

Should I Take Heed to Warnings?

Intro:

I. Do you heed warnings? When should you heed a warning: Never, Always, Sometimes?

A. Sound bite #1 [Tornado Warning Siren Sound Effect freesound - YouTube](#)

1. What you just heard was a “tornado warning” sound.
2. You understand that it was just an illustration--that there is no real threat and no need to take action.
3. But take a look at what the warning was about:

Sound bite # 2 From “into the storm” video

[Tornado Warning-Must Watch.....Best sound effect - YouTube](#)

- a. Did you notice that the people were more concerned with watching and taking pictures than in heeding the warning—even laughing and carrying on.
- b. They needed to get to safety, which they obviously did not do.

B. Not all warnings should be heeded.

1. When you receive a warning several things automatically go through your head:
 - a. You consider the content of the warning;
 - b. The nature of the warning;
 - c. Who is giving the warning (his charisma, appeal and character);
 - c. Whether you should or should not take some action; and finally, What action to take if action is called for.
2. Thus, there are a lot of things to consider when we look at warnings.

II. Do you know the difference in a *warning* and a *threat*?

A. Recently, a man had some property that belonged to me (valued at about \$3k).

1. He ignored my calls and text messages until I warned him that my next action, if he did not respond to my concerns, would be something he did not like.
2. He did not ask what I was going to do – he just assumed I was threatening him with some sort of bodily harm, and flipped out.
 - a. When he finally responded, he accused me of threatening him and said he notified the sheriff.
 - b. My warning, which I never had to follow through with,

would have been simply to notify the sheriff in hopes of him helping me get back my property.

- c. The man became paranoid – thinking I was going to do who knows what to him--but I made no threat!
- d. I told him he needed to look up the word “threat” and compare it to the word “warning,” which is what we are going to do now.

Warning:

“a statement or event that indicates a possible or impending danger, problem, or other unpleasant situation.”

Threat:

“a statement of an intention to inflict pain, injury, damage, or other hostile action on someone in retribution for something done or not done.”

3. The man...was as thief; he was paranoid and a danger to anyone who he considered to be a threat to him.
 - a. But to his credit he heeded my warning and gave back my stuff.
 - b. He took “HEED” to my words and responded in his best interest.

Body:

- I. Let’s talk about what it means to “heed” a warning.

Definition: *“To heed something is to listen to it, pay careful attention to it, or otherwise observe or acknowledge it in some way—and often to take action on it. To heed a warning is to listen to it and do what it says to do (or not do what it says not to do).”*

- A. Warnings can be good, or they can be bad.
 1. For example, let us say your doctor tells you that you have gangrene in your little toe.
 - a. He tells you it is a simple procedure to remove the toe and that this is necessary to prevent it from spreading over your entire body, resulting in death.
 - b. Now, if this happened to you would you listen, heed the warning and take the suggested action?
 2. Heeding warning is usually GOOD, but it CAN be BAD.
 - a. For example, your doctor might be a quack in need of money, and he warns you about something knowing

it is not true, just so he can “treat” you and get money from you, or your insurance.

- b. In this case, it would obviously be best if you detected the *false warning* and responded accordingly.
3. Sometimes, employers must warn an employee of the consequences if they continue to do, or fail to do, something that displeases the boss.
 - a. Sometimes the warning works – sometimes it does not.
 - b. Sometimes employees get fired for not heeding warnings.
 - c. Why would one not heed such a warning?
 - 1) He may be a fool and fail to act.
 - 2) Or he may not take the warning seriously.
 - 3) Or he may think he is so important or such a valuable employee that there is no way he would be let go, and so he does not take heed to the warning.
 - 4) Therefore, when the words “I’m letting you go—pack up your things” are uttered, it is too late...

[reminded of the song, “to late will be for you to cry, when mercy’s day has passed you by”, us as invitation song]

II. Examples of disasters that happened because of failure to heed warnings.

A. Titanic

1. Late on the night of April 14, 1912 the Titanic, hailed by its captain as “unsinkable” (“not even God could sink it”) struck an iceberg.
2. It sank two hours and 40 minutes later resulting in the deaths of more than 1500 people.
3. The captain had been warned about the icebergs in the path that was planned, but he ignored the warnings.

B. Pearl Harbor

1. Another great tragedy was the Japanese successful attack on the navy fleet stationed at Pearl Harbor.
2. They crippled or destroyed nearly 20 American ships and more than 300 airplanes. 2,403 sailors, soldiers and civilians were killed and an additional 1,000 people were wounded.
3. It could have been avoided if the warnings had been heeded instead of ignored.

