

Do You Pray For Believers to Rebuke You

by James Jennings

This sermon delves into the importance of receiving rebuke and correction in our lives, drawing insights from Psalm 141 and the example of King David. It emphasizes the need for humility, transparency, and a willingness to grow in our relationship with the Lord through accepting correction from righteous individuals. The sermon highlights the dangers of refusing rebuke, the kindness in offering correction, and the potential for personal and communal revival through a spirit of reproving sin.

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Scripture: Psalm 141:5, Proverbs 10:17, Matthew 7:3, Hebrews 12:11, Proverbs 27:5, 1 Corinthians 16:14, Ezekiel 36:25, Amos 5:10, Revelation 3:19

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Description

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Transcript

Go ahead and open your Bibles to Psalm 141. And let me ask a question. How many of you have been helped in how to pray and grown in your prayer life by hearing the prayers of others? Raise your hand.

And that's what I hope to help us do this morning. And whose prayer life in the Old Testament could be better to look at than King David? A man after God's own heart. Psalm 141 says the psalm of David.

You know, prayer, it's a very intimate time. A person is talking to the Lord. They're bearing their heart.

It's very transparent. And we see that in David. We get a glimpse into this person who has a deep relationship with the Lord.

And one question we should ask is as we read this, ask yourself, as I ask myself, does this in any way reflect how I pray? Does David's prayer here, does prayer throughout Scripture, if someone recorded me praying or I wrote the prayer down like David has written it down here, does that reflect that reality in my own life? And one of the greatest areas that many of us need to grow, that I feel I need to grow is in my prayer life. In my relationship with the Lord as I communicate to Him with whom my soul loves. So let's

read the whole psalm.

Specifically, I'm going to draw my points from v. 5. Psalm 141. David says, O Lord, I call upon You. Hasten to me.

Give ear to my voice when I call to You. Let my prayer be counted as incense before You. And the lifting up of my hands is the evening sacrifice.

Lord, set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth. Keep watch over the door of my lips. Don't let my heart incline to any evil, to busy myself with wicked deeds in the company with men who work iniquity.

Let me not eat of their delicacies. And then David, he interjects a thought. If you just read v. 4, let me not eat of their delicacies.

Go to the end of v. 5. Yet my prayer is continually against their evil deeds. That's the flow here. But he interjects v. 5 in the middle of this prayer.

Let a righteous man strike me. It is a kindness. Let him rebuke me.

It is oil for my head. But let my head not refuse it. Yet my prayer is continually against their evil deeds.

When their judges are thrown over the cliff, then they shall hear my words, for they are pleasant. As when one plows and breaks up the earth, so shall our bones be scattered at the mouth of Sheol. But my eyes are towards You, O God, my Lord.

In You I seek refuge. Leave me not defenseless. Keep me from the trap that they have laid for me and from the snares of evildoers.

Let the wicked fall into their own nets while I pass by safely. So I want to speak to you this morning on v. 5. King David, a man walking intimately with the Lord, he clearly recognized his present and future need for righteous people to rebuke him. He recognized that need.

What is rebuke? What is reproof? Reproof is the process which brings something to the light and exposes it. And what are we trying to bring to the light? Things that are not according to what? To God's character? To the Word of God? That's our concern as Christians. Our concern as Christians is I want my life lining up with God's standard.

And so rebuke is bringing into the light something that is not lining up. But it's not just that. Correction, when you think about correction, it literally means a straightening up again and a restoration of something to its original and proper condition.

You know, when we say I'm going to go correct someone, too often that sounds like they're going to do something harsh or mean. When you hear a doctor say I'm going to go correct your son's broken leg, does that sound harsh and mean? It doesn't. Because you recognize what that doctor's going to do is they're going to take that leg and they're going to fix that bone so it can heal properly.

And so to be rebuked is to have someone point out something in your life that is not according to the Scriptures and then they apply instruction. They show how this should change so that it would be aligned with God's character, with the Word of God, with the Scriptures. And David's praying for this to happen.

Right? You guys catch that? Verse 5, let him rebuke me. It is oil for my head. David loves the Lord, and David is not content with where he is at.

David recognizes his stability today could shift and he could be unstable and crooked in an area in a week. And he recognizes I need people to come to me and point things out in order to keep me straight and on the straight and narrow road to the heavenly city. Why would a man pray this? A man would pray this prayer because he has a heart that wants to be like Christ.

