

1 Timothy

I. Introduction

A. **1 Timothy 5:1-2** . . . Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but rather appeal to him as a father, to the younger men as brothers, [2] the older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters, in all purity.

B. Pray

II. How to talk to wayward believers for the best possible outcome

A. [1] **Do not sharply rebuke** an older man, but **rather appeal** to him as a father, to the younger men as brothers, [2] the older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters, in all purity.

1. The **first** thing to notice in these two verses is that we are dealing with wayward adult Christians, not children or early teens.

a. An effective method of dealing with wayward children is to use a reward and punishment method of discipline, coupled with persistent training, and explanations within their range of understanding.

b. An effective way of dealing with wayward early teens is to combine the reward and punishment method with reasoning, understandable explanations, teaching them to think critically, and the persistent use of natural or logical consequences.

c. An effective method of dealing with older teens and adults is to appeal to them through the use of reason, urge them to consider the short and long-term consequences of doing what is right vs. doing what is wrong, provide them with workable methods for change, and consistently use natural or logical consequences for their wayward behavior.

d. The reason for dealing with teens and adults differently from children is because teens and adults have the God-given ability to change on the inside as well as the outside.

(1) In other words, they have the ability to change their beliefs and values, to use reason to deal with their fears and hopes, and therefore willingly and willfully choose godly behavior and love over selfishness and sin.

(2) And when they choose the right beliefs and values, and sensibly manage their fears and hopes, genuine – and most probably – lasting change takes place.

2. The **second** thing to notice in these verses is that it matters how we talk to each other when one of us has gone astray in some way.
 - a. In this context, going astray is in relation to theology and Bible doctrine, the meaning or application of scripture passages, and godly living. However, how we talk to each other when one of us has gone astray does not need to be confined to this list.
 - b. And though Paul is applying this principle to Timothy, and by extension to the leaders of the church, I am applying it to all of us, regardless of our position or status in the church.
3. In establishing this principle for how we talk to each other, Paul contrasts **sharply rebuking** with **appealing**. “Do not sharply rebuke,” he says, “but rather appeal.”
 - a. The idea conveyed by **rebuke** is that of stopping fellow believers from doing something by accusing them of wrong doing, or by strongly expressing disapproval of what they are doing so as to coerce them into compliance, or by reproofing them publicly and severely so as to shame them into compliance. The reality is, a rebuke is a form of control – where one adult is trying to control another adult.
 - b. The idea conveyed by **appeal** is that of making an earnest request or respectfully entreating someone to stop doing one thing and start doing another. An appeal is the use of reason, a reminder of the costs and consequences, and the encouragement to think more carefully about what a person is or isn’t doing.
 - c. In contrast, a **rebuke** is an effort to control a person’s behavior, while an **appeal** is an effort to reason with and encourage a person to make the sensible choice and change their behavior – of their own free will.
4. This does not mean that there is no place for a rebuke.
 - a. According to Jesus, when someone is causing another person to sin or leading others into sin, they are to be rebuked. We read this in **Luke 17:1–4**, “It is inevitable that stumbling blocks come (*behavior that leads, prompts, or causes another into sin*), but woe to him through whom they come! [2] It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea, than that he would cause one of these little ones to stumble. [3] Be on your guard! If your brother sins (*in a manner that fits the context*), **rebuke** him; and if he repents, forgive him. [4] And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent,’ forgive him.”

- b. Paul, when dealing with wayward, unrepentant elders gave similar instructions. **1 Timothy 5:20**, “Those who continue in sin, **rebuke** in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning.”
- 5. As you can see, there is a time and a place for rebuking, but we should not make it our first option when dealing with a wayward believer, or even an unbeliever.
 - a. Paul affirms this in **Galatians 6:1**, “Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a **spirit of gentleness**; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted (*most probably by pride and a harshness that lacks compassion and mercy*).”
 - b. The important truth here is that we are not to manipulate or seek to control or coerce, but rather to use truth and reason to show the person the value and importance of agreeing with the truth, own it as their own, and change of their own free will.
 - c. And why is this our goal? Because the best and most enduring motives for godly living comes from your convictions, that is, from the beliefs and values you hold as your own.
 - (1) For example, when you are free to love whatever and whomever you want to love, and if you choose to love God because you believe He is worthy of your love, and if you value loving Him more than loving anyone or anything else, **then** you will willingly and cheerfully want to please Him, obey Him, implicitly trust Him, and pursue fellowship with Him, in spite of the cost.
 - (2) If, from that same condition of freedom, you choose to love others as you love yourself because you believe this kind of love is best for them and everyone effected by their choices and behavior, and if you value putting good into the world instead of evil, **then** you will willingly and cheerfully love them, even if they do not love you in return or mistreat you.
 - (3) If you believe that love does no wrong to its neighbor – and is therefore the cure for most of the ills in this world, and if you believe that love is the perfect bonding and unifying agent, and if you believe that love is the only path to mutually meaningful, mutually trusting relationships, and if you value such relationships above less meaningful, shallow, and hard to maintain relationships, **then** you will willingly, intentionally, and cheerfully make an honest effort to love as

