

#### 4. The Importance of Admonishing - warning, cautioning – expressing reproof or reproach especially as a corrective.

Before Jesus died on the cross for our sins and sent the Holy Spirit to us all, the Lord used very few special people (prophets) to speak through. Most of the prophecies were admonishing (warning) people that they needed to change their ways and follow God.

Let's look at some scriptures in the Old Testament:

Isaiah 17:10-11 You have forgotten God your Savior; you have not remembered the rock, your fortress. Therefore, though you set out the finest plants and plant imported vines, though on the day you set them out, you make them grow, and on the morning when you plant them, you bring them to bud, yet the harvest will be as nothing in the day of disease and incurable pain.

Jeremiah 18:8-10 If that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned. And if at another time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be built up and planted, and if it does evil in my sight and does not obey me, then I will reconsider the good I had intended to do for it.

Ezekiel 33:1-7 The word of the Lord came to me: "Son of man, speak to your people and say to them: 'When I bring the sword against a land, and the people of the land choose one of their men and make him their watchman, and he sees the sword coming against the land and blows the trumpet to warn the people, then if anyone hears the trumpet but does not heed the warning and the sword comes and takes their life, their blood will be on their own head. Since they heard the sound of the trumpet but did not heed the warning, their blood will be on their own head. If they had heeded the warning, they would have saved themselves. But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet to warn the people and the sword comes and takes someone's life, that person's life will be taken because of their sin, but I will hold the watchmen accountable for their blood.' Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the people of Israel".

Now that we have access to the Holy Spirit through Jesus, we do not need prophets to speak for God. We all can speak to God ourselves and we can be led by the Holy Spirit. The Lord has now put the responsibility of admonishing the undisciplined on each and every one of us who are following and serving God. Each of us now have become God's watchman. It is a very important responsibility since it can affect salvation of souls and relationships with God.

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 Now I ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn (admonish) those who are idle and disruptive.

Admonishing should always be spirit led and done in a loving respectable manner. We need to be very careful. If it's not spirit led and it is just your opinion, you could actually turn someone away from God, and that would be on your head. Admonishing should also always be about the person's relationship or service with the Lord. It is your responsibility to pray about it before actually approaching someone to admonish them (unless the Lord speaks to you and leads you at that moment). Always make sure it is the Lord's will and you are speaking for the Lord.

If the Lord leads you to admonish, and you don't do it, you could be accountable for them falling away from God.

I once had a personal experience at my workplace. The Lord led me to say to a co-worker "May the Lord have mercy on your soul". I apologized for saying that and felt horrible. I explained to my co-worker that the Lord asked me to say that to him. I really liked that co-worker and thought he was a good person. That was the last time I ever spoke to that co-worker because he was killed in an automobile accident three days later.

Don't take this responsibility lightly. If the Lord leads you to admonish someone, do it; even if it's out of your comfort zone. If someone admonishes you, be gracious and thankful. Pray about what was said to you. Don't get angry or insulted. We need to keep each other in check, and it is the Lord's will that we faithfully do this.