

Competent to Admonish One Another (part 2)

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[0:00] Well, we're going to pick up where we left off a couple weeks ago in Romans 15-14. If you want to take your Bibles and open to that passage, reminding you of the verse.

Let's read that again. The Apostle Paul spent a good amount of time writing to the believers here. Not that they needed this as new information because they had already been well taught, but writing to remind them of some essential truths that they needed to be reminded of, just like we are in need of being reminded of important truths that we need for everyday living, but also encouraging them to continue on doing what they were doing already.

And so in his closing of the letter, he gives this personal commendation to them, which is what we looked at the last time we were together. And he said in verse 14 of chapter 15, I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge, and competent to instruct one another.

So this personal commendation that he brings to them, he assures them, reassures them of his conviction that they were competent to instruct one another, but competent to instruct one another because they were full of goodness, kindly affection toward one another.

They had a generosity of heart that translated into some actions that were on behalf of one another, that contributed to their welfare.

[1:56] They were willing to do and to say the sometimes the necessary and hard thing to one another that would really promote their growth in godliness and Christlikeness.

It's not always an easy thing to do, but an essential within the church of Jesus Christ. They were willing to do that. They were full of goodness, but they were also complete in knowledge, meaning that they were well-versed in gospel truths, in the scriptures, and not just the knowledge of it, but also the implications for daily life.

And that kind of, I guess we would call that wisdom, that again is essential for living out this new life that we have in Jesus Christ and helping others do the same.

So Paul was commending them for these qualities that were in them. And when you think of it, it really is a wonderful combination to have.

If they were just full of goodness, well, they might be moved with compassion toward one another and want to reach out to somebody and maybe even go to do that, and then, well, what do I say?

[3:17] I don't know what to say to really help this person. It's nice at times to sit there in silence, but there's times that we need to go beyond silence and just listening to the person and really provide them some instruction that will really help them move in the direction that they need to move in order to really go through the difficulty that they're going through.

So full of goodness, good, but needs to be combined with being full of knowledge or complete in knowledge. And while knowledge is important, it can't stand alone without being full of goodness.

Just being full of knowledge or complete in knowledge, you might not even be sensitive to the needs of people around you, leaving you unaware, just kind of looking to yourself.

Or you might move in the direction of the person and come across and present what you know to be true in a very harsh way, condemning way. In a way that it wouldn't really be receptive to the person or difficult to receive.

So this combination, full of goodness, complete in knowledge, certainly not the only two qualities that are helpful in instructing one another in the things of God's word.

[4 : 41] There are others as we study the scriptures further, but these were the two that the Apostle Paul was commending these believers for. And being full of goodness and complete in knowledge really enabled them or equipped them to be what we want to take a look at today, competent to instruct one another.

Let's take a look, first of all, at that matter of competence. Or has the idea of being able or being skilled. It's the kind of ability or skill that only comes through this combination, learning, and then a practice of what is learned.

And these people were those people, as we've already been mentioning. They had been well taught and were really endeavoring on a day-by-day basis to put into practice the things that they had learned.

And they were speaking and doing what was necessary for one another's growth in godliness. And as Paul was encouraging them for what they had, he was also encouraging them to continue doing that because they were competent or skilled in this ability.

And we're familiar with this process of becoming skilled in a certain area. I believe most of us here this morning know how to tie our shoes, unless you're still just a Velcro person.

[6 : 10] But we've all learned to tie our shoes. You've become skilled in tying your shoes. And I can't remember who taught me that, but I can remember teaching our children and our grandchildren as well.

They first of all needed some instruction, some information as to just how to do it. But then they needed to actually put it into practice on a daily basis so that I think most of them are now able to tie their shoes.

So whether it's tying our shoes or other skills and abilities that we have, we've developed that kind of competence.

And that really continues on through life. As a person gets older, not my age, but out of high school, many go on to college, maybe attend a trade school or become an apprentice someplace.

That same process they go through. They gain some valuable information, the book learning we might call it, and then also go through a time where they then have to put it in practice.

[7 : 25] Even some schools have learned the value of having internships for those who are going through a certain program so that they can actually put into practice the things that they've been learning in the classroom.

