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**Mentoring by  
Teaching:  
Information,  
Appropriation,  
Transformation**

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**Series: Possessing the Land:  
The Process of Mentoring**

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# Mentoring by Teaching: Information, Appropriation, Transformation

Sometimes we tend to approach the less than obvious before we explore the seemingly routine things in Scripture. In our quest for some patterns of mentoring taken from the lives of God's Biblical examples, we have done just that.

We have explored what it means to mentor by *example*, to mentor by *interceding*, to mentor by *reminding* and *remembering*. We now come to that element of communicating truth from one life to another that is what we normally think of when we think of mentoring or disciple-making: the matter of *teaching* or *instructing*. Even there, we want to be sure that we challenge our thinking by looking at everything that word teaching implies.

Our natural bent is to think of teaching as the giving forth of information, and on occasions, the dialogue that results from the going forth of those facts. We tend to think that if we accumulate enough oral or written words about a given subject, we have been taught. That, of course, is not true. Where Scriptural truth is concerned, the giving of information is only a small part of teaching. That is because spiritual growth is not an academic exercise, but rather the result of a series of personal encounters with the Living Word of God, Jesus Christ Himself. It is the process of learning and then applying the absolutes and principles of God's word to an individual's life in such a way that the person being taught is changed, "*in ever increasing splendor, from one degree of glory to another.*" That takes place when one takes the *information* they have heard and received into their spirit by the Holy Spirit and appropriates it in such a way that the *information* leads to *transformation*.

Often, this does not happen without some level of interaction with another person who serves to create responsibility through accountability. If this were not necessary, God would not have created parents. He would have dropped children in various stages at various places and told them to grow up. But how could they know how to grow up if someone did not show them, and

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if someone did not correct them *as they instructed them*, and encouraged them as the *corrected* them? So parents and school teachers have a task that requires diverse techniques and an incredible balance. They must break the will without breaking the spirit; they must be consistent with the absolutes and flexible with the techniques. They must be sensitive to the feelings of their pupil or child, all the while never letting that sensitivity govern their response to disobedience. They must honor their word without dishonoring their role. What a task. To those who are teachers, parents, grandparents, home schoolers, disciplinarians, mentors, or who fill any role in society that requires the passing on of one life to another through instruction, we must have both respect and concern.

We ought to pray regularly for those who teach our children or grandchildren. What an incredible responsibility. And for those who preach or teach or disciple, we must pray with an added dimension. Not only are they communicating facts; not only are they communicating life by example; *they are the unconscious vehicles by which the Spirit of God is transmitting life through the Scriptures*. That is why the Scriptures and only the Scriptures can be the real basis for spiritual instruction. Any other kind of teaching takes the words of man and attempts to use them to change the life of man. It can't happen. Only God's word can change a heart; and only a changed heart can change a man or woman.

If we are to examine carefully the concept of mentoring by instruction (or teaching as we seem to call it), we must look, I believe, at two main examples: *How Jesus taught the disciples and how the Holy Spirit teaches us*. When we see those patterns, we will begin to better realize what real teaching is all about, and hopefully understand the difference between academic instruction and spiritual enlightenment. One may follow the other, but it is definitely not a given. Studying the Holy Spirit's techniques, if you will, is crucial, because *He is still the teacher of all spiritual truth*. Studying how Jesus dealt with the disciples is crucial, because *it is still His Word that the Spirit uses to teach us*.

To make it work, we must first lay aside all of our preconceived notions about what constitutes transformation by instruction. We are not using a certain teacher or a certain technique or a certain seminary as models. We are using Jesus Christ, the Living Son of God and His Holy Spirit. How did Jesus communicate with

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Peter, James, John and the others? He only had three years in which to accomplish the impossible. Or is that really true? If the process was to be one of generational enlightenment, is there a progression or unfolding of truth that builds as time goes by? And just how does the Holy Spirit teach us today? Have His methods changed? Good question.

Paul knew we would need some kind of pattern, and he knew that we might miss the simplicity of simply watching Jesus and examining the work of His Spirit. So in his second letter to his disciple Timothy, he reiterated that pattern so Tim would forever have the balance explained, and so that he, as Paul had said in his first letter, would *“commit these things to faithful men who in turn could teach others also.”*

That is, you remember, the reason we are here. We are not here to enjoy Christianity, though much of the time there is a level of enjoyment in fellowship and worship. *We will have eternity to enjoy Christianity.* In this “me” generation in which we live, we are getting the idea that the church is a vehicle to make people happy. It is not. It is a vehicle to make disciples, so the disciples can make more disciples. Much of the church’s work today is geared towards becoming more contemporary so we will be acceptable in a contemporary world. That’s not all bad. But it’s secondary.

