

Competent to Admonish One Another

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[0:00] Well, I had some questions on the screen for you to consider prior to the class. Of course, we're dealing with this topic of competency, something that I think we all hold as important.

! In fact, where would you consider competency an important quality to have in someone's life? Any thoughts on that?

And where would you consider competency important? In the workplace, obviously. And we all take our cars at times for regular maintenance or repairs, etc.

And you want the person that's working on it to be competent in what he's doing. And even beyond that, we think of, well, what are some qualities that enhance a person's competence?

Any thoughts on that? What are some good qualities that go along with this quality of competence that really enhances even more?

[1:09] Training. Training, certainly. You've got to have that knowledge and understanding in the field, whether it's auto mechanics or whatever else, in order to really be competent and to exercise competence in that field.

Anything else? Any other quality? Diligence in studying. Okay. Diligence in studying it. Diligence in pursuing and trying to apply the knowledge that you have in that situation.

Well, the last question was, is there ever a time when it's really good to commend somebody's competence? Yes or no question?

Of course. Yes. Well, in what ways do we do that? We do that with a toddler. With a what? With a toddler.

Oh. Yeah, exactly. So we can say an encouraging word to them. Even we see that sometimes in the workplace you give somebody a promotion, you give them a raise, or the foreman comes along and commands, hey, you know, we couldn't have got that job done without all that you did in helping us and finish that product, that job.

[2:33] So lots of different ways that we commend the competence that really helps the person to continue on. I enjoy hearing that, that word of commendation, and it is something that spurs me on to continue on doing what needs to be done, even though it might be a difficult thing to do and might cost me something in the whole process.

Well, we find the Apostle Paul doing these very things, these questions that we just discussed briefly. Briefly, in Romans 15, 14, if you'll turn to that chapter in that specific verse, he wrote in his letter that he wrote to the believers here, he recognized and commended them, and I think also encouraged them, in their competency in a specific area.

And he also drew attention to two important qualities in them that, again, I believe, contributed to their competence, their competence to minister to one another.

Romans 15, 14, he says, I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge, and competent to instruct one another.

Now, as I have two Sundays with you, I'm going to break this up into two Sundays. We're going to focus on two points this morning, Paul's personal commendation to these believers, and then those two specific qualities that he mentions that really qualify them to do the second part of the verse in order to instruct or admonish one another.

[4:24] So, first of all, taking a look at this personal commendation that he brings to these believers in the book of Romans, I mean, we've all benefited greatly from the book of Romans and see it as a book that's in depth in theology and doctrine, and what we're reading and studying is just coming at the end of this letter that Paul has written to them filled with these precious truths of salvation and sanctification, the work of God in their lives, and then not just that kind of doctrine and instruction, but also that instruction that deals with the practical implications or the application of those things that he taught, the gospel of God's grace, and on and on we could go with all that's in that book.

And it's not that these people were untaught in these areas. Take a look there in chapter 15, in verse 15.

He says, I've written you quite boldly on some points as if to remind you of them again. So, it's just not all new information to the believers here, and we'll get to that a little bit more later on in this lesson.

But he's really writing to remind them, hey, we need reminders. You've been part of a church like this for a number of years. You've probably heard pastors teaching on specific doctrines over and over and over again from many different angles.

So, it's not like I have to stand up here and teach you new things, but there are times, like these believers, that we do need reminders of the things that we have learned so that we can be spurred on to additional specific activity in each other's lives.

[6:24] And so, that's what we see the Apostle Paul doing here. He also wrote to them because he was commissioned by God to take God's message to the Gentiles so that they would be growing in godliness, that they would be set apart even more in practical ways in being servants of God, ambassadors of Jesus Christ.

And he says that in verses 16 and 17 of chapter 15 as well. So, it's possible that as he begins to close this letter, and that's what he's doing here in verse 14, that I think he wants to leave them with some encouragement here.

Encouragement that would really motivate them to continue serving one another in ways that really do promote their growth in godliness. Again, he doesn't want to discourage them.

