

CORRECTING THOSE YOU LEAD

This lesson will help you understand the heart of a wise leader, who effectively corrects subordinate ministers or church workers.

Eventually, everyone in a position of leadership in God's kingdom will have to bring correction to someone on his or her ministry team. This can be an unpleasant experience, and many will mistakenly avoid it. However, being a responsible leader means that you cannot avoid this experience, no matter how unpleasant it may promise to be. It will speak to you, so your encounters with those you correct can fulfill God's purposes in a difficult moment.

The Goal of Biblical Correction: Bringing Focus and Completion to a Filled and Fruitful Walk

This lesson is not a "how to" manual for disciplining people. Rather than focusing on the traditional New Testament Scriptures concerning correction of a sinning brother or sister, we will tighten our focus. We will concentrate on the deeper purposes involved in correcting those ministry subordinates who are accountable to you. These are people to whom you have given responsibilities to minister, to train and most importantly, to love. You have delegated to them the tasks of ministering to the people God has given you to love and care for. Remember, those being disciplined will be part of these people.

Here is the theological basis for this teaching.

***CORRECTION SHOULD ALWAYS BE UPWARDLY CONSTRUCTIVE.
IT SHOULD NEVER BE DOWNWARDLY DESTRUCTIVE.***

We will base this teaching on Colossians 1:9-10. Paul wrote these verses in his letter to the people of the Colossian church. His occasion for writing was not the same as what you will find

when discipline becomes necessary. The Colossians were not subordinate workers in Paul's ministry. However, the principles remain true and applicable toward those who will require corrective or disciplinary action from you. Thus, the insights I will share with you come from an understanding of the Apostle Paul's view of all those whom God had given him to love, care for and oversee. They reflect the heart of God through His appointed spiritual authorities. Accordingly, We will take our points from it. Here are the Apostle Paul's words. We will unpack these two verses and, from within them, we will ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you.

(Colossians 1:9-10 NKJV) "For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; {10} that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;"

The First Thing: Pray for Them

Paul indicates in the beginning of this prayer wish for the Colossians that he does not cease to pray for them. His words remind us that our first responsibility is to pray for those God places under our authority. This principle does not change with the situation at hand. Praying for subordinate workers is a heart issue. This is even more so when you are disappointed deeply by someone. Your challenge becomes whether you will allow your heart to harden, or will continue to see them through the eyes of compassion and with God's kind of love. Compassion and love do not excuse sin or ignorance. They merely begin to define the attitude you should have in exercising your authority to discipline them.

Helpful Suggestions for those Times when you need to Correct Someone

A. Remind them of His Will - Helping them to make correct, honorable and purposeful choices.

“...that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding”

The theological basis for correction always establishes boundaries within which we are to work. These boundaries are designed to restrict our methods to what will move people back into the will God. When you find your subordinates made mistakes that got them off course, and influenced them leave God’s will, your task is to help them return. You are not asked to make choices for them. They alone are responsible for doing so. However, you can challenge them to make correct, honorable and purposeful choices that will take them back into the will of God. Then they can realign themselves with His will, get back on track and move forward again.

B. Be determined and not deterred. Let them see you are determined to help them draw closer to God and see things His way.

Once they have agreed to submit to the correcting or disciplinary process under your authority, you can begin to dialogue with them. Underlying all that you require of them will be the purpose of giving them *“spiritual understanding.”* You will help them see their failures or mistakes from a spiritual perspective, or the way God sees them. What really counts is that they understand God’s point of view. You are not trying to be their judge. You are helping them come into right standing before their Judge, the Lord Jesus Christ. Then they can continue to their destinies in the will of God.

Upwardly Constructive Correction

*“...that you may walk worthy of the Lord”
or “... that you may live a life worthy of the Lord.”*

Spiritual understanding brings the opportunity for them to *“walk worthy of the Lord.”* Many translations read, *“live a life worthy of the Lord.”* According to the Apostle Paul’s prayer, such a walk can be defined as *“fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.”*

As was earlier stated, correction should **always** be upwardly constructive, **never** downwardly destructive. This means that everything about the ideas and methods we employ to correct our subordinates should take them toward God in constructive ways. Our ideas and methods should never take them away from God in ways that destroy their motivation to serve or lessen their love for God.

What follows is a check-list of questions you can ask yourself. They serve as a means of validating your methods and a set of guidelines to help you decide your approach to the design of your corrective program.

1. Your program should point them toward resetting their paths toward the center of God’s will.
2. Encourage them and help them strengthen their resolve to be the best they can at serving God, others... and you.
3. Help them challenge their own pride and embrace the value of humility. It will be necessary for them to humble themselves in order to make the season of correction a series of teachable, fruitful moments.
4. Add something to their wisdom wells. Within each person you will ever bring correction, are wells of wisdom. Some of these wells have been neglected or dried up. You can help them refresh and resupply these wells, so they can draw from them once again.

5. Discern what areas of their lives you can address that will increase their fruitfulness. This is not about their abilities, experience or spiritual gifts. It is about their character, commitment and faith.

When you need to correct someone, recognize that this challenge is a gift from God to you. It is not to be a burden, but a blessing. This will require numerous attitude adjustments along the way. It is also an opportunity to give to them what the Lord deposited inside of you. The experience of being corrected is also a gift from God to them. As you give them the gift of correction, take encouragement for yourself that you will be the vessel He uses to bring grace to them. The result will be restoration to their calling and purpose. It will bring them joy, peace, hope and assurance of God's love for them. They will look once again toward their destinies. You will have the gratification of knowing your concern and compassion, coupled with your leadership skills and anointing, made the difference.

Correction should always be upwardly constructive, never downwardly destructive

Guidelines

A. Be led by the Holy Spirit.

The task is critical to the future of the person being corrected. Be sure you get past your emotions and submit to God's direction.

B. Speak only words filled with life.

What you say and the way you say it become the foundation of the restorative work. It will only be as solid as its foundation. Wrap your efforts in life.

C. Speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15)

Your skills in communicating the truth lovingly will make the difference. Truth will not touch a person's heart when spoken

with condemning overtones. **Set your heart before you say your words.** Wrap your efforts in love.

D. Humble yourself before you meet with those requiring correction.

Temptation is common to all of us. As you begin, establish an attitude that, except for the grace of God, you could be on the other side of the conversation. Wrap yourself and your efforts in humility. Your authority will not suffer. It will be well received and effective.

E. Humble yourself throughout the process.

Be careful to keep your focus on who you are restoring. It is easy to allow your success in the midst of the process to change your focus from them to you. This results in the rise of pride and loss of focus. Stay humble.

F. When you have completed the correction or restoration process, move ahead, thankful that you could make a difference.

G. Learn and grow from the experience.

Do not waste the inconvenience, discomfort and distaste inherent in it. These are the raw materials of wisdom and maturity for you. They will help mold you into a better leader.

A Final Encouraging Thought

Your walk with God through a life of ministry should be looked at as a series of stepping-stones to your destiny as a leader. As the years go by, the stepping-stones can become memorial stones to the goodness of God along the way. They become like the memorial stones the Children of Israel set up when they crossed the Jordan, just to remember the goodness of God. Build yourself a pile of memorial stones with the steps of your life. Among these stones, will be some you valued the most. These will be the ones that remind you how you changed someone's life, because you did what your heart said to do... and as you did, you became just a little bit more like Jesus.

Suggested Reading for You and the Leadership in Your Ministry

JUST A LITTLE BIT MORE

THE HEART OF A MENTOR

Accounts of Cross-cultural Mentoring
and the Lessons they Hold

DR. BOB ABRAMSON

Available from the bookstore at www.mentoringministry.com