And then over time, once they get out into their field and they continue to put those things into practice, at some point we would say, oh, they're skilled in their trade.

They're well able to perform this service that you're looking for them to perform. They've become skilled.

Well, these believers were those people. Again, they had been taught well. They accepted the truth that they needed to hear and were putting it into practice.

That combination, they were really endeavoring to walk in newness of life and help each other do the same. And so from this combination, they had really become competent.

[8 : 25] They were able to carry out what Paul was going to call them to continue to do. They were skilled, really skilled to help one another grow in godliness, grow in Christlikeness, to live out their new lives in Christ and their culture.

And it was a challenging culture in which they were living. So I'm hoping through this verse here and this little bit of exposition I can give on it, we're developing in a new way, just as to remind you, as Paul was with these people, that this really is an essential ministry for the various members of a church body to be performing.

if we're going to be able to stand effectively and accomplish the glory of God in the culture in which we're called to live, even for us today.

If this isn't happening, then the degree of our effectiveness in really representing Christ and the gospel really goes very low and goes down more and more.

And so we can begin to see why the Apostle Paul was encouraging them. Listen, you're facing a lot of things here in the Roman culture and you've got a lot of good things happening.

[9 : 51] But I'm encouraging, you're full of goodness, complete knowledge, you're skilled, keep it up, keep on going. It's essential in what you are doing and what your purpose is as the Church of Jesus Christ.

So I'm hoping from our time together and looking at these verses, we're drawn more and more to this kind of thinking that, boy, this is an essential skill that I need to be developing in my life for my, not just my effective ministry in the local church and community, but for the corporate effective ministry of the body of Christ here in Bremen in our community.

If we're not actively doing this, if we're not, if it's not my ambition to become more and more skilled in this, then I not only hurt my effectiveness but also the effectiveness of the whole body.

So we have to be drawn more and more to this commitment of developing the skill just as you would be seeking to develop the skill for your vocation or whatever you would consider important that would drive you to develop that skill.

I trust and pray that this would be, within my heart, a priority ministry service service that I would be seeking to develop as a skill so that I can serve you and ultimately that you can serve me and one another as church members.

[11 : 31] So, we have to ask that question. Is it my ambition to put into practice, first of all, this wise counsel of God but then also help others do the same?

And if it's not, then we need to really get on our knees and pray, God, give me that kind of desire that would reflect and be the desire of Jesus Christ, certainly, and that was the desire of the Apostle Paul and the desire of these believers but let us follow in their footsteps as well.

So, they were skilled and we rejoice in that with them and Paul was calling on them that, hey, keep it up, keep on going. with this goodness and knowledge that you have.

And so, with this, they were skilled to do what? Well, they were skilled to instruct one another. Now, in the NIV, it's translated to instruct.

There's other translations that use the word admonish. Just some information from various writers from J. Adams and his book Competent to Counsel written back in the early 70s, one of the leaders in this biblical counseling movement that started back in those years.

[12 : 49] One of the first books that I read on biblical counseling was really quite refreshing with the encouragement that he was giving of the sufficiency of the scriptures when approaching the issues of daily life.

And so, he wrote this book *Competent to Counsel* and in explaining this term, he says, the term contains more than one fundamental element. That's one reason why it's difficult to translate.

Traditional translations have vacillated between the words admonish, warn, and teach. Another writer just has the brief definition, meaning, to put in mind.

So, you know a truth, you see a need within someone's life and you're moving in the direction of the person, bringing that truth to put it in their minds.

If they may not know it at all or they may have forgotten it, so you're bringing it back to their attention. Another writer says, to bring the truth seasonable to bear on the mind and conscience.

- [13:58] You recognize the need there and so what's needed at this time, at this season in this person's life is this principle, this wise counsel from God and you're bringing it to bear on their mind out of loving concern for them and ultimately for the glory of God.

In John MacArthur's commentary, he wrote at length in saying this, the word carries the ideas of encouraging, warning, and advising. It's a comprehensive term for counseling.

Don't let that term counseling scare you. Certainly it's done in a formal setting, but it's done very informally as well. We are all counselors. You probably have given advice or counsel to someone even possibly this morning throughout the week in a very informal way in your house, in your home, with your child, with your spouse, at work possibly, at school, on and on we could go with the different scenarios in which we're all in that we pass along advice, we bring to bear on the mind of someone something that we think and believe that ultimately will affect how they think, believe, make decisions, and ultimately act.