III. Bible Teaching regarding warnings.

- A. The word “warn” occurs 11 times in the KJV; “warned,” occurs

10 times and “Warning,” occurs 8 times, for a total of 29 occurrences, and there are many passages that give warnings where none of these words are used..

- B. Both the Bible and common sense tell us that we should heed legitimate warnings.
- C. God has often given warnings, and as we shall see in some of the readings in this lesson, He used persuasive words to move the hearers to respond wisely (to which some did – but some did not):

- 1. First, he warned Adam and Eve:

Gen. 2:16-17 “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”

We all know how that turned out after they failed to take heed and disobeyed God.

- 2. Noah

Hebrews 11:7a “By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house”

- a. It turned out well for Noah because he heeded the divine warning and began building the ark, just like God instructed him to do.
- b. While he built it, he preached to the people--warning them about what God was planning to do.
- c. But the rest of the people ignored the warnings and when the flood came, they all drowned.
- d. They lost their lives because when warned, for whatever Reason, they took no action, until it was too late.

- 3. Leviticus chapter 26 (TEV)

The Lord said to the people of Israel:

15 If you refuse to obey my laws and commands and break the covenant I have made with you, 16 I will punish you. I will bring disaster on you--incurable diseases and fevers that will make you blind and cause your life to waste away. You will plant your crops, but it will do you no good, because your enemies will conquer you and eat what you have grown. 17 I will turn against you, so that you will be defeated, and those who hate you will rule over you; you will be so terrified that you will

run when no one is chasing you. 18 If even after all of this you still do not obey me, I will increase your punishment seven times. 19 I will break your stubborn pride; there will be no rain, and your land will be dry and as hard as iron. 20 All your hard work will do you no good, because your land will not produce crops and the trees will not bear fruit. 21 If you still continue to resist me and refuse to obey me, I will again increase your punishment seven times. 22 I will send dangerous animals among you, and they will kill your children, destroy your livestock, and leave so few of you that your roads will be deserted. 23 If after all of this punishment you still do not listen to me, but continue to defy me, 24 then I will turn on you and punish you seven times harder than before. 25 I will bring war on you to punish you for breaking our covenant, and if you gather in your cities for safety, I will send incurable diseases among you, and you will be forced to surrender to your enemies. 26 I will cut off your food supply, so that ten women will need only one oven to bake all the bread they have. They will ration it out, and when you have eaten it all, you will still be hungry.

- a. If the people had had confidence in God that He would do what He said, then those words of warning should have created enough fear to result in obedience.
- b. Parents sometimes warn their children, but they are bluffing, and once they fail to follow through the children ignore the warnings.
- c. God has always done what He said He would do, if it became necessary.

4. Deut. 11:26-28

Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known.

God sought to persuade by offering rewards and by giving warnings of consequences for failure to trust Him and obey Him.

5. Jos 23 -24

Another example of God's persuasive efforts is in Joshua 23:15 – 24:24 – one that resulted in a positive response. It is a lengthy reading...but ends at 24:24, which says:
“And the people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.”

IV. In the Bible we read of people's responsibility to give warnings and people's responsibility to heed warnings:

A. Ezekiel

Eze 33:1 “Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 2 Son of man (mortal man, rw), speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman: 3 If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; 4 Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. 5 He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. 6 But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. 7 So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. 8 When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. 9 Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. 10 Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel; Thus ye speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live? 11 Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

1. In this passage God tells Ezekiel that he must warn the

People about the need to turn from their wickedness.

2. If he does not do it then their blood will be on his hands.
3. But if he warns the wicked he will deliver his own soul whether the wicked heed the warning or not.

B. Jonah

1. Another great example is that of Jonah the prophet that was directed to warn the city of Nineveh.
2. This guy was reluctant to carry out his mission, but after being swallowed by a great fish....was encouraged to do God's work, which resulted in the people of that city repenting.

C. The Rich Man

1. (Luke 16) We have an interesting New Testament example of an effort to warn others.
2. A rich man died and was in *torments*.
 - a. He was able to speak to Abraham so he asked that Lazarus be sent to his father's house to testify to his 5 brethren so they would repent and not wind up in the place prepared for the wicked.
 - b. He wanted to WARN them in hopes of saving them.

(Text)

29 Abraham saith unto him, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. 30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. 31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

D. Warning from the apostle John

"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1)

John was warning Christians about false teachers.

E. Jesus said, (Matt. 7:15) "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves."

F. Warnings from Peter (2 Pet. 2:1)

1. The apostle Peter gave warning concerning those who preach and teach things that are not true.
(2 Peter 2:1) "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you,

who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.”

