

INTERACTIVE TEACHING/LEARNING GUIDE
Lesson #8

SESSION TITLE: “ADMONISHING ONE ANOTHER”

FOCAL PASSAGE: (Rom. 15:14 ; James 5:19-20)

Central Teaching/Learning Aim: To help the learner discover the purpose and meaning of admonishment and help him/her identify other believers they need to help.

I. Creating Interest in the Series (Hook)

A. Share - the following statistics from the Barna Research group 5/30/03. The stats demonstrate how the gap of what’s “morally acceptable” is not too wide between all adults and “born again” adults.

PERCENT OF ADULTS WHO DESCRIBE BEHAVIORS AS “MORALLY ACCEPTABLE”

<u>Behavior</u>	<u>All Adults</u>	<u>Mainline Protestant</u>	<u>Not Mainline</u>	<u>Regularly Attend Church</u>	<u>“Born Again”</u>
Cohabitation	58	54	43	42	36
Getting drunk	36	30	20	23	20
Watching movie with explicit sexual behavior	49	44	33	33	29
Using profanity	37	29	25	24	22
Breaking speed limit	39	39	34	33	33

Source: Barna Research Group, based on national telephone surveys and reported in the “Leading Your Church Forward” seminar by George Barna

People’s opinions on these moral issues often change, Barna reported, noting that even Christians often are swayed by the last strong stance they have heard.

Churches may be too “timid” when dealing with controversial issues, Barna asserted. “Born-again” believers do not seem to know where the church stands and therefore avoid discussions on moral and ethical issues, he said.

Barna identified five demographic groups he believes are “morally at risk”:

- Adults under 35 years old who are activists and future leaders
- Men of all ages
- The wealthy
- Trendsetters of the West Coast
- Adults in churches of more than 500 members, whom Barna said are morally at risk because larger churches generally demand less accountability.

Display - Barna’s quote:

“Churches may be too “timid” when dealing with controversial issues, believers do not seem to know where the church stands and therefore avoid discussions on issues.”

State – In order for us to make it on our spiritual journey, we have to work together.

Share – The following excerpt from an article in the Chicago Tribune:

The headline in the Chicago Tribune read, “Sober Companions’ Shadow the Stars.” It explained that movie companies or concert promoters sometimes assign “sober companions” to movie and rock stars who have drug or alcohol problems to guard their investments. They want to be sure a movie or concert isn’t scuttled by an out-of-control star. Also known as “minders” or “clean-living assistants,” these folks stick to the stars like glue, making sure they are never alone or accessible to those who might slip them drugs or drink. One sober companion, Tim Tankosic, explains, “The point is to be a rock, a friendly face, a reminder of recovery, a safe person.”

The article explains that “on a typical movie location, Tankosic lives with the celebrity in a home far from the hotel that houses the rest of the cast and crew. In the morning, he rises with the star and they meditate together. After breakfast, he accompanies the star to the set, and then to a support group meeting.

During off-hours, Tankosic said, he tries to make sure the star has fun, although he steers him or her clear of ‘slippery places’ --- any locale where drugs or alcohol are available.” Another “minder” said discretion is a critical part of the job. “I’m like a wisp of smoke,” he said.

---Rachel Abramowitz and Dana Calvo, “Life In Hollywood: ‘Sober Companions’ Shadow the Stars”, *Chicago Tribune* (4-2-02)

State – This is what Christians need---“Clean-living Assistants”.

Today - we are going to discuss what it means to admonish one another in order to help others grow spiritually.

B. Optional Method

Have a role-play presented. Enlist two people to present the role-play.
Props needed: tablecloth, 2 place settings, a coffee cup and a glass of orange juice.

See Handout for Role-play script.

After the role-play state – This is exactly the opposite way to admonish a believer.

Today - we are going to discuss what it means to admonish one another in order to help others grow spiritually.