So that's what counseling is about, done informally and done formally. in this context, it refers to coming alongside other Christians for spiritual and moral counseling.

Paul is not referring to a special gift of counseling. He has made reference to those who are gifted in certain ways, whether it's encouragement, exhortation, teaching, on and on we go.

- [15:44] This is one of those areas in which, yeah, there might be those who are specifically gifted in this way, but that doesn't mean the rest of us are excluded from it.

That means we all continue to move forward and do it with the capacity that we have, the skill, the ability that we have that we're seeking to develop more and more so that we can be more effective at it, but we still move in that direction.

So he's not referring to a special gift of counseling, but of the duty and responsibility that every believer has for encouraging or strengthening other believers.

So this is what God, through the Apostle Paul, is really calling us today to as believers, in this case, and members of the Church of Grace Fellowship Church.

We're called to be skilled in instructing and admonishing, warning one another. and that's what we're learning of in this passage.

- [16:55] So what are some of the elements of this ministry that we're called to? The first one that I listed here is a personal caring relationship between people.

That kind of relationship where we're concerned for each other's spiritual welfare. I mean, without that, we are not going to move in that direction. That relates to that phrase that Paul was using, that they're full of goodness.

Let's take a look at the level of our goodness that we're yielding ourselves to, that the Spirit of God is seeking to move us in the direction of. Do we have and are we cultivating that kind of personal caring relationship with one another that will enable us, quite possibly in the future time, to open the door into somebody's life and to step in and to share, bring to their mind the truth that they need for their welfare.

What we are able to do over here has a lot to do with what we're doing here on this side of the door. And so we're looking at how we're cultivating those kind of relationships so that we can actually do what God is calling us to do.

Even though Paul had never met these people, he was really cultivating, you can see throughout his letter, that kind of personal caring relationship.

[18:30] He had that heart for the people. Let me remind you of some verses that I've read last week in Romans 1-8. In his letter, he thanked God for them. In verse 9, he constantly remembered them in his prayers and desired to come to spend time with them.

And you're beginning to see, well, what are some of the ways in which I could cultivate a relationship with somebody? Well, how can I pray for you, brother, this week, or sister? I want to be sure that you know that I'm here to pray for you.

And I want to do that this week. How can I pray for you? In verse 11, he says he wanted to impart some spiritual gift to them, to make them strong.

How can I help you this week? I know I'm not really skilled in too many things, but there's some things I can do. What can I do to help you? I can do this.

Do you need help in this area? Verse 14, just referred to them as brothers. It's not a term that we use often, brother or sister. brother, but when we use that term, boy, it is an indicator that I want to move certainly just beyond this surface relationship with you, that you're my brother and that's how I view you.

[19:46] How are you doing today, brother or sister? And cultivating that just through the simple little things that we can say to one. That's what the Apostle Paul was doing.

And it's out of his personal caring relationship, relationship, that we move toward one another, really to serve one another.

And in this case, that we're learning about in this verse, to admonish one another. It's going to be very difficult to do that out here if we haven't done the preliminaries back here.

I always found it interesting. There were times in the past that we did formal counseling, Carol and I. and I always thought it very interesting and at times commended the people when they came in.

It was the first time that they would meet us and they're ready to open up these intimate areas of their lives with us that were difficult to share.

[20:47] And so it would just take the time to commend them, thank them for coming in and be willing to do that. And we would be sure that we would try and listen carefully and take their problems seriously and pray over what they're bringing to us and seek to deal with those seriously.

But there are times that we can take those preliminary steps to really do that. So how are you doing? What things are you doing specifically really to cultivate those kind of personal relationships with each other?

Think about what you're doing even on Sunday mornings because this is some of the only times some of you will see each other really. It's not often that I see some of you during the week.

So it's very different. So we have to start thinking about well with the time that I do have in particular on Sunday what am I doing in the things that I say and in things that I do with the people that I see even on Sunday that would show I'm seeking to move in that direction of cultivating a personal relationship with that person.