Right? Why would we sing a song, I ask the Lord that I might grow? You want to be like Christ. You want to set your feet on higher ground. You want to have growth in your life because there's a discontentment that I want to know the Lord more.

So Psalm 141. I want to give you eight observations here. So first thing I want to point out is this.

David interjects a prayer in v. 5 for the righteous to rebuke him just after mentioning two things. Two things that could happen in his life that would not be good. What were those two things? In v. 4. In v. 3. What were the two things? Just speak up.

Not incline his heart to evil? How would that happen? He says, in company with men who work iniquity. David recognized, I could be in company with men who work sin. So part of what's on David's mind is I need to be kept from hanging out around certain people.

What was in v. 3? What's his concern there? About what he says. So right before David interjects a prayer of let a righteous man rebuke, he's praying two things to the Lord. He's concerned that he could err in the way he speaks.

Boy, and isn't that something that often happens, right? I mean, 50% or more of our sin as Christians sometimes is how we speak. And you go through the book of Proverbs and you've got all sorts of things talking about how we speak. James 3 says, for we all stumble in many ways.

And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he's a perfect man able to also bridle his whole body. And so we can stumble in what we say. Did David ever stumble in what he said? Can you ever think of some time where David was very... I mean, there's actually multiple times, but the time I thought about was this.

Remember when Nabal really offended David? Man, his blood got boiling. He wanted to go kill that man. And he was saying things to his men and his men were saying things to him.

And David got in a rush to go kill Nabal. What happened? Did he get to kill him? No, thankfully, a woman was hasty and quick to go to David, Nabal's wife. She rebuked David and he received it and he was thankful and he rejoiced that he was kept from blood guilt.

So, what we say, and then the second thing there is to busy myself with deeds in company with men. And who do you keep company with? David kind of points out to us two areas in which often we find we need to correct people. In their speech and what they say.

And then the second thing is in who they keep company with. Those two things often come up and David here in his prayer mentions those two things before he's asking for the Lord to let someone as righteous rebuke him. So, you think about 1 Corinthians 15 that Gary just read.

It says their bad company corrupts good morals. And obviously in context there, bad company with false teachers who deny the resurrection, it corrupts good morals. You're not steadfast and movable always abounding in the work of the Lord because you don't really believe there's going to be immortality to come.

You think there's no resurrection. That affects how you live. Who do you keep company with? Or who do you keep company with that people have actually come to you and they've actually sought to correct you with concerns? Did you receive what they said? Or did you refuse it? How did you respond? So second observation from this psalm.

We see here that David, by acknowledging his need for rebuke, by acknowledging the need to even need someone to come and correct him, what is David acknowledging that's in his life? That could be in his life. David's acknowledging that he has blind spots. It's something you can't see.

I don't see what's behind me. It's a blind spot. You guys can see very well what's behind me.

I can't. So David here is acknowledging he's got blind spots. You see, the proud man thinks I don't have anything wrong.

Everything is good with me. Jesus said in Matthew 7, why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but you do not notice the log that is in your own eye? How many of us have logs that we don't see? I'd actually argue with you that based on the fact that none of us have arrived at perfection, we all have blind spots this morning. Every single one of us has some area in our life that is not perfectly conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.

And that area needs to change. And every one of us has those areas and we don't even see that that's there. We don't recognize it.

We can't see it. And so David, the fact he's praying for this to happen, that he's praying for someone to come to him, is him acknowledging he has blind spots. And this is good.

As Ecclesiastes says, it's better was a poor and wise youth than an old and foolish king who no longer knew how to take advice. David is showing, I know how to take advice. At this point in his life, he's saying, I can take advice.

Come to me with that advice. An old and foolish king. Recently, Paul Washer mentioned in a conversation that he said he is more afraid right now where he's at than when he was young.

He said it's going to be far easier for him to be proud because of all the success in the ministry to not take correction. And he said that's why it's so important that I'm a member in a church submitting under godly biblical elders who will be willing to confront me. And that's the mindset you have to have.

You look at Uzziah, you look at all these kings, so many of them, they missed it in their old age. So, David, he recognizes he's got blind spots. So a third thing, stay with me.

A third thing in Psalm 141, verse 5, we see this, David recognizes righteous people correcting him is a means of him being kept from doing what? Unrighteousness. From sinning. This man does not want to sin.

And he recognizes it's not just up to me. I need input from righteous people in my life. That means I need to be a person who takes the verses seriously about in the abundance of counselors, there is safety.

