

Correct Correction, p.2

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Bible Text: 1 Timothy 5:1-2
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Take your Bibles and let's go back to 1 Timothy. We're in chapter 5. This exceedingly practical exhortation that we've been looking at in 1 Timothy 5 as, again, Paul is, ah, writing to Timothy who is, has, rather, been left in Ephesus to oversee the church, function as the pastor. He's a young man and, ah, Paul gives him some guidance about relations in the church but particularly about how to correct people of different ages and different genders within the church.

Here's how he says it, 1 Timothy 5:1-2,

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.

Now as I said in my introduction this morning, um, this text teaches us quite a bit about relations, about honoring those who are older than us, respecting them, having an esteem for them even when as a pastor they may have to be corrected. It tells us a lot about, um, how we're to just care for one another. There's a familial spirit here. He talks about the older men as fathers in the church, older ladies as mothers, ah, younger men as your brothers, and younger ladies as sisters. But the centerpiece of what he's talking about is there's a way you correct one another in the church.

Now I'm gonna move on to new material. We've talked about, um, ah, ah, appealing to older men as fathers, we've talked about, um, correcting the younger men but remembering they're brothers, we've talked about, ah, correcting older ladies and we're to appeal to them as a mother, and now we come to IV, and that is correct younger women as sisters, and then he gives the phrase, "in all purity." Well, let's talk just for a moment about sisters. Now, once again, we, ah, see the real parallel between the previous statement of admonishing or correcting the young men in the church as brothers, and can I charge you again with the spirit of the whole text and that is: this is a loving family.

Ah, one of the things that we do when we're trying to mentor pastors and quite often in their churches they have people who are unregenerate, people who are opposed to the preaching of the word, people who are opposed to reforming or changing the church to be biblical, and, um, this isn't like some unusual thing, this is almost always the case, and a

pastor gets in flow to where he views so many of those he's preaching to as being his enemies or against him, and guess what? He's right. There is some of that, but then slowly God begins to save church members, slowly God begins to purge the church, and slowly he has found a church in what was once just a congregation of people, and he has to learn, "Hey, it's no longer me against them. Hey, they're with me as long as I'm with the book. They're for me. They're for the word of God. They're for reforming the church biblically." And it's a hard transition sometimes for a pastor. I think I struggled with that myself, to go from it's me against them and them against me, to it's us against the world for the glory of God.

And that's sort of where Paul's coming from. I, more than sort of that is where Paul's coming from as he says, "Remember, Timothy, this is like your father, and this is your mother, this is your brother, and now this is your sister and love should be your motive." Let me say it again: love is our motive, when we correct an individual in the church, our motive should be the glory of God because if that brother or sister goes on in sin, they're gonna damage the reputation of Christ. Secondly, our motive should be the good of the church. If that brother or sister continues in sin, they add to the spiritual disunity and disharmony in the church, and all kinds of bad repercussions can come as they will likely begin to reproduce their compromise and their error in the church, and the church is damaged and hurt before the Lord.

Now that's one of the things that baffles me and has, um, from the very beginning about people being adamantly opposed to any element of biblical church discipline. Ah, ah, you know, the talk of, "Well, it's gonna hurt people. People are gonna get upset," etc. etc. Yes, but if it's not corrected, they continue to let a little leaven leaven the whole lump of dough. That was Paul's explanation to the Corinthian church when they were negligent in removing an unrepentant, ah, immoral man in their fellowship.

So the good of the church should be a loving motive, and then, lastly, the good of that individual. Now you've got to check yourself. I have to check myself. In fact, matter of fact, you just have to pray and say, "God, work in my heart. Make it be that I've got to deal with this but make it be that I'm consumed with Your glory, the good of the church, and the good of this individual. It's not about me being the great elite corrector in the church."

Um, you know, for a long time there was, it was real popular for churches to take spiritual gift tests. You remember those? Some of y'all had those spiritual gift tests and there's nothing in the Bible about finding your spiritual gift that way, by the way. Um, and I think people were trying to be helpful but really what it is is a personality test, just kinda tells you what your natural bent is. And you know, somebody would get through with their spiritual gift test and they'd be a prophet, so from then on they had permission to be rude and mean to everybody around them. That's kinda what that amounted to. Well, um, your spiritual gift should never – listen to me – should never override your love for your brothers and sisters. Your spiritual gift flies on the wings of love and it, it, to me as our decades have gone by together, my love for you has grown and grown and

grown where if I deal with something in the church today, my whole tone and my whole sense of what I'm about has changed and I'm so grateful for God growing me that way.

