

**“I’M SORRY.
BUT IT WAS THE RIGHT THING TO DO.
IT WAS FOR YOUR JOY!!!”**

The title of our discussion may seem to be a little bewildering. It is my meager attempt to paraphrase what the apostle Paul wrote in His second letter to the Corinthians.

In 2Corinthians 7:8-10 (KJV) we read, *“For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season.”*⁹ *Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.”*¹⁰ *For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.”*

Within their context, the above scriptures come from a section of a letter Paul was writing to the Corinthian Church. In the scriptures just prior to the above, we read that Paul had received news from Titus that the Corinthian believers had received Paul’s admonition and correction concerning a person who was living in egregious sin and the believers were doing nothing about it.

Actually, if you read the account in 1Corinthians we see that the believers were very proud of themselves that they were not doing anything about the sin within. They were convinced that they were doing the right thing, not just the right thing but the “Godly” thing, to not do anything about it. Their reasoning was that now through being freed from the bondage of sin through Jesus, it did not matter any longer if a person was living in and doing sin, secretly or openly. Hey, Jesus loved that person and it did not matter any longer (sic). Therefore, it was not for them to say anything. In essence this opened the door for everyone else to do what was “right in their own eyes.” To that, Paul, for lack of a better term – hit the roof. He brought forth strong correction.

Obviously, the Corinthian believers received the correction and repented of their foolish and incorrect ways of thinking. To that Paul writes his response. He writes that it was difficult to bring the correction and it made him uncomfortable and even sad. Yet we see that even though it was difficult, Paul did it anyway because it was the right thing to do. We see that it was the right thing to do because it brought forth the correct response by the believers in Corinth. They repented of their ways. Yes!!! They repented. Imagine that!!! They were convicted by the Holy Spirit through Paul’s writing and it brought within them a “godly sorrow” which brought them to repent. These were believers. Paul brought forth loving correction. That correction brought forth repentance. That repentance brought forth joy and comfort to both Paul and the Corinthian believers. (2Corinthians 7:13)

Another scripture I would like to bring to our attention is Hebrews 12:5-8. It reads, *“And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:”*⁶ *For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.”*⁷ *If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?”*⁸ *But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.”* Notice that the writer of Hebrews asks the question,, *“...have ye forgotten the exhortation?”*

What the writer of Hebrews is stating is that his readers seemed to have forgotten the written scriptures concerning the concept of receiving correction – the correction from the Lord. Believe it or not the writer is directing his readers to the written Jewish scriptures. He is quoting directly from Proverbs 3:11-12. Therefore, we see that in both the Jewish scriptures and again, as now being quoted in the New Testament, we are being taught that correction from the Lord is a good thing.

The aspect of God correcting those whom He loves is not an “Old Testament concept” that is to be discarded because of who we are now in Jesus. Actually, if we take a good hard look at these scriptures in the New Testament letter to the Hebrews, it very clearly states, “...*those whom the Lord loves...*” He corrects and chastens. It is referring to the believers.

The interesting thing to note here is that you would think that God would spend His time correcting and chastening those who do not believe in Him and those who are actually walking and living contrary to Him – the “unsaved.” Yet we see the scriptures very clearly state that the Lord corrects *those whom He loves*. He calls them His children. He calls them as being in the position of His “son.”

We also need to notice that these scriptures use the terms “chasten” and “scourgeth.” These are not necessarily gentle words. Actually, they are words that denote the aspect of being punished and beaten. Now, don’t get me wrong. I do not believe the Lord literally “beats” His children. However, these words do suggest that the Lord can get, let’s say, a little tough as He brings forth His correction to those whom He loves. This does not demean our God in any way. Actually, it shows that He is consistent with Himself and His Word.

Just as He teaches parents to not “*spare the rod*” on their children, it is the same with His children – those who are members of His Household of faith. Sometimes it may seem harsh and difficult as we experience this chastening of the Lord. However, as we come out of it we realize that we are the better for it and that our Heavenly father truly does love us. We are told in the scripture to not “despise” this chastening of the Lord. It is not saying that it would not be difficult and always pleasant but yet we should not look at it as a bad thing. We are to view it as God loving us and directing us in the way we should go.

I am well aware that this is not a very popular topic and that many believers do not accept the concept that God now brings correction and chastisement to His people. There has risen up within the Body of Christ a misconception concerning this aspect of what the scriptures teach much like the Corinthian believers were misunderstanding. The misconception is that now that we are saved by the blood of Jesus, God does not bring this correction to His children nor is there a need for the believer to repent any more. They refer to concepts of correction, chastisement and repentance as being “Old Testament theology.” Those that bring forth this teaching tell us that we are under a new dispensation of grace and that every aspect of “Old Testament theology” is now irrelevant and not valid for the believer. They spew out this misconception and misrepresent God and His Word through these types of teachings.

