

The Value of God's Rebuke Part 1

Rebuke is the language of God to deal with human's sin, shortcomings, mistakes and stubbornness. Let us go through the Scripture and learn how we can use this very effective language of God:

1. “22 And it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob was fled. 23 And he took his brethren with him, and pursued after him seven days' journey; and they overtook him in the mount Gilead. 24 And God came to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said unto him, Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad. 25 Then Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mount: and Laban with his brethren pitched in the mount of Gilead. 26 And Laban said to Jacob, What hast thou done, that thou hast stolen away unawares to me, and carried away my daughters, as captives taken with the sword? 27 Wherefore didst thou flee away secretly, and steal away from me; and didst not tell me, that I might have sent thee away with mirth, and with songs, with tabret, and with harp? 28 And hast not suffered me to kiss my sons and my daughters? thou hast now done foolishly in so doing. 29 It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt: but the God of your father spake unto me yesternight, saying, Take thou heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad. 30 And now, though thou wouldest needs be gone, because thou sore longedst after thy father's house, yet wherefore hast thou stolen my gods? 31 And Jacob answered and said to Laban, Because I was afraid: for I said, Peradventure thou wouldest take by force thy daughters from me. 32 With whomsoever thou findest thy gods, let him not live: before our brethren discern thou what is thine with me, and take it to thee. For Jacob knew not that Rachel had stolen them. 33 And Laban went into Jacob's tent, and into Leah's tent, and into the two maidservants' tents; but he found them not. Then went he out of Leah's tent, and entered into Rachel's tent. 34 Now Rachel had taken the images, and put them in the camel's furniture, and sat upon them. And Laban searched all the tent, but found them not. 35 And she said to her father, Let it not displease my lord that I cannot rise up before thee; for the custom of women is upon me. And he searched but found not the images. 36 And Jacob was wroth, and chode with Laban: and Jacob answered and said to Laban, What is my trespass? what is my sin, that thou hast so hotly pursued after me? 37 Whereas thou hast searched all my stuff, what hast thou found of all thy household stuff? set it here before my brethren and thy brethren, that they may judge betwixt us both. 38 This twenty years have I been with thee; thy ewes and thy she goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten. 39 That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night. 40 Thus I was; in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes. 41 Thus have I been twenty years in thy house; I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy cattle: and thou hast changed my wages ten times. 42 Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty. God hath seen mine affliction and the labour of my hands, and rebuked thee yesternight.” (Genesis 31:22-42 KJV)

In Verse 24, the Hebrews word of ‘take heed’, is ‘shamar’, and it has the following meaning: keep, guard, observe, give heed, watch, observe, to keep (within bounds), refrain, restrain, treasure, reserve, refrain, be guarded and pay heed. The Lord warned Laban not to speak anything to Jacob whether good or bad, **“And God came to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said unto him, Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad.”**

Genesis 31:24 KJV) God wanted Laban not to do anything or interfere with Jacob's life. The Lord will rebuke our enemies and those who try to harm us or do bad to us. He has His own way to do it in our behalf and we need to trust Him for that. Laban was rebuked in such a way that he even confessed it to Jacob and he did not hide it. God's rebuke in Laban's life was so powerful that he would not manage without publicly declaring it.

Other places in the Old Testament that this word, ‘shamar’, is used are in the following examples Scriptures, where God was warning His people not to do certain things that against His will and instructions:

“And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death.” (Exodus 19:12 KJV) God warned the Israelites not to go beyond their limit and touch the mountain of God.

“11 Observe thou that which I command thee this day: behold, I drive out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite. 12 Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee.” (Exodus 34:11-12 KJV) God warned His people not to intermingle with the people of the land; otherwise they will be snare to them.

“26 Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations; neither any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourneth among you.” “30 Therefore shall ye keep mine ordinance, that ye commit not any one of these abominable customs, which were committed before you, and that ye defile not yourselves therein: I am the LORD your God.” (Leviticus 18:26, 30 KJV) The Lord command his people to keep His commands and warn them not to do the abominations that other nations they were doing before the Israelites possessed the Promised Land.

“3 Ye shall fear every man his mother, and his father, and keep my sabbaths: I am the LORD your God.” “30 Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the LORD.” (Leviticus 19:3, 30 KJV) God warn His people that everyone should revere his parents and shall keep the Sabbath.

That rebuke of God to Laban, Jacob used it to reprove his uncle and to face him, face to face. He faced him that he changed his wages ten times, and that was the reason that God rebuked Laban to protect Jacob and not to allow Laban and his sons to take away from Jacob what God had given him from possessions, **“Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty. God hath seen mine affliction and the labour of my hands, and rebuked thee yesternight.” (Genesis 31:42 KJV)** The Hebrew word here in this verse for ‘rebuked’, is ‘Yakach’, and it has the following meanings: to prove, to decide, to judge, to adjudge, to appoint, to convict, to chide, to rebuke, to reprove, to correct, to be right, to chastened, to argue, to reason, and to reason together.