Well, to the specific admonition, IV, "Timothy, you're a young man and make sure when you have to correct a younger woman, you remember you're to correct her as a sister." When we have these pure, loving, spiritual motives I've been talking about, these flavor the correction with effectual honey and here's what you should ask yourself: how would I want someone to correct my sister? How would I want someone to deal with my sister if she needed addressing or correcting? How would I want someone to correct my daughter? And by the way, are you listening to me, I want my daughters corrected by godly older women. It's just astonishing to me the people who will cover up for their children's sin. What are you? What are you thinking? That's the salvation of our souls. That's the security, that's the cleansing, that's what'll keep us from ruin and wreck and total despair and wasting our lives and being given over to the enemy. We need one another to help us. Hillary Clinton said, "It takes a village to raise a child." No, it doesn't. It takes a church, a local church family to raise a child.

So please help me with my children. Well, they're grown now. They could still use some help, but now I have grandchildren and you'd better help me raise them. I'll bear witness to you at the judgment seat of Christ. And I'm gonna help you raise yours, and we're gonna more than anything, what are we gonna do? We're gonna love them and when we do have to correct one of them, we're doing it because we love our Lord and we love our children and love our grandchildren. Did I get a little carried away there? I just can't fathom a Spirit-filled, regenerate child of God saying, "I don't want godly people helping me raise my children." Okay, leave that alone. Let's move on.

Now let me say this, talking about Timothy who's being addressed here specifically: a pastor who's chief motive is to exalt himself by using harshness or hardness when it's not necessary, especially in dealing with ladies, is not serving God but he's serving an idol, himself. He's made an idol of himself. He has evil and self-serving motives. Paul says, "Timothy, when you correct ladies, young ladies in particular, love them like you love your sister. Care for them spiritually like you'd want somebody to care for your own sister, or maybe for some of us, our own daughters."

V. We have this other phrase that jumps out at us in verse 2, the last phrase, "in all purity," or with all purity. Now for a young pastor or for any pastor in that manner, you want to make sure that you have the discipline to look upon the young ladies in your church the same way you would want someone to look upon your daughter or your sister, and when counseling and in this case correcting a young lady in the church, a man in the church, a pastor in the church, you can start out with pure motives but because of the work of the enemy and the fallenness of our flesh, you can quickly flow into something that is improper, and here's where I would say we have to be vigilant and disciplined, to be cautious about connections. And that's what happens in a church family, special, good, pure, precious connections are made, there's a connection made when you correct a person and they're repentant and God does a work and there's a sweetness of renewal and forgiveness and starting over. There's a precious connection but you, Paul, Paul says to

Timothy, "But Timothy, be careful at that point, especially with the young ladies, things can quickly go, get over into impurity." It can go from a spiritual oneness to an emotional oneness that can end in a physical oneness that's dishonoring to the Lord. How true it is that a young woman can be particularly vulnerable to a man in the office of pastor and he must never cross the line of using his status wrongly to involve himself with her. Paul says, "Timothy, have all purity."

So he must never sin against her by ministering spiritually and then using that as a platform to manipulate her emotionally or physically. That's not treating her as a sister. John MacArthur says something that I think is right on. He says in effect this is spiritual adultery or spiritual incest because she's your sister and you've taken advantage of her. We hear of this, we hear of a lot of this going on. We hear of a lot of it. Just in our area some years ago, I think there were three staff members on the church who had been arrested for molesting children in the church. What a horrifying and vile evil. And it came back to me that one of these men had put, ah, coverings over his windows, over his door windows and over his windows outside, facing the outside so he could bring children, small children, into the closed office. And the other staff members knew this was happening. You see, that's not being diligent to exercise all purity and to guard yourself.

We have policies here in place at our church we don't have to talk about it anymore because our guys know these things and we're just not gonna counsel with ladies with a closed door, or at least a door that's got a, like mine has a two foot by three foot window in the wall and my secretary is always outside the door. Basically generally speaking, we don't counsel with the ladies more than one time, and sometimes if a lady needs to come back, then like I'm gonna do with a young lady here in a week or so, my wife will sit into that second meeting just to be, just to try to maintain all purity. And isn't it true that sometimes one party can be perfectly pure but the other be impure, and you just sometimes need somebody with you to be a witness and to guard against anything taking that next step, and we're gonna talk about those steps in just a moment.

