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**Personal Bible Study-98**  
**Galatians 4:16 – It really is all about Truth.6**  
**(Are you a scoffer or a wise person?)**

**Galatians 4:16 Have I therefore become your enemy because I communicate to you Truth? (ὥστε ἐχθρὸς ὑμῶν γέγονα ἀληθεύων ὑμῖν;).**

This is the last installment on this passage that addresses issues between a communicator of truth and his hearers. How do you feel when I, as pastor-teacher of FBC, rebuke an evil or sinful attitude or lifestyle that you may be guilty of? It has been my experience that people respond either with appreciation for correction or will increasingly view me negatively. An illustration may be helpful. Say, for example, someone is living for the world rather than for the Lord. In this case he is mainly interested in doctrine in order to make his life more comfortable by using God to solve his problems associated with his earthly kingdom-building program—instead of preparing himself by building his spiritual virtue in preparation to be with the Lord forever. Honestly, How do you think he feels when he comes to class expecting to be encouraged in his earthly-focused life, and, instead, he receives a tough rebuke? How do you think anyone in the Bible, from Cain to the Laodiceans, felt when he was rebuked by the Lord's Word?

It is very easy to pick up anti-Christian standards from the world in which we live, for example: It's OK to complain, gossip, malign, be sexually impure, live for the world, live in autonomy, and do our own thing instead of living for the Lord. It is very easy to think that these things are *normal* because they are *frequent*, instead of thinking of normalcy in terms of the Word of God and the nature of man (biblical-philosophical psychology) as designed by God.

A person's response to rebuke will speak volumes about his priorities and true loves. Consider,

Proverbs 9:8 Do not reprove a scoffer, lest he hate you, Reprove a wise man, and he will love you.

Note the two categories: scoffer and wise man. What is a scoffer (*lets* פָּרְוֹ)? The Hebrew word and the biblical testimony give us several characteristics of a scoffer: one who is haughty, prideful, delights in making fun of people, laughs at or looks down on God's biblical directives, is incapable of being corrected by God's truth, is disbarred from receiving grace needed for the spiritual life (e.g., spiritual virtues of faith, hope, love), is unable to attain wisdom, and should be avoided. It is not difficult to see how pride causes these various effects. Moreover, since he

already knows “it all,” he is unable to attain true wisdom or grace for the spiritual life. Read the following proverbs on the scoffer: Proverbs 1:22; 9:7; 3:34; 13:1; 15:12; 21:24; 24:9.

There is no way around it: A person who is proud will scoff at reproof and hate the one who delivers the message. For the pastor, there is simply no way for him to be faithful to the Lord and avoid this problem with scoffers. For him to give in and twist the Word of God to please the scoffers by catering to their unbiblical attitudes is to commit mutiny against his Lord. Scoffers scoff at the need to learn and live out principles of Bible doctrine: these proud scoffers scoff at such divine directives for wives to honor and respect their husbands, for husbands to love and cherish their wives more than themselves, for a child to obey parents, for parents to raise their children in the nurture and *admonition* of the Lord, for believers to live for the next life, for believers to gather with other believers in a local assembly to encourage each other as they grow in truth together, to *always* do one’s job as unto the Lord, to be thankful for *all* things, and not to grumble or complain. “Yea? Right?” says the *Christian* mocker. This response is unmistakable evidence that his mind has already turned the corner to evil as it now views good as evil and evil as good, due to in small part because he takes what is *prevalent* in society and Christianity as the *norm* instead of what God and His Word says.

Note the other category: the wise man. Note his response of love in Proverbs 9:8. Why does he love the one who (pastor or anyone else) *reproves him*? What would he have to love more than himself to appreciate getting admonished to get back to the Lord? Have you ever seen anyone respond with love for the person who corrects him? Why would anyone do that? I have seen this and there is only one reason: a love for truth and a love for God that is far more important than a feel good message that strokes and stokes love for self and the kosmos. Some of the greatest messages I have ever received was from pastors who severely rebuked an attitude that I was guilty of—and I loved them for it. I thanked them for opening my eyes.

As pastor, I have received appreciation from believers of FBC for teaching truth and even for reminding them that their lives and hearts belong to God, not to the world. Any pastor-teacher will be loved and hated as he teaches the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. So it was with all of the prophets of the Old Testament, the apostles of the New Testament, and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. People are either interested in truth or they are not. Those who are *not really* interested in the whole truth are only interested in playing religious games to use God and make religion work for them and their *personal* difficulties. Only God can fix such a self-deluded person. If someone is not interested in the whole truth, what else could I possibly offer him?