Where there is no guidance, a people perishes. That's what the Proverbs say. David recognizes if the righteous don't strike me, I could fall into eating the delicacies of sin.

So David reveals the need that David Butterball was sitting out in the 10 A.M. He realizes the need for fellowship and people to be involved in his life. He realizes I can't be some lone ranger. I need to be with people in these relationships that these things might come out and I will see them.

David wants people transparent with him. Well, a fourth point here is this. We see that David prays for the righteous to strike him as opposed to who? The righteous compared to who? Yeah, the unrighteous.

The wicked. As Christians, how often the wicked might bring something to us. Not that we shouldn't take the grain of salt of truth that might be in their correction, but Christians, we're going to get ran over by unbelievers and they're going to mock us and malign us when we do not join them in their flood of debauchery, as Peter says.

David wants the righteous, those who are keeping God's standard and know God's standard. In a way, David wants someone like Ezra who studied the law of God, who taught it and did it, he wants that type of man to come to him and say, hey, you look at this in your life. The righteous.

You know, when we rebuke people, how important is it that what we're bringing to them is Scriptural? Is what I'm going to bring to them, can I defend it from principles and verses in the Bible? Is this a Scriptural idea? Or is this my own personal conviction? And I realize one issue we face is a lot of times there are sayings that are grayer than we would like. And so it's more difficult to discern. But David's praying for the righteous to strike him, not the unrighteous.

A fifth point here. Fifth is let the righteous man do what? Strike. How many of you have been... well, maybe don't raise your hand.

How many of you have been punched before? Or struck? Look, I know as a parent, when I strike my child on the bottom and I'm disciplining them, it hurts. It hurts. I get the idea this is on the face.

Getting struck on the face. David recognizes it's going to hurt. He's praying for something that will actually bring about pain, but he realizes that's not what it's going to bring about.

The pain of discipline, Hebrews 12 says, is what? Momentary, right? But later, it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. So David doesn't care. Strike me on the face.

That's fine. Because it's going to get the ultimate goal of knowing the Lord more and pressing on. So I want that.

So he likens the rebuke, as you can see in v. 5, to a strike. And he says it in two ways. He says, let a righteous man strike me, and then he says, let him rebuke me.

It's the same idea. The striking and rebuking. And he says it's kindness.

It is oil for my head. He's basically restating this one thrust that he has in two different ways with different imagery to communicate something to us. So a strike.

It hurts. Maybe this is what David means here. Think of this.

What if David is praying that the righteous man strike him as opposed to tap him on the shoulder? Meaning, David is praying, don't be vague about it. Make it clear to me. Don't beat around the bush with subtle inferences.

Tell me exactly as it is. Maybe that's what David wanted. Maybe David knew all this subtle tapping on the shoulder, it's no good.

You come to me and you strike me. Alright, a sixth point here. A sixth observation.

How does David view the rebuke? How does David view the righteous man coming to rebuke him? Kindness. And this is important. Because so often, this can be where we miss it.

We're not correctly seeing what the other individual is seeking to do. Whatever it might be. It could be that individual's coming to you, sister, to reprove you for immodesty.

And you get defensive. They're seeking to be kind to you. You know how much guts it takes to bring up certain things that could be considered controversial? They're being kind to you.

David views it as kindness. In the Holman Christian, it's worded this way. Instead of it is a kindness, he says this, it is an act of faithful love.

Wow! Them coming to rebuke me is an act of faithful love. Who wants faithful friends? I do. I want faithful friends.

And my wife is the one who lives with me and is able to see the most glaring things and bring them to my attention. And I've got to make sure as a husband I'm leading her in a way where she can approach me and bring those concerns forward and does not feel shut down or shut off. So David recognizes when they come to rebuke me, they are being faithful to me.

This is a kindness. Proverbs 27.5 Better is open rebuke than what? Hidden love. Now what does he mean there? Well, hidden love, meaning if you do not rebuke, you're hiding your love.

The act of love that's being hidden is the fact that you could go and reprove them. But when you don't go and reprove, you're hiding that act of love that could be towards that person. And so often what keeps us from bringing things up to one another can be selfishness and love of self.

We're so afraid and gripped with fear. What if I say that to them? How does that affect my relationship? But the fact is if what we're going to bring to their attention is out of a heart of kindness and love for them, we should expect as a Christian they're not going to respond in that way if we're delivering that message in a gracious way. So David views the rebuke as an act of faithful love.

