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## Caring Enough to Rebuke

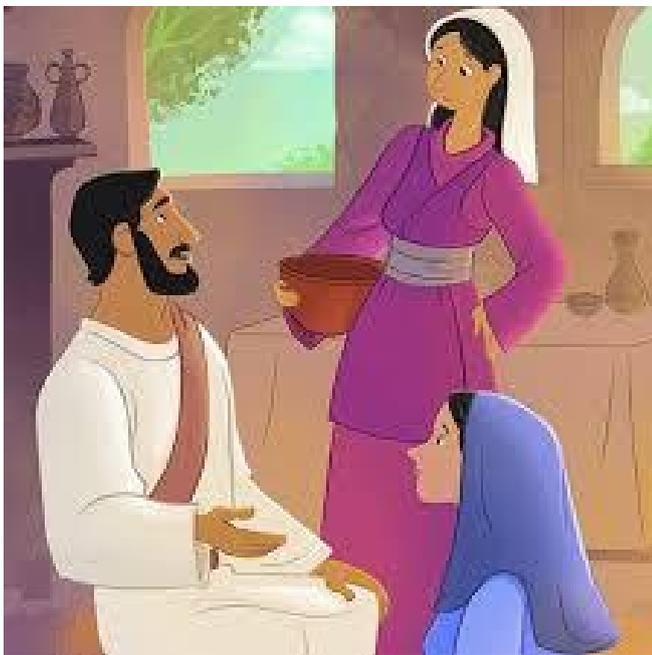
### 15: 5-19

**A proverb is a short and memorable saying designed to be our blueprint for living in the world that ADONAI has created. It is important to note that proverbs are not promises; they are generally true principles, all other things being equal.**

**Only a fool despises a parent's rebuke; whoever learns from correction is wise (15:5 NLT). Rebuke.** How rare, yet how important! To **rebuke** is to speak seriously to someone as a warning, or to correct someone in order to prevent a bad/**sinful** action, or bring it to an end. Although the word sounds intimidating, **rebuking** is not synonymous with harshness. Pause and think of a time when someone **wisely**, yet firmly, **rebuked** your behavior, your thinking, or your attitude, and you became a better person as a result? **Trustworthy are the bruises caused by the wounding of one who loves you; deceitful is the flattery of one who hates you (27:6).** This tells us several things: (1) the one who does **the rebuking** should be someone **who loves** the person they are **rebuking**, (2) **a bruise** tends to linger long after the wounding, it is not forgotten soon, (3) friendship should allow freedom to offer constructive criticism, and (4) not all compliments are offered with the right motive. We all need to listen to the words that **Solomon** spoke to **his son: Do not despise ADONAI's discipline, or be weary of His rebuke, for the LORD rebukes those whom He loves (3:11-12a).**

So much of this matter of **rebuking** has to do with discernment and discretion. There is a right way and a right time (not to mention the right motive) for **rebuking** someone. If your friend's motive is to help you, those wounds will make the best use of timing, be done privately, focus on a specific issue, lead to long-term improvement, and include lots of affirmation and encouragement. Consider what **Solomon** wrote: **Timely advice is lovely, like golden apples in a silver basket. To one who listens, valid criticism is like a gold earring or other gold jewelry (25:11-12).**<sup>295</sup>

How does **ADONAI rebuke** us? In the B'rit Chadashah, **Yeshua** rebukes everything from the wind to unclean spirits. At various times, **He rebuked His apostles'** unbelief, pride, ambition, and their inability to understand his coming death as being according to **His Father's** will. **God** finds ways to reach us when we need **correction**. Often, **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** will work through our own consciences to convict us. If we surround ourselves with others who are also aspiring to holiness, we have faithful friends accompanying us on that path. To **rebuke** a friend, or to be **rebuked** by one, is a sign of obedience and **love**.