We are not here just to become contemporary. We are soldiers in a war, and the purpose of our warfare is not to socialize with the enemy so he’ll think we’re one of his. We are here to reflect a life that is so incredibly different that even the enemy is in awe. Our desire is not that the unbeliever should say: *“Isn’t he or she a lot like us?”* Our desire is that they might say: *“These are they that turned the world upside down.”*

So Paul gave Tim a formula for discipleship. It was at the end of his life, and it characterized his life. He capsulized everything that was important to him in a few sentences. Here it is:

I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to

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themselves teachers, having itching ears;

And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith:

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. (II Timothy 4:1-8)

### IN SEASON, OUT OF SEASON

Paul's call to discipleship was a "charge". In this instance, the word "charge" is the word διαμαρτυρομαι, diamarturomai {dee-am-ar-too'-rom-ah-ee}. It means "to testify or attest solemnly to the authenticity of something". It was Paul's way of saying: "*This is where it's all at. I guarantee it.*" This was a Biblical order based on Paul's authority as Timothy's spiritual overseer. He was commanding him, based, not on Paul's insights, but on God's oversight to do the following.

The first thing he was to do was to "preach the word". Don't hop over that because you are not a professional in the ministry. Everyone who disciples or raises children teaches, and every teacher is, in fact, called to preach, not necessarily vocationally, but spiritually. Study carefully those two words "preach" and "teach" and you will see that the mentor teaches truth to his follower, then preaches that same truth so that the one who is being taught will apply the truth to his or her life.

It does not mean he or she will ever stand in a pulpit and proclaim the gospel to a church. That is a unique, but wonderful calling, assigned to those God has chosen to do so, *but though only a few are called to the ministry of preaching, every believer is called both to preach and to teach.* Those who preach without teaching may be guilty of proclaiming transformation without communicating the truth that transforms. Those who teach without preaching may be guilty of dispensing knowledge without the exhortation that turns knowledge into wisdom, and knowledge, as an end within itself, according to I Corinthians,

chapter 8, “puffeth up”. It swells the head, brings satisfaction to the brain, but never allows the truth to enter the bloodstream where it affects and transforms the heart.

That word, “preach”, κηρυσσοϋ, kerysso {kay-roos'-so}, is a word that means to “herald or proclaim”. An interesting footnote in your concordance indicates that it *“always involves the suggestion of formality, gravity, and authority, which must be listened to and obeyed”*. It means to “openly proclaim that which must be listened to and obeyed”. It is often used of the public proclamation of the gospel and matters pertaining to it. It is, however, used in more than one instance to describe the dual ministry of preaching and teaching, in more of a one to one or small group context. In Colossians, chapter one, Paul said:

Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God;

Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:

Whereunto I also labor, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily. (Colossians 1:25-29)

“We preach Christ” said Paul, “warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect (spiritually mature) in Christ Jesus”. We proclaim the mystery which is: *“Christ in you, the hope of glory.”* Paul was a tent-maker God called to go to the Gentile world and proclaim that Christ actually is alive and can live His life in you and in me. Some day go back and look at those three words used in your concordance regarding what preaching is: *“it always involves the suggestion of formality, gravity, and authority”*. We need to think carefully, then, about what we preach and what we teach.

I see a lot of “Christian jokes” in e-mail format, and I believe God has a sense of humor, but Beloved, *the gospel is not a joking matter*. If you went to a doctor for an exam, and he discovered something of life and death proportions, you would not want him to begin by laughing or making light of the problem. And where

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the gospel is concerned, *it is a life-or-death matter*. It is a grave matter. Not necessarily somber but sober; not gross, but grave. The reason it is not somber is that the Great Physician is telling you that though you have a seemingly incurable disease, He is offering you a perfect cure at His own expense. But it is grave, because if you reject His offer, you die. If you accept His offer, however, the darkness turns to light; and the death, through His resurrection, heralds a new birth.