And then what's the second thing he says here? It is oil for my head. What does he mean there? Oil for my head. Where did David experience oil on his head in his life? When he was anointed to be king.

I mean, David, do you think he was upset that they anointed him to be king? What a privilege, right? So maybe that's what he means here. Maybe he's thinking of that oil on the head. Was oil expensive or cheap? Expensive.

Expensive. It's a very expensive thing for someone to come to you and try to correct you. There's a lot of expense that happens there.

Because not having confrontation often is the easier thing to do. But when we confront, there's all sorts of expenses. Emotional expense.

Time of praying and fasting before writing that email or having that conversation. It's not easy. It costs a lot.

And so then when they're pouring that oil on your head and you refuse that, what an insult. They spent all that time accumulating that oil to pour on your head and you just refuse it. It's a blessing.

It's a faithful act of love. So you can think of this. When I go to reprove you, it's equivalent to me bringing anointing oil to honor you as Cain.

Think about that. The next time someone's coming over and you're thinking they're most likely going to meet with me because they're going to bring up a concern. The meeting just kind of has that sense.

Like, this is two came out of nowhere, they're probably going to bring something up. Roll out the red carpet and let them walk right in and anoint you. They're coming to honor you with something very important as a child of God.

They're coming to honor you with growth to be more like Christ. To fulfill God's promise to change you from one degree of glory to the next to be like Christ. You've got to see it that way.

Proverbs 9-8 says, do not reprove a scoffer or he will what? Hate you. He hates you for it. All you get is hate.

Reprove a wise man and he will what? Love. Ah. What a thing.

You reprove a wise man and he actually loves you more. It goes on to say, give instruction to him and he will still be wiser. Teach a righteous man and he will increase in learning.

I want to increase. And one way that happens is righteous people coming to me, revealing something that's off and applying correction to that area that I might grow. To be more like Christ.

And that produces in me a greater love for them. A greater love for them. I remember, Zeke's at the prison preaching, but I remember maybe it was years ago, he mentioned that someone had come to reprove him.

He mentioned this publicly. That someone had come to reprove him about how he was treating his children. And at first, he wanted to fight against it.

And then he ended up saying that person was right. And you know what Zeke told me? He loves that brother all the more for pointing that out to him. I've seen this proverb fulfilled many, many times.

Here's an example. I'm going to give an example from Leonard Ravenhill. And I laugh because if you've read his biography and if you know Ravenhill, Ravenhill was very good at times, but there were times he was too extreme and too harsh.

Okay, so I'm not endorsing. This is not to say we all need to be like Leonard Ravenhill in how we correct people. But this gets the point across about someone loves you more because of that correction.

This is page 510 from the biography. A young preacher was preaching and Ravenhill just randomly showed up to hear him. And so the next morning, the preacher walked to Ravenhill's house to ask him

what he thought of his preaching.

So there the guy gets in and he asks Ravenhill, what did you think of my sermon? Probably shouldn't have entered the house. But no, no, you know what? He got oil poured on his head. We're about to read how that... This is the oil getting poured on his head.

He was brutally honest and responded by saying, you were too funny. You want people to like you too much. You probably spent the afternoon eating and talking with people instead of praying.

What did the man say? He said he was right. I've been feasting at the wrong table and fellowshiping with the wrong person on Saturday, not with Christ. Though this happened 25 years ago, I remember it like it was today.

That conversation taught me more than all the times of prayer we ever shared together. Now, there's times in the biography Ravenhill missed it. Ravenhill did not act in a righteous way in his rebuke.

And we have to recognize that could be our own fault. That's why it's so important. Am I coming to that person in kindness, in love? Have I prayed, fasted about this? There are people, they'll not eat for three days before dealing with some controversial situation because they want to make sure I'm not going to miss it in what I say to that individual.

They're such a burden. Here, another example. John Wesley and George Whitefield.

This is Whitefield writing to Wesley. He says, I thank you for your kind reproof. I thank you.

Henceforth, I beg of God to keep the door of my lips. That's exactly what the psalmist David prayed right here. Whitefield says, I beg of God to keep the door of my lips that I offend no more with my tongue.

So Wesley was rebuking Whitefield for something that came out of his mouth. I would not willingly have one unprofitable word proceed out of my mouth. I'm often with persons that commend me.

They flatter me. I take it as a cross. I love you the more for rebuking me.

See, that was Whitefield to John Wesley. So, we see here, this is a kindness. It's oil for our head.