We really can't afford to just come in and be aloof from one another and I could have that tendency to be honest with you it would be easy for me just to be myself and just find my safe spot but that would not help me to open doors prepare to open doors in the future to be obedient to God's word so that I could faithfully minister to people when the need is there and so that's the way we have to start thinking more and more put on the mind of Christ so that we are moving in the direction of cultivating those kind of relationships that would open the door in the future for us to bring the word of God to bear on the minds of God's people and help them in their time of need so that one element cultivating those personal caring relationships think about how you're going to do that the next element is that there's an existence of a problem another quote from J. Adams neuthetic confrontation always implies a problem and presupposes an obstacle that must be overcome something is wrong in the life of one who is confronted that individual it might not be to the extreme yet but you're beginning to see the early stages of it maybe because

[23:28] I've been there you know I see where they're going and it's not going to end up good for that person and so you're beginning to see the problem in its initial stages and you're also seeing the problem in its ultimate climactic stages and you want you want the person not to go there and so this is what this exhortation is indicating and that's really how it's very different from teaching teaching is communication of information that's what I'm doing this morning with you but it really doesn't imply anything on the part of the person who's hearing may indicate that they need to hear this information but it's not assuming that there's any particular problem there in the neuthatic confrontation the focus is on both the individual doing the confronting and the person who is confronted it's a more specific personal encounter with a person with God's word and where

God's word is brought to the person's mind ultimately to help that person to help that person remember a truth a principle a wisdom a teaching from God's word that ultimately again will affect change in their heart their thinking and again their lives and their behavior and this is where having good information full of goodness but also complete in knowledge a good foundation of biblical doctrine wisdom from God's word really essential first of all so that we can even discern that there's a problem and that quite possibly when the person is beginning to veer off the track the path of godliness and living as a child of God so this information these truths from God's word is important for us to be filling our mind putting ourselves in the position where we're learning truth in God's wise counsel so that we can help others when they are facing this problem third element there's person to person verbal confrontation or connection that where this occurs to address the problem now you you've seen it you're full of goodness you're wanting to move in that direction you actually are moving in the direction the door is open for you to go and you open that door and begin speaking truth bringing truth to bear in the mind of this person in their heart we see some positive examples in the scriptures remember

Nathan we could say Nathan nephatically confronted David after David sinned with Bathsheba it wasn't an easy thing to do for Nathan and it won't be easy for us to do this either but God instructed him commanded him God instructs us commands us Romans 15 14 that we would be moving in this direction David certainly needed it he needed you can read the Psalms where he's he's in great distress physically emotionally he needed help who was going to come forward Nathan was the one to come forward and he did that in faithfulness and love for God and faithfulness and love for David and God used that positively in David's life well it was not only Nathan Jesus of course was doing this over and over again but especially as he restored Peter after Peter's denial

Jesus made that opportunity come alongside Peter do you love me Peter needed this restoration in Jesus and characteristic love of Jesus Christ for his disciple moved in that direction neuthetically confronted him brought to bear on Peter's mind that which he needed to hear in order for Peter to continue to follow as a disciple Paul did it as well he confronted Peter because Peter was living hypocritically and was leading others astray this one in Galatians 2 11 through 21 I won't read all those verses but it says when Peter came to Antioch Paul said I opposed him to his face because he was clearly in the wrong and there's times that you have to do this publicly as Paul was doing here the other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray and it's interesting as you read through the rest of that passage how Paul carried that out but Peter was in need

Peter was not a perfect man struggling struggling with some issues of identification with certain groups and he fell into that Paul recognized that Paul moved in his direction the door was open and he brought to bear on Peter's mind the truth that Peter needed to hear not only for himself but others who were there being influenced by his example and so through that Paul really made Peter's ministry even more effective and prevented others from going astray as well well not only are there positive examples but there are negative examples one in particular of Eli when he failed to we'll say use this terminology failed to empathetically confront his sons early and seriously let me read this verse for you in 1st Peter 3 13 God spoke to Samuel and said for I told him that I would judge his family