Do you see the difference and the need for both? You *teach* about the resurrection, *but you preach Christ crucified*. You *teach* about the indwelling Holy Spirit, *but you preach Christ in you, the hope of glory*. Jesus made no bones about the fact that He, on planet earth, did both:

And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities. (Matthew 11:1)

He separated the two activities, but included both. And so must we. Look at Acts 5:

And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ. (Acts 5:42)

They preached in the temple. They taught in the temple. They preached from house to house. They taught from house to house. And these weren't necessarily house churches; it says they taught in *every* house. God was at work, and this gospel was all new to them. So they *explained* what God's word said, *and they proclaimed what God's word required*. One activity resulted in communicating *necessary information*, the other executed *necessary transformation*. The two together were the dynamite that turned their world upside down.

But that word "teaching" is also sometimes used in a sense, to accomplish both. If you view it in the Scriptural context, teaching is the expression of Biblical truth in such a way that change takes place within the human heart. So, while in one sense, preaching is the application of teaching, in another, depending on how you use the word, teaching is the sum total of a series of activities that involves *personal preaching*. What are those activities? Paul goes on, then, to describe them.

Now, remember, as we begin this journey, that Paul and Jesus both demonstrated and communicated that these activities were to be carried out "*in season and out of season*". The Greek



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word, ευκαιρῶς, eukairos {yoo-kah'-ee-roce} means “whether it is convenient or not”. That is a key part of the teaching or discipling environment. Passing on truth and passing on Biblical challenges cannot be a matter of convenience, either for the disciple-maker or for the disciple.

Being mentored, spiritually, *is your life*. And being a mentor, spiritually, *is your calling*. Therefore, everything else moves aside when spiritual growth is effected by one of these exercises. Then Paul describes the process of mentoring: It involves reproof, rebuke, and exhortation, and it involves doing those things with “longsuffering” and “doctrine”. You correct, you redirect, and you encourage those who walk alongside, *but as you do, you exercise a maximum amount of patience, as you keep on teaching*.

### THE MINISTRY OF REPROOF

Now, be careful. The first thing Paul told Timothy to do if he was to preach and teach effectively was to “reprove”. The word is ελεγχο, elegcho {el-eng'-kho}. It literally means: “*To call to one’s attention a personal fault with an eye to change.*” Your concordance says this: “*to reprehend severely, to chide, to admonish, to show one his fault, to demand an explanation, to chasten, to punish.*”

This ministry of reproof was given primarily to those God has placed in spiritual authority. Misused, this challenge becomes an ego trip for demented souls who think God has called them to be everyone else’s conscience. Used properly, however, it is the catalyst to change each of us into the image of Christ.

Remember, whether you are dealing with one of your children or a fellow church member or someone under your authority, *Biblical reproof always has a common goal: to bring about positive change*. Never is reproof commanded or demanded in Scripture with an eye to satisfying one person’s desire to put another in their place. The only basis for reproof is a humble heart seeking to help another grow spiritually or solve a problem that is causing grief in the body of Christ. It is not the solution for a personal vendetta or to satisfy either an insecure spirit or a life filled with arrogance or pride. Look at the elements that make up Biblical reproof:

#### 1- The first step is to examine your own heart (Matthew 7:3-5).

And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

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Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye. (Matthew 7:3-5)

2- The second step is to be sure you are reprovng in love, not in anger. In II Corinthians Paul wrote:

For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you. (II Corinthians 2:4)

3- The third step is to be sure the one you are reprovng is open to reproof. Otherwise, you will simply compound the problem and build a thicker wall. This may be the most overlooked principle in this entire study. Look at these verses from Proverbs:

He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame: and he that rebuketh a wicked *man* *getteth* himself a blot.

Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee. (Proverbs 9:7,8)

Smite a scorner, and the simple will beware: and reprove one that hath understanding, *and* he will understand knowledge. (Proverbs 19:25)

What constitutes a scorner? He or she is one who mocks truth. Who isn't open to correction. Not only are they not teachable, they keep others from being taught. Look what the Scriptures say:

When the scorner is punished, the simple is made wise: and when the wise is instructed, he receiveth knowledge. (Proverbs 21:11)

Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; yea, strife and reproach shall cease. (Proverbs 22:10)

So you can't reprove just anyone. Your reproof will only be profitable if the one being reprovod is open to correction. If they are, says the Scripture, *they will actually love you for having cared enough to correct them.*

4- True reproof is the work of the Holy Spirit.

And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: (John 16:8)

The process of reproof is a task only the Holy Spirit can accomplish; therefore, if it is a spiritual matter, it is imperative that:

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- a- The one doing the reproof must be a believer.
- b- The one being reproofed must be a believer in order for the Holy Spirit to translate the reproof into godliness.
- c- Both must be led by the Spirit and not acting in the flesh.

