

## Equipped to welcome correction

Several kids at school had them. They didn't like them, but they knew they had to wear them for their own good. Every one of these kids longed for the day when they wouldn't need them anymore. What were they? School uniforms? Ill-fitting sports gear? No, nothing like this. These unwelcome additions were... dental braces.

For months, and I think years in some cases, some of my friends had to wear braces on their teeth in order to correct some dental defect. While it wasn't an enjoyable experience at the time, those who persevered with wearing their braces ended up with a mouthful of straight teeth that were no longer out of alignment.

Perhaps you've got good teeth and have never had to wear braces to correct any problem. But might there be something else in your life that would benefit from being corrected or put right?

### Biblical corrective

The Bible says, *"To learn, you must love discipline; it is stupid to hate correction"*.<sup>1</sup> I don't know about you, but this sentence contains two of my least favourite words - discipline and correction. But, in order to learn and make progress, I need both. There are at least two reasons for this. The first is that correction is one of the purposes of Scripture<sup>2</sup> and the second reason is that rejecting correction is linked with disobedience and lack of trust in God.<sup>3</sup> However, the upside is that to heed correction is to grow in understanding.<sup>4</sup>

To respond positively to being corrected can be a mark of humility. It suggests we're ready to learn from others and prepared to acknowledge there's room for improvement in some area of our lives. Not everyone who tries to correct us will do so from right motives, but it's up to us to test the validity of what they are saying.

### Practical example

I have a friend who is a well-known Bible teacher and, after giving a message to a large group of people, one of them approached her and suggested ways she could improve her presentation. My friend's first reaction was to impatiently dismiss what this person had said. After all, the critic had no experience of standing on a platform teaching hundreds of people, so what did she know? However, my friend wasn't so short-sighted that she was going to totally reject this unsolicited criticism out of hand.

On her way home from the teaching event, she carefully considered her critic's remarks and prayed that God would show her if there was any merit in them. And, guess what? There was! My friend took on board some of the remarks that had been made to her and the result was a definite improvement in her communication style. Heeding the correction was beneficial to her and to her future audiences. How unwise she would have been to have disregarded the correction that had been offered.

### Your response

How is it with you? How will you answer the question: In what area(s) of my life do I need correction? Your first reaction might be to dismiss this question, thinking that it doesn't apply to you and, even if it does, it's not something you want to turn your attention to right now. But taking time to seriously consider this question, and then to respond positively to it, could result in living more effectively as a follower of Jesus Christ. I reckon that would be a very worth-while outcome, don't you?

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<sup>1</sup> Proverbs 12:1 (NLT)

<sup>2</sup> 2 Timothy 3:16

<sup>3</sup> Zephaniah 3:2

<sup>4</sup> Proverbs 15:32