

Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Colossians 3:16 (NASB)

The value if a warning can be a tremendous help in most situations. A warning is designed to help and prevent negative outcomes. Let's be men eager to seek and provide warning of help to each other.

A Simple Warning

In the 1930's The Hudson Car company in Detroit, Michigan began a car revolution by developing the check engine light. At this time, only the bare necessities existed on the dashboard of the car. Basic fuel and oil gauges along with the speedometer and odometer. But a need for more arose.

See over the course of 30 years the automobile industry had grown significantly following Henry Ford's vision that everyone would be able to own their very own car. His factories and production methods made this goal a reality. By 1930 over 26 million cars were registered in the United States. During those first thirty years driving was a hazardous activity in the cities. Traffic lights did not exist until the late 1920s. The rules of driving were still being developed and standardized. The need to create conformity and participation in safety precautions was becoming more and more evident. And while the number of people owning cars increased rapidly the understanding of and ability to work on and maintain their own car was still relatively low for the average Joe. Even drivers training was not mandatory until 1930.

With the foresight to try and get ahead of the abundance of mechanical problems, The Hudson Car Company invented what we know as the check engine light. While similar to today's dash located lights, this was a very rudimentary device. At that time it was actually called, "the idiot light." The idiot light was designed to bring attention to something that could possibly cause a problem in the car. Ultimately, they were **warning** lights.

A Serious Warning

In 1984, an Avianca Airlines 747 passenger plane crashed in Spain. Investigators studying the accident made an frightening discovery. The "black box" cockpit recorder that was recovered in the wreckage revealed that several minutes before impact a loud, computerized voice from the plane's automatic warning system alerted the crew repeatedly in English, "Pull up! Pull up!"

The pilot, determining for himself that the system was malfunctioning, most likely due to his perceived perception of the computer's error, ignored the **warning**, yelled, "Shut up, Gringo!" and switched the system off. Minutes later the plane crashed into the side of a mountain. 181 people died.

Like these warnings, admonishment serves the purpose to prevent, fix and/or change course. Two main Greek

Admonish

words can be translated admonish:

- **Paraineo** from **para** = to the point of + **aineo** = to praise) – Strong advice or direction
- **Noutheteo** from **nous** = mind + **tithemi** = place) – Strong warning with moral implications

Noutheteo is our word of focus. The main thrust of noutheteo is that of not simply informing but informing the intellect, but doing so with the purpose of influencing the mind, the will and the disposition of the person.

The desire of admonition is to bring about change in a person's life. Noutheteo is where we get the term Nouthetic counseling. Now known simply as biblical counseling, Nouthetic counseling was designed to bring change to the Christian life in the most biblical way. It was built on the idea of admonition.

Concern	Confrontation	Change
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*"Nouthetic counseling was first seen in a book published by Dr. Jay Adams. Adams is known as the father of the biblical counseling movement as his writings and zeal for nouthetic counseling ultimately produced hundreds of books and writing, training institution as well as university and seminary degrees. "God's Word changes people, changes their thinking, changes their decisions, and changes their behavior. Change is an important matter to nouthetic counselors. The Scriptures everywhere anticipate change. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of change. His activity is everywhere represented as the dynamic and power behind the personality changes in God's people." – Jay E. Adams, **Competent to Counsel: Introduction to Nouthetic Counseling***

Admonition: Its Purpose

We proclaim Him, admonishing every person and teaching every person with all wisdom, so that we may present every person complete in Christ. Colossians 1:28

The purpose of Paul's exhortation for admonition is emphasized in the words "so that we may present every person complete in Christ." Here Paul is speaking about Christian Maturity. Complete here is the Greek word (teleios) and is often translated perfect. Paul is not teaching some sort of perfectionism that results in no sin or flawless living. The term means: an end, a purpose, an aim, a goal, it means complete, mature, fully developed, full grown, brought to its end, finished, wanting nothing necessary to completeness, in good working order. The picture is maturity. Maturity is not an uncommon subject in the scriptures.

Brothers do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature. 1 Cor. 14:20

Until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, Ephesians 4:13

The importance of Christian maturity is seen in its connection with glorifying God. John 15:8 says "By this my Father is **glorified**, that you **bear much fruit** and so prove to be my disciples." John tells us that the way we bring glory to the Father is by bearing much fruit in our lives. This idea of much fruit is synonymous with Christian maturity. As a Christian grows, he naturally will produce more fruit in every area of his life.

Any true believer should have the desire to glorify God with his life. This is a direct result of his gratitude for the free gift of salvation. Paul later says "**admonishing** one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, **with thankfulness** in your hearts to God." This gratitude produces a love for God that strives to glorify Him. This is done through the persistent pursuit of obedience in the Christian life. As a result, the Christian matures producing much fruit and ultimately glory for God.

Now the believer sees all God ordained "tools" for maturity as a good and valuable thing. This includes **admonishment**.

Admonition: What It's Not

One of the best ways to see something clearly is to see what's not or to see what the contrast. Paul gives us a clear picture of what admonition is not. I do not write these things to **shame** you, but to admonish you as my beloved children. 1 Corinthians 4:14. While admonition is direct and point to things that are wrong, the goal and intention is not to **shame** the person. The goal rather is to lovingly bring change for the glory of God. This does not mean that during the process of admonition there will be no shame or guilt, it is simply saying those are only the biproducts of and not the initial intention of the admonisher's heart.