We have to remember that. You've got to remember that. If the conversation isn't happening face-to-face, and it's one of those things where it's a person far away and you're getting an email, I've had emails that are in my inbox and I see it there and I don't click on it.

Sometimes I'll wait days because I know the weightiness of it and I've got to pray and make sure my heart's right before I read that email. And I might even be assuming wrongly what the contents are. But either way, I've got to know, am I right? Am I ready? If someone's about to pour oil on my head, am I ready to receive that? So, seventh thing, and we've got to see this as well.

We also see from David who ultimately is doing the rebuking. Okay, let's think for a moment here. David is praying to who? That the Lord will do what? Send.

Let. Allow. You catch that? David's praying to the Lord to do the sending of the righteous man.

So the righteous man who comes to do the correcting, it's not just the man. If he's of God doing it in his own initiative, the Lord has sent him. The Lord has sent him.

And he says that right there. Let a righteous man strike. He's praying for God to allow it to happen.

God allows it to happen. Think of this, it's the Lord who gives another believer discernment and awareness to see your blind spot. And we have to be good stewards of that knowledge to deal with it appropriately.

It's the Lord who then presses that individual to bring it to you. Look, how many times something happens and there's this very valid concern. And you can't shake the burden.

You've got to go say something. Well, that's the Lord. And we've got to be good stewards of that to bring that concern forward.

It's the Lord using them to rebuke you as a means, as John 15 says, of them pruning you so that you might bear more fruit. Do you catch that? That person coming to pour oil on your head is sent by the Lord, and the Lord is using them as a means to cut off some branches. And the reason those branches get cut off is that you might bear more fruit.

Who doesn't want to increase and bear more fruit? We all should as Christians. So, think of this, brethren, if the Lord reveals something clearly to you that should not be overlooked, because there's often times we should just overlook stuff. Let love cover that.

Am I being a good steward of the discernment that God has given me? Am I being a good steward of that? Look, if you're a doctor and a patient comes and you're made aware that they have some terminal problem, are you being a good steward if you do not tell them about it? Are you being a good steward of the knowledge you have? No. You're failing that patient by not being honest with them. In the same way as Christians, if God allows us to see something and be made aware of an area in a Christian's life where they're drifting, and we just want to ignore that, it's like that doctor who doesn't make the patient aware of what they saw on that scan.

So it's ultimately the Lord doing the rebuking, but God uses means. Deuteronomy 8.5, Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, the Lord your God disciplines you. The Lord disciplines us.

So that's an eighth point. You guys getting hot? Is it hot in here? It's cold? Maybe we need to stand a little more. An eighth thing, we see the great danger we have.

What is the great danger that David makes very evident in this prayer? What does he recognize in his own life could be his response? He recognizes I could have the ability to be a defensive and proud person and refuse this oil and kindness that is going to be poured on me. I could say no to it. And this is what happens.

All of us think we would never refuse the rebuke. Right? I mean, you hear this sermon right now and you're sitting there saying, yeah, yeah, I'll receive the rebuke. Oh yeah, I'll take it.

It's oil. This is the problem. The rebuke we have yet to receive, we imagine we're going to get rebuked about something different than the thing that's actually going to be brought to our attention.

If the person brought the thing we assume they're going to bring, we'd be ready to receive it. But they bring something we're totally blind to. So that makes it difficult.

And we imagine the reproof happening at a different and more convenient time than when it will happen. So they're coming to you with the thing that you didn't even see you had, so it makes it hard to receive it

because you think, really? Is that really in my life? And then they're coming at a time where you had all these other trials happening probably. A lot of pruning going on.

And we imagine the person will come across in a different way than they come across. Things like that make it hard. They can make it hard.

What are ways we refuse rebuke? Well, I mean, the first is by not even being approachable. By not even making yourself accessible for someone to bring a concern up to you. You know, we have to handle ourselves in such a way where people have a sense that, you know, I can bring that concern to that brother.

He's interested in my input for his own good. And you think about people who aren't in a local church. That's a horrible position to be in.

For one, you don't have a community that's able to see your blind spots for you. And two, you don't have the ability to be tested by them rebuking you and seeing how you respond. And so you can become very proud as many YouTubers and Internet Christians are full of pride.

What are other ways we refuse to rebuke? People refuse to rebuke by minimizing the concern. They minimize it. Someone brings a concern and you say, well, yeah, but... Is there a time where people might clarify? And that's actually very helpful? Yes.