2. He went on to say that the false teachers would make merchandise of them because of their covetousness.

G. Warnings from the apostle Paul:

1. First, he warns those who would live worldly.
Gal 5:19-21 *“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, heresies, 21 envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they which practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”*

2. In Acts 20, beginning in verse 28, we find Paul’s words spoken to the elders of the Church at Ephesus.
 - a. He encouraged them about their work, but he also warning them about factious men.

“Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. 29 I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. 31 Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish (warn) everyone with tears. 32 And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”

- ‘b. To Titus Paul commanded: (Titus 3:10) - **Reject a factious man after a first and second warning.**

- 1) Here, we see that even a man that is deserving of being disfellowshipped is to first be warned – not just ONCE but TWICE.

3. Paul devoted several years to evangelizing an area known as Galatia, where he started several churches.
 - a. He knew those Christians were sitting ducks for false teachers who were circulating among the

Christians in those days.

b. And so he wrote:

(Gal. 1:6-9) "I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel-- 7 not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed."

4. Paul wrote to Timothy telling him about things that he needed to keep in mind.

(1 Tim. 4:1-3) Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; 2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; 3 Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats..."

a. Paul warns about "*forbidding marriage*" – yet many professed Christians not only DO IT, but argue that it is their responsibility to do it.

b. There are other warnings (commands) regarding this very thing in 1 Cor. 7, but because of love for tradition many do not take heed.

5. In his 2nd letter to Timothy, Paul continued to warn about what was coming:

(2 Tim. 4:1-4) "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; 2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

6. Finally, Paul wrote to the church in Corinth saying:

(2 Corinthians 11:13) "For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even

Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness.”

D. JUDE

1. While neither the word “warn,” “warning,” or the words “take heed” are found in the book of Jude, there is much in this book about warnings.
2. The writer warns of “certain men crept in unawares” that were false teachers, and urges his hearers to “earnestly contend for the faith” because of their efforts to deceive.
 - a. He puts them in “remembrance” of “how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.”
 - b. He talks about the angels that became unfaithful and are chained in darkness awaiting the judgment.
 - c. He notes “Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them” being punished for their lifestyle that was contrary to nature.
 - d. And finally, he mentions Enoch who prophesied about such things.

V. We have seen that warnings are not always good, and that we should not take heed to the warnings of some.

- A. There are people who claim to be Christians that are maliciously warning others about the Church of Christ.
 1. Such warning might be subtle, like “you are not thinking of going there, are you?”
 2. Or, it might be blunt, like “The Church of Christ sect is one you need to say away from.”
 - a. Some even refer to the Lord’s church as a CULT.
 - b. Fellow I debated (Dr. Olson on “once saved...”) did just that.
 3. Of course, warnings about Christ’s church and its preachers are not anything new.
- B. The Jews approached Felix (Governor) in their effort to do Jesus harm.
 1. They said, (Acts 24:5-9) For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes: 6 Who also hath gone about to profane the temple: whom we took, and would have judged according to our law. 7 But the chief captain

Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands, 8 Commanding his accusers to come unto thee: by examining of whom thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things, whereof we accuse him. 9 And the Jews also assented, saying that these things were so.

2. These not so noble Jews (supposedly acting by the authority of God) lied about Jesus in their effort to preserve their tradition.
3. (Mark 7:9) Jesus said to such men: "Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition."
4. Many today (and in the church as well) are in that same category.

C. We have the record of Paul in Rome appealing to the Chief leaders of the Jews.

1. They said, "But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against" (Acts 28:22).
2. So, the true church of Christ (at a time when there were NO denominations) was *spoken against everywhere*.
 - a. People were WARNING others about Christ's church.
 - b. But their words were lies.
3. About such men Paul writes:
"For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:" (Philippians 3:18).

D. Indeed, there are and have always been "enemies of the cross of Christ" who are WARNING others about us.

1. These people are seeking to do us damage, and they are.
 - a. But it is not just hurting us, it hurts (does damage to) those who listen to them and are deceived by them.
 - b. I have had studies going with people, and was making progress, only to have them suddenly bow out after their preacher WARNS them--having said "who knows what" to stop the study.
 - 1) Paul wrote of his concerns about such men corrupting the minds of the brethren in Corinth.

"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." (2 Cor. 11:3).

