



Northland Reformed

Monthly

Vol. 13 – January 2019

The Life-Changing Power of God’s Word – Part 5 – “Correction”

As a teenager, I was absolutely convinced that I knew it all and therefore, if anyone disagreed with me, they were obviously wrong (just ask my parents). Perhaps this describes you when you were a teenager. Or perhaps you have had, or now have, one of these curious creatures living in your home. It can be quite frustrating to have a conversation with someone who is convinced that they are right and will not



admit otherwise. The truth is that those who believe they are correct will never accept correction (why should they, since perfect people do not need to be corrected!)

But the reality is that no human, other than Jesus, is perfect. We all make mistakes and, when sin is added into the mix, we are continuously in need of correction. And accepting correction is easier said than done, because no one enjoys being told that they are wrong. When we truly understand and admit that we are capable of being greatly mistaken, we have taken the first step in the process of correction. By God’s grace we must humble ourselves by admitting that there is much we do not know and be willing to accept correction as our faults are made known to us.

Last month we looked at the biblical concept of reproof, or conviction, learning that it either leads to the hardening of the heart in rebellion or to the softening of the heart in repentance. The Bible teaches that “He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will receive mercy” (Proverbs 28:13). According to this proverb, we are required to confess our sin and to forsake our sin. If one is a Christian, he or she has been given a new nature by God’s grace. Therefore, when a Christian is convicted of wrongdoing, the proper response is repentance. Biblical repentance includes both admission of wrong (confession of sin) as well as a change in behavior (forsaking of sin). Forsaking sin not only means

turning from sin (ceasing to do what is wrong) but also turning to righteousness (beginning to do what is right).

This is where correction comes in, for it is the process of replacing old, sinful behavioral patterns with new, biblical ones. The Greek word translated “correction” in 2 Timothy 3:16 has the sense of standing something up straight. Biblical correction, therefore, is the process of reorienting our lives, aligning our thoughts and actions to the straight line of God’s Word. The Apostle Paul refers to this correction as an ongoing process of putting off and putting on: “**put off**, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to 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 4:22-24).

But what does it look like to put off former conduct and to put on the new man? The word translated “put off” in Ephesians 4:22 literally means to take off (as in clothing), to lay something aside, or to shake something off. A good illustration of this concept may be found in our daily routines. Each day we put off old clothes and put on new clothes, but why? Isn’t it because the old clothes are dirty, and the new clothes clean? This analogy holds with regard to the biblical process of change. We put off the old man, the sin, those filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6) which, like old clothes, are worn out, full of holes and stained.

The putting off process includes: seeking forgiveness for our sin; being willing to say no to our old ways; removing from our lives the practices, places or people associated with sin; and putting guardrails in our life to protect us from wandering back into these sinful patterns of living.

When our sins are made known to us, and we are convicted by God’s Spirit, we must seek to be reconciled to God and to others. This reconciliation comes through confession (admitting that we are wrong) and forgiveness. Confession of sin is both vertical and horizontal. It involves admitting that we have violated God’s law and, if that sin is against another person, that we have harmed that individual. Confession must be both specific and sincere. Simply saying, “I am sorry” is not good enough, for it leaves open too many unanswered questions. What are you sorry for—that you were caught, that you are feeling guilty, that the other person is offended? The better response is, “I sinned against you by <detail specific sin>. Will you forgive me?”

After confessing our sin, we must forsake our sin. Jesus teaches us that the forsaking of sin is so important that, “If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast

it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell” (Matthew 5:29-30). Jay Adams calls this “radical amputation” and instructs us to “Eliminate anything, anyone, any influence or any situation that may be a stumbling block to holy obedience to God’s Word.” (Jay Adams, *How to Help People Change*, p. 154).

But putting off the sinful practices, the old man, the old way of living, is not enough. That is only half of the corrective process. Just as it would be foolish for a transplant surgeon to stop a procedure after removing the old organ, but before inserting the new, so it would be foolish for us to stop after putting off the old man, but before putting on the new man. The second part—putting on of the new man, in righteousness and true holiness (Ephesians 4:24)—is crucial for our spiritual health.

What does the process of putting on involve? It is the opposite of putting off. These are the new, clean clothes which replace the worn out, old and dirty ones. Christians are to “put on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 13:14), to “walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4-7) and instructed to “bear fruit worthy of repentance” (Luke 3:8). These fruits are the put ons that come from a heart that is “putting to death the deeds of the flesh” (Romans 8:13) and which “hungers and thirsts for righteousness” (Matthew 5:6). If the particular sin we are putting off is lying, Paul tells us to put on truth (Ephesians 4:25). If it is drunkenness, we are to put on the filling of the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18); if it is stealing, put on giving (Ephesians 4:28); if it is wrath, put on kindness (Ephesians 4:31-32). But above all, we are to put on love (Colossians 3:14), for “love covers a multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8).

Correction is difficult—no one wants to be told they are wrong and no one finds it easy to change. But God commands us to confess our sins and turn from them. The challenge to you now is to evaluate your own life, comparing it with the Word of God, and asking yourself two simple questions:

What do I need to put off?

What do I need to put on?

May our God help each of us to rightly evaluate our lives by the standard of His Word and give us the power, by His Holy Spirit, to replace our old sinful patterns with new godly practices.

Rev. Christopher Campbell

Congregational News

New Elder – Michael Baas

At our 2019 annual meeting we voted to install Michael Baas as an elder at Northland Reformed Church. Michael is an ordained elder in the Presbyterian Church of America (PCA) where he has served for many years. We are grateful to God that he has provided men gifted to lead his church and we look forward to the way in which He will use Michael here at Northland Reformed Church.



Welcome New Members

God is truly gathering His church from all the peoples of the earth, and He does so by bringing them into fellowship in a local body.



In January we welcomed four new communicant members into our church family: Luther, Geni, and Ash Witt and Ryan Baas. We praise God for His work in their lives and His blessing to our church.

Upcoming Events

REGULAR MEETINGS

- Sunday Worship | February 3, 10, 17, 24 | 9:30AM & 5:00PM
- Men's Morning Fellowship @ Cracker Barrell Tiffany Springs | February 9, 23 | 7:00AM
- Friday Night Fellowship | February 8, 22 | 6:30PM | We will meet for a meal and lesson
- Prayer Meeting | February 20 | 7PM



Scripture Memorization

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

February 3 1 Thess. 5:18-22

February 10 Proverbs 3:9-10

February 17 Proverbs 3:11-12

February 24 John 10:27-30