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Standing for the Truth

“Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning” (1 Timothy 5:20).

There are times when we must confront a sibling in Christ and rebuke them. But when is that? When is it right to take a Brother aside and correct them? Perhaps when they use a “different” translation, hold a different Biblical doctrine, or don’t wear their Sunday best?

No, Scripture tells us that action should be taken when a Brother lives in **sin** and does not repent of it. Perhaps a Brother has treated someone badly, cheated, or lied without repenting. Maybe they contradict the Gospel, leading others astray with false teaching “to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin” (Hebrews 11:25b). False gospels are a curse (Galatians 1:8) and unrepentant sin must be addressed.

All humanity sins, but only Believers repent. When someone sins, they are laboring for their own death (Romans 6:23). If they do not repent, they prove their service to sin as its slave and are declaring themselves an enemy of God (James 4:4). “Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?” (Romans 6:16). Believers repent of sin because we have sacrificed our lives to be “slaves of righteousness” (Romans 6:18) to our master, Jesus Christ—no longer “presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God” (Romans 6:13).

This is why Jesus said, “Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him,

and if he repents, forgive him, and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive him” (Luke 17:2-5). “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector” (Matthew 18:15-17). While God wants us to forgive, He does not want us to lay aside His Truth for the sake of getting along. Jesus said, “Whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother” (Matthew 12:50) - “unity” is not worth more than Jesus.

Before we rebuke a Brother’s sin, what should be our attitude? The Love of God. Correction, reproof, or rebuke in the Church must occur from a place of love, respect, and patience for our Family and not from frustration, jealousy, irritation, displeasure, annoyance, or any other reason. Jesus tells us, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34-35). Love must be the reason we intervene. We are to “put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony” (Colossians 3:12-14). Even so. Amen.

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