Hell and Destruction are before the Lord; So how much more the hearts of the sons of men. A scoffer does not love one who reproves him, Nor will he go to the wise.” The issue of whether or not we begin to build into our life an open door for reproof can ultimately be one of life and death. The word of the Lord is clear, “...he who hates reproof will die.” He may first die spiritually, but in many ways that is worse than dying physically. What is your attitude toward reproof?

## SUNDAY, September 28

Scripture: Proverbs 13:18

The promises for those who disdain reproof and correction are sobering indeed; but on the other side of the issue, for those who open their life joyfully and cultivate reproof and correction, the promises are exceedingly glorious. Proverbs 13:18 incorporates both sides of the coin: “Poverty and shame will come to him who disdains correction, But he who regards reproof will be honored.” Usually when we receive reproof and correction it comes in private, as well it should. If we openly receive reproof even in private the humility causes God, who sees in secret, to begin to move on our behalf in the open; publicly where all can see. Many times public honor and blessing is first birthed by receiving private reproof.

## MONDAY, September 29

Scripture: First Corinthians 14:23-25

The early Church found a place in God that was exciting indeed. The prophetic word would pour through their spirit in services and reveal the secrets, motivations, and heart attitudes of those who were unbelievers. The Greek word translated “convinced” is a familiar one to us. We found it in Matthew 18 for “fault,” **el-eng-kho**, meaning “to bring to light, expose with conviction, correct, call to account, admonish, reproof, rebuke, to reprehend severely, or demand an explanation.” Is that happening on Sunday morning where you go to church? I do not believe God will open our spirits to manifest reproof and correction by revelation for unbelievers until we allow Him to manifest reproof and correction for us. There is a day appointed when many, as the Scripture says,

“...falling down on his face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you.” “God manifested among us to the world,” demands we first invite Him among us individually for correction and reproof. The end-time promise is set in cement. The problem is are we willing to pay the price to qualify?

TUESDAY, September 30

Scripture: John 3:1-21

The religious system that we have grown up in has predominately emphasized salvation and evangelism. This, of course, is good and necessary and partially fulfills the great commission, but the heart of the great commission was not to make converts but to make disciples. A disciple is one who can stand and walk with God hearing and obediently responding to the Master's will. I believe John chapter 3 almost perfectly exhibits the training we received in our previous Christian experience. In any congregation in America, you could stand in the pulpit and ask the people to quote John 3:16 and almost every single person could do it. If you then were to ask the same people if they could tell you the main principle of the passage surrounding verse 16 they would probably say “salvation of the lost,” but would miss it completely. Do you know what the primary principle is that Jesus outlined in John 3 or the purpose of the passage that contains John 3:16? As Jesus deals with Nicodemus in his unbelief and Pharisaical background, He begins to progressively call him to account over the scriptures concerning the Messiah. Then He begins to speak of judgment. In verses 19-20 He speaks to the very spirit that has blinded the Pharisees, “And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be (King James) reproofed, (New King James) exposed.” The Greek word translated “reproofed” in the KJV and “exposed” in the NKJV is the word **el-eng-kho**, which we found in Matthew 18 for fault, and First Corinthians 14 for prophetically reproofed, and now in John 3 outlining the purpose of this passage. Isn't it amazing that with all of our religious background, if anyone asked us to quote John 3:16 we could spew it out in a second, but if we were asked what Jesus' whole point was in the words He spoke to Nicodemus, most of us would miss the fact that it was a reproof for the Pharisees. We need to recognize that our religious heritage has minimized the importance of an attitude that receives reproof and correction. It is time to make some decisions about re-establishing firm foundations.

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