Yes, it is true that we as believers are the recipients of tremendous grace and mercy that has been poured out to us by the Father in and through Jesus. The scriptures are clear, “...*by grace ye are saved...*” (Ephesians 2:5,8) We know that there is nothing that we could do to earn or work for our salvation. It is only through the grace and mercy of God who sent Jesus to save us from sin and its wages. Through the blood of Jesus we are justified in His sight and we become children of the Most High God and members of His “household of faith.” The Father looks at us through the blood of Jesus and because of that we are considered “righteous” in His sight and we are able to experience true relationship with God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

However, the scriptures are clear concerning correction, chastisement and repentance. In 1John 1:8-10, the writer, who is writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, teaches us as believers, the need to confess our sins as he writes, “...*if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*” This act of confession is the precursor to repentance. As we confess those actions that “miss the mark” it leads us to change our ways and turn towards God which is true repentance. Actually, “turning towards” God is not only an aspect of repentance but it also is a part of the definition of worship. Repentance becomes an act of worship.

As previously mentioned, the writer of Hebrews who is also writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, teaches us that those whom the *“Lord loves”* (referring to His children) He corrects and chastises. The purpose of this correction and chastisement by the Lord is to cause His beloved children who are going in the wrong direction, to turn from those incorrect ways and turn towards Him, which again is the action of repentance. As mentioned previously, Paul clearly states in 2Corinthians7:10 that. *“...Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation.”*

I have stated all of the above for the purpose of sharing that I firmly believe that the Body of Christ is entering into a “season of correction” by and from the Lord. As stated in Hebrews, I believe the Lord is going to be doing this because He truly loves His children. We all are “sensing” within our spirit that we are either in or about to enter into the final stages of the “end times.” To many in the Body of Christ this means many different things.

There are many interpretations of what the end times may look like and be like. There are too many to state in this brief discussion and ultimately that is not the purpose of this discussion. I do not pretend to know that I have the answers and that I have the “end times” figured out. I am some who have a “glimmer” of understanding concerning the “end times.” However, I do not believe anyone truly has it all “down pat” - no one that is except God.

We have the Book of Daniel, Ezekiel, Revelation and other scriptures that delve into the subject of the “end times.” Jesus, in His brief explanations of the end times found in Matthew, Mark and Luke gives us what some of the signs of those times would be. However, the most important aspect that Jesus wanted to bring across to His disciples both then and now is the warnings to “take heed, watch, pray and be ready.” Depending on the Gospel account you are reading and what translation you have, you will see the warnings to “take heed” and to “watch” or something similar stressed over and over again. Jesus was emphatically imploring and warning His disciples to always take heed, always watch, always pray and always be ready.

This leads us back to the statement that I previously made concerning entering into a “season of correction.” I believe the Lord is trying to get His true children to take heed, watch and be ready. I believe that the Lord is going to be a little tough with us to try to get our attention so that we will repent and turn towards Him. He will need to be a little tough because whether we have realized it or not, the Body of Christ in general has become a little stiff-necked in their walk with Him. I believe that as a good loving Father, God is going to chastise His children. We have been getting off track with traditions, doctrines of men and to a greater extent “doctrines of devils” as the scriptures declare will happen in the “end times.”

Recently, there have been subtle changes and misinterpretations to the sound fundamental doctrines of the Word of God. There has been preaching and teaching going forth saying that the Jewish scriptures (Old Testament) and the words of Jesus prior to His resurrection are no longer valid for the believer today to read, study and live by. There has been an over abundance of “prophetic utterances” that do not correlate with each other and do not line up with the Word of God concerning the “end times.” Yet those who give these “prophetic utterances” are saying that these are “words from the Lord,” leaving many people confused, bewildered, misled and causing it to seem that God is schizophrenic. All of the above mentioned items and many other such things are tools of the enemy to bring divisions and deceptions to the Body of Christ that will ultimately lead to the “great falling away.”

I believe God is now giving us an opportunity to recognize these deceptions, turn from them and turn back to the original and pure truth of His Word. Correction brings discipline to an individual’s life. The word “discipline” is the root word for the term “disciple.” If we are disciples of Jesus then we are to walk in and live by the disciplines He taught and role modeled for us when He walked this earth.

There are many aspects to the Lord's correction of His people. One of those aspects is that He brings forth conviction when His children whom He loves are "missing the mark." To be convicted of sin means that the Holy Spirit brings the individual to the realization of the wrong they have done and for them to now be convinced it is wrong and to turn from it and turn towards God.

The term conviction also means to be convinced of the truth – the truth of God's Word. This is where it gets very difficult and fuzzy for us. Let's face it. We all believe that what we each of us believe is the absolute and correct truth. Herein lays the problem. There are so many different interpretations of scripture, so many different "camps" with their different views of the same scripture. The difficulty lies in the fact that everyone thinks they are absolutely correct and that they have the absolute truth. This leads to the thinking that everyone else is wrong except them. We can lose focus on God's truth.

