



Northland Reformed

Monthly

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The Life-Changing Power of God’s Word – Part 4 – “Conviction”

This article is the continuation of a series on the power of God’s Word in which we have been looking at Paul’s instruction to Timothy that “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for **doctrine**, for **reproof**, for **correction**, for **instruction in righteousness**, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Based on this text, we might say that the normal pattern for the use of God’s Word in the Christian life is as follows:



Doctrine – We are taught the truth of what we are to believe by God’s Word

Reproof – We are convicted of having fallen short of living according to God’s Word

Correction – We are shown how to correctly live according to God’s Word

Instruction in Righteousness – We are disciplined to continue living according to God’s Word

In Parts 1 and 2 we learned that God’s Word is both powerful and profitable for us because it is the Word of the all-powerful and all-wise God. In Part 3 we learned that doctrine is crucial, for we need to know what we believe before we can begin to live according to that belief. Now, in Part 4, we will look at the power of God’s Word in reproofing, or convicting us of sin.

In a fair and just society, when a crime is committed, the accused must stand trial in a court of law before being punished for the crime. Therefore, once a person is charged with a crime, he or she is brought before a judge and, if enough evidence is presented, is then convicted of the crime and punished appropriately. A lawful conviction is the result of proving that the charges against someone are true.

In the case of Biblical conviction the charge proven true is that we are guilty of sin. The word translated “reproof” in 2 Timothy 3:16 is a Greek word that may also be translated “rebuke, reproach, convict, test or confirm” and has the sense of testing for the purpose of objectively proving a fact.

The first purpose of this conviction is to lead us to faith in Christ, the only one who is able to remove our guilt, cleanse us from sin, and give us new life. Jesus, in John 16:8, uses this same word, teaching his disciples, and us through them, that one of the functions of the Holy Spirit is to “convict the world of sin.” And Paul, in Romans 3:19, reminds us that by the law “every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.” In other words, Biblical conviction is the Word of God applied to the heart of man by the power of the Holy Spirit, leaving us without excuse before God.

But, for the born-again believer, conviction also leads us to grow in Christ-likeness. In fact, Biblical conviction is a sure sign that God loves and cares for us. Jesus, speaking to the church in Revelation 3:19, says, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.” The author of Hebrews tells believers not to “despise the chastening of the LORD, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the LORD loves he chastens and scourges every son whom He receives.”

The Holy Spirit convicts men of sin, but he does not directly convict apart from the means God has provided. Instead he works through those means. The first and primary means is the preaching of the Word of God by God’s ordained ministers. In 2 Timothy 4:2, Timothy is told to “Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.”

Another way that God convicts us of sin is through our brothers and sisters in Christ. Jesus teaches us in Matthew 18:15 that “if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.” The phrase translated here “tell him his fault” is the same word translated in 2 Timothy 3:16 as rebuke. We are told to rebuke, or convict others of sin when they sin is against us. We are to be used as a means by which God will help others to see their sin clearly.

When a person is convicted of sin one of two results will occur. Either that person will harden his heart, reject the mercy of God, and continue in sin. Or, that person will soften his heart, repent (turn from) his sin, and seek the mercy of God in Christ.

Notice however that conviction comes before correction. One has to know what they *have done wrong* before they can know *what to do about it*. As Jay Adams has written, “It is possible to acknowledge guilt inwardly or outwardly without repenting of it or changing one’s ways. But there can be no repentance without acknowledging guilt.” In other words, in order to receive correction, you have to know and recognize that you are in need of correction.

Next month we will look at how we, as Christians, are to move from conviction to correction by learning to “put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness” (Ephesians 4:22-23).

Rev. Christopher Campbell

Congregational News

Ladies' Christmas Tea

The ladies of Northland Reformed Church enjoyed a time of fellowship, tea, snacks and an ornament exchange.



Christmas Program & Dinner

What a joy it was to witness our children praising God in song and through the reading of Scripture.

After our program, we gathered together in our fellowship hall for a time of great food and great fellowship. May God be praised for the joy he has given us together in our Lord Jesus Christ.



December Schedule

REGULAR MEETINGS

- Sunday Worship | December 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 | 9:30AM & 5:00PM
- Men's Morning Fellowship @ Cracker Barrel Tiffany Springs | December 1, 12 | 7:00AM
- Friday Night Fellowship | December 14 | 6:30PM | We will meet for a meal and lesson

SPECIAL EVENTS

- Christmas Program & Dinner | December 16 | 5:00PM
- Christmas Eve Service | December 24 | 7PM



Scripture Memorization

“Your word I have hidden in my heart,
That I might not sin against You.” – Psalm 119:11

December 2	Matthew 20:26-28
December 9	2 Corinthians 5:21
December 16	1 John 3:1-2
December 23	Ephesians 3:20-21
December 30	Matthew 22:37-39