He's given them a lot of teaching. He's given them a lot of strong exhortations. And from some of the reading I did, it wasn't necessarily that these people were really faltering tremendously and living out their lives in Jesus Christ, but the exhortations were necessary as way of reminder of what it really looks like to live out the truths that were precious to them and that they knew.

So, Paul's coming alongside now as he is about to close this letter to give them and leave them with some encouragement. And this is a personal commendation that he brings.

[8:05] So, let's take a look at this. He says, I myself am convinced my brothers. So, I myself. What he's about to say is a personal conviction that he has.

He's really speaking for himself here. It's what he personally believed about these believers. It's like saying, after all I've written in this letter, I don't want you to misunderstand what I think about you.

I myself am convinced. So, it's not, again, like, although he did hear information from others about these people because he had never visited these people.

He wasn't the one that established the church in this area. He had received information, but at the end of all of that, he had come to this place that he personally was convinced convinced about something in regard to these people.

And so, that really would be an encouragement, I think, to these people. I mean, we would also be encouraged if someone in a position over us, I mean, the Apostle Paul did write to them at the beginning of the letter and let them know that he was an apostle, and that was a position of real authority when writing to people and communicating the truths, the gospel to people, to Christians.

[9:37] And so, it was a position of authority, and so now this individual, the Apostle Paul, coming and offering this commendation, this kind of encouragement.

Again, we can understand that. We would be encouraged just as your children would be encouraged. There's places for that kind of personal commendation and recognition with our children.

Times of praise where we recognize what they've done and what they're doing. And that can be a real encouragement, and we all understand that.

So, Paul has come to this settled conviction, and he is convinced. This isn't just empty flattery to try and get them to do something he wants them to do.

No, it's something that he's convinced about. And we never use this word or phrase saying I'm convinced about this without some supporting evidence.

[10:40] If he's convinced about something with these people, well, he's got evidence and information to support that. So, again, it's not empty flattery. This is coming from a firm conviction.

He has no doubts about what he's about to write to these people. And, again, he had received information from others about them.

In fact, turn back to chapter 1, and you'll see what I'm talking about here. As he writes about these people, let me pick out some verses here.

Chapter 1, verse 6. He says, And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

So, those who are called to belong to Jesus, they have great resources in living out who they are in Jesus Christ, as followers of Christ.

[11:43] So, this recognition alone should bring some real conviction in the Apostle Paul's life about what they're able to do and carry out and apply the truths of God's word.

This is what was true about these people, and he knew that. Look at verse 8 as well. He says, First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you because your faith is being reported all over the world.

So, again, these people had heard the truth of God's word, the gospel of Jesus Christ, the gospel of Paul that was given to him through Jesus Christ.

They believed the good news, and now we're living those new lives of faith in Jesus Christ, declaring it in the way that they lived, but also in the things that they spoke.

So, we're seeing more and more that there's a firm foundation that Paul can build on for this conviction that he has about them and what he's going to be encouraging them to do.

[12:44] They were living and declaring this faith that they had in Jesus Christ. But then also, down in verse 12, we see here, too, that in his future plans to come and visit them, he anticipated that he would certainly be an encouragement to them, but he also believed that they would also be mutually providing him some encouragement and building him up in his faith.

So, I wouldn't think Paul would say that lightly just about any individual. He says, I want you to be wise. No, I want, in verse 12, you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith.

And then if you go back to chapter 16, take a look, and we won't read through all of these, but take a look at the personal greetings that he sends to different individuals here.

And really, the testimony, the evidence that was pouring out from their lives, in verse 3 of chapter 16, in Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, they risked their lives for me, not only I, but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them.

Greet also the church that meets at their house. Greet my dear friend, Eponetus, who was the first convert to Christ in the province of Asia.

[14:17] Greet Mary, who worked very hard for you, and on and on he goes. Wow. Who wouldn't want to have a group of people like this in your congregation who had such an active faith in the church, but even outside the church?