And you realize, wow, that was not as big of a concern as I thought it was. But there's often someone refuses it by minimizing the concern. Or by saying something like, well, you don't understand.

Or you don't know what we've been going through. This or that. Or they say to you, you're not seeing things clearly.

What did Jesus say in Matthew 7? He said we have logs in our eyes. Well, we're the ones who aren't seeing things clearly. Just the other day, I went to an optometrist to get my eyes checked.

She gave me her assessment of my eyes. Do you think I responded to her and said you don't know what you're talking about? No, I agreed and I got a new pair of glasses coming in with that exact prescription, trusting she knew what she was doing. And I'll be helped by it.

What's another way people refuse rebuke? Blameshifting. Right? You bring a concern and their instant response is what about this thing in your life? Right? Just get it off themselves. What about this thing in your life? I mean, brother, you've got a lot of your own problems to deal with, so I don't know why you're coming to me about my problems.

So now you make them feel guilty for even approaching you with correction. That's a shame. You're missing out on something good.

People might even hear you, but then they go away and they're bitter. They're bitter. They might have said I agree with you, but they go away bitter.

In Revelation, the Lord says I reprove you, so do what? Be zealous and repent. Hearing reproof and agreeing with it is one thing. Do I actually go after that point and live that out? Or does it not actually apply to my life? Do I not apply it to my life? So, here another thought is, the matter you're being corrected on might be very, very minor, but the way you respond could actually now create a bigger issue.

So someone might come to correct you. It's something that's more minor. The way you respond in defensiveness and pride, that could now make your pride the bigger issue that now they've got to come and correct you for that.

For that response. Proverbs 10, 17, whoever heeds instruction is on the path to life, but he who rejects reproof... he who rejects reproof does what? Who knows what that says? He who rejects reproof... say again? That's another proverb. But yeah, be destroyed without remedy.

He who rejects reproof leads others astray. Okay. Wow, what a thought there.

You're telling me that if I reject reproof, it's going to have a negative effect on other individuals? Yeah, it'll have a negative effect on the church. And think about it at home, alright? Imagine my kids catch wind of say some anger or something in my life that someone comes to rebuke me on, and I refuse to accept that rebuke. That leads my kids astray.

Because it teaches my kids, well, what Dad was doing wasn't really wrong because he rejected the reproof and what he was doing was really wrong. He would have received the rebuke. So my refusal to receive the correction is going to lead my own children astray.

How many people in cults, their kids are totally led astray and confused because their parents won't take correction from what the Bible is saying. So these are all ways that we could refuse the rebuke. And that's what he says there.

Let me not refuse it. Notice, who does he appeal to to let him not refuse the rebuke? Who is he asking to help him to receive it? The Lord. In the same way, he's saying, Lord, bring the person to correct me.

He's also saying, Lord, You bring the help for me to not be stubborn, to not be proud, to not be defensive, and when it comes with something I didn't even think they were going to talk about at the worst time possible, and they deliver it in a stiffer, more awkward way and I thought they were going to be warm, Lord, help me to receive it. Because it's oil for my head. And who would want to reject being anointed? So a ninth thing.

We need to take heed lest we fall. He says in v. 9 of the chapter, keep me from the trap that they have laid for me. Keep me from the trap that they have laid for me.

And he recognizes one way to be kept from the trap is someone coming and rebuking me. Okay, so there's a trap, right? Do I need to watch out for snares and it's going to be something pretty obvious? Is that what he's saying there? Are others going to see the trap more clearly and they're going to point it out to me? No, look at v. 4. Let me not eat of their what? Delicacies. Friends, the enemy is not out there putting out obvious traps.

Those are obvious, right? Who's going to walk into that? Rather, Satan in a way is putting out this plate with really nice delicacies on it. And you're about to partake of one of those. Oh, I have my liberty to do this.

And a righteous person comes and they say, you're going too far, friend. And you say, no, there's no harm in this. It's just a nice little delicacy.

And you eat of that thing and it traps you. And you try to get out of that trap and you kick your legs and you're stuck. You rejected that opportunity to see clearly by refusing to rebuke.

And a prime example in David's life, brethren, is at the end of his life in old age, he did that census. That didn't look like an obvious trap. That was a delicacy.

Let's send out the men and count and see how many people we've got so that number can be taken and put in the Chronicles so I can be remembered as having this many people in my kingdom and this many soldiers. And who went to correct David? Joab, an unrighteous man, went to correct David. And how did David respond? V. 4, in that chapter, the king's word prevailed against Joab.