C. Optional Method – Movie Clip - “Music of the Heart”

Start: 00:38:58

Stop: 00:41:40

Synopsis:

The movie *Music of the Heart* is based on the life of Roberta Guaspari (Meryl Streep), a single mother who teaches the violin to students in inner city New York. Her passion and commitment inspires thousands of young people to excel in music and in life.

In one scene, Roberta meets with the school principal and a mother of a student who argues that Roberta shouts at her students. Roberta maintains she only does so when they don’t listen. The mother asks, “Didn’t you tell them that they were making their parents sick?”

Roberta laughs uncomfortably and tells her that she didn’t say exactly that.

The mother insists, “I’m raising Becky in a supportive atmosphere. I didn’t send her to school to be abused.”

Roberta responds, “I’m just trying to teach them discipline, that’s all. If you want to take a very difficult instrument, you have to take it seriously. You have to focus. You have to pay attention.”

The principal interrupts Roberta and tells her she should soften her comments. Roberta reluctantly agrees.

In the next scene, Roberta is instructing her students, all about 10 years old. They are out of sync and playing badly, and they know it. Roberta pauses and says, "Well, that was pretty good. Not so bad."

The students are surprised, and one says, "It wasn't. We stunk."

Roberta responds, "Well, I wouldn't put it that way. I would just say that people could practice a little bit more." She asks a student if he practiced, and he says no. She encourages him to try a little harder for next week. "All you have to do is your best."

One of the students speaks up and asks, "Roberta, why are you acting like that, like, nice?"

"Well, don't you want a nice teacher?"

He answers that he already has nice teachers and wants variety.

Another student says, "We like you better the way you used to be." All the students agree.

One girl says, "I agree. This is even worse. You're acting weird now."

Roberta smiles and says, "Okay, I take it all back. You stunk!" All the kids laugh. "Don't tell your parents that I said that. Let's do it again. Right, this time. Stand up straight."

---Music of the Heart (Miramax, 1999), written by Pamela Gray, directed by Wes Craven

State – Sometimes people appreciate hearing the honest truth, being held accountable. Just like the children in the clip, we admire people who have enough love to confront us with compassion.

Today - we are going to discuss what it means to admonish one another in order to help others grow spiritually.

BOOK Getting Into the Word

A. Utilize - the Discussion Guide to examine the scripture.

(Note: This would be an excellent group activity discussion guide.)

LOOK Getting the Word into Life

A. Distribute - the handout, "Admonish or Admonish Not" and guide members to complete it.

TOOK Conclusion

IV. Conclusion (Took)

A. Distribute – the Accountability Guides and remind members about how to utilize them in their accountability relationships. If we have accountable relationships, we can avoid admonishment in a time of crises because we are holding one another accountable regularly. Challenge members to get into an accountable relationship.

Close in prayer.

B. Optional Method

Share – the following account and then challenge members to have an accountability partner or group:

When Justin Armour was a rookie wide receiver with the Buffalo Bills, some veteran teammates invited him to a preseason party. Justin went and couldn't believe what he saw: Gorgeous women everywhere, offering free sex to any of the guys who wanted it.

"It was the most eye-opening experience I've ever had," Justin says. "I had heard about things like this, but I was so naïve. I got out of there as fast as I could!"

As a single Christian guy, Justin had committed to saving sex for marriage. To do so, he knows he's got to run from temptation. "I'd rather not have my mind polluted by those things. Once you've been in a couple situations where there's temptation, you learn how to avoid them and you don't go back."

Justin also calls his best friend and accountability partner, Steve Stenstrom. "You need someone to hold you accountable for walking with Christ," says Justin. "Steve does that for me. He knows everything about my life, good and bad, and there's nothing he won't hold me accountable for."

---Mark Moring, editor of *Men of Integrity*. *Men of Integrity*, Vol. 1, no. 1.

C. Optional Method

Share – the following illustration:

In what the news called "The Miracle at Quecreek," nine miners trapped for three days 240 feet underground in a water-filled mine shaft "decided early on they were either going to live or die as a group."