And then secondly, not only do we need strict policies in all of our lives so that we maintain the utmost purity, secondly, as much as possible the women in the church should be counseling the other women in the church. Small groups covers this wonderfully here at Grace Life Church, and I hear it over and over again where our older spiritual ladies in small groups are bringing another lady aside and counseling and encouraging and admonishing and correcting where necessary, and this is beautiful in the Lord. Most of the time a lady doesn't have to see a pastor, she just needs to see those who've been matured under a faithful pastor's ministry. Typically ladies can counsel with ladies.

Titus 2:3-5 reminds us, "Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips not enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, so that they may encourage the younger women," now here's what I'm gonna say, if, if, if women would get busy with these biblical admonitions, it would solve a lot of their problems. Most women have anxieties and difficulties emotionally because they're doing a lot of things

God never prescribed for them to do. They're carrying a lot of burdens God never gave them to carry.

So older women are to be training younger women, he says in Titus 2:4, "to love their husbands," if you're married to me, that's a lot of work. My point is, if you do what God tells you to do, you don't have time to do other things sometimes that usually get you in trouble. "To love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored." It's amazing to me as the feminist rage and throw around their false gospel, that, ah, they're all against submitting to their husbands but, oh, don't they want to submit to their new surrogate husband, the Federal government. Federal government, provide all my needs. Federal government will give me all my healthcare. Ah, Federal government, give me birth control. Federal government, be my avenger. Federal government, be my protector. Over and they will gladly submit to one that God has not given that charge to. They always submit but here's what's interesting: they don't submit to the one that God says, "If you'll submit to him, I'll work on his heart for you. I'll change him. I'll break him."

Well, back to the thought of our text, men in the church, a young man in particular in the pastorate, you must go the extra mile to make sure you function in your ministry to the young ladies in the church with all purity. Now, so the pastor or men in general are given this exhortation in the church, yet I want to turn the coin over and talk about the ladies for a second. Men are not the only ones who fail at this. Men are not the only ones who are schemers and manipulators, and by the way, in the "me too" movement, let me say it loud and clear: anytime anywhere a man is abusive, assaulting, hurting, attacking, misusing a lady sexually or otherwise, that is criminal, that is evil and we stand against it 110% always. Always. But brothers and sisters, the Bible tells us that this is often a two-way street. There's another side to that coin. All of the young ladies that go to a movie executive's hotel room some evening knows or isn't innocent in how they're going and why they're going. There are evil seductresses, women who have evil motives and women who use their wiles to get their way. Men do that and the Bible says women do that.

Matter of fact, go over to the Old Testament, the book of Proverbs, would you go there? Proverbs 6. I'll give you just a minuter. Proverbs 6 and first look at verse 23. Proverbs 6:23. Now you know the proverb is a man writing to his son to give his young son wisdom and in this section of Proverbs, he's warning his son against the strange woman, that's the way the King James translate it, translates it, or in the New American Standard from this evil woman. Now what's he say about this woman? Proverbs 6:23, "For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light; And reproofs for discipline are the way of life To keep you from the evil woman, From the smooth tongue of the adulteress. Do not desire her beauty in your heart, Nor let her capture you with her eyelids. For on account of a harlot one is reduced to a loaf of bread, And an adulteress hunts for the precious life." Let me talk about that for just a moment. You know what precious life means? It generally means that one that has the greatest value for the things of God. The writer of Proverbs says there are evil women set on fire of hell itself and their goal is to

bring down the men that may be greatly used by the Lord. No wonder Paul tells Timothy, "Timothy, maintain all purity. Stay away from danger zones."

She hunts, notice that, she hunts for the precious life. Then he says in verse 27, "Can a man take fire in his bosom And his clothes not be burned?" You can't get by with this without it burning you.