Well, so Paul has come to this firm conviction about these people through the evidence that was presented to him. So he's well able to say, I myself am convinced, but then he says, my brothers.

Of course, remember, in the beginning of the book, he addressed himself and identified himself as an apostle, but now, here's a term that he uses 14 other times in the book.

And it's a term that really brings himself down on their level. There's a real familial relationship that he wants to emphasize with these people, and I think it's important here because he's going to be calling them to a mutual ministry with each other.

And so I think what he's doing is really setting the example of what that looks like because he's been doing that in this whole letter in sharing these precious truths with them and helping them see the implications of that for life, and that's what they're going to be doing.

[15:45] We'll learn more about what this whole matter of competent to instruct or admonish one another is all about in the next lesson.

But as he identifies himself as a brother, he's helping them understand, listen, what I'm doing with you here in letter form and that I hope to be able to do with you when I'm with you is really what you can be doing with one another now in your mutual ministry.

And you are qualified to do that. And so I'm encouraging you to do that more and more. And again, even setting the example of what that might look like.

So I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves, this is that personal commendation to them. What he's going to be calling them to is not just an activity or ministry, mutual ministry that is just left up to the apostles, the top people in Christendom, not even just the leaders of the church and not even just those who might be specifically gifted by the Spirit of God in this area.

We know that different parts of the body are gifted in special ways to do certain things, but at times we're all called to do those same things as well.

[17:14] So while there might be others in the church specifically gifted for teaching, encouraging, it's something that we're all still called to do.

So Paul is making this plain to them that I myself can convince my brothers that you yourselves, every one of you, each one of you, is called to to do this ministry.

So I think it's an important point that we understand Paul is providing this personal commendation to these believers that he's really convinced that they're able to carry on this ministry that he's going to want them to do and to some extent they're already doing but wants them to continue to do it even more and more.

And I think really what the Apostle Paul is writing here I think does fit us as a congregation as well. And so the things that he's writing to them about I think is something that we can really take to heart as well and consider that listen, if I have these qualifications then really God is calling me to this activity as well.

So I need to start thinking more and more of what it really looks like on a daily basis as I interact with my brothers and sisters in Christ.

[18:40] And even beyond that again, which is what we'll talk about in a couple weeks of what's the application of this ministry that Paul is calling to them, calling them to.

Well, he's convinced about something in their lives and he's reassuring these people that they are qualified to do what he's calling them to do.

So let's take a look at their qualifications for this mutual ministry that he's calling them and us too. They're suited to do this ministry with one another because they are full of goodness and complete in knowledge.

full of goodness. The idea is a kindness, a generosity of heart and action. It was a kindness and generosity of heart that would motivate each of them and again, I'm saying us as well to speak to another person and say what needed to be said or what needs to be said in order to help the person grow in godliness, to live a transformed life, to walk to walk in newness of life.

I said a lot in that long sentence. Carol says, I'm noted for my long sentences when I'm writing things out. So he's convinced that they have this goodness within them that really moves them in the direction of those people who are in need in some way and moves them with a readiness and a willingness of mind and heart to say and do the things that are necessary for that person's welfare that would set them in the direction where they need to go to really live out all of what they are and have in Jesus Christ.

[20:35] They're full of goodness. It moves us to that kind of activity to say even what might be the difficult thing to say for the welfare of the other person.

It was true of Paul. I've mentioned that already in what he did in his doing or did in his letter that he wrote to them.

The kindness of heart. Now let me point out some things. You don't have to turn to these things but his heart really was overflowing in this goodness this kindness in his letter to them.

He desired God's grace and peace to be upon them. Chapter 1 verse 7 you see his heart flowing out to these people. May God's grace and peace be among you be toward you be active in your lives.

He desires that for them. He also says that he thanked God for them. He prayed consistently for them. You see there's a heart of the person the man Paul for these people he's writing to them.

[21:45] Writing to. His heart is right there with them that he's moved to that kind of action and activity on their behalf. But then he also longed to see them to spend time ministering to them to make them strong spiritually.

