



When You Are Corrected

Push Me to Be Better #3 • August 30, 2026

Opening

We don't need to drag this out. Our series on accountability started two weeks ago. It ends today.

We've been exploring what it means to admonish one another in a godly way. We want to make sure our church members hold each other accountable for our behaviors – that we encourage growth in grace and wisdom, that we discourage sins and bad habits.

And in the spirit of Chris Gehrei's communion meditations, my goal will be to **be bold**, **be brief**, and then **be done**. Accountability is important, but it doesn't need to take forever. In fact, it should be pretty simple!

In **week one**, we acknowledged the need to “push each other to be better.”

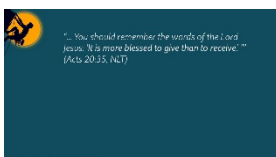
In **week two**, we shared Jesus' words from Matthew 18 and had a process for correction – private words, 1-2 witnesses, church leaders, and ultimately separation...but *only* escalating if they refuse to repent, apologize, or seek reconciliation. If any spirit of contrition is present, we celebrate that restoration is happening!

Our message last week was focused on the situation from the vantage point of the one *offering* correction. But accountability has two sides. There is also a person *receiving* correction. **This week**, we want to explore Biblical guidance from the other side, when someone is correcting us.

➔ **Quick poll: Would you rather give or receive correction?**
(How many would rather give? Rather receive?)

I'm on team “give.” That's the scriptural answer, right?!

“... You should remember the words of the Lord Jesus: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’ ” (Acts 20:35, NLT)



I know, I know. That is the wrong way to use Scripture! We can't just skim for words we want to hear. We always need to use Scripture in context, making the points that Scripture makes in alignment with the "author's intended meaning" – the A.I.M. of the passage. And the context in Acts 20 makes it clear that Paul is using Jesus' words to show that pouring into the lives of others is a blessing...not to say that it's more fun to correct than to be corrected! So, I take back the "scriptural answer" quip.



I would assume that most of us prefer to be the one **correcting**, rather than the one **being corrected**...for no other reason than my own personal bias.

I'll be honest, this message probably would be better if I was in the seats listening and learning, rather than delivering it! I am still a work in progress when it comes to being correctable.

Deb and I had a loving moment of correction this week, where she pointed out something that I had done wrong. I wish I could say I received it with a smile and gently affirmed her advice. But instead, the "old" Steve – the part of me that is still being sanctified and renewed by the Holy Spirit – that Steve reacted with pride, defensiveness, and anger. So now I not only had to face correction on one front, I also had to face correction on how I face correction!

To paraphrase the apostle Paul in Romans, "*O, what a wretched man I still am!*" But thanks be to Jesus Christ my Lord,¹ who not only has saved me from and forgiven me for my sin...but He is actively making me new, helping me to grow in righteousness.

Today, don't hear this as truth from an expert (Steve). Hear it as commentary from a fellow traveler trying to follow the same map. The map (Scripture!) is right...and it is trustworthy...and it gives us the way forward for receiving accountability, even if those following the map take a wrong turn here or there.

¹ Paraphrase from Romans 7:22-24

Before we follow the map further, then – since I need to hear this too! – let's take a moment to pray.

Prayer

Father, it is hard to be corrected. It is hard to receive advice from other flawed human beings. But there is only One who never needed correction; Jesus is our perfect example. The rest of us will continue to fall short of Your glory. So, please help us to hear words of correction as words that will steer us closer to You. Help us to receive them well. Please guide us as we study and learn today.

In Jesus' Name...Amen.

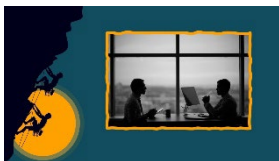
I'd like to point out four quick truths from Scripture when it comes to receiving correction and accountability. Here is some truth to consider.



Truth #1: It is Wise to Seek Correction

“Mockers hate to be corrected, so they stay away from the wise.” (Proverbs 15:12, NLT)

You and I might not like being admonished or rebuked, but there's a paradox here. The more we want to **avoid** correction, the more we should **seek it out**.



Let's say that you are looking to get a promotion. You apply and get rejected. Again, and again, and again. It is hard to hear “no” from the organization, so you decide to talk to a successful friend in the industry.