Let's face it. This was exactly the mindset of those Religious Leaders who went head to head with Jesus. They saw themselves as "experts" of the Law (God's Word). They believed they had it right and that it was impossible for them to be wrong. When Jesus came, who by the way is the Living Word and is God, they rejected Him. He came to bring correction to the error in their ways of viewing God and His Word. When He did try to bring this correction, they were so stiff necked that they rejected Him. Not only that, they were so hard hearted that they not only rejected Him but they were so threatened by Him that they went and had Him crucified. In other words they were unteachable and unwilling to take correction –even from the Son of God!!! Hmmm.....

Is it possible that history could repeat itself? Here we are 2000 years later being on the verge of the "end times" and the return of Jesus. As I mentioned, I believe that the Body of Christ is entering into a "season of correction" by the Lord. Could it be that many of us are in the same mindset as the Religious Leaders were with Jesus? Will we be so stiff-necked and hard hearted to the point that we would not be open to the Lord's correction? Will we be teachable and open to the correction of the Lord through His Spirit? This may mean that many of us may need to change our ways of thinking and repent and admit that we have been incorrect and "missing the mark" concerning some of the fundamental truths of the scriptures. Or will we be so prideful and arrogant as the Religious Leaders were with Jesus? This will be very difficult for many of us to admit and own up to as the Lord brings forth His correction but as Paul states it will be for our joy.

The attitude of every believer's heart should and must be to bless the heart of their God, their King. The attitude of heart of every believer should and must be the total understanding that God loves each of them. It is because of that love that our Loving Heavenly Father brings His correction and chastisement. He wants to get our attention and acknowledge Him so He can then place us all back on the path that He has established for all His children.

Proverbs 3:5-6 tells us, *"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. ⁶In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."* This is exactly where every believer must place themselves. We must place our lives and our trust totally in Him. We must stop leaning on our own understanding or leaning on other peoples' understanding, as well. We must acknowledge and willingly receive the Lord's correction and conviction – we must repent, change our incorrect ways of thinking and turn towards God. Only then will we be able to truly allow the Lord to direct our path. He desires to set us back on the true path that He had established for us from the very beginning of time.

That leads us to one more aspect of experiencing the Lord's love to His children through His correction. I am referring to "course correction." I believe in this hour and for the times we are in, for many of us, the Lord is desiring to set us back on to the course that He had originally desired for us to be on. Many of us have veered off and have allowed ourselves to be sidetracked from the path that we should be on. Even doing "godly" things but it may not be where God wants you to be. In this He also may also be telling us that He wants to take us onto a new and different path. However, some of us are so "entrenched" in our

own understanding that we are resisting the Lord's "course correction" for our lives. The point I am trying to make is that, for many of us, we need to be open and "teachable" to allow the Lord to bring that "course correction" in our lives concerning what each of our role or function needs to be in these last days.

This also may be very difficult for us to receive from the Lord. We have become comfortable right where we are. Maybe so comfortable that we are no longer relying upon the Lord but simply leaning upon our own strength and understanding. In other words we may actually be in disobedience. However, the Lord may desire to change all of that and place us into a role or function that is totally out of our comfort zone. It may get a little messy as the Lord brings His chastisement to get our attention and bring us out of that place of comfort and disobedience. Will we be open to what the Lord is doing? Will we be willing to allow the Lord to "change our course" for the purpose of bringing forth His plans in these "end times?"

I am not comparing myself to the apostle Paul. However, I am sorry to bring forth such a discussion although I am not really sorry because I believe it needs to be brought forth. I am aware, as I had mentioned previously, that this is not a topic that many in the Body of Christ desires to hear or even accept. We are entering into a "season of correction." Correction, chastisement and discipline are not popular topics. We must realize that things may not and will not happen and occur the way we may think it should or will happen. It will not all be wrapped up in a neat little box

As I had mentioned previously, Bible history is "repeating itself." Another example is the "Kingdom of Judah." In the last days leading up to Judah's captivity there was one lone true prophet of God who was declaring the Word of the Lord to wake up and repent. His name was Jeremiah. Instead the people and the king listened to the false prophets who were saying that everything was alright. The best was yet to come. They were saying that nothing was wrong and there was no need to repent. After all, they were God's people. They had refused and rejected the chastisement of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah. Instead of receiving the Lord's correction, they ended up receiving His judgment. Hmmm!!!

Again, I am not calling myself a prophet. I am far from that. What I am is a brother in the Lord who is just sharing from his heart. Will you and I be teachable and open to receiving the correction of the Lord in this hour or will we refuse and reject it as so many did with Jesus 2000 years ago as well as in Jeremiah's time. However, in those days there were those who did hear, receive and repent. There is always a remnant. They heard the love and correction of Jesus who was sent by the Father. It was for their joy and salvation.

The scriptures are clear concerning what the Lord may need to do concerning those whom He loves so very dearly as these "end times" approach. Proverbs 3:11-12 (KJV) –*"My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: ¹² For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth."*