you ought in spite of what others do, and you will invite others to do the same.

6. The reality is, people can be manipulated or forced into a change of behavior through the use of harsh words, threats, anger, shaming, control, and coercion. But no one – and I am specifically referring to teens and adults – can be manipulated or forced into a lasting change of their beliefs, values, fears, and hopes. These can only be changed in a lasting way by the help and empowerment of God and an act of the will.
 - a. In the same way, we can manipulate or force others into loving us the way we want to be loved. And though we may call their compliance with our demands, love, in reality it is only an act of self-preservation on their part, or what is called appeasement.
 - b. And why is it only appeasement? Because coerced love seeks the good of self by trying to keep the one coercing happy, and minimize the suffering or shame or loss that comes with being coerced.
 - c. Genuine love comes from the heart, and of its own free will seeks the good of others – even at its own expense. Such love cannot be forced or manipulated into existence. It has to be chosen and nurtured and owned.
 - d. Therefore, genuine change, and in this context, genuine godliness, lasting godliness, godliness that comes from within and is driven by a person's beliefs, values, fears, and hopes, cannot be forced or coerced or manipulated into existence.
 - e. So once again, the use of power to coerce older teens and adults into doing what is right may produce compliance, but it will not produce a changed heart – that is, a change of beliefs, values, fears, and hopes.
 - f. And it is my opinion that though God is willing to accept compliance over non-compliance, He prefers a changed heart, because that is the only way to whole-hearted, whole-life godliness, genuine love, and meaningful relationships.
7. The reality is, if a person complies with (*goes along with*) some request or demand against their will, it is highly likely they will continue holding the opinions, beliefs, values, fears and hopes they held before complying.
 - a. In other words, though their outward behavior changes, no beliefs or values, fears or hopes have changed on the inside. In fact, if anything changes on the inside, it most likely is a growing

resentment over having to comply, or thinking less of the person who is forcing them to comply, or being angry with themselves for complying.

- b. Coerced outward change may please the one demanding or pressing for it, but the ill-will that takes place on the inside of the one coerced erodes trust between the parties involved, it damages or even prevents meaningful relationship between the parties, and it strongly tempts the one coerced to replace love with relationship damaging forms of self-protection.
 - c. When this kind of interaction takes place in the church or the home or anyplace else where meaningful relationships built on love and trust are the expected norm, the long-term losses far exceed the momentary gains. And so to prevent such losses, the word of God exhorts us to appeal to one another rather than rebuke each other for failing to live as a Christian ought to live.
8. One final thought before moving on. To consistently **appeal**, you must have genuine humility coupled with the intention to willingly show respect, kindness, compassion, and sensitivity to those who are going astray.

B. [1] Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but rather appeal to him as a father, to the younger men as brothers, [2] the older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters, in all purity.

1. Notice that Paul uses common family relationships to describe the manner in which we are to approach those we are appealing to.
2. In using this model, Paul not only shows us the mindset, attitude, and demeanor with which we are to deal with a wayward believer, he also reminds us that we are members of God's family.
3. Therefore, we are to be like an adult child appealing to our father or mother, and like an adult brother or sister appealing to our adult brother and sister.
4. The one additional condition is that when men are dealing with younger single women, and I add, any female, whether a teen, young adult, or older lady; or any female is dealing with a male, whether a teen, young adult, or older man – we are to guard against even the hint of impropriety in order to prevent (1) any of the devil's temptations or (2) any desires of the flesh from leading either or both parties astray.

III. Conclusion

- A. When dealing with teens and adults, we should value and work toward genuine change – change that engages the heart, the mind, the beliefs, and the values as well as the outward behaviors.
- B. And though today's focus was on the **how** of talking to others, I want to remind you that the **what** of our conversations is equally important.