[29 : 38] God speaking Eli I would judge his family forever because of the sin he knew about his sons made themselves contemptible and he failed to restrain them failed to confront them now in the Septuagint most of you know what that is the Greek version translation of the Hebrew Old Testament the word discipline or restrained in that Hebrew is the verbal form of that Greek word that we've been learning about in Romans 15 14 Eli's sin was failure to confront his sons biblically neuthetically in this way he failed to speak soon enough strict enough and seriously enough to affect genuine changes in them not that if you do that at the early serious strict time that the change will come it doesn't always come but still we're faithful Eli that's what he should have been doing he did it later on but far too late for his sons and in far too weak of a manner so he failed to connect with them so that second element of neuthetic confrontation involves that personal connection that communication and discussion directed toward bringing about change in the person's life change that will honor

God and be for their welfare but then the fourth element in this kind of confrontation the confrontation is for the benefit of the one confronted we see this again in Paul's letter to the Corinthians he had a tender concern for these people and he was moved by God to write to them for their welfare he did that for the people in Corinth as well in 1 Corinthians 4 14 he says I'm not writing this to shame you he says again motive was right he had the position he had the authority to do it but he wasn't doing it just I just got to get this off my chest no he was doing this not to shame them but really to warn them he says as my dear children so that tells us a lot too about our parenting too and how we confront our children and sometimes we need to just be there very open and verbal with our children listen

I want you to understand that I'm not doing this just because I get a kick out of expressing and exercising my authority over you and putting somebody in their place I'm doing this to warn you I because you are my dear my beloved child and so that's the heart of the apostle Paul and so again that's what we're praying that the spirit of God would be working in us that we would be yielding ourselves to as he developed that in us that kind of motivation that moves me in the direction of the person rather than the self protection of I don't want to get involved I don't know what to say that makes me uncomfortable no that is something we set aside as we set aside the old man that really just seeks to serve self and we put on the Lord Jesus Christ that moves forward at the sacrifice of our own comforts time or whatever in service and ministry essential ministry for one another so we're doing that for the benefit of others and we also see in

Colossians 1:28 when Paul wrote we proclaim him admonishing there's our word or warning and teaching everyone with all wisdom all wisdom it's good we're developing that skill there's a proper time there's a proper way to bring the warning the instruction we're not just like a bull in a china shop or whatever we've learned developed those skills moving in that direction and so that we can admonish and warn one another and he says so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ see what's moving what's moving him he's so concerned for this person maturity and growth in Christ and his desire to present them perfect in Christ at the time that they all stand before Jesus Christ we all do that now he's moving in that direction of giving these warnings so he's not again thinking of himself and all those things that would keep him back here but he's thinking about the final situation he's thinking about what is more glorious than what would pertain to myself he's thinking of presenting this person perfect in

Christ later what a glorious wonderful time that will be talk about the exhortations the hallelujahs you know all that we're uncomfortable saying now we'll just throw all that off and throw our hands up and scream hallelujah for the glorious things that are being presented before Jesus Christ in the form of people who have walked in obedience to Christ where they were here in this world so in a thetic confrontation people are verbally confronted with God's word out of love and deep concern for that person's good their growth and godliness and Christ likeness and if you find that you're weak in that which we all will be at times we're still struggle with these sinful influence within us that cause us to think more of ourselves than others we just need to fall on our knees in our times of prayer and god give me that heart give me that desire and not only that desire that willingness to do and the move forwardness to really do it help me to do it and then do it and begin developing looking for ways well what's one small step that

[36:07] I can take today that would lead me closer to in that direction where I could help others and really become this kind of servant that's going to strengthen the body of Christ and ultimately I'll be able to have someone be presented before Christ more perfect what's one step what's another step and there we go on and on and we find that our skill is developed in this area again it is Cade is learning how to play the banjo right now interesting and before he got the banjo we're all thinking Cade it's a difficult instrument you don't want to play it find a different instrument that's easier to play he was persistent now I want to play the banjo well God provided him a banjo and he was saving his money up for a banjo it wasn't going to cost two or three hundred dollars but he was saving his money he was persistent God provided him one free of charge and so he started picking and grinning and we were grinning and boy he could play what is it