Reproof, then, is a very real part of teaching. It is the most personal part. It is the act of calling to one's attention areas of sin that need correcting. In a later lesson, we will learn how to turn reproof into victory by turning weakness into strength. We will look at how the Spirit in us would go about reproofing in love. For now, let it suffice to say that one basic tenet of mentoring is the process of reproof. Like it or not, it is a vital ingredient. In today's world, we have tried to replace authority with co-laborship and rebuke with encouragement. Both are vital, but one without the other violates Scripture. You must be willing to exercise reproof, be it to a disciple, employee, teenager, or friend if you want to exercise genuine love.

### THE MINISTRY OF REBUKE

The second thing Paul said to do was to "rebuke". Reproof and rebuke are so close in nature they are almost used interchangeably...but not quite. The word for "rebuke" is the word ἐπιτιμαω , epitimao {ep-ee-tee-mah'-o}. It means

*"to show honor;  
to raise the price of;  
to adjudge, or award for merit; or  
to chide, reprove, censure or admonish."*

Here are some basic principles about rebuke:

1- We are to be careful about "rebuking" the devil (Zechariah 3:2. Jude 1:9).

2- That is God's job. (Malachi 3:11)

3- We are not to rebuke God, even with so called "good" motives (Matthew 16:21-23).

4- We are told to seek to be blameless, without need of rebuke (Philippians 2:15).

5- We are told to not rebuke an elder, but entreat him as a father (I Timothy 5:1).

6- We are told that there are times when others need to be rebuked in public as an example to the flock (I Timothy 5:20).

7- We are told that God's rebuke is a reflection of His love (Revelation 3:19).

8- In the same way, rebuke, done properly by those in authority, is also an emblem of love and should actually be a source of encouragement (Proverbs 27:5).

If you watch the pattern expressed in the definitions of both reproof and rebuke, you will see that the concept of authority, either ordered or delegated, is intertwined with those two forms of correction, and that the Holy Spirit, whose job it is to "reprove the world of sin" must be in control, for rebuke or reproof done in the flesh or for the wrong motive or to the wrong person or at the wrong time will actually turn that person's heart away from God and harden their spirits against God's word, rather than soften it. More about that, later.

### THE MINISTRY OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Paul, fortunately, didn't limit his arsenal of teaching tools to the confrontational and corrective. He then said we are to "encourage" and that, indeed, is the one we gravitate towards. It is less painful to encourage. Things are less likely to go awry when we encourage. We are less likely to offend when we encourage, but we do have to be careful, for we live in a world that has redefined authority as "peer level encouragement" and redefined reproof and rebuke as "the absence of the love of God".

You have to throw out a lot of the Bible to come to those conclusions. You have to mix in a lot of the world's humanistic philosophy, and assume that man is basically good and that spiritual growth is automatic and that grace not only limits the wrath of God, but eradicates it. In a future study, we will take this concept of encouragement and explore it more fully, and search out some of the encouragers or exhorters in Scripture. For now, however, remember that true teaching involves the full gamut from the negative to the positive, from confrontation to correction to encouragement. Leave out any of the three and you leave out the balance of the equation.

Also remember that these teaching tools are to be undergirded with "longsuffering and doctrine". We continue teaching as we correct and encourage, and we do so with "patient endurance", remembering how often God has to correct us and convict us and encourage us before the process runs its course to transformation.

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Remember, however, as you think about teaching others, that the process of mentoring by instruction is a *spiritual* activity and will only bear eternal fruit if it is done by the Spirit; and if it is done by the Spirit, it will be true to the Word. If you really want to teach someone spiritual truth, then, use the Word, and use it wisely. It is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. (It will teach you, turn you, train you, and transform you.) Nothing else can and nothing else will.

Teaching facts about the Bible or sharing others' opinions about the Bible provides an interesting start, but as we discussed at the outset, left to itself, mere information produces swelling in the brain and hardening of the heart. Truth must be translated into transformation by trust; and faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. If, then, you really want to rebuke, reprove and encourage, the best way is to see that the word is laid upon that person's heart, line upon line, precept upon precept, and that you pray for that child or that disciple constantly as you meditate on the word yourself. Then the Spirit uses the word and teaches them for you. Or as the Spirit wrote through John:

But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

(I John 2:27)

That doesn't mean God doesn't use teachers. It means that God's Spirit, taking God's word, is enough as you pray to change anyone's heart. (And guess who gets the glory when it happens.) Oh, that we would return to the process of simply teaching God's word, and as it convicts, reproves and encourages, we would pray for miracles that would change the hearts (not just the minds) of those for whom we are spiritually responsible or spiritually concerned.