The wise person always wants truth and, so, welcomes correction precisely because he wants truth and has no desire to live in self-delusion, even if such a life is more comfortable for the short-term. *Wisdom* as such is always about a very broad and deep understanding of reality, God, and self. Boy, have we done this with Esse and metaphysics! Those who are wise think very deeply about reality, God, and their final end. The wise are not like children who are always concerned with the here and now with its details of life, all the while sticking their heads in the

sand regarding the meaning of their lives and ultimate destiny. The wise “get it” and thus are not proud, do not mock others, love truth, and love those who bring it to them. I will always love Thieme and Carnagey for telling me the truth as best they could.

Look up the various passages on wisdom and note the various characteristics in relation to the aforementioned issues: Proverbs 1:2-33; 3:1-20; 4:7-9; 6:16-19; 11:2; 13:14; 15:5; 19:20; 22:15; 23:12-14; 24:3-5; 27:15; 30:5-9. As far as the love of the teaching of the Word of God, note the *normal* attitude of Christians toward the *daily* teaching of the Word of God in Acts 2:42-47; 17:11. The attitude that the Christian life is just for a couple of hours on Sunday is not normal. In fact, it is demonic.

It is not that the wise person does not have difficulty in honoring a difficult husband or cherishing a difficult wife, or is never tempted to live for the world, or never complains about difficulties. The difference is that if the wise person is corrected, he will recognize his errors and make adjustments. He has no inclination to mock the Lord’s commands. He has capacity to see the good of God and His plan as truly good instead of mocking it as evil or bad or ridiculous.

Let’s note another passage,

Psalm 141:5 Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head:

What an attitude! The Galatians should have received Paul’s rebuke as *kindness* and a blessing (“*excellent oil*”). A true friend always tells the truth, and Paul was telling the Galatians out of love. Instead of thanking him, they viewed him negatively—as an enemy, as he put it. Teaching the whole truth is not for sissies. It is tough work. There is always peril involved in teaching and challenging believers to move forward, especially when a lot of effort is required—like thinking long and hard about God. It is especially difficult in our modern narcissistic and entertainment-oriented “Christianity.” But the pastor-teacher must bite the bullet and pay the price that is required to study and teach, and let the chips fall where they may. No doubt, he will end up with enemies, but he will also end up with those who really love the Truth. In other words, he will end up with those who have true capacity for God, His Word, and for others. Aren’t they the best kind of people to be around? Who would you rather be around: Moses, Joshua, Paul or the Israelites of the Exodus generation, the Corinthians, and the Galatians?

We live in a time of unprecedented evil. We cannot afford to be complacent for a moment. We must expunge all notions to redefine God, Reality, or anything in His Word. While many Christians are quick to denounce the moral decay in our culture that calls evil good and good evil (due to acceptance of the standards of the kosmos), they are also guilty for taking many standards from the world as well. In other words, many believers also call evil good and good evil in many ways, from the way they treat their spouses to their attitudes toward the local church, the Word of God, and God Himself. In fact, some unbelievers actually treat their spouses better than some Christians whose marriages are failures. Of course, if believers are not in the

Word daily, is it any wonder that they would get their cues from kosmos diabolicus? Consider their only input! Unless this is corrected the believer will get to the point where his whole life is defined by this life. When that happens, the believer will live as if this life is the end of the story, instead of it being only the beginning. For those who live like this life is what it is all about, there is no solution to the evils and injustices of life. However, the wise man knows that life really begins after the short stay here, and everything is to be evaluated in light of eternity. Such a believer is the only one who has capacity to enjoy his short stay due to his growth in spiritual virtue:

Psalm 73:24 With Thy counsel Thou wilt guide me, And afterward receive me to glory.

2 Corinthians 5:1 For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Psalm 27:4 One thing I have asked from the LORD, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD, And to meditate in His temple.

Romans 8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

“Sufferings of this present time not even worthy compared to the future glory?” “Really?” says the scoffer. “Really!” says the wise person. My thanks for all of you who are wise and say amen to “Really!” As far as others, my only question for you is Quo Vadis?

In 'Ehyeh,

Pastor Don