Joab said you do this, you're going to bring guilt. And what happened? David's word prevailed. He out-argued Joab.

And obviously, he was king, right? So he had a little more position of power. That's a delicacy. Thousands of people died because David refused the rebuke of Joab.

Thousands of people died because one man who prayed what he prayed in Psalm 141, and I don't know when he prayed it and I don't know how old he was, but what I know is this man in his older age was the king, at least in that occasion, who could no longer take advice. And thousands upon thousands of people lost their lives because that man did not receive that kindness that Joab poured upon him. I did that sermon on Uzziah a while back.

I mean, what a thing. Uzziah. Who remembers? How many men of valor came to rebuke Uzziah? Eighty and one more.

Eighty-one. Eighty-one men of valor came to rebuke Uzziah. And he got angry at them.

And God struck him with leprosy. A man who had so much fruit in his life, but near the end, he couldn't take rebuke. He went to do something that was not his position to do, and 81 men rebuked him who were men of valor and he refused it.

What a sad thing. So, a couple of brief conclusions. Number one, ask yourself this, what righteous rebukes have you refused? Think about it.

Think, what are things that someone has come to me about, I might have even agreed with them and I didn't apply it in my life. That's refusing the rebuke ultimately. Because the rebuke isn't just the exposure of it, it's the correcting, right? What righteous rebukes have I refused? Or did not apply to my life? By refusing that, you're refusing growth and the ability to bear more fruit.

By refusing that, it will only hinder your communion with Jesus Christ. Do you see what's at stake here? This is not about am I right and they're wrong. This is about I want to be like Christ.

I want to grow. I ask the Lord that I might grow. That's what David did in this prayer.

He doesn't use the word grow there. He uses the idea of being corrected. David, I don't know if Newton wrote that psalm based on this prayer of David's, but David is praying for growth through the means of people bringing things to the light in his life that are not straight according to the way of righteousness.

The second conclusion, or what kindness am I withholding to someone by not going and anointing their head with oil? Maybe some of you, you have that bottle of oil. I mean, you've prayed about it. You've fasted about it.

You've maybe even got different counsel. Should I bring this concern? And you've got that bottle of oil and you want to pour it on someone's head. Look, if God's in that, that's a kindness.

Go and do that to that person. If I'm that person, go and do that to me. I don't want to miss out.

Do you want to miss out? Apparently so. That was very quiet. Before you approve someone, you ask yourself, is me going to them based on me wanting to be kind to them? Can you say that? I want to be kind to them.

That's what this is rooted in. This is not who's right and who's wrong. This isn't some vendetta.

This isn't me trying to bring something up out of bitterness. I'm sure we've all faced... I mean, the dangerous thing is there's times we've faced correction we need and we excuse it away as well, they were angry and they're wrong. So don't get that in your mind.

There might be times you've missed it and you should have received it, but there might be times someone's come to correct you and it was incorrect. 1 Corinthians 16, let all that you do be done in love. When we correct, we need to do it as a brother considering our own failures.

Considering our own failures. So is this sermon, am I preaching this to help our church become really hypercritical and judgmental? Is that what I'm doing? No. No, that's not the desire.

I mean, you guys know that. It takes balance in this as in every area in the Christian life. And I realize we might have some loose cannons from time to time that want to blow up everything.

But sometimes you've got people who have very, very precious oil. God has given them discernment to see something in your life. And they're just waiting to pour that oil on your head.

But they might have some indicators about how you respond where they're afraid to do it because they just think, oh, they're going to refuse me. They're not going to hear me. And so you're missing out on a blessing.

Third conclusion, one solution to get quicker growth and get kindness that people are withholding from you is to go up to them and ask. Do you see anything wrong in my life? Let me quote Richard Ganz. There's a biography.

He was lost and a psychiatrist. And God radically saved him and he started evangelizing in the psych ward. And people who were out of their minds got converted.

And like in Mark 5, they were in the right mind. And so they ended up firing Richard Ganz and the guy got converted left with them. But Richard said this on page 107, imagine what it would be like if everyone who knew and cared for you told you something about yourself of which you were not aware.

Sounds pretty overwhelming. Everyone who knew and cared for me told me something about myself which I'm not aware. There would be numerous areas for growth and change.

And Richard says this, do it. Ask the question and then listen to the answers. Certainly there will be some pain in the self-discovery, but nothing close to the pain of being stunted as a Christian.