The 55 degree (Fahrenheit) water threatened to kill them slowly by hypothermia, so according to one news report "When one would get cold, the other eight would huddle around the person and warm that person, and when another person got cold, the favor was returned."

"Everybody had strong moments," miner Harry B. Mayhugh told reporters after being released from Somerset Hospital in Somerset. "But any certain time maybe one guy got down, and then the rest pulled together. And then that guy would get back up, and maybe someone else would feel a little weaker, but it was a team effort. That's the only way it could have been."

They faced incredibly hostile conditions together---and they all came out alive together.

---Adapted from "Teamwork Helped Miners Survive Underground", CNN.com (7-28-02)

State – Notice how the men survived. When one got down the others rallied to pull him up. They could not have made it without the support and help of one another. This is a great example of an SGM that is concerned about the spiritual development of all members. When one becomes weak and strays, the others bring him back quickly.

**DISCUSSION GUIDE
(Teacher's Copy)**

1. Why did Paul state that the Christians would be able to admonish one another? (Romans 15:14)
- a. They were full of goodness; they had a genuine interest in the welfare of others.**
 - b. They were knowledgeable in what is biblical.**

2. What is the literal meaning of the Greek term for "admonish"?

It carried the sense of "a warning...to provide instruction as to correct behavior".

3. This term is used eight times in the New Testament.
Record how it is used in the following verses:

- a) (Acts 20:31) Admonishment is an ongoing process.**
- b) (1 Cor. 4:14) It is not about embarrassing someone.**
- c) (Col. 1:28) It helps build wisdom and complete believers.**
- d) (Col 3:16) It is a part of spiritual discipline.**
- e) (I Thess. 5:12) Those who admonish are to be appreciated.**
- f) (I Thess. 5:14) Admonish with patience.**
- g) (2 Thess. 3:15) Admonish as a brother not an enemy.**

4. When helping to "turn back" a believer who has strayed, what characteristics should be avoided?

5. What are the results of "turning back" a sinner? (James 5:20)

- a) His soul would be saved from death.**
- b) He would hide a multitude of sins.**

6. When James referred to "saving the soul" of the believers who had strayed, did he mean that there was a possibility of a believer losing his/her salvation?

No, he referred to the deliverance of a believer's life work--to preserve the believer from a loss of reward.

7. What are the most common reasons why Christians do not admonish one another?

**Because of sin in their own life.
Do not want to appear judgmental.
Do not want to appear nosey.
Not interested in other people, too self-centered.**

8. Is there anyone in your life that you need to help turn back?
Develop a plan of action.

ADMONISH OR ADMONISH NOT

Evaluate your admonishment scale.

(On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being "Never" and 5 being "Every Time")

_____ My life is full of "goodness".

_____ I know what the Bible says about godly and righteous living.

_____ When I admonish another Christian, I reflect deep love and concern.

_____ I admonish in private.

_____ I am persistent in my admonishment without being overbearing or obnoxious.

_____ I admonish others to help turn them back and restore them.

_____ I admonish other Christians when I sense the need.

If you tend to seldom or never admonish others, list the reasons why it is difficult for you.

Are there people in your life for which you are concerned because they have strayed from their Christian walk? List them.

How can you admonish each of them in a non-judgmental, encouraging way?
Develop a plan for each person.

Role Play

Scene – Two Christian friends sitting at a restaurant breakfast table discussing their lifestyles.

Friend #1 I'm glad you agreed to have breakfast with me this morning. Let me begin with a word of prayer. O Lord, I come to you this morning like I do each and every morning. Of course, Lord, as you know I usually spend at least 30 minutes in prayer with you every morning.

(**Friend #2** opens one eye and looks at the other person as Friend # 1 continues praying)

I come to pray that other Christians can get their act together and truly follow you in all areas of life, not just in the areas where it makes them look good in front of other Christians. I ask that you convict other friends in their hypocritical behavior.

(**Friend #2** squirms in his chair as Friend #1 continues.)

Wake them up, Lord. Shock them back into reality before it's too late and their lives are totally worthless and ruined. In Jesus' Name. Oh, and, thanks for the food. Amen.

