

# Rebuke is a blessing

It is human nature to become defensive when one's behavior, beliefs, or practices are challenged. I do not know anyone who enjoys criticism. However hard criticism may be, it is a blessing when accepted. Listen to the wise man as he gives instruction:

- Psalm 141:5 – "Let a righteous man strike me—that is a kindness; let him rebuke me—it is oil on my head. My head will not refuse it."
- Proverbs 12:1 – "Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid."
- 13:1 – "A wise son heeds his father's instruction, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke."
- 15:5 – "A fool despises his father's instruction, but he who receives correction is prudent."
- 15:10 – "Harsh discipline is for him who forsakes the way, and he who hates correction will die."
- 15:12 – "A scoffer does not love one who corrects him, nor will he go to the wise."
- 15:14 – "The heart of him who has understanding seeks knowledge, but the mouth of fools feeds on foolishness."
- 15:31-32 – "The ear that hears the rebukes of life will abide among the wise. He who disdains instruction despises his own soul, but he who heeds rebuke gets understanding."

The Bible has a lot to say about accepting rebuke, but I must confess, it is easier to read about accepting rebuke than doing it. So, how should one respond when being rebuke/corrected? Should we respond out of human nature, "How dare you say that to me..." or "What about you?" Here are a few suggestions:

Be quick to hear & slow to speak (James 1:19). Ask yourself: "Is what my critic is saying true?" If it is true, then learn from it. This is a mark of true wisdom. "Rebuke a wise man, and he will love you" (Proverbs 9:8).

Keep your emotions in check. As already mentioned, the truth hurts. But we shouldn't strike out at the one who is trying to help us with his instruction. Even if the person rebuking has improper motives and he reviles us in the process, we must not revile in return if we are to follow the steps of Jesus (1 Peter 2:23).

Demonstrate an attitude of humility. No one is above correction. Correction looked at properly can be a great tool for growth. Being made aware of our weaknesses can cause us to depend that much more on God's grace and mercy in our lives (1 Corinthians 15:10).

Don't be too proud to admit your wrong. If upon reflection, we realize we have done wrong, then we must be willing to concede such and determine to do better. If we have sinned, then we need to confess that sin to God and to whomever we have injured (1 John 1:7-9; James 5:16).

Rebuke is a blessing if we let it be. If we are to arrive ever closer to where the Lord would have us to be, we must be willing to accept our fallibility and make correction when necessary. We will close with the words of the wise man who said, "He who disdains instruction despises his own soul, but he who heeds rebuke gets understanding" (Proverbs 15: 32).