

but affectionate and humble, in order to its being effectual, and thus proving itself 'better than secret love': – for it is better not to rebuke at all, than to rebuke in a bad spirit." Wardlaw

3. God's Advice

a. Choose open rebuke over secret love

- 1) Truly **open rebuke** that biblically confronts a wrong, and leads to repentance and restoration, is **far better** than **secret love** that overlooks wrong, and allows it to remain to the ultimate harm of the loved one.
- 2) Confronting one who has done wrong is never enjoyable, but both God's command and true love motivate us.
- 3) As difficult as it may be, openly rebuking one who has done wrong is far better than covering his wrong with secret love.

b. We must respond humbly when openly rebuked.

- 1) Solomon wrote, (Proverbs 29:1) "*He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.*"
- 2) The right response to open rebuke is to repent as David. (Psalms 51:1-3) "*Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.*"
- 3) When God, the Holy Spirit, your spouse, your parent, your pastor, or a friend loves you enough to rebuke your wrong, let it make you better, not bitter. Humble yourself as David humbled himself. Thank God for their love!

Conclusion: On the surface, this "Better Choice" seems crazy, but I hope that having taken a closer look at it, you will agree that open rebuke **IS** better than secret love. Without loving, open rebuke, your sin could leave you spiritually crippled for life.

As difficult as it is, we must practice true love by openly rebuking those who offend or sin, always seeking their repentance and restoration.

Song: Have Thine Own Way - 388

Better Choice – Open Rebuke

30 August 2020 PM – Proverbs 27:5 – BC20 – Scott Childs

Introduction: Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, who broke both legs in a fall, had no doctor to set his broken bones and thus he was a cripple for the rest of his life. When a person breaks a leg, the most loving thing that the doctor can do is to straighten and realign the broken bone. Though this procedure can be very painful, it is necessary if the leg is to be useful in the future.

Transition: We will see this principle unfolded in our "Better Choice" verse this evening as we examine the **terms**, the **choices**, and **God's advice**.

1. The Terms

a. In the first half

- 1) **Open** – The Hebrew word behind this is found 188 times in the Bible. It describes something that is uncovered, revealed, or disclosed. It is to lift the cover off something. (Proverbs 27:25) "*The hay appeareth [is uncovered as it grows], and the tender grass sheweth itself, and herbs of the mountains are gathered.*"
- 2) **Rebuke** – This Hebrew word is used 28 times in the Bible. It refers to rebuke, correction, reproof, punishment, or chastisement. Solomon uses this word 16 times in the book of Proverbs where it is usually translated "reproof." Ex. (Proverbs 29:15) "*The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.*"

b. In the second half

- 1) **Secret** – Here is a word that mean to be hidden carefully, or to be concealed. It is used several times to describe David hiding himself from Saul. It is used when Jehoiada the priest hid young Joash from wicked Athaliah. (Proverbs 22:3) "*A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.*"
- 2) **Love** – This word is used for both human love and God's love for His people. In the verse before us, it refers to human love. We find the same word in Genesis 29:20.

"And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her."

2. The Choices

a. Open rebuke

- 1) The only way to correct a sin or offence is to uncover it and bring it into the open where it can be addressed. If it is kept covered and never confronted, it will continue to harm and only get worse.
- 2) Illustration: *A sliver in your hand is a good example of this. That tiny sliver stuck in your hand may hurt and be irritating, but if you do not get it out, it will cause an infection that will greatly increase the pain.*
- 3) Open rebuke is when an offence is brought out in the open or uncovered. This is when someone calls you to their side, uncovers a fault you have done and rebukes you or chastens you for it, seeking to restore you to right.
 - a) Open rebuke necessitates confronting the offender. Until the offence has been biblically confronted, cleansing and restoration cannot be enjoyed.
 - b) It is unpleasant to speak to someone about his fault. Open rebuke is never pleasant for the sinner or the corrector. This may tempt us to neglect rebuke.
- 4) Open rebuke is God's plan for a sinner's restoration.
 - a) The **Lord** rebukes us when we do wrong. (Proverbs 3:11) "*My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction.*"
 - b) **Parents** must rebuke their sinful children. (Proverbs 29:15) "*The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.*"
 - c) The **Holy Spirit** rebukes. (John 16:8) "*And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.*"
 - d) **Pastors** are to rebuke. (2 Timothy 4:2) "*Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.*"
 - e) The **Word of God** rebukes us when we sin. (Jeremiah 23:29) "*Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD;*

and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?"

- 5) The bottom line is that open rebuke is never enjoyable, but it is necessary for cleansing and restoration.

b. Secret love

- 1) Our Creator God placed within each of us a need **for** love and a need to **give** love. Love is one of the most cherished and prized actions known to a human.
- 2) Love is primarily an action rather than an emotion. Love is sacrificially giving to meet the needs of another expecting nothing in return. True love does that which is **best** for the object of its love; therefore, **true love confronts faults** in the loved one to make him or her a better person.
 - a) Confronting offences is God's **loving** way to restore an offender. See **Matthew 18:15-17**.
 - b) When God corrects our wrongs, it shows that He **loves** us. (Proverbs 3:12) "*For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.*"
 - c) Chastening a sinful child is God's **lovingly** way for a parent to help his child. (Proverbs 13:24) "*He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.*"
- 3) Remember the word "**secret**" means hidden. Secret love is hidden love. It is love that does not give the best.
- 4) **Secret love** is love that does **not** speak out when it should. Because secret love does not want to inflict pain on the loved one, it **overlooks** sins. It silently **approves** of evils, allowing them to pass without confrontation. Secret love **closes its eyes** to the long-term consequences of sin. Secret love **focuses** on present feelings rather than on future betterment.
- 5) When a parent says, "**I love my child too much to punish him when he does wrong,**" that is **secret love**. (Hebrews 12:11) "*Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.*"
- 6) "The rebuke required must not only be open and faithful,