

3 - I Am That Fool - I'm Defensive When Corrected

Proverbs 15:5

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March 20, 2022

SLIDE: Title Slide with I'm Defensive When Corrected

My name is Doug Bridge and I'm the Family Ministries Pastor here at Verde Valley Christian Church. And first let me just say that I DO relate to today's focus and felt a little defensive when I was asked to share this topic with you today. So, Jim is getting a much deserved Sunday break from teaching and when this topic was shared as the one for his Sunday break I felt like everyone in the room looked at me like, "well, you should be able to do a good job on that one!" Now, it could have been me being too sensitive, but I do admit that when corrected, my first and toughest challenge is to NOT GET DEFENSIVE! So, if you sometimes feel that way too, then we're here together this morning to look at how to grow in our faith and in our ability to receive correction. OH BOY!

On the more positive side of things let me share what is going on in my life right now. First, I'm SEMI-RETIRED which means I don't get to see the amazing men and women who make up the staff of VVCC as much as I like. And, I am truly blessed to be working with 2 of the most enjoyable and energetic ministry leaders EVER. Tanie Rice, who just completed her Bachelor's degree last Saturday and who loves sharing God's Word with our children from birth through 5th grade and Hunter Tibbs who is equally up to challenging our middle schoolers and high schoolers with truths from God's Word. While I am getting older, both of my knees are now younger than any of the kids in the room here today. Our entire family, including my mother Barbara, our daughter and son-in-law and our son and daughter-in-law and all of the in-laws that that entails, all of us live here in the Verde Valley and all attend this church. My wife Sue and I have 2 sweet and wonderful granddaughters and am looking forward to our first grandSON this May. And, TODAY folks, my wife Sue and I are celebrating our 45th Wedding Anniversary. I'll bet you didn't know church was going to include a party today! So for me, this season of life is AMAZING.

And please let me begin in the same way we begin almost every Children's Church - **"TODAY IS THE BEST DAY OF THE WEEK!!!"** It's that way because we are here, gathered together to worship our Creator,

Savior, and Lord. Outside of heaven, I'm not sure it gets much better than this!

SLIDE: 5 Sessions of Series with **today's topic** highlighted

So let's begin with one of the verses for today . . .

SLIDE: WTTB Proverbs

SLIDE: Proverbs 15:5 (CSB) A fool despises his father's discipline, but a person who accepts correction is sensible.

By way of review, we have looked at discipline as having 2 basic definitions. One is a corrective type action (like a spoken reprimand or spanking) and the other is a learned practice (like brushing your teeth after a meal) like what a disciple or follower would do.

Let's remember what we've talked about in the first two weeks of this series.

Why is this so foolish? A father's discipline generally comes from someone who knows you, sees you more closely and objectively than most, and who cares for you enough to speak to you about what needs to be corrected. Actually, you might say it's part of his job description as a dad. If this is true about your father, then to despise that correction says nothing about your father, but a whole lot about you!

And since this is a Family Sunday, I'd like to interject here something for the dads. I do believe this is part of a fathers job description. But I also know that we have to be very careful when we are correcting. So much so that God made sure that Paul included this insight in his letter to the church in Ephesus. In Ephesians 6:4 dads, we are told,

SLIDE: Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord.
Ephesians 6:4 (NLT)

Let's think about this further. If this is true about your father's discipline, perhaps it is even more correct when it comes to your spouse's

correction. If your spouse knows you as well as most spouses do, they know you better after a few years, than even your parents know you. And if your spouse loves you, and speaks to you about blind spots they see in you, if you are pridefully defensive when you are corrected, this says far more about your character deficiency than it does about your spouse!

Rabbi, physician, and philosopher Moses Maimonides said,

"Accept the truth from whatever source it comes."

SLIDE: Proverbs 15:31-33 (NLT) - If you listen to constructive criticism, you will be **at home among the wise**. 32 If you reject discipline, you only harm yourself; but if you listen to correction, you **grow in understanding**. 33 Fear of the Lord teaches **wisdom**; humility precedes **honor**.

SLIDE: 1. There are great blessings in life when we listen to correction.

Verde Valley Christian Church exists to help each of us take steps from wherever we are to where God wants us to be by growing us in grace and truth through Jesus Christ in relationships designed by Him.

What kind of steps are we talking about here? Not just single steps whenever we feel like it because we were motivated one day by a message. We are talking about developing the habits and disciplines Jesus taught us.

Jesus teaches us something counterintuitive. He teaches that you cannot trust your own feelings. That is the opposite of what the world is teaching these days. The world teaches forget what anyone else thinks. Forget what any authority thinks. The world teaches that only you are an authority on you. The world teaches that only you know what you really want. If you believe this, you will fall into the lies of this world that began with Adam and Eve and continue with us today. The lie is that our own desires and our own hearts are a more reliable guide than anything else (including what God or anyone else says). Don't you believe it!! God says this is the fools, and the way to destruction.

Fools follow their heart.

