

The willingness to be warned is a valuable character trait

When God providentially brings warnings into our lives, it is a great mistake to ignore them. When, for example, Paul preached the gospel to Felix, the Roman governor, the text says: “And as he reasoned about righteousness and self-control and the coming judgment, Felix was alarmed and said, ‘Go away for the present. When I get an opportunity I will summon you’” (Ac. 24:25). Paul’s warning about “the coming judgment” was enough to make Felix “alarmed,” but Felix did nothing about the warning. Like so many who procrastinate and fail to do anything about the warnings that come to them, this man postponed taking any action with regard to his soul’s salvation. For all we know, he never got around to obeying the gospel.

The willingness to be warned is a valuable character trait. It is, in fact, one of the major attributes that distinguish a wise person from a foolish one. Solomon said, “The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice” (Prov. 12:15). Learning from our mistakes, listening to others’ advice, and paying attention to our conscience seem like simple things. Yet we often fail to do them. And when we fail to let ourselves be warned, we lose much of the benefit of wisdom. We are doomed to repeat our mistakes and to suffer their consequences over and over again. If we’re unwilling to be warned, for whatever reason, we will lead a life that is much harder and more unpleasant than it has to be. “Whoever heeds instruction is on the path to life, but he who rejects reproof leads others astray” (Prov. 10:17).

It is not fun to be warned. There are more pleasant things that we’d rather hear. But we need to be warned, and God loves us too much not to warn us. He has provided for our salvation in His Son, but that salvation is only for those willing to be warned about their sins. If it is the gospel of Christ that we wish to hear, then we must be prepared to hear its warnings. Concerning Christ, Paul said, “Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ” (Col. 1:28). Do we wish to be “mature in Christ”? Then we must welcome the warnings of His word. This week, let’s open up our hearts, our minds, and our attitudes to the benefit of God’s warnings to us.

Monday: Psalm 19:7-11

Key Idea: From time to time, every person needs to be warned.

Questions for Family Growth: In v.11, what good purpose does David say is served in our lives by the teachings of God’s word? Why do we all need to be warned occasionally? Why should we appreciate warnings?

Wisdom for the Day: Proverbs 28:13.

Tuesday: Luke 15:11-20

Key Idea: Difficult circumstances are one means through which we are warned.

Questions for Family Growth: Briefly describe the foolish thing this young man did? What happened that finally woke him up and made him realize how foolish he had been? Is “pain” always a bad thing?

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 28:14](#).

Wednesday: Proverbs 10:17; 12:15; 17:10

Key Idea: We should be willing for others to warn us by their counsel.

Questions for Family Growth: What is the basic point made in all three of these proverbs? What does it mean to “heed” instruction or advice? Why is it so difficult for us to do this? Who are those whose counsel we should seek?

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 28:15](#).

Thursday: Genesis 39:7-10

Key Idea: We should listen to the warnings of our own conscience.

Questions for Family Growth: Other things may have been involved, but what was the basic reason Joseph refused the temptation of Potiphar’s wife? Should we always follow our conscience? Why is this a wise practice?

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 28:16](#).

Friday: Colossians 1:28

Key Idea: If we wish to be mature spiritually, we must take heed when God warns us.

Questions for Family Growth: As he preached Christ, what two things did Paul say he did? Can we become complete and mature in Christ without these two things? In [Acts 20:31](#), what did Paul say he had done while he was in Ephesus?

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 28:17](#).

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