2. Paul was concerned about members of the church being

“corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ” by men speaking **perverse things**... :

3. He also forewarned, (Acts 20:30) “...**Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.**”
4. Just like the serpent beguiled eve men yet today are deceiving people.
5. To Timothy Paul further describes them, and their actions, as:

(1 Tim. 6:5) **Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.**

Conclusion:

- I. **These warnings we have looked at, and there are MANY MORE, were given to us by the Holy Spirit.**
 - A. He warns us, not just of the possibility of false teachers and false teachings, but of the certainty.
 1. Will we heed the warnings?
 2. Many do not heed nor hear the warnings.
 - a. Many have come to believe that doctrine does not matter – that all who have faith in Jesus will be saved.
 - b. They are convinced of this because someone that looks like a sheep told them so.
 - c. But didn't Paul say that “**men from among your own selves will arise, speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them?**”
 - d. So, the person who is the trusted preacher of the congregation can be the very one that it teaching what God has warned us about.
 - B. There is a lot of false doctrine being taught today in pulpits, on radio, FB, on television and in books.
 - C. We need to be like the Bereans Luke wrote about in Acts 17:11: “**Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.**”

II. Review:

- A. We have talked about the difference in a warning and a

threat – threat has to do with bodily harm or harm to one’s property.

- B. We have talked about when to heed warnings and when not to—that some warnings are made by shysters intent on taking your money.
- C. We have presented examples of God warning his People and we talked about his persuasive efforts to get people to repent.
- D. We have seen that some heeded the warnings but that others did not.
- E. We have seen that God requires people to warn others and that failure to give the warning is to their own destruction, but that if ones gives the warning he saves himself whether the warning is heeded or not.
- F. We have seen that religious men, motivated by love for their own traditions, have denigrated the Lord’s church from its beginning to this day.
- G. And, we have seen that there are false teachers, and they can be someone we deem to be one of us.

III. Exhortation

- A. Let us not take truth for granted and therefore make it easy for the devil to get to us.
- B. Let us not be naïve and think that that there are no deceivers in the world, or that we could never be deceived.
- C. Let us not put our faith and trust in men.
(1 Cor. 4:6). “...not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.”
- D. Let us make sure our faith is based on the word of God and grounded in it, and that it is continually growing.

IV. Invitation

- A. Failure to heed warnings has been the reason for many tragedies throughout the ages, and it is the reason for the greatest tragedy of all history, which occurs every time an unprepared soul enters eternity.
 - 1. **Matthew 7:13** is a passage that is just terrifying.
 - a. Here Jesus said, “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is

wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.”

- b. Jesus is warning us that most people are going to be lost--that only a few are going to find the way that leads to eternal life.
 2. One's first thought might be, "Why are so few going to be saved and why are so many going to be lost?"
Well, it is because people do not heed the warnings.
- B. Every person has an eternal soul and God does not want people to be lost, which is why He sent His Son into the world to become a sacrifice that through the shedding of His blood man could find redemption and hope.
1. When one turns to Jesus, truly believing Who He is, and what He has done to save man, he will repent of his sins, and confess that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior.
 - a. He then obeys Jesus' command to be baptized...and have his sins washed away Mk.16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16.
 - b. In doing this he makes his preparation for the life to come.
 - c. Why is this preparation necessary?
 - 1) Because God has prepared a Day of Judgment when all must give account of their lives (Acts 17:30-31; 2.Cor.5:10).
 - 2) God has given the warnings that this day is coming, and we had better prepare for it.
 - 3) God is delaying the time, giving man sufficient time to prepare.
 2. And so no one can say they have not been warned.
- C. God has send warnings, and continues to send them, that one day the Judgment is coming.
1. The hurricanes, floods, earthquakes and fires are signals of God's great power and man's inability to control things.
 2. He has the ability to prevent or stop them if He chooses, and sometimes, because of the sincere, persistent prayer of faithful brethren He intervenes.
 3. People need to take heed to what is happening and change their lives while there is time.
- D. I pray that you did not just skip over these warnings, thinking to yourself, "Well that's not anything with which I need to be concerned."
- E. All of us have been warned that this life is temporary, and a day of judgment is coming.
1. After the judgment, we will either have eternal life in heaven or be eternally condemned, depending on whether we have

heeded the warning and made the proper preparation while we are alive.

a. Through Amos God's message to Israel, was:

- 1) "You have been warned."
- 2) What are you doing about it?
- 3) It's your move.

Amos 4:9 I have smitten you with blasting and mildew: when your gardens and your vineyards and your fig trees and your olive trees increased, the palmerworm devoured them: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD. 10 I have sent among you the pestilence after the manner of Egypt: your young men have I slain with the sword, and have taken away your horses; and I have made the stink of your camps to come up unto your nostrils: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD. 11 I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD. 12 Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.

2. God is very patient and persistent in seeking repentance, But as with Israel there will be a day of reckoning if we keep on being obstinate.
3. Why not get right with God while you have time and opportunity.
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