

## Message #123

## Proverbs 29:1

Hebrews 12 is a very powerful and intimidating chapter because it sits just after a list of some of the most faithful servants of God to ever exist and it begins with a challenge for us to be like them (12:1) and ends with a challenge to fear God, who is a consuming fire (12:28-29). One of the key subjects this chapter teaches is that true sons of God will be given **corrective reproof and discipline by God** (12:5-6). According to Proverbs, God gives **knowledge or judgment** based upon our response to reproof (1:23, 25-26, 30). Proverbs informs us that our response to reproof determines whether we are on a course of **life or death** (10:17; 15:10). It determines whether we are **wise or stupid** (12:1); **shameful or honorable** (13:18); **foolish or prudent** (15:5), **temporally-oriented or eternally-oriented** (15:31-32).

**A WISE PERSON WILL NOT CONTINUALLY REFUSE REPROOF BECAUSE HE REALIZES THAT THIS WILL EVENTUALLY BRING SEVERE JUDGMENT FROM GOD.**

**QUESTION #1** – What is reproof?

The word “reproof” is one that literally means to contradict by arguing, specifically by verbally communicating God’s truth as opposed to man’s thinking or ideas.

The point here is that if a person hardens himself in a stubborn, firm manner, after being clearly contradicted and shown God’s truth, he will most assuredly face sudden, unstoppable, destructive judgment sent directly from God.

**QUESTION #2** – Who gives the reproof?

This proverb makes it clear that true, convicting reproof comes directly from God. God uses His Spirit to convict (John 15:7-8) and He may bring His convicting reproof through reading the Bible (II Tim. 3:16), through a pastor (II Tim. 4:2), through those that are wise (Prov. 25:12), through another believer (Eph. 5:11), through parents (Prov. 6:20-23) or through governing authority (Rom. 13:1-4). When a person is reproofed by God, he has two choices: **heed it or hate it; take it or leave it.**

**QUESTION #3** – How many rebukes will God give?

The word “reproof” is plural in Hebrew, indicating God gives more than one opportunity of conviction to hard-hearted people.

**QUESTION #4** – What does it mean to “harden the neck” against reproof?

It means to stubbornly refuse to repent when clearly confronted with truth, and as “obstinate persistence” in refusing to bend and submit to God’s correct way of thinking and living.

**QUESTION #5** – What is the destruction that will come to one who refuses reproof?

The word “broken” literally means broken to pieces. The word implies that once God decides to send this judgment, it literally will break into pieces the one who is being judged.

Several Bible expositors take this to mean a literal death penalty (Jer. 19; I Cor. 5:5; 11:30-32; I John 5:16). Charles Bridges, of England, in the 1800’s said this includes various tragedies, illnesses, accidents and even death.

Two realities are brought out about this judgment:

**(Reality #1)** - This judgment will be sudden.

It will come at an unexpected moment.

**(Reality #2)** - This judgment has no remedy.

The words “beyond remedy or without remedy” are scary Hebrew words because they literally mean that if God reaches this point, the possibility of deliverance is non-existent.

**QUESTION #6** – Who should fear this judgment?

No matter what our spiritual level, every one of us needs reproof (Prov. 19:25). However, the person who has been stirred by God regarding something in his or her life multiple times is one who is in desperate need of this proverbial instruction.

**QUESTION #7** – What must one do to avoid this judgment?

Perhaps one of the clearest answers of all is found in Prov. 28:13—confess and forsake. Heed the conviction. Heed the reproof. Be softhearted, teachable, and pliable to God’s Word.