

Warning Signs - cont.

irritation is more than just frustration over the inconvenience—it is a rejection of authority. They say to themselves, “No one is going to tell me how fast to drive!” So they choose to deliberately ignore the warning sign and drive as fast as they wish. Does their irritation shield them from penalty? No. If a policeman sees them they will be stopped and they will suffer the consequences. Is the warning sign to blame for their irritation? No. They had a mindset bent on doing what they wanted to do and had already set a course toward rebellion even before they saw the warning sign.

So it is when we proclaim the truth to those around us. Some will rejoice—we have spared them a penalty they didn’t realize they faced. Some may be annoyed that their life must change, but ultimately they realize that the stakes involved make any change worth it in the end. Others, however, will be angry and resent the fact that we dared to warn them. Sometimes this may even be **“a righteous man”** who **“turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity.”** If we warn such a person and he or she becomes angry is it because we are unkind, judgmental, or “think we are the only ones going to heaven”? No. It may reflect hearts that want to do what they want to do and resent anyone and anything that would dare urge them to change. Their problem isn’t with us—their problem is

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with God. We can try to help them change their attitude, but we must never allow their resentment to cause us to stop proclaiming the truth as a warning sign to those who will heed it.

So you, son of man: I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore you shall hear a word from My mouth and warn them for Me (Ezek. 33:7).

- Kyle Pope -

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THE WARFIELD BULLETIN

August 20, 2023



For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me (Ezek. 3:17, NKJV).

We have all seen them—those flashing signs that