“What am I doing wrong?” you ask.

“Do you really want to know?” he replies.

Your answer, of course, is yes. Because YOU asked HIM. And that's a wise move. He can evaluate your skills and demeanor and let you know areas to develop. Maybe you aren't good at delegating. Maybe you need more soft skills with people. Maybe your communications aren't professional.

By asking for correction, you might avoid it when you next apply for the promotion.

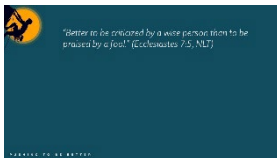
Scripture is blunt when it comes to correction. If we don't love godly correction now, we'll face lots of rebuke later.



“Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but whoever hates correction is stupid.” (Proverbs 12:1, NIV)

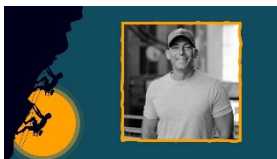
So, don't be stupid. Decide to lean into the correction. Decide that wise criticism will help you in the long run.

It might apply to your golf game (by hiring a hitting coach), or to your cooking (though sharing a recipe with some taste testers), or to your dating relationships (while asking a married friend for guidance). Find a person who knows success and listen to them.



“Better to be criticized by a wise person than to be praised by a fool.” (Ecclesiastes 7:5, NLT)

A willingness to pursue guidance and correction should especially apply to your faith. I recently heard a great story that demonstrates that willingness.²



Josh Howerton (Senior Minister of Lakepointe Church in the Dallas area – a preacher you might have encountered online) recently told a story of when he was a teenager, after he felt God's call into ministry. At sixteen, his dad told him, “If you want to be successful, find good, faithful, fruitful pastors...ask good questions of them, write down everything they say, then do it!”

Howerton went to my old church (Southeast Christian in Louisville, KY) and snuck into the new member's class just to get access to the Senior Minister, Bob Russell – a seriously good, faithful, and fruitful pastor. He asked if he could get on the calendar for lunch sometime to talk and pick Bob's brain on ministry, and Bob agreed to do so at a later date (his secretary scheduled it for nearly 2 years out! Lol).

² [Facebook](#) video from podcast...

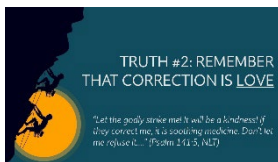
Josh faithfully waited, then showed up with his 20 best questions. Bob spent nearly two hours with him answering everything.

Josh was making a search for wisdom! Maybe it's not *correction* in the sense you think about, but it was preventative correction! *"Do these things now so you won't make mistakes later."*

For example, at the end, Josh asked Bob if there was anything he needed to know that he didn't ask. Bob responded, "Yes. *There's one more thing. What's most important isn't the seminary you attend or the first church you pastor – it's who you marry.*" (So wise!)

If you had that kind of attitude – a heart to seek out older, wiser Christians for advice – it would help you improve as a follower of Christ. So, seek correction now and try to put that wise advice into practice!

It is wise to seek correction.

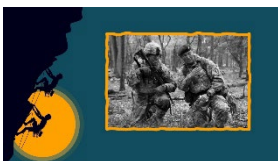


Truth #2: Remember that Correction is Love

"Let the godly strike me! It will be a kindness! If they correct me, it is soothing medicine. Don't let me refuse it..." (Psalm 141:5, NLT)

Accountability, reproof, rebuke, warning... all of it is just a form of love.

Don't believe me? Guess who you don't correct?



- You don't send correct coordinates to the **enemy on the battlefield** when they defend the wrong airfield.
- You don't give breath mints to the **guy who is asking your crush** to the homecoming dance.
- You don't tell the **other cook at the chili cook-off** that they used sugar instead of salt.

Those who admonish others do so to those whom they *love*.

They do it with *your best interests* in mind (most of the time). If you are receiving correction, you **must** view it as kindness.

Discipline is a form of love...especially when it is from your Heavenly Father. Look up Hebrew 12:5-11 and read with me.



“And have you forgotten the encouraging words God spoke to you as his children?

He said,

“My child, don’t make light of the Lord’s discipline, and don’t give up when he corrects you. For the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes each one he accepts as his child.”