It's one thing to be at a distance communicate your love your heart to people but boy when you see this and hear this from the Apostle Paul that I'm writing these things to you but I want to be right there with you so that face to face I can say some of these things and encourage you.

And so his heart was full of this kind of goodness and kindness toward them and then it also translated into some action because he wrote the letter and we know from reading and spending time in the letter that there were some challenging things that he had to say to these believers.

Again, not that they were deficient in an extreme way in these things but we know we all need exhortation in things that we may have slipped from to some degree and so he's writing to them and so there's some real activity.

He's moving in the direction of those who need to hear the hard thing but not doing it just to get something off his chest not just because oh, I'm an apostle to the Gentiles so I've got to do this this is my duty.

[23:20] No, he's doing it because he has a heart for these people and it's moving in their direction writing what might be the hard thing to write but doing it for their welfare.

So that's kind of the basis of what this goodness looks like. You know, it might be easy for us to well I see somebody in need and I'll write a check and provide that for them and you know we do that anonymously or we might not do it anonymously and that's great that is a good expression of the love of Christ or bake a cake for somebody provide a meal for somebody but this expression of goodness when it has to be expressed by saying the hard thing that somebody might need to hear woof that's a little bit more difficult to do but that as well is an expression of goodness that means I am full of that kind of goodness that goodness exists within me and the evidence is that I'm moving in the direction of that person in need to minister to them in such a way as to help move them along where they need to be heading in order to glorify God and enjoy this new life they have in Jesus Christ so this is what

Paul was doing and was commending them for that this is what's true in you but again it wasn't something that was there just because of some self improvement program in their in their own lives this goodness that was within them and within us or all true believers is what comes from the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives it was manifested through them because it came from God's Holy Spirit dwelling within them we know Galatians 5 22 the fruit of the Spirit and what's listed there is goodness Paul wrote previously about the Holy Spirit's working in them and dwelling in them so there's another reason why Paul could confidently say that listen

I myself am convinced my brothers that you yourselves are full of goodness he saw evidence of it the outworkings of it but he also understood that the Spirit of God dwelling in them was that resource of goodness producing his fruit through them so we can confidently say that within them and within every believer from the Holy Spirit dwelling within us and them each believer is potentially able to speak and act for the welfare of another believer and express the biblical goodness toward them because we have the Spirit of God dwelling within us we can confidently say that you're capable of that kind of ministry because the Spirit of God dwells within you so whenever we're tempted to say I can't do that well help me understand why you think you can't do that

I could never do that well help me understand why you could never do that because the scriptures tell me that within you if you're a true believer the Holy Spirit is dwelling and then the fruit that he's looking to manifest through you is such that would actually lead you to that kind of activity so you're coming to a wrong conclusion for some reason and we have to determine what that wrong reason is so that you're not basing your activity within the body of Christ on some faulty reason and as a result are not really carrying on this mutual ministry so let us be reminded of these precious truths these things that are true and begin acting on those things that are true and keep in step as Paul says in Galatians 5 with the Holy Spirit and what he's instructing us to do from the word that he has written and actually be ministering to one another so what

[27:50] Paul was convinced that as a result truly of the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives that they were full of goodness and he's seen it manifested in their lives and wants to see that to continue on so full of goodness but they are also complete in knowledge doesn't mean that they had all knowledge but they had a rich a full understanding certainly of God's truth in the gospel Paul had written many precious things in depth doctrines and truths in this letter to them and he was convinced that they had understanding of these things the gospel of Jesus Christ but then also the implications of that and how they lived their new lives in Jesus Christ another writer put it this way they were had been abundantly instructed on these different subjects that he had presented in his letter so as to be able to instruct or admonish one another filled with all knowledge they had a discerning knowledge so that they were able to look after one another's spiritual needs this is this idea of knowledge not just facts and information but the application of those facts that a real personal experience with Jesus