When **Yeshua** rebukes in the Scriptures, it does not always appear gentle. Sometimes **He** displayed anger, frustration, or sorrow. **His** delivery suited the circumstances. **His** goal was to help **His** children make a course-**correction** that would lead them to **Himself** and **His Father's** will. When **Messiah's** devoted servant **Martha** complained about **her** sister **Mary** not helping **her** serve and clean up, **the Master** told **her** gently, but matter-of-factly: **Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is a need for only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, and it will not be taken from her (Luke 10:41-42).** **Messiah** left **Martha** to contemplate **her** priorities, but **He** did not deal harshly with **her**. **He** invited **her** to consider what was truly important.

When **the Lord** encountered **the Samaritan woman at the well**, **He** taught gently and compassionately about **Himself** as **the Living Water**, because **He**

wanted this daughter of **His** to receive what **He** had come to give. Then **He** gradually led **her** to see **her** failings, face them, and take accountability. **Yeshua's** approach was an invitation for **her** to change **her** life.

The **rebuke** that stands out to me to be the starkest in Scripture is when **Messiah** exclaimed to **Peter**, “**Get behind me, Satan. You are an obstacle to me. You are not thinking as God does, but as human beings do!**” This was a wake-up call to **Peter** to remember the will of **ADONAI**, not human **love**, must be **his** priority. **Peter** had lost sight of the divine. In **his** zeal, **he** swore to protect **his Master**, **he** threatened to obstruct **the Divine Will**. We know **they loved** one another deeply. The stark reprimand was a warning and **rebuke** against **Peter's** way of thinking in the moment. **Yeshua** knew **Peter's** flaws and weaknesses. But **He** also knew that much would be required of **Peter** to accomplish the will of **God** in and for **the Church**. And **Peter** is our example in how he handled this **rebuke**, when **he** wrote: **So humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may lift you up in due time. Cast all your worries upon Him, because He cares for You (1 Peter 5:6-7).**

**The Lord** doesn't delight in crushing us under the weight of our own faults. **He** doesn't want to humiliate or destroy us and **He** doesn't want others to do so either. But if we see the need to offer **rebuke**, we should first examine our own motives and intentions. Do we truly want the best for the person in question? We cannot know someone else's heart. Only **God** can. But there are times when we can see by the outcome of a situation or by a specific behavior that gentle correction would be an act of mercy. It can be difficult to judge. Some relationships are better suited to rebukes than others. And some people are better suited to receive them than others. Some relationships are more accommodating of rebukes than others. After examining our intentions and considering these points, we can pray and ask **the Ruach** for the right words and right opening if there is enough time to wait. Finally, we must be sure that our **rebuke** is filled with as much **love** as possible.

The Bible also has much to say about *being rebuked*. **God** admonishes those **He loves**, and asks us to do likewise with our **brothers** and **sisters** in **love**. **Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke, and encourage with great patience and careful instruction (Second Timothy 4:2); If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him (Luke 17:30); These then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you (Titus 2:15); My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when**

**he rebukes you (Hebrews 12:5); Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline, so be earnest and repent (Revelation 3:19).**<sup>296</sup>

**There is treasure in the house of the godly, but the earnings of the wicked bring trouble (15:6 NLT).** The **proverb** describes the effects of the efforts of **the righteous** and **the wicked**, the first being positive and the second being negative. The first colon speaks to the fact that **righteousness** has effects beyond the individual. **The** great **treasure** does not have to be understood exclusively in terms of material goods; it may be the **joy** of living. However, due to the frequent connection drawn between **wisdom** and material benefits, this would not be excluded either. On the other hand, these positive effects of **righteousness** are contrasted with the harm that comes from the efforts of the **wicked** person.

