

We should be grateful for the spiritual help that others give us

Sometimes we resent it when others try to help us do better. Instead, *we should be grateful for the spiritual help that others give us*. None of us is objective enough to see every weakness we have, and we need the perspective that our friends and loved ones can provide, so we can become aware of problems that need to be fixed. It is a good thing — a thing to be thankful for — anytime someone cares enough about us to try to help us be closer to God.

In fact, it is a good thing (for us, anyway) when even an enemy tells us the truth about ourselves. If what is said is true, we can profit by it even if it was said maliciously. A person handing out criticism may, despite his evil intent, be telling the truth. Indeed, a person will sometimes tell us more of the truth about ourselves when he is mad (and throws caution to the wind) than when he is not.

But whatever the source of the criticism, as God's people we will always want to be looking for any help that we can profit by. As far as the good that we may receive is concerned, valid criticism is valid criticism, period. We need to be big enough to admit the truth wherever it comes from. Several of the proverbs make this point. One such passage is **Prov. 27:5,6**: "Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy." The help that a friend gives may sometimes feel more like a "wound," but we would be foolish not to receive it humbly and profit from it.

As Christians, we are more fortunate than we know to have people who love us. In God's family, we are blessed to be surrounded by brothers and sisters who will not only try to help us, but who will attempt to do it in the very best way possible. Rather than resenting the "meddling" others do in our lives, why can't we try this week to have a nobler attitude? Why can't we focus our attention on the advantage that others give us by helping us to see ourselves as we really are.

Let's make this a week of significant spiritual growth, one in which we seek out the help and advice of those who know us well. Together, we can do a better job in the Lord's work than we could individually. God has made help available to us in a variety of ways. Let's be glad for it!

Monday: Hebrews 12:9-11

Key Idea: Parents who help us see and overcome our faults are a blessing.

Questions for Family Growth: What does this text teach us about the attitude we should have toward our parents' discipline? What is the purpose of correction and chastening? What are fathers commanded to do in passages like **Eph. 6:4**?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 26:18,19**.

Tuesday: Hebrews 13:7,17

Key Idea: Elders who help us see and overcome our faults are a blessing.

Questions for Family Growth: What does it mean that elders “are keeping watch over your souls” (v.17)? How can we make their work a joy? What are some reasons why our elders in the local congregation might be the very best people to get constructive criticism from?

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 26:20-22](#).

Wednesday: Acts 20:17-20

Key Idea: Preachers who help us see and overcome our faults are a blessing.

Questions for Family Growth: In v.20, what did Paul say he had “kept back” (NKJV) from his fellow Christians in Ephesus? Did people always appreciate Paul’s words or take his advice? What question did he ask the Galatian Christians in [Gal. 4:16](#)?

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 26:23](#).

Thursday: Proverbs 27:5,6; 28:23

Key Idea: Friends who help us see and overcome our faults are a blessing.

Questions for Family Growth: In 27:6, why would a friend ever “wound” us? Which is better: a friend who always tells us what we want to hear or one who tells us what we need to hear? Why do you think it is so hard to accept the criticism of a friend?

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 26:24-26](#).

Friday: Galatians 6:1,2

Key Idea: We all ought to care enough about each other to help one another obey God.

Questions for Family Growth: What is a “trespass” (NKJV)? In practical terms, how do we go about trying to “restore” a person who has disobeyed God? What can we do if we try to restore someone and they tell us to mind our own business?

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 26:27](#).

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