Christ and interaction with Christ and his word to the point where they were seeking to live this out in their daily lives they had this kind of full comprehension comprehension of the truths of God's word and what it meant for daily life and how it affected how they lived so we begin to see and understand how important this would be when it comes to carrying out this ministry competent to admonish or instruct one another this is really is essential it was this foundation of truth that would enable them even to recognize when someone was drifting away from Christ and the teachings delivered to them it's this understanding of the standard the person of Christ and what the image of God is in our world today that helps us discern oh my brother you know I see he's struggling in this area he's somewhat straying away from the application of these things that we've learned in the past he's in danger now what am I going and I'm making those conclusions based on the understanding

I have from God's word and the truth the full knowledge that I have of God's word that standard of holiness and godliness so it's important for that to be true of me so to discern and recognize when someone needs confronting again we must know the standard from which another has moved away from or is in danger of moving away from it's the same emphasis that we see in Colossians 3:16 again a letter from Paul if you want to turn over there you can I've got it here and I can read it for you he's encouraging these believers Colossians 3:16 he says let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom so we see the correlation here the relationship of what he's writing to these believers and what he's written to the believers there in Rome that word admonish here is from the same word used in Romans 15:14 where he says competent to instruct or admonish one another so in order to teach and admonish there is a difference between the two you know it's very easy

I won't say it really is easy to stand up here and teach a lesson but it's one thing to stand up here and teach a lesson with a shotgun approach and it's another thing to have to admonish somebody and I'm not going to admonish you all if I know there's somebody here that means I'm going to have to go to that person one on one and to admonish so there's a difference in just the teaching and the admonishing but in order to do both we must be full of the word of God the word of God must be dwelling in us richly so that we can carry out these ministries with one another because it's out of that knowledge that understanding that wisdom of God's word that we really become competent to help others and to minister to them think with me back to in fact just turn back we're not too far from that second

Timothy chapter three these two are familiar verses for us but just again emphasizing why the apostle Paul again Paul writing to Timothy so refreshing to see the emphasis the apostle Paul has over and over and over again on the word of God and the importance of ministering that word and what that word is really able to do and effectively accomplish in the lives of people as they hear it and receive it from others he says all scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching and again here we see the different ways in which the word of God is used teaching rebuking or reproving correcting and training in righteousness so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work so while the apostle Paul is calling Timothy to do this in season out of season using the word of

[34:17] God in this way in Romans he's calling the believers there and us as well to pursue God's word that we would indeed hide it in our hearts that we would do whatever is necessary to make sure we have a full robust understanding of the doctrines of the word of God and the implications of that for daily life and are really endeavoring to apply that in our daily lives so that when we see a brother or sister struggling we can quickly come alongside because we are full of goodness we love God and his glory to be displayed through that believer's life we love that believer and long for them to enjoy the fullness of living and walking in the spirit of God and we have God's truth that will help us know how to come along and instruct and admonish this person so that they're once again on track and walking in a way that would be pleasing to God so goodness and knowledge truth and a desire to help another what a combination for a church to have for these believers in

Rome to have Paul said he was convinced that these believers were full of goodness complete in knowledge full of this truth this wisdom of God living it out and that they would be well able to admonish and counsel and instruct one another well we are those people and we can be those people even more and more may God really work in our hearts and our lives so that we are recognizing that the application of that goodness and knowledge on each other's behalf well we'll continue this study as I said in two weeks and finish out what that really looks like what is practically how is that admonition of one another what is it going to look like and hopefully we'll be equipped again more and more to be faithful servants of

God well let's close in prayer father this morning we thank you again for what you've done in our hearts and what you're going to continue to do in our hearts our lives even father through one another and so we pray for your work that we desperately need that that would continue father that we would be people recognizing all that we have in Christ this goodness that is there that your spirit the spirit of Christ is really seeking to live out through us that we would recognize that and be willing willingly submitting to his leading looking even for ways that we can show that goodness to each other that you would continue to grow us bringing back to our memory things that we've heard father throughout the years things that are good and true things that will establish us in life while we're still in this world help us father to continue to grow and just to know how to live this all out as a body of believers in

Jesus name amen thank you