Secondly, our purpose statement says Verde Valley Christian Church exists to help each of us take steps from wherever we are to where God wants us to be by growing us in grace and truth through Jesus Christ in relationships designed by Him.

God speaks to us through relationships designed by him.

Parenting relationships.

Marriage relationships.

Mentoring relationships.

Relationships in the fellowship of a small group.

Church is the BODY of CHRIST, members in relationships one with another, to serve one another, love one another, encourage one another, exhort one another, even rebuke one another.

Spiritual Formation is about the development of habits that are cultivated encouraged and developed within this matrix of relationships in the background helping us walk in the path of Jesus, the paths of discipleship, and discipline. Learning the patterns, and behaviors Jesus teaches all about.

SLIDE: Proverbs 12:1 (NIV) - Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but whoever hates correction is stupid.

SLIDE: 2. God's Word is clear and direct. I don't want to be stupid.

So, let's run through an example of this being defensive when I'm corrected. I'm going to take the position of the one who needs to bring loving admonishment to his church family, or going to bring some correction. Here's the example: I would like all "influencers", each mom or dad, grandparent, aunt, uncle, teacher, leader, or friend of a young person ages birth through at least 18 years of age to consider striking something from their bank of questions. I am certain that if you qualify as one of the "influencers" in their lives you have a keen desire to see them grow and make choices in ways that are mature and Godly. And questions are a great way to bring out healthy discussion of important topics in life. So

here it is - would you please quit asking these amazing young people this question? *So what do you want to be when you grow up?* If you desire to see them grow and make choices in ways that are mature and Godly, why would you ask them what THEY WANT TO BE? Perhaps a more probing and helpful question to ask would be, "So do you think you've seen God leading you in any specific direction for you life in the future?" Or maybe, "With all the talents and abilities and giftedness God has placed in you, do you sense where He might be leading you next?"

Now, some of you might feel good that I brought up that topic. Others of you might be saying I'm being ridiculously picky about words. Some of you might say that you see no difference in any of the 3 questions. You might feel scolded, upset, or perhaps a little DEFENSIVE? If you don't feel that way, I hope you can see how some people might. In any case, it is sometimes, many times, well ok, most of the time difficult to NOT get defensive when I'm corrected. Especially if the correction feels like I might have been doing this wrong for a long time?!

SLIDE: Have you completely forgotten this word of hope? It speaks to you as a father to his children. It says, "My son, think of the Lord's training as important. Do not lose hope when he corrects you. The Lord trains the one he loves. He corrects everyone he accepts as his son." Hebrews 12:5-6 (NIRV)

SLIDE: 3. God and His Word are the ultimate sources of correction and wisdom.

Here are a few verses to hopefully remind us of WHY we want to be open to correction and discipline:

SLIDE: Proverbs 3:13 (NLT) - Joyful is the person who finds wisdom, the one who gains understanding.

SLIDE: Proverbs 9:10 (NLT) - Fear of the Lord is the foundation of wisdom. Knowledge of the Holy One results in good judgment.

SLIDE: Colossians 2:2-3 (ICB) - I want them to be strengthened and joined together with love. I want them to be rich in the strong belief that comes from understanding. I mean I want you to know fully God's secret truth. That truth is Christ himself. **3** And in him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are safely kept.

SLIDE: James 1:5 (NIRV) - If any of you needs wisdom, you should ask God for it. He will give it to you. God gives freely to everyone and doesn't find fault.

I want to be sure to remind the kids here today that we are working on a memory verse together for this series. But that doesn't mean you big kids - adults - can't join us! Here is the verse

(Bright Background) **SLIDE:** "Live in harmony with each other. Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't think you know it all!" Romans 12:16. (NLT)

Let's PRAY!

MARCH 20, 2022

SMALL TALK

1. Generally speaking, about which subject or topic are you most defensive? Why?
2. Of the 3 parts of the series, which has been most personal for you? Why?
(I'm Wise In My Own Eyes; I Don't Like Discipline; I'm Defensive When Corrected)

VIEWPOINT

3. READ Ephesians 6:4 aloud in your group. Can you think of a time either you provoked someone to anger or someone provoked you to anger?
4. READ Proverbs 15:31-33 aloud in your group. What are the blessings listed for those who listen to constructive criticism, correction, or discipline?
5. READ Hebrews 12:5-6 aloud in your group. What is the difficult part of these verses? What is the encouragement and blessing of these verses?

GETTING PERSONAL

6. From the previous 3 passages or from the following verses, which thought do you desire most for your life right now? Share it with the group.
Proverbs 3:13; Proverbs 9:10; Colossians 2:2-3; James 1:5
7. Would you be willing to commit to memorizing Romans 12:16 along with the kids in our church by the last week of this series? (Sunday, April 3). If there is another verse that we have looked into during this series that you feel helps you more right now, would you commit instead to memorizing it by April 3?

PRACTICE!

How are you doing with this series challenge of reading the chapter of Proverbs that corresponds to the date of the month? Are you on Chapter 20 today? If not, join in! Don't forget to make a note or two on which wise saying you found most helpful. If you've been doing this, would you care to share something from your notes with your group?