You see, there's greater pain in your Christian growth being stunted and you not bearing more fruit than you could. And he says this, the payoff is tremendous. A life more closely conformed to Christ, the best person to help others become like Christ is that person who himself is becoming more and more like Christ.

So that's Richard Ganz' advice. You could take him up on it. But you know what, the fact is, as Christians, we live on a day-to-day basis, right? Whatever happens tonight and leading into tomorrow, there might be a rebuke I would receive today that come tomorrow morning because of certain trials and things that could happen.

My heart might not be as tender. You know what this psalm also teaches? What was David doing when he said these words? He was praying. We have to be people of prayer who are constantly crying out to God, bearing our hearts to Him.

And you see that in David's life, being transparent, Lord, I'm feeling a little cold here. I don't know if I sinned there and was impatient. Lord, forgive me.

Lord, help me. Don't leave me. The fourth thing here in conclusion.

Think about revival. We want revival, right? William Grimshaw in his biography talks about John Wesley. John Wesley, he saw a lot happen.

God used him. John Wesley was 85 years of age and he preached at 85. So that's a little younger than you, Papa.

He preached this sermon called The Duty of Reproving Our Neighbor. The Duty of Reproving Our Neighbor. And Grimshaw, the author of the book, Grimshaw says this, as he looked back across 50 years, John Wesley recollected, no doubt with some nostalgia, the zeal and fervor that had marked the early days of the revival.

So he's thinking, what was different then? And this one particular characteristic stood out in his mind. The courage with which many of the pioneer preachers had rebuked sin wherever they saw blatant expressions of evil among them. Wesley said, I never heard of reading of any considerable revival of religion, said the fearless old preacher, which was not attended by a spirit of reproving.

I believe it cannot be otherwise. And again, part of it, we have to get the harshness of that word to be gone. Someone rebuked me.

Someone rebuked me. The first thought that some people think is, oh, ouch! I mean, yes, that might have been getting struck. But we should also think, oh, that hurt.

But wow, what kindnesses did God work in your life? How much oil did they pour on your head? Was it a gallon or was it a little bottle? How much did they save up for this time? Tell me about it. What did you learn? And so when you're rebuking, you're trying to help people be more holy. And no wonder that would bring about revival.

Because one way to define revival, it's revival among us of a greater zeal and holiness and passion for God. So, that's all I have. This is a prayer.

This is something we should pray. As I started this out, could you say, have you ever prayed this psalm? And if you haven't, don't just go quickly pray it. Go read it.

I realize there are some verses in here. You could say v. 7 could have some confusion. I realize the whole psalm.

But v. 5, praying that verse. That's our David's psalm. I need God to act and bring people to correct me and God to act and give me the grace to receive the correction.

That's how needy we are for the Lord's strength. We need Him. And David is doing this as he prays.

As he prays. So let's pray. Father, I thank You.

Lord, I thank You for the heart of David. Lord, he wants higher ground. He asks You that he might grow.

He wants to be kept from bad company and bad speech. Lord, that's our heart. Lord, as Christians, we want Your promise in Ezekiel 36 of the New Covenant that You will cleanse us from all of our idols.

Lord, we want that to progressively continue to be fulfilled in our lives practically by seeing areas in which we're missing it and correcting those areas. And Lord, we desperately need Your grace. Father, I pray You would help us.

Lord, help us as a church. Help my brothers and sisters to apply this correctly. Lord, help us to be good stewards of the things and concerns that we have and help us to be loving brothers and sisters as we go in kindness and talk to certain people about things.

And Father, we pray as David prayed, Lord, let us not refuse it. Lord, let us not refuse something because we're so blind to see the good that is going to be for us. Lord, if there's something in my own life that I've refused to see, I pray, Lord, You'd show that to me.

Lord, we want to grow. Lord, we don't want stagnation. Lord, we want to press on.

We really, really do want higher ground. Lord, we are not content with where we're at. We pray You'd make us more like the Lord Jesus Christ.

And Lord, I pray You'd help us. Give us more humility. Lord, that we would not end up like Uzziah.

That we would not end up like King David. And Lord, I think of the brethren who are alive, Lord, right now, and have fallen into some of this in their own life. Lord, I pray You'd be merciful to them.

Lord, that they would have the kindness of the correction have its full effect in their lives. That they'd all the more shine bright for Christ. Lord, we love You.

We thank You for dying for us, Lord Jesus, and putting away our sin and giving us the Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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