Proverbs 7:6. In chapter 7, verse 6 he writes, "For at the window of my house I looked out through my lattice, And I saw among the naive, And discerned among the youths A young man lacking sense, Passing through the street near her corner; And he takes the way to her house, In the twilight, in the evening, In the middle of the night and in the darkness. And behold, a woman comes to meet him, Dressed as a harlot and cunning of heart." That means she has honed her craft. "She is boisterous and rebellious, Her feet do not remain at home; She is now in the streets, now in the squares, And lurks by every corner. So she seizes him and kisses him," notice her aggressiveness. "And with a brazen face she says to him: 'I was due to offer peace offerings; Today I have paid my vows. Therefore I have come out to meet you, To seek your presence earnestly, and I have found you. I have spread my couch with coverings, With colored linens of Egypt. I have sprinkled my bed With myrrh, aloes and cinnamon. Come, let us drink our fill of love until morning; Let us delight ourselves with caresses. For my husband is not at home, He has gone on a long journey; He has taken a bag of money with him, At the full moon he will come home.'" Notice verse 21, "With her many persuasions she entices him; With her flattering lips she seduces him. Suddenly he follows her As an ox goes to the slaughter, Or as one in fetters to the discipline of a fool, Until an arrow pierces through his liver; As a bird hastens to the snare, So he does not know that it will cost him his life." Verse 24, "Now therefore, my sons, listen to me, And pay attention to the words of my mouth. Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways, Do not stray into her paths. For many are the victims she has cast down, And numerous are all her slain. Her house is the way to Sheol, Descending to the chambers of death." Brothers and sisters, Satan plants these wicked seducers in churches and they hunt for the precious life. The minister of God or any man in the church that considers himself a spiritual man, he has to be vigilant, to be aware and maintain all purity.

So be cautious about the connections that are naturally made in a church. They're beautiful and sweet and pure and holy, but easily the enemy can switch them over to impropriety. Real quick I'm gonna give you some challenges and these are things that I purposed to challenge my own self with and walk in. We're gonna call this fighting for purity. Fighting for purity. None of you are pristine pure. You know what you call a man or a woman who says, "I've had not one trace of improper thinking or lust in my heart, in my life," you know what you call that person? You call them a liar. Jesus said, "If you have, have lust in your heart, you've committed adultery already." You know why he said that? I don't know all the reasons but I can surmise one of the reasons is because that made everyone guilty. So what I like to say is there are lines you must not cross. You must fight in certain arenas and never let things escalate to the devastating state of immoralities.

1. Fight in the arena of looking and thinking. Fight there. Fight to catch it there. Fight to grab it, call it what it is, and repent of it there. That's the arena to fight it in. That's the arena to catch it in. Job said in Job 31:1, "I have made a covenant with my eyes; How then could I gaze at a virgin?" Now the word "gaze" is interesting. Matter of fact, um, the King James probably has it a little better, "think on a virgin." It didn't have the idea of looking at a man or a woman and noticing that they're attractive or beautiful, the Bible even talks about those who had external beauty, but it means to go from there to begin to cultivate lust in the heart, to begin to look with thoughts to pursue improper ends in this relationship. Cultivating something forward. You look and then the thinking starts. Repent there. You know what a great thing to do is? It's to say, "Lord, he's an attractive man, he's appealing, he's kind and caring, but he's not mine and You've not given him to me. Lord, that's a beautiful woman, she's attractive physically, she's kind and caring and affirms me in so many ways but, Lord, she's not mine. I can't go down that road." Fight in the arena of looking and thinking.

Proverbs 6:25 reminds us, "Do not desire her beauty," now notice this, "in your heart." This is a cultivation. It's more than an acknowledgment, it's a cultivation. You are willfully cultivating something now. That's when the sin occurs and it must be called that and named that, call it just as an act of discipline, say, "That's evil. I'm not going there."

I remember, isn't it funny how little incidents you just remember in your life, and this is kinda funny but it's not kinda funny but it's kinda funny. I was a little boy and we were at a sporting event that I was participating in and there was a man there who was middle-aged man who was a professional man and a wealthy man, and just be honest, he looked better than most men in my town. I mean, he just was dressed nice and carried himself with an air of confidence, and he was a kind man, and I remember he walked by and I remember my momma saying to her friend sitting there, "Oh, he, he is distinguished, isn't he?" I don't know where else it went. That's fine, but what thinking do you allow to be cultivated after that is the question?

Fight in the arena of looking and thinking. What did King David do on the balcony as he looked and saw Bathsheba? He didn't fight at that point, he began cultivating, "How can I have her as mine?" If you don't fight there, the dominoes are gonna fall and you're gonna go deeper.

Secondly, not only fight in the arena of looking and thinking, fight in the arena of physical proximity. Fight in the arena of physical proximity. This is that time when that person just seems to be around and you realize there could be an attraction there that's unholy and you decide, "I'm not going there anymore. I'm not going to that place any longer. I'm not gonna allow myself to get near that place again where he usually is, or where she usually is." The Bible says in Proverbs 7:25, "Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways, Do not stray into her paths." Earlier he talks about going near her door and you know where her door is. You don't go there.

