

SCRIPTURE READING: Matthew 18:15-17.

INTRODUCTION:

1. The young preacher.
2. The middle-aged preacher.
3. It is a popular approach.
4. But is it a godly approach? This is the question I hope to address in this morning's lesson.

ANALYSIS:

1. **Love rebukes.** Leviticus 19:17-18.
 - A. NKJV, "You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him." ESV, "You shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him."
 - B. Who? You and me personally, individually!
 - C. Why? Otherwise we hate (Proverbs 27:5-6; Psalm 141:5A; James 5:19-20), sin (Ezekiel 33:8-9), take vengeance, bear grudges, violate the golden rule (Matthew 7:12); etc.
 - D. I am the LORD! Luke 17:3B.
2. **Love rebukes directly.** Why?
 - A. Love gets the facts straight. Leviticus 19:15-16; Proverbs 25:8-10.
 - B. Love contains the damage of sin.
 - 1) Proverbs 10:12.
 - 2) Proverbs 17:9.
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 13:7A. "To cover closely (so as to keep water out)." "Love does not delight in exposing the weaknesses and sins of other people. Love will agonize over the sin and condemn the sin, but will always yearn to cover and protect the person who has fallen. Some people get a certain malicious pleasure in hearing about someone else's fall or trouble. Love does not do that" (Paul Butler). "Love ... causes us to want to help others instead of publishing their faults all over the countryside" (Thomas Warren).
 - 4) 1 Peter 4:8.
 - 5) Matthew 18:15-17.



APPLICATIONS:

1. **Some people don't rebuke.** If we love people, we will rebuke them when they sin. We must not be self-righteous, but we must judge with righteous judgment. John 7:24.
2. **Some people rebuke, but they don't rebuke directly.**
 - A. The advantages of rebuking directly.
 - 1) It helps limit rebukes to matters of true importance.
 - 2) It helps get the facts straight. Proverbs 18:13, 17. It is basic fairness – we should hear from the accused before we condemn. It eliminates many problems that arise simply because we don't have our facts straight.
 - 3) It helps us contain the damage of sin.
 - 4) It doesn't tempt people to speculate, draw unnecessary inferences, etc.
 - B. But ... he didn't sin against me ... he didn't necessarily sin ... it wouldn't do any good. There may be times when we don't have to rebuke directly, but ... are we acting out of love or are we really being lazy, cowards, selfishly ambitious, hypocrites, etc.?
3. **We must make it as easy as possible for people to come to us.** But, if people aren't easy to approach, that doesn't mean we don't have to approach them.
4. **We must not enable ungodliness.** Proverbs 20:19. One elder's (MB) approach to preacher's critics. Don't repeat criticism without citing sources.