Other places in the Old Testament that this word is used are in the following examples of Scriptures:

“1 And Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country, and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar. 2 And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my

sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah. 3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife. 4 But Abimelech had not come near her: and he said, LORD, wilt thou slay also a righteous nation? 5 Said he not unto me, She is my sister? and she, even she herself said, He is my brother: in the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this. 6 And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her. 7 Now therefore restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore her not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that are thine. 8 Therefore Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called all his servants, and told all these things in their ears: and the men were sore afraid. 9 Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said unto him, What hast thou done unto us? and what have I offended thee, that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done. 10 And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing? 11 And Abraham said, Because I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife's sake. 12 And yet indeed she is my sister; she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife. 13 And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said unto her, This is thy kindness which thou shalt shew unto me; at every place whither we shall come, say of me, He is my brother. 14 And Abimelech took sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and womenservants, and gave them unto Abraham, and restored him Sarah his wife. 15 And Abimelech said, Behold, my land is before thee: dwell where it pleaseth thee. 16 And unto Sarah he said, Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand pieces of silver: behold, he is to thee a covering of the eyes, unto all that are with thee, and with all other: thus she was reproved. 17 So Abraham prayed unto God: and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maidservants; and they bare children.” (Genesis 20:1-17 KJV) Abraham and Sarah were rebuked by Abimelech, as we read and listened above. He rebuked them because they caused him almost to sin when they told him that they are brother and sister and hide the fact from him that they are husband and wife. Abimelech was about to sin by taking Sarah as his wife, but the Lord came to him in a dream and warned him, that she is a married woman. People who do as what Abraham and Sarah did, they needed to be admonished, reprimanded, rebuked and criticized to avoid doing that again.

“22 And it came to pass at that time, that Abimelech and Phichol the chief captain of his host spake unto Abraham, saying, God is with thee in all that thou doest: 23 Now therefore swear unto me here by God that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son: but according to the kindness that I have done unto thee, thou shalt do unto me, and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned. 24 And Abraham said, I will swear. 25 And Abraham reproved Abimelech because of a well of water, which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away. 26 And Abimelech said, I wot not who hath done this thing; neither didst thou tell me, neither yet heard I of it, but to day. 27 And Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them unto Abimelech; and both of them made a covenant. 28 And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves. 29 And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What mean these seven ewe lambs which thou hast set by themselves? 30 And he said, For these seven ewe lambs shalt thou take of my hand, that they may be a witness unto me, that I have digged this well. 31 Wherefore he called that place Beersheba; because there they sware both of them.” (Genesis 21:22-31 KJV) Here Abimelech was rebuked by Abraham

for the well that his men took violently from Abraham, *“And Abraham reproveth Abimelech because of a well of water, which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away.” (Genesis 21:25 KJV)* Rebuke is needed to those who take things that are not theirs for they need to restore them. The rebuke application here is to bring the justice of God and adjudge the situation to compensate those who are abused.

“14 And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master.” “44 And she say to me, Both drink thou, and I will also draw for thy camels: let the same be the woman whom the LORD hath appointed for my master's son.” (Genesis 24:14, 44 KJV) the word ‘appointed’, that used twice here is ‘Yakach’. What can be understood from that, the fruit of rebuke is to bring us and direct us to God’s choice and toward His decision to our lives. Here in this example of the servant of Abraham, he was directed to find out the suitable wife for Isaac, his master son. Further what we can say here that, the language of rebuke can take away wrong choices that would probably mislead us from what God had ordained for us. If someone is rebuked, he is awaked from his delinquency and once again he is redirected toward the direction that he need to go

“3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours. 4 And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him. 5 And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more. 6 And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: 7 For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf. 8 And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words. 9 And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. 10 And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?” (Genesis 37:3-10 KJV)

Here Jacob pampered Joseph his son more than his other children, and that caused him to have pride. Added to his pride is when the Lord gave him dreams and showed in the dream that he will finally ruled over his family. His father rebuked him for that. Pride with the lack of rebuke will cause a stage of over confidence and being higher than others. That will cause more self righteousness, and will cause others to be jealous and might revenge and cause troubles. Joseph’s brothers out of jealousy revenged of him and caused him much harm. What we learn from this event of rebuke that we need to be consistent in rebuking our children and disciples when we discern they have pride and overconfidence. The word here used for ‘rebuke’, is ‘Gaar’ and is repeated in other places as we can read in the following Scriptures:

“And let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not.” Ruth 2:16 KJV)

“Thou hast rebuked the heathen, thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put out their name for ever and ever.” (Psalm 9:5 KJV)

“Rebuke the company of spearmen, the multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the people, till every one submit himself with pieces of silver: scatter thou the people that delight in war.” (Psalm 68:30 KJV)

“He rebuked the Red sea also, and it was dried up: so he led them through the depths, as through the wilderness.” (Psalm 106:9 KJV)

“Thou hast rebuked the proud that are cursed, which do err from thy commandments.” (Psalm 119:21 KJV)

“The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters: but God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind.” (Isaiah 17:13 KJV)

“He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers: Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth.” (Nahum 1:4 KJV)

My dear and beloved: “Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.” (Mark 16:14 KJV) Jesus rebuked His disciples because of their lack of faith. God said about Solomon, who is going to be the person who will build the temple of God, *“I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men.”* (2 Samuel 7:14 KJV) *“Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.”* (Luke 17:3 KJV) The Lord Jesus wants us to rebuke our brethren who do wrong, and correct them, as well as He wants us to forgive those who repent.

My Prayer: Father God, I come before you in the name of Jesus, who died on the cross for my sins to give me eternal life. Lord I commit myself to the principles that I learned from your Word. Lord leads me to apply this message of yours tactfully in my life. Lord I am willing to rebuke those who do wrong so that they will be corrected and start to do what is right. Lord I ask you to protect me, provide for me and lead me with your Holy Spirit to do what is right and just, this is my prayer in Jesus name, Amen.

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