(**To Friend #2**) I guess you know why I asked you to breakfast?

Friend #2: Yeah, just to catch up on old times. Right?

Friend #1: Not really. I wanted to talk to you about your lifestyle. I used to have a sin problem like you do, but since I made Jesus the Lord of my life, I can hardly recall a sin that I have committed in the past month!

Friend #2: Oh, come on, I'm sure. . .

(**Friend #1** interrupts.)

Friend #1: You and I both know that pet sin of yours I'm talking about. And quite frankly if you keep this up it can ruin your family, marriage and your life.

Friend #2: I really . . .

(**Friend #1** interrupts again.)

Friend #1: I know that to be a true Christian friend, it's my duty to confront you. Romans 15:14 tells me that I have to admonish you—which means I have to warn you about your evil ways.

Friend #2: But I . . .

(**Friend #1** interrupts again.)

Friend #1: Please, don't interrupt while I am trying to help you. I want to make it perfectly clear how I feel about your lifestyle.

Like Lucy told Charlie Brown—In this sin area of your life . . .

You're a foul ball in the line drive of life.
You're often in the shadow of your own goal post.
You're a miscue.
You're 3 putts on the 18th green.
You are a 7-10 split in the 10th frame.
You have dropped a rod and reel in the lake of life.
You're a missed free throw.
You're a shanked 9-iron, a called 3rd strike,

A bug on the windshield of life!
Do you understand???? Have I made myself clear???

Friend #2: Well, I certainly hope that . . .

(**Friend #1** interrupts.)

Friend #1: And I'm sure glad we had this time to discuss your sin problem. I know you feel better; I certainly do.

(Picks the check up, looks at it as he stands up, preparing to leave.)

Hey—it must be my lucky day. They didn't charge for your orange juice or my coffee—oh well, their loss is my gain. Hey, I hope to see you at Church Sunday, and you have a great day!

(Walks away, leaving **Friend #2** sitting at the table.)

Word for the Week

"Submitting To One Another"
Philippians 2:3-4; Matthew 20:25-28
Week #8

Monday - Read Philippians 2:1-4; Romans 12:3

- Ø Observe the "if-then" statements in verses 1-2.
- Ø What contrast does Paul make between verses 2 and 3?
- Ø Reading between the lines, what was wrong with the church in Philippi?
- Ø How can we counter attitudes of self-importance and self-interest?

Tuesday - Read Philippians 2:3-4; John 13:12-17

- Ø How should we regard others in our community of faith? (2:3 and 7)
- Ø What does Paul warn believers not to do?
- Ø Observe the "not only, but also" directive in verse 4. Are you to overlook your own interests?
- Ø If humility is using your strength for the good of others, how can you put it into practice today?

Wednesday - Read Matthew 20:25-28

- Ø Read the immediate context (20-28). What were the ten indignant about?
- Ø What values did Jesus turn upside down when He met with His disciples?
- Ø How does Jesus want His followers to be different from other leaders?
- Ø How can service result in leadership?

Thursday - Read Matthew 20:25-28

- Ø Read the preceding context (17-28). What didn't the disciples and "mom" get?
- Ø What would the death of Christ accomplish (28)?
- Ø How did Jesus exemplify the kind of leadership he wants to see in His followers?
- Ø In what specific ways can you serve people, using Jesus as your model?

Friday - Read: Matthew 19:27-30; Jesus' parable in 20:1-16; and 20:26-28

- Ø What will happen to those who seek status and position in God's kingdom?
- Ø How significant do you feel in relation to God's kingdom?
- Ø Who will be highly esteemed in the kingdom?
- Ø What act of humble service are you willing to do for Christ?