Can I say to you: leave that area. Can I say to you: leave that job if you have to. Don't ruin your life. Don't ruin the testimony of Christ. Don't ruin your marriage. Get out of

there. This happened, ah, to a relative of mine years ago. This, this lady who was a relative of mine said that she had left her job and I said, "What do you mean, you left your job?" And she said, "Well, I was in an environment that was just wicked. It was just people shacking up, immoralities. It was just awful. And my husband learned what was going on there and," she said, "I wasn't involved, I wasn't interested in any of it. I was fine but he found out what was going on there and he called my boss and said, 'She'll not be coming in next week.'" He got her out of the arena even though she was pure and clean. Sometimes you've gotta do those things. Leave that job if you have to. Leave that gym if you need to. Leave that hobby if you have to. Don't be in that, the presence of that person where you sense, "I don't know for sure." And by the way can I say something to you? The person you're thinking that you don't need to be around may love the Lord, may be at a time of weakness, and by you taking the first step, you save them too. Amen? They don't have to be an evil man like we saw or talked about earlier. They don't have to be an evil seductress necessarily like we talked about, it could just be the wrong time and the wrong place, and you just need to make sure you don't go near her door. Fight in the arena of physical proximity.

3. Fight in the arena of emotional affinity. Affinity with the idea of agreement. Now this is a very tricky thing when you're trying to counsel and care for someone. They can be emotionally affected and you not know they're emotionally affected, but you do know when it goes too far and you're beginning to talk about things, ah, about how you connect with them and how you're in agreement with them, and how they understand you and you understand them. Those are lines you shouldn't be crossing. Fight it there. Stop it there. Repent at that level. Don't go forward. You start spending time with that person you don't need to spend with them. You start giving them energy you don't need to, to give them. You start giving them attention which is inappropriate for them to get. You start neglecting these things in your own spouse but you say, "Well, but you don't understand, my spouse doesn't get me, and my spouse is not kind to me, and they don't affirm me, and they don't understand me." So? What does that mean? You're to love your husband, you're to love your wife, that means to forget yourself and throw yourself back in it again and call on God to be the strength you need. As Jay Adams said before when you come into counseling with Jay Adams, you know Jay Adams is sort of the father of true biblical counseling, he, he'd say a person would come in and they'll say, "At this point, you know, my spouse acts like my enemy. Just it's just horrible and it's so difficult." He said, "Well, what's the Bible say about your enemy? He says to love your enemies, so just love them like your enemy for a while until it gets better."

Avoid the arena of emotional affinity. That's the only way. If you don't fight, I'm convinced in those three areas, and I doubt you're gonna make it through life and score 100, but you'd better score high. If you don't fight in those three areas, then you are highly likely to fail in out-and-out sexual immorality and sin. These things just don't happen. Listen, there are lines you cross to get there. Paul says, "Timothy, maintain all purity. Don't cross those lines."

Proverbs 7:13, "So she seizes him and kisses him And with a brazen face she says to him." And Proverbs 7:25-27, "Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways, Do not stray

into her paths. For many are the victims she has cast down, And numerous are all her slain. Her house is the way to Sheol, Descending to the chambers of death." Now our God is a God of grace and he's a God of mercy, he's the God of the second chance and the third chance and the hundredth chance, and I know there are brothers and sisters in this room who love Jesus, who want to be devoted to him and serve him with all their hearts, but they've crossed these lines in the past and they've committed those type sins in the past. Here's what I want to tell you and you be the greatest warrior going forward to protect younger brothers and sisters in the future. And I want to tell you, if God's forgiven you, we certainly forgive you. If God's forgiven you, we certainly love you. But you make sure that's in the past. There's a difference between something in the past you've repented of and a pattern you're walking in. Matter of fact, the Greek tense of the verbs concerning sin has the idea of, of a pattern of continuing on and embracing. Fight in these arenas and don't fall into impurities.

Well, amen. Amen. Nothing but the word of God has this stuff in it. Just remember I'm for you and I love you. Let's fight for each other. Let's fight for our children and their marriages and our children's children and their marriages. And you know some of the greatest saints of God I've seen that are effective for the Lord have something in their past that they'd give a million lives if they could erase it, but you know, you can go forward and know God's covered it in his blood. Hallelujah and praise God for that.