Man has tried to make it so complicated. We create programs, we hire people, we design facilities, we plan, we program, we promote, all in the name of trying to build the church. "*But except the Lord build the church, they labor in vain that build it.*" That means that *all of that labor could be in vain*. But when we simply teach the Word, *in season and out of season, and watch it reprove, rebuke, and exhort*; and when the Body of Christ humbles itself and prays and seeks His face and turns from sin, *God will still deliver us and heal our land*. When He is lifted up, He will draw

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all men to Himself. When we lift up what we can do, however, we draw men to ourselves and to a church, not to Him, and real revival cannot and will not break forth.

But don't we need to be more relevant? Perhaps. It is okay to become more relevant in order to reach the next generation; but real relevance, Beloved, comes when we simply teach that generation, line upon line, precept upon precept, *exactly what God's word says*. Nothing more. Nothing less. It isn't most of what we need. It is *all* we need. Period.

Discipling someone? Be sure they understand that the Scripture is his or her only textbook, and God's Holy Spirit his or her only teacher. Then watch the Spirit do what He does. Watch Him teach. He loves to do what we can't. And He will rebuke, reprove and exhort when necessary. He will be patient, and He will transfer that patience to us in answer to prayer as that fruit of the Spirit (patience) becomes a reality in us.

Don't teach without preaching. It is a waste of time. Don't try to impart knowledge and expect mere knowledge to change a life. The only thing it will produce are clogged spiritual arteries. But preaching without teaching is no more fruitful. It excites the mind and elevates the emotions; but without Truth ingrained in the heart, the mind will be diverted and the emotions will flip-flop, and life will become a roller coaster of spiritual ups and downs.

Knowledge must be translated into understanding. It must be personalized. For example, it is one thing to teach that "godliness with contentment is great gain". That is a wonderful lesson in Bible truth. You can teach them who said it, what book it is in, when it was written, what the meaning of the Greek words are, and help them to find in a concordance other uses of the same words.

But until they measure their own contentment (or lack of it) alongside God's standard, they only have knowledge. They may be proud of it, and even share it with others, which compounds the problem. But if they are still discontented with their job, their mate, their church, their house, their car, etc., they are simply a more educated fool than they were before, and they are more accountable, because

...to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him  
it is sin. (James 4:17)

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Your job and the Spirit's job is to help them see that not only is discontentment a sin, but if they are discontented, they are living in sin and they must repent and turn around towards God's perspective of contentment, which means developing a grateful spirit.

Then they will have gained understanding. They will have translated information into personalization demanding application and they are being "taught". But only, Beloved, if you stay with them, in prayer and by faithfully walking alongside until that discontented spirit is turned into a life of active praise and thanksgiving, *have you really taught them anything*. Then, your teaching (giving them information) and your preaching (exhorting them to appropriation) will have borne lasting eternal fruit (transformation).

That, Beloved, is real discipleship. That is mentoring God's way.

By His grace, may we settle for nothing less.

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### A Challenge to Further Study and Application

1- See if you can diagram the concept of Biblical teaching. How does it differ from other forms of instruction? What is necessary for you to be taught spiritual truth? List all of the necessary ingredients.

2- Begin a notebook entitled “How God Teaches”. Each time you watch Jesus teach in Scripture, make notes about the way He goes about pouring spiritual truth into lives. Each time God teaches you, make notes about how His Spirit went about ministering truth to your heart.

3- Write out II Timothy 4:1-8 in your own words. See if you can define the key words as you do.

4- What do you think “in season, out of season” means in verse 2? Does that phrase apply to you? Does it describe your ministry?

5- See if you can explain the difference between “teaching” and “preaching”? Do you have to be “preacher” to preach? How can you “preach” to your children without them accusing you of “preaching” to them? Watch Jesus and the twelve for your answers.

6- Why must the concept of authority remain a reality for real teaching to place? Why has society so rebelled against this concept?

7- Do you ever “reprove” or “rebuke” anyone? When should you? When shouldn’t you?

8- Read the Scriptural admonitions concerning “rebuke” on pages 11 and 12. Can you explain them? Why are these truths so important?

9- What are some of the reasons we rather encourage than rebuke?

10- Diagram the turning of knowledge into wisdom. See if you can explain it to someone else.

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