

4. Learning to Admonish One Another

In our last topic, we saw that one of the ways that we show the love of Christ is by learning how to accept one another. Today, we will look at another way that we show the love of Christ to others. In Romans 15:14, we read, “Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.” Here, we see that Paul told the Christians in Rome that he was confident that they were able to admonish one another. Learning to admonish one another in love will be the focus of our topic today.

We see that this verse in Romans 15:14 gives us two characteristics that will make it possible for us to admonish one another in love. First, we see that to admonish one another in love that we need to be full of goodness. “Goodness” speaks of high moral character. To be “full of goodness” means *to have a heart and life that is controlled by goodness and kindness*. If we are not growing in godly character we will judge others rather than admonish them. Romans 14:13 warns of the danger of judging others when it says, “Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way.” To be effective and admonish one another rather than judge one another, we need to have proper inner attitudes in our hearts so that we speak in love.

Second, we see that to admonish one another in love, we need to be filled with all knowledge. To be “filled with all knowledge” speaks of growth to spiritual maturity. Paul had confidence that many of the Christians in Rome had grown to spiritual maturity and had a good knowledge of the Word of God. This is very important because effective admonishing is done from the Word of God and not from the personal opinions or convictions of a person. Paul had confidence that the Christians in Rome knew the Word of God and knew how to share the Word with others.

As we put these two things together, it helps us to understand why Paul knew that the Christians in Rome would have an effective ministry of admonishing one another. They had developed godly character and they had become familiar with the Word of God. Here, we see the two things that are essential to have an effective ministry ourselves and to equip others for effective ministry. Ephesians 4:15 says, “But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ--.” To be effective as we admonish others, we must speak the truth. This means that we share the Word of God instead of our own words. At the same time, we speak in love so that we admonish rather than judge.

One key thing to notice is that this is not the ministry of just a few highly qualified Christians. Instead, this is to be a part of the life and ministry of every Christian. Ephesians 4:16 says, “From whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.” Notice that every part (every Christian) is to do his or her share because all are to be equipped to speak the truth in love. We want to help each of our physical and spiritual children learn to speak the Word of God and speak it with love as they share the Word with others.

A second passage that talks about admonishing one another is Colossians 3:16-17 where we read,

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” Here, we see several key principles that will help us to be effective in admonishing one another.

First, we see that we are to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly. Much of the New Testament was just being written during the time that this statement was made. As a result, the word that Christ had taught while He was here on this earth was being passed on orally until it could be written down in the Gospels. Today, we have the teachings of Christ written for us in the Gospels. The word that is translated “dwell” means *to be at home or to live in our lives*. If the teachings of Christ are a part of our thoughts, they will also become a part of what we share with one another. Here, we see that if we are normally sharing the Word of God with one another, we will be ministering to one another through the Word of God.

Second, we see that the teachings of Christ are to be at home in our lives with all wisdom. Colossians 1:9-11 explains what this means, “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; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy.” These verses show us that when the wisdom of Christ is present in our lives:

- we will be filled with the knowledge of His will
- we will be guided by His wisdom
- we will have true spiritual understanding
- we will walk worthy of God
- we will have lives that are pleasing to God
- we will be fruitful in every good work
- we will be increasing in the knowledge of God
- we will be strengthened with all might through His glorious power

Third, when these things are present in our lives we will be effective both at teaching one another and also at admonishing one another. Teaching involves giving positive instruction from Scripture while admonishing primarily involves giving instruction that includes a warning about things that are wrong. Here, we see that we are to share a balance of positive instruction and instruction that includes a warning about the things that are wrong. Colossians 1:28-29 point out the fact that there must always be a balance of teaching and admonishing. Those verses say, “Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.” People need to know what they are doing that needs to be changed but then they also need instruction so that they know how to make those changes.

Fourth, we see that one of the key ways we teach and admonish is through music. However, these verses point out the fact that in order to do that, the songs we sing should include Scripture and the

teachings that come from the Scripture. Many Christian songs are focused on personal experience rather than based on Scripture. Such songs will express our feelings and that is important. However, they will not help us to receive the Biblical admonition and instruction that we need to grow to spiritual maturity. Since our goal is to help our children and all Christians grow to spiritual maturity, we need to teach our families to sing songs that help them receive admonishment and instruction to minister to their hearts, as well as songs that express the feelings of their souls. Our goal is to help them grow to become mature, balanced Christians.

Fifth, we see that as we help others grow through admonition and instruction, we are to do it with grace in our hearts. Here, we see the attitude that we are to have as we give admonition and instruction to others. Ephesians 4:29 says, “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.” Our words are to be spoken with grace so that they will minister grace to the hearers. This means that we will admonish with gentleness rather than harshness to our children or others because we want them to experience the grace of God that will build them up and not hear evil words or angry speaking that will tear them down as we speak to them.

Sixth, we see that as we give admonition and instruction, we are to do all that we do in a way that brings honor to Christ. 1 Corinthians 10:31 says, “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” Our goal in all that we speak and all that we do should be to bring glory to God. That is why it is so important that we speak the truth but also speak it in love. When we speak the Word of God with love in our hearts, the Lord is able to use the Word that we share to bring glory to God.

Seventh, we see that we are to give both instruction and admonition with a thankful heart as we give thanks to God the Father through Christ. Ephesians 5:20 says, “Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Often as Christians, we give thanks some of the time and for some things. However, both Ephesians 5:20 and Colossians 3:17 say that we are to give thanks at all times and for all things. Colossians 3:17 puts it this way, “And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” When we give instruction and admonition with a thankful heart and attitude, we also help those who are receiving the instruction or admonition to receive it with a thankful heart. Our heart and attitude often have as much impact as our words.

As we learn to follow the principles, in these verses, of teaching and admonishing one another, we will all grow together and bring glory to God. May the Lord richly bless you as you admonish and teach your physical and spiritual children and help them to grow to spiritual maturity.