

Reproof

Welcome back. In this session, we are going to continue our discussion of three things that every conflict firefighter must know. In the last session, we looked at the first of three things—that being the Lord is always at work in the midst of conflict. In every conflict you encounter, the Lord is at work. In this session, we'll examine the second thing that every conflict firefighter must know. That is that the reproof of instruction is the way of life. As the Lord is at work in the midst of conflict, He provides us with an opportunity, to be corrected, to be disciplined, to be transformed into His image.

If there was a key principle in God's Word that if you honored this principle, the Lord promised to pour out His Spirit on you, would you do it? If there was a key principle in God's Word that if you honored this principle, the Lord promised to reveal His love to you, would you do it? If there was a key principle in God's Word that if you honored this principle, the Lord promised to reveal His Word to you, would you do it? If there was a key principle in God's Word that if you honored this principle, you would receive honor and be counted among the wise, would you do it?

If there was a key principle in God's Word that if you did not honor this principle, it would mean that you despise yourself, would that make you honor this principle? If there was a key principle in God's Word that if you did not honor it, you would lead others astray, would that make you honor this principle? If there was this key principle in God's Word that if you did not honor it, you would be considered a fool, would that make you honor this principle?

The principle that I'm describing is the principle is the reproof of instruction is the way of life. To reproof means to correct, to discipline, or rebuke. Most people do not like to be corrected or told that they are wrong especially during a conflict. It's easier to focus on correcting the other people who are involved in a conflict rather than ourselves. But the Word of God tells us that there is blessing in responding to the Lord's reproof and correction. Conflict presents a tremendous opportunity for the Lord to expose things in our lives that He wants to change, that He wants to reproof if only we'll seek Him at the peace fire and listen.

Let's listen now to what the scriptures say about the blessings available to those who turn at the Lord's reproof. Beginning with Proverbs 6:23, "For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light and the proofs of discipline are the way of life." Proverbs 1:23, "If you turn at my reproof, behold, I will pour out my spirit to you. I will make my words known to you." Proverbs 3:11, 12, "My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline or be wary of His reproof for the Lord reproofs him whom He loves as a father to son in whom He delights."

Proverbs 13:18, “Poverty and disgrace come to him who ignores instruction. But whoever heeds reproof is honored.” Proverbs 15:31, “The ear that listens to life-giving reproof will dwell among the wise.” Proverbs 15:32, “Whoever ignores instruction despises himself but he who listens to reproof gains intelligence.” Proverbs 10:17, “Whoever heeds instruction is on the path to life but he who rejects reproof leads others astray.” Proverbs 12:1, “Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge but he who hates reproof is stupid.”

When we fail to turn at the Lord’s reproof during a conflict, it is an indication that something in the wild fire, some dynamic of that conflict, something that it’s exposing to us—our pride, our reputation, material things, fear of loss, fear of man, fear of failure—something is more important to us than obeying God’s Word and letting Him have His way with us at the peace fire. Reproof in conflict is hidden treasure and it’s found at the peace fire by seeking the Lord. Let God reprove you at the peace fire before you attempt to reprove another person.

Here’s how Jesus addressed this topic. In Matthew 7:3-5, “Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye’ when there is the log in your own eye, you hypocrite. First take the log out of your own eye and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.” As you seek the Lord’s presence and response to a conflict, remember He is always at work and the conflict may present an opportunity for Him to reprove you and in so doing to bless you.

Don’t reject the blessing of the Lord’s reproof. As you encourage others and shepherd others through conflict, encourage them to do likewise, to submit themselves to the Lord’s reproof that there is great blessing in letting Him correct us and discipline us. It’s a sign of His love for us. He’ll pour out His spirit on us. He will reveal His word to us and honor us as we seek Him at the peace fire.

Let’s review the key points from today’s session. The Lord’s reproof of instruction is a path of blessing. Accepting the Lord’s reproof brings the following blessings: The Lord will pour out His Spirit upon you. The Lord will reveal His Word to you. The Lord will reveal His love to you and you will receive honor and be counted among the wise. There are warnings to those who reject God’s reproof. They despise themselves. They lead others astray and they’ll be considered a fool.

Two things every conflict firefighter must know: The Lord is always at work and the reproof of instruction is the way of life. Next time, we’ll consider the third thing that every conflict firefighter must know.