



“The Gift of Correction”

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“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.” (John 10:27–28, NIV84)

- **TRUE LOVE is obeying God’s commands.** *“If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever— the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.” (John 14:15–18, NIV84)*
- **The Work of the Holy Spirit:** He TEACHES us to love God, HOW to live a God pleasing life, WHAT is true and what is a lie, TEACHES us how to be a willing follower, imitator, submitted to His teaching and coaching.
- **It’s not EASY!** *“Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. “Make level paths for your feet,” so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed. Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.” (Hebrews 12:10–13, NIV84)*

IT GRIEVES THE HOLY SPIRIT when we resist His coaching and counsel to go back to our sinful lifestyle. *“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” (Ephesians 4:30–5:2, NIV84)*

God’s voice gets quiet and no longer challenges our sin.

If we allow our sins to again become a lifestyle GRADUALLY, we repetitively dull our conscience to the Spirit’s discipline and correction; we are no longer following Him. God finally stops opposing and correcting us:

We run the risk of two things happening.

1. **He turns us over to our sin.**
 - a. It means that now your conscience isn't complaining ; your sin doesn't seem all that bad.
 - b. *“For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for*

images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.” (Romans 1:21–25, NIV84)

2. God quits listening to us in our distress.

- a. *“Therefore this is what the LORD says: ‘I will bring on them a disaster they cannot escape. Although they cry out to me, I will not listen to them.’” (Jeremiah 11:11, NIV84)*
- b. *“If you had responded to my rebuke, I would have poured out my heart to you and made my thoughts known to you. But since you rejected me when I called and no one gave heed when I stretched out my hand, since you ignored all my advice and would not accept my rebuke, I in turn will laugh at your disaster; I will mock when calamity overtakes you—” (Proverbs 1:23–26, NIV84)*

Silence comes with consequences and punishment we cannot escape.

- **Spiritual effects:** we cannot sense God’s presence;
- **Emotional effects:** profound guilt and shame that we cannot escape from;
- **Physical effects:** we discover damage to our bodies

It is about the pain; God is turning us over to the pain so it can teach us what we were unwilling or unable to learn any other way. Finding the reasons may be difficult but if we repent, then humble ourselves to seek, knock, ask, He will answer our cry.

It is a gift of God to be corrected by the Holy Spirit! Besides the love of God and the salvation of Jesus Christ, the counsel and correction of the Holy Spirit, is one of the greatest gifts any of us could ever have in this life and in this Christmas season.

The Gospel: In spite of the pain of our sin, we never left His heart.

- **Nehemiah 9:29-31**, 29 “You warned them to return to your law, but they became arrogant and disobeyed your commands. They sinned against your ordinances, by which a man will live if he obeys them. Stubbornly they turned their backs on you, became stiff-necked and refused to listen. 30 For many years you were patient with them. By your Spirit you admonished them through your prophets. Yet they paid no attention, so you handed them over to the neighboring peoples. 31 But in your great mercy you did not put an end to them or abandon them, for you are a gracious and merciful God.
- **The good news...** genuine repentance... genuine surrender to Jesus Lordship and a DESIRE to be taught and instructed by the Holy Spirit - there is a Father waiting to welcome us with grace, mercy and forgiveness and eventually our ETERNAL HOME. **This is the heart of the Christmas story.**