

Our Attitude Towards Admonition

Ecclesiastes 4:13 [King James] *“Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished.”*

It is not hard to understand why an old king, after years of giving orders, might easily build a self-confident psychology that simply could **not** entertain the notion of taking advice from others.

The foolish king’s word had long been law, to him right had become synonymous with his will and wrong had become to mean anything that was contrary to his wishes.

This state of mind that rejects admonition was characteristic of ancient Israel at various periods of her history, and these periods were invariably followed by judgement.

When Jesus Christ came to the Jews He found the religious leadership full of arrogant self-confidence that would **not** accept reproof. This attitude filtered down in measure to the rest of the people.

John 8:31-37 [King James] *“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abraham’s seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. I know that ye are Abraham’s seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.”*

This was the response when Jesus Christ talked about their sins and their need of salvation.

Those who listened to Jesus Christ and repented were the lowly, common people.

The Jewish priests who had ruled the people too long to be willing to surrender their privileged position.

Like the old king of Ecclesiastes, they had become accustomed to being right all the time.

From their viewpoint to reprove them was to insult them, they had become beyond reproof.

Churches and Christian organisations have shown a tendency to fall into the same error that led Israel into captivity and the Jewish leaders’ inability to receive admonition.

Religious leaders can come to accept themselves as the very “chosen ones of God,” special objects of divine favour for their success is proof enough for them.

The fact that they have attained this position of leadership is proof that they are right, and anyone who tries to call them to account is instantly written off as an unauthorised meddler who should be ashamed to dare to reprove their betters.

If anyone imagines that I am merely playing with words, let them approach at random any religious leader and call attention to any error in their theology, because it is not based on scriptural proof!

I know this to be true from personal experience.

If any person dares to persist in their admonition, they will be confronted with reports, statistics and church traditions to prove that they are wrong and completely out of order.

How can any of us avoid getting into this deadly situation of being immune to admonition?

- 1) Don't defend your church or your organisation against criticism. If the criticism is false it can do no harm. If it is true, you need to hear it and do something about it.
- 2) Be concerned, **not** with what you have accomplished, but over what you might have accomplished if you had followed Jesus Christ completely.

Luke 17:5-10 [King James] *“And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you. But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.”*

If our goal is to increase our faith in Jesus Christ, this should be our humble attitude.

- 3) When reproved, pay **no** attention to the source. Do **not** ask whether it is a friend or an enemy that is reproving you. **The reproof of an enemy is often of greater value to you than a friend because they are not influenced by sympathy.**
- 4) Keep your mind open to the correction of Jesus Christ as He works on us through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. **Also, Jesus Christ may chastise us through people we wish He didn't use.**