**The lips of the wise spread good advice, but the heart of a fool has none to give (15:7 Hebrew).** The parallel between lips and heart is found elsewhere in **proverbs** and indicates **Solomon's** belief that **the lips** normally reveal what is going on inside a person. Since **the wise** are **wise**, when **they** speak, it's worth listening to. However, there is nothing inside **fools**, so when they speak, one expects stupidity. **The tongue of the wise makes knowledge appealing, but the mouth of a fool only belches out foolishness (15:2).**

**The sacrifices of the wicked are an abomination to ADONAI, but He delights in the prayers of the upright (15:8 Hebrew).** The contrast in **Chapter 15** is between **the wicked** and **the upright**. It is the sacrifice, not the sacrifice, that is the issue. The first colon really underlines **God's** dislike of **wickedness** because it can ruin something as otherwise **God-pleasing** as **sacrifices**. On the other hand, even **the prayers of the upright** win **His** favor. **The path of the wicked is an abomination to ADONAI, but He loves anyone who pursues righteousness (15:9 CJB).** This verse is connected to the previous by the phrase **abomination to ADONAI**, but here the lifestyles of **the wicked** are contrasted. This is a general statement that needs to be understood in light of the book's entire teaching on **folly/wickedness** and **wisdom/righteousness**. This verse and the following one remind us of the two-**path** metaphor that is especially prominent in **Chapters 1-9.**<sup>297</sup>

**Stern discipline awaits anyone who leaves the path; the one who hates correction will die (15:10 NIV).** Having led **himself** astray (**10:17**), the unteachable person turns from **the path** of **wisdom**, not only resulting in **stern discipline** but in **death!** **According to Isra'el's sages, such a person is worse**

than he who rejects the right path. In the end, YHVH will correct this man and cause him to repent of his evil ways. Moreover, the one who hates ADONAI's rebuke will find his way to death because there is no way to correct him. On the other hand, wisdom's path is smooth and easy to travel, while the road of folly is filled with potholes.<sup>298</sup>

Even Sh'ol and the Abyss hold no secrets from ADONAI; how much more does He know the human heart (15:11 NLT)! Here Sh'ol and the Abyss are personified, the expression in colon 1 suggests that even Sh'ol and the Abyss are controlled by YHVH. The implication drawn from the second colon is that neither are human beings independent or superior to ADONAI.<sup>299</sup> Sh'ol (to see link [click Af - Sh'ol](#)) was the place of departed spirits. It had two subdivisions. The first was called Abraham's side (a place of comfort and peace), or Paradise (Luke 23:43), and the second section was a place of torment (see [The Life of Christ Hx - The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus](#)). At the end of the Great Tribulation, Satan will be thrown into the Abyss (see the commentary on [Revelation Fb - He Seized the Dragon, or Satan, and Bound Him for a Thousand Years](#)).

Mockers resent correction, so they avoid the wise (15:12 NIV). The proverb here and 15:10 reveal a theme that mockers do not appreciate correction. The term mocker is a strong term describing the fool as one who mocks those who try to point out a weakness. By being defensive about it, mockers ultimately undermine themselves. One way they avoid correction is by not associating with the wise, who can see their mistakes and are willing to offer advice. On the other hand, the wise really appreciate insightful correction because it helps them to live life better and more productively.<sup>300</sup>

A joyful heart makes the face cheerful, but a broken heart crushes the spirit (15:13 Hebrew). There are times when a sense of humor is needed. By a sense of humor, I am not referring to crass, foolish, distasteful talk, or ill-timed jesting. By humor I mean carefully chosen, well-timed expressions of wit and amusing, fun-loving statements.<sup>301</sup> The next proverb explains the source of the joy that enlivens and the hurt that depresses. For the despondent, every day brings trouble. The implication of this is that the daily life of the afflicted or oppressed is difficult because of their life choices, which suggests that it refers only to those whose heart has chosen the path of folly, rather than diagnosing everyone in the world who is depressed.<sup>302</sup> But for the cheerful of heart, life is

**a continual feast (15:15 NLT).**

**The discerning heart seeks knowledge, but the mouth of a fool feeds on foolishness (15:14 Hebrew).** This **proverb** talks about the basic motivations of those who are **discerning**, and of those who are **fools**. As might be expected, **the former** pursue what will make **them wiser**, and **the latter** what will make **them** more **foolish**. The contrast between **heart** and **mouth** may contrast the depth of **the wise** over against the shallowness of **the foolish**. The contrast between **seeks** and **feeds** may imply that **knowledge** requires effort, while **foolishness** just takes the easy route and consumes whatever is before **them**.

