

The Sick and Dying Don't Need More Bad News.

Constructive criticism is most often viewed negatively, no matter how loving the intent. Its effect on people is often the opposite of what was intended. In the Bible we find many examples of people reacting negatively to the chastisements of God. They dig their feet in and continue to rebel. Many of the prophets were killed for their trouble. The judgments of God yield the *"peaceable fruit of righteousness,"* when directed at people whose hearts have been prepared by the Holy Spirit. Most often, however, the softening of the heart happens as a result of being shown mercy, rather than judgment. Sometimes people are so badly beaten down and so completely devoid of self-worth that constructive criticism only serves to pour salt on their wounds and makes them resist all the more.

The power of the Gospel of Christ is in the Cross. God's self-sacrificing love and forgiveness are very powerful motivators that can soften even the hardest of hearts. Being told that we are wrong is necessary for all of us, but we need to realize that the chastisements of God are primarily used to prepare our hearts to receive His love. They are not the end result, but instead are a necessary precursor to our receiving God's blessings. The Hells that we find ourselves in when we lose our way are used by God to humble us and break us free from our own stubborn self-will and prepare us to receive His love and forgiveness. God doesn't allow us to go through this just for the Hell of it. He does it for our good.

We need to realize that bad people don't need to be warned about Hell. They are already living in Hells of their own making. What they need are words of love and kindness. They need to know that God loves them, no matter what they have done. The Gospel of Christ is Good News, not bad news. The sick and dying don't need more bad news. What they need is healing.