Cripple Creek now and does pretty good on that and he would be more than glad to play Cripple Creek for you but that only came because he was persistent took one step another step and he's continuing on and so that's how we do that even when it comes to these truths of God's word these activities that God is calling us to we don't just look toward the end product and say I could never do that well then we begin to say okay I could never do that that's true but that's not where I'm going to stay I'm going to pray God what you're calling me to do means I am able to do that so help me to take the first step and what will eventually and ultimately lead me to do what I need to be doing out here and not be settled with not doing it at all well where does this confrontation take place finishing up in here with this with these few thoughts well it certainly takes place in the life of the church and with our pastors and shepherds they neuthetically confront the church and we see these passages and have heard of them numerous times 2nd Timothy 4:2 where they're encouraged preach the word be prepared in season and out of season correct rebuke and encourage with great patience and careful instruction

Titus 2 15 these then are the things you should teach encourage and rebuke with all authority do not let anyone despise you and on and on we could go so our pastors and elders are called to this ministry so when they come to you quite possibly to do that remember instead of drawing back just thank thank you God that I have a shepherd and elder who is willing to put themselves in that difficult position but are still willing to obey God to do that now give me an open heart to receive what obviously I need to hear and see so that I could move on and grow in godliness so it happens through our pastors and shepherds but it also happens as we've been learning through fellow members through one another this kind of ministry that we do on behalf of one another so we're removed from this excuse that it's just for the pastors let the pastor do it the pastor you know so and so you need to get over there and talk to them about this sorry you know if you know about it then God is calling you to do it if you don't know how to do it you might want to get counsel how to do it but don't look for an escape group and make somebody else do it

God has put you in the position for you to express your love and your concern your dedication to Christ and the church and going to that individual and there's numerous verses I could give you on that as well we've been looking at one in Romans 15 14 but our time is running out here but it also happens in the family we have the bigger family the church where it happens but also the smaller family of God the biological family certainly parents with children Ephesians 6 forefathers do not exasperate your children instead bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord instruction is also translated admonition it's again that form of that Greek word that we see in Romans 15 14 so the parent uses the scriptures to straighten out what is wrong in the child's life not with a stick a club but in that way where a manifestation that's flowing out of full of goodness complete knowledge coming alongside so that with the scriptures the parent leads that child out of the wrong path or seeks to do that and sets that child on the right track bringing the scriptures to bear on the mind and the conscience of the child and hope of turning that child to Christ in his ways doing that regularly just a wonderful opportunity but also husbands and wives the husband to the wife

Ephesians 25 following the example of Christ husbands love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy cleansing her by the washing with water through the word so we as men and husbands this is what we're called to in following the example of Christ it's a manifestation of the love of Christ that I take up the word with my wife and to help cleanse her and wash her with the word of God now if I'm not doing that then I'm faltering in really showing the love of Christ and I can't put that off I cannot put that off and be faithful to this command that God has given me so it's not a matter of I'm very uncomfortable doing that I've never done that you'll think I'm not you'll wonder what's going on now you know it's okay what can I do now to correct what I've neglected in the past what's one step that I can take this week dear you know

[42 : 52] I've not done this properly would you forgive me I'm not quite sure how to go forward but I want you to know I want to move forward so what I want to do this week is to pray for you how can I pray for you or would you sit down with me let's just read one verse out of the Bible this morning before we get started so taking those steps but also the wife to the husband we see the wife neurotically confronting her husband from a combination of scriptures one Romans 15 14 we've taken a look at as a believer she has that open door with her believing husband Genesis 2 18 as one called alongside to help her husband but she does it out of that role in Ephesians 5 22 of submission and respect so she's looking for in a submissive respectful way but in obedience to God and love for her husband as a faithful helper so this is what

God is calling us to do and we trust that each of us are looking for that ongoing development of being full of goodness complete in knowledge so that we can carry on this ministry faithfully more and more of instructing admonishing warning one another well think as we leave and as we close what can I do this week what can I do this morning even that will prepare the way for me to be obedient to this scripture passage let's pray father this morning we thank you for our savior jesus christ who was ever so obedient to you in confronting us with our need and with his provision now we pray that with the mind of christ the spirit of god within our hearts you would continue to move us on in the direction where we need to be moving with the mind of christ the love of christ father help us in our weaknesses but not use those weaknesses father excuses but as opportunities to call upon you for grace and mercy in our time of need we thank you for what you will do father even starting today in jesus name amen