**Better to have little, with the fear of ADONAI, than to have great wealth with inner turmoil (15:16 Hebrew).** The **better-than proverbs** express relative values. In other words, **Proverbs** affirms both the value of **the fear of ADONAI** and the value of **wealth (1:7 and 10:22)**. But if the choice must be made, then there is no question that **the fear of ADONAI** is much more valuable. In other words, though the book often suggests that wealth is the reward of **the wise**, it also makes it clear that sometimes one must choose between **the fear of ADONAI** and **wealth**. The **proverb** also implies a contrast between **fear of ADONAI** and **turmoil**. The assumption being that **the fear of ADONAI** brings calmness of mind as well.<sup>303</sup>

**Better a small serving of vegetables with someone you love, than a steak with someone you hate (15:17 NLT).** In the ancient world oxen were rarely slaughtered for meat because they were far more valuable alive. When plowing a field, a single ox could accomplish more in one day than three men laboring for a week. Consequently, the owner of an ox typically hired out the services of his animal once his own plowing, threshing, or harvesting had been done. It was not uncommon for an entire village to use the same team of oxen for farm labor. So killing an ox for food in ancient, agrarian societies was a lavish luxury, not unlike a farmer today selling off a tractor and using the proceeds to buy the most expensive caviar and serve the finest gourmet cuisine at a single dinner party. Yet, **Solomon** placed such value on love and harmony that **he** would rather eat a meager portion of **veggies** than attend a lavish dinner marred by a **hateful** attitude and strife. **He** was content with the intangibles of life.<sup>304</sup>

**A hot-tempered person starts fights, but a cool-tempered person stops them (15:18 NLT).** This **proverb** speaks of the emotional intelligence of **the wise**. **Fools** respond to an attack by attacking back, only making things much

worse. On the other hand, **the wise** are coolheaded and patient; thus in the end, fending off the harsh accusations directed toward **them**.

**A lazy person's way is blocked with a hedge of thorns, but the path of the upright is a level highway (15:19 Hebrew).** This **proverb** uses the two-path analogy throughout the book to talk about the hazards of one form **foolish** behavior, **laziness**, and contrasting **it** with **wisdom**. For **lazy** people, **their path** is hard to navigate and filled with pain, while **the righteous** find **their path** smooth and unimpeded. This observation is a subtle encouragement to avoid **laziness**.<sup>305</sup>

*Dear heavenly **Father**, praise **You** for being perfect in **Your** love - neither too harsh nor too soft. **You** are always perfect in **Your** tender caring for each of **Your** children! What a peace and joy it brings, that when troubles and trials come into my life, calling on **You** is **the wisest** thing I can do. **Then you will call on Me, and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you (Jeremiah 29:12)**. However, sometimes **You** use trials as **discipline** to remove imperfections in my life, as a silversmith uses **the fire** to perfect and remove the dross from the metal. **These trials are so that the true metal of your faith (far more valuable than gold, which perishes though refined by fire) may come to light in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Messiah Yeshua (First Peter 1:7)**.*

*Even though my trail may seem to go on for a long time, **You** time how long I should remain in **the fire**. You know when the right length of time to purify me, to teach me. **My son, do not take lightly the discipline of ADONAI or lose heart when you are corrected by Him, because ADONAI disciplines the one He loves and punishes every son He accepts (Hebrews 12:5b-6)**. Joy comes from **discipline** that is learned, for it produces the peaceful fruit of **righteousness**. **Now all discipline seems painful at the moment - not joyful. But later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it (Hebrews 12:11)**. Thank You for caring enough to **discipline/rebuke** me when I need it. I know **You** love me and I can trust **You**. In **Messiah Yeshua's** holy **Name** and Power of **His** resurrection. Amen*