REAL LIFE
“Admonishing One Another”
Rom. 15:14 ; James 5:19-20

(Exegetical . . . What it meant to the Romans/Colossians back THEN)
THE OBJECTIVE OF PAUL'S CONFIDENCE IN THE ROMANS
(To Glorify God Together [15:5-13], as Illustrated in James 5:19-20),
BASED ON THEIR FULL GOODNESS, COMPLETE KNOWLEDGE,
AND COMPETENT ABILITY, WAS THAT THEY WOULD
ADMONISH ONE ANOTHER.

- I. The OBJECTIVE of Paul's Confidence in the Romans (ultimately To Glorify God Together - see 15:5-13), Based on Their Full Goodness, Complete Knowledge, and Competent Ability, was that they would Admonish One Another, (14).
 - A. The Goal of Paul's Confidence in the Romans was that they would Glorify God Together (see 15:5-13), (14a).
 - B. The Basis of Paul's Confidence was that the Romans were Full of Goodness, Complete in Knowledge, and Competent in Ability, (14b).
 - C. The Objective of Paul's Confidence in the Romans was that they could/ would Admonish One Another, (14c).

[The Greek term translated “admonish” was used eight times in the New Testament. It carried the sense of “a warning . . . to provide instruction as to correct behavior and belief.”

Acts 20:31 Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.
1 Cor. 4:14 I do not write these things to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children.
Col. 1:28 And we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ.
Col. 3:16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.
1 Th. 5:12 But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction,
1 Th. 5:14 And we urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all men.
2 Th. 3:15 And yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.
- II. The RESULTS of a Believer Turning Back a sinner from the error of his way, as James' readers were to Know/Remember, were that 1) he would Save his soul from death and 2) he would Hide a multitude of sins, (James 5:19-20).
 - A. The Condition in which a Believer might find himself, according to James' final observation, was having Turned Back one who had Wandered from the Truth (in doctrine or behavior), (19).
 - B. The Content of James' Command to the Believers was that they Know (i.e. remember) the results of Turning Back a sinner from the error of his way, (20a).

[James presented a hypothetical illustration of one believer admonishing another. Although the specific term was not used, James implied the concept of Christian admonition in this, his climatic statement. Here, too, the positive results were recounted.]
 - C. The Results of a Believer Turning Back a sinner from the error of his way were that 1) he would Save his soul from death and 2) he would Hide a multitude of sins, (20b).

[James was not speaking of justification (or the possibility of losing one's eternal “salvation”) here, though we typically think in those terms when we encounter the words “save(d)” or “salvation”. Rather, he referred to the deliverance of a believer's life-work (see, e.g., 1 Corinthians 3:12-15). As we have studied in James and 1 Peter, the concept of “saving the soul” meant to preserve the believer from a loss of reward, from a life that would amount to nothing in light of eternity.]

(Theological . . . What it means to believers ALWAYS)
THE MASTER-PLANNED COMMUNITY
ADMONISHES ONE ANOTHER.

- I. The Ultimate Goal of the Church is To Glorify God, (Romans 15:5-13).]
- II. The Basis of Christian Admonition Rests in . . .
 - A. Full Goodness,
 - B. Complete Knowledge, and
 - C. Competent Ability, (Romans 15:14a).
- III. The Master-Planned Community Admonishes One Another, (15:14b).
- IV. Christian Admonition Results in . . .
 - A. A Life Delivered from Insignificance, and
 - B. The Avoidance of Sin, (James 5:19-20).

(Pedagogical . . . What it means for us NOW)
 ADMONISH ONE ANOTHER.

- I. Take Responsibility for your Fellow Christian.
 - A. People you know are Hurting.
 - B. People you know are in Danger.
 - C. People you know are in Sin.
- II. Strengthen Your Credibility by . . .
 - A. Pursuing Goodness,
 - B. Knowing God's Word,
 - C. Developing Skill, (Romans 15:14a).
- III. ADMONISH ONE ANOTHER, (Romans 15:14b).
 - A. Offer an appropriate Warning.
 - B. Give appropriate Instruction.
- IV. You Can Help To . . . (James 5:19-20)
 - A. Deliver Your Brother from a Wasted Life,
 - B. Keep Your Sister from Ongoing Sin.