"For the person who admonishes in a friendly way takes special pains to see that all the shame should remain a matter between himself and the person whom he warns, and so be disposed of. But the man who upbraids in a malicious way exposes sin of another, and produces shame in him so as to make him the object of everybody's reproach." John Calvin

In Acts 4, Paul shows us his intentions. He says, 15 For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet you would not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. 16 Therefore I exhort you, **be imitators of me.** 17 For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he **will remind you of my ways which are in Christ,** just as I teach everywhere in every church.

Paul was arguing his case in this passage, bringing admonishment, in order to reestablish their focus and goal of following him in his pursuit for Christ. He again is concerned with their maturing. One must follow in the footsteps of the faithful men leading so as to mature and glorify God. Here admonition is a means for that

Admonition: How It's Done

goal.

- "In all wisdom" - Colossians 1:28
- "with all wisdom" - Colossians 3:16

Admonition must be executed in the right way. To do it without biblical guidance is risking the effectiveness of it. We must be men committed to pursuing admonition biblically. Paul makes it easy for us to see the question then becomes: where does this wisdom come from? Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another (Colossians 3:16). Before one can admonish in wisdom, he needs the source that wisdom to be in place: **the word of Christ richly dwell.** The word of Christ here is synonymous with the truth about Him. The word of Jesus Christ is the word of the gospel. We have established in this series that true wisdom and true knowledge only comes from God and through His scriptures, therefore for one to have this wisdom he must be true believer in Jesus Christ. Paul pushed this further for the believer he says this word must **dwell richly.**

Dwell - (enoikeo from en = in + oikéo = dwell) means literally to "dwell in", to take up residence, make one's home in or among. **Richly** means wealth, abundance, riches but with a twofold meaning of quantity and degree. This is a picture of the word of Christ being dominant in every area of the believer's life. A man who's life is devoted to the scriptures resulting in the maturity that it produces naturally has the wisdom to admonish properly. He has the wisdom to see the nuances of the situation and compassionately give proper correction and guidance. He is selfless and humble knowing that he too is a sinner capable to the same issues resulting in an encouraging love.

Admonition: Who Does it?

Let's get practical. Does the Bible instruct that only certain people can admonish? The answer is no. Admonishment is a duty of all believers. The only restriction is that the admonishment be guided by careful biblical truth and guided along with biblical wisdom.

- **The Church/leadership**- 1 Thessalonians 5:12
- **Each other** – Romans 15:14/Colossians 3:16

In 1 Thess. 5:12 Paul instructs to “respect those who labor among you and are **over you** in the Lord and admonish you.” These three participles are describing one group: leadership. Those laboring among the church are faithful men striving to be obedient. They naturally are elevated to roles of leadership giving them duty to look over people. Their heart to love Christ’s flock as a result will include godly admonishment. The

Admonition: Who Gets it?

second group Paul points out is clearly seen in Romans 15:14. And concerning **you**, my **brothers and sisters**, I myself also am convinced **that you yourselves** are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to **admonish one another**. Paul affirms that it’s the faithful believer’s job and responsibility to admonish one another.

Continuing with the practical nature. Does the Bible instruct that only certain people need to be admonished?

- **“To each other”** - Colossians 3:16
- **“The unruly/disorderly”** - 1 Thessalonians 5:14

Conveniently the same way Paul shows us who does the admonishing we see who needs to get admonished. Again, Colossians 3:16 says, **each other** and Romans 15:14 also says **one another**. Keeping in mind that as sinners we will always have need for repentance and maturing, there should be no surprise that we all fit into this category. Paul does isolate another group. He says in 1 Thessalonians 5:14 “We urge you, brethren, admonish the **unruly...**” The unruly was someone out of order, not following directions, insubordinate. These people pose threat to the peace of the church.

Admonition: When Does it Happen?

“Therefore, be on the alert, remembering that **night and day** for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears” Acts 20:31. Paul speaking of his time in Ephesus shows us that he was willing to spend day and night admonishing. One’s heart must be willing to give to each other consistent admonishment in order give the help needed for the situation. It is sacrificial with the others best interest in

Admonition: The Heart Behind It

mind.

- **“beloved children”** - 1 Corinthians 4:14
- **“As brothers”** - 2 Thessalonians 3:15
- **“With tears”** - Acts 20:31

Paul shows us that it’s the love of a father towards **children** that is behind admonishment. The one being admonished is not an enemy but family. He is a **brother** in Christ sharing the same needs as the admonisher requiring the admonisher to approach in all humility creating a situation that will be fruitful. This should be emotional and serious up to point of **tears** if necessary but definitely not a cold and calculated approach.

For Further Study

1. Memorize Colossians 3:16
2. What do you see in your own heart that has made you frustrated or even angry at receiving admonition?

3. Describe several ways that having biblical wisdom would guide your admonishment and guidance.
4. Have you found yourself on the receiving end of admonition coming from an unbiblical heart? Explain.
5. How has your desire for God's glory impacted your desire to fight sin and receive admonition?

Audio, video, and handouts for this session: gracechurch.org/motw

Next meeting: May 18, 7pm, Q&A with Ukrainian missionary, Bruce Alvorod