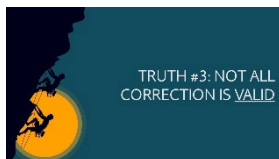
As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as his own children. Who ever heard of a child who is never disciplined by its father? If God doesn’t discipline you as he does all of his children, it means that you are illegitimate and are not really his children at all. Since we respected our earthly fathers who disciplined us, shouldn’t we submit even more to the discipline of the Father of our spirits, and live forever? For our earthly fathers disciplined us for a few years, doing the best they knew how. But God’s discipline is always good for us, so that we might share in his holiness.

No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it’s painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way.” (Hebrews 12:5–11, NLT)

It’s not easy, but rebuke, warning, and admonishment is good! Correction isn’t just *criticism*; it is *care* and *concern* shared by the One who has your best interests in mind.

Remember this and breathe easier when you are corrected – by God or by others. Take a deep breath, listen, and say, *“Thanks. I love you, too.”*

Remember that correction is love.



Truth #3: Not All Correction is Valid

At the driving range one day (years ago), I was practicing my golf game and doing terribly! Every drive was slicing off to the right, badly (like ‘landing in the next fairway over’ badly).



Suddenly a voice from my left said, “*Can I give you some advice?*” A helpful gentleman had noticed how I was putting people in mortal danger.

“*If you want to hit it straight,*” he said, “*you need to adjust your hands like this.*” He helped me fix my grip, then demonstrated.

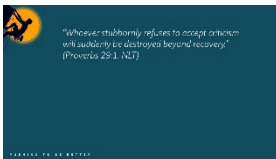
His shot went short and to the right. “*Oops.*”

His next shot was even worse.

He tried a couple more, then apologetically mumbled some excuse why it wasn’t working for him today and walked away. Poor guy...

Not all correction is valid! There are times when a person admonishes you wrongly – for wrong facts, different opinions, bad interpretation, confused motives, or (sometimes) personal sin.

Please, don’t let their failures be an excuse for you to ignore every correction.

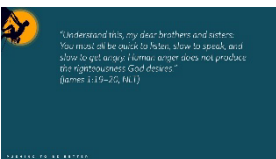


“Whoever stubbornly refuses to accept criticism will suddenly be destroyed beyond recovery.” (Proverbs 29:1, NLT)

Ignore bad advice, but maintain the wisdom to discern good correction from unnecessary rebuke.

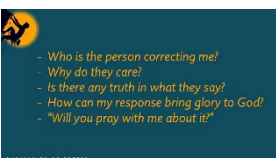
How do you decide?

First, remember lock the words of James 1:20 in your head. Memorize this:



“Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires.” (James 1:19–20, NLT)

Keep your ears open and your mouth shut. Listen to a rebuke without getting angry so you can properly evaluate what is being said. Then, ask some questions (internally, not always out loud):



- **Who is the person correcting me?** Consider their authority in the matter, their stake in the correction, and the spiritual maturity you’ve observed in their life.

- **Why do they care?** Consider why they care enough to say something – is it as a fellow believer who loves the church, a friend who sees your potential, a family member who wants you to be around longer? Figure out how why they love you enough to say something.
- **Is there any truth in what they say?** *“A stopped clock is right twice a day.”* Even if they are wrong on many things, you may find a gem of truth in the midst of rubbish. Their facts might be right even if the conclusion is wrong. Their recommended actions might be helpful even if they misunderstood your motives.
- **How can my response bring glory to God?** Think about your reaction. Ask whether a reaction of anger, denial, resentment or isolation will elevate Jesus or your witness about Him.
- **“Will you pray with me about it?”** Pause and ask the person correcting you to join you in prayer. Take turns, if possible, and both of you can lift the situation up to God, asking for Him to be at work!

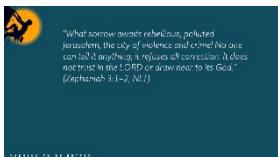
Remember that not all correction is valid...but it can still be helpful.



Truth #4: Put Helpful Correction into Action

Godly people who ignore correction are doubly shamed. Their refusal to change robs them of a better way, but it also spoils their reputation and identity as the people of God.

Want an example? Look no further than the capital of Judah, a city that should be known as the righteous throne of God.



“What sorrow awaits rebellious, polluted Jerusalem, the city of violence and crime! No one can tell it anything; it refuses all correction. It does not trust in the LORD or draw near to its God.” (Zephaniah 3:1–2, NLT)

Jerusalem failed to heed correction. And it was embarrassing.

If we want to be better, we need to **actively** listen to correction – we must take it to heart and do something about it! Correction can hurt, yes, but if it leads to a change, the hurt is worth it.



“For the kind of sorrow God wants us to experience leads us away from sin and results in salvation. There’s no regret for that kind of sorrow. But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death.” (2 Corinthians 7:10, NLT)

It is possible to be cut deeply by rebuke yet remain unmoved in behavior. Please don’t be that stubborn! Act now and allow the correction to edit your behavior so that you can be a better follower of Christ than you were before.

Put helpful correction into action.

Conclusion



When you are on the receiving end of correction, you get to decide whether the focus is on yourself or on your God.

If the focus is on you, then your reaction will be filled with pride and resentment. You’ll resist change, whether it is right or wrong. You’ll become defensive and angry and stubborn.

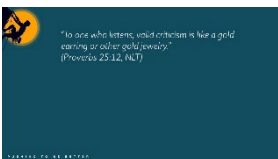
Your life, your relationships, and your church will suffer.

If the focus is on God, however, you’ll be willing to listen. You’ll even embrace Christian admonition, knowing that every failure is a chance to improve and bring glory to God.

Your life, your relationships, and your church will thrive!

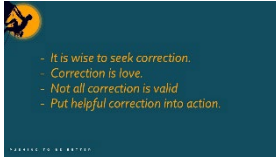
You can honestly ask others to push you to be better, and you’ll become better in the process.

Count it as a blessing to receive Christian admonition. View it as valuable and precious.



“To one who listens, valid criticism is like a gold earring or other gold jewelry.” (Proverbs 25:12, NLT)

I hope you'll take this instruction to heart – not because of me, but because this is what we find in Scripture. Remember:



- **It is wise to seek correction.**
- **Correction is love.**
- **Not all correction is valid...but it can still be helpful.**
- **Put helpful correction into action.**

If you'll do those things, you can be pushed to become better! And I can't wait to see how God will grow us!



Prayer

Let me close with a prayer that came to me in an email last week, a prayer for discomfort that fits this series to a “T.”

Lord,

*When disagreement makes me want to pull away,
teach me to remain present,
to tell the truth with love,
and to recognize your work in discomfort.*

Amen.

Invitation

If you are facing a situation where you must give or receive correction, take the time to pray about it. I invite you to share it on the back of your connection card. Write down the situation and how we can be in prayer for you.

Think about how the situation can be used to build the church and to give glory to God!!!

Write your responses while we stand and sing our invitation song.

Sermon Notes

Truth #1: It is Wise to Seek Correction

(Proverbs 15:12; Proverbs 12:1; Ecclesiastes 7:5)

Truth #2: Remember that Correction is Love

(Psalm 141:5; Hebrews 12:5–11)

Truth #3: Not All Correction is Valid

(Proverbs 29:1; James 1:19–20)

Truth #4: Put Helpful Correction into Action

(Zephaniah 3:1–2; 2 Corinthians 7:10; Proverbs 25:12)

Sermon Discussion Questions

- Would you rather give or receive correction? Why?
- Read Proverbs 15:12. Why is it important to seek out correction?
- Where is the best place to look for wise correction? Who are the kinds of wise voices you look for?
- Read Psalm 141:5. How is correction a loving action? Does it feel loving in the moment? Explain your answer.
- Read Hebrews 12:5-11. What are some examples of God's discipline? How is it good for us?
- Do you thank Him for the discipline and correction He provides?
- Share a time when you were criticized unfairly. How did it impact you?
- How can you look for pearls of wisdom in unfair rebuke?
- How can your response to admonition or rebuke bring glory to God?
- Read 2 Corinthians 7:10. What should be the outcome of godly correction? How does it differ from worldly correction?
- Do you typically respond well when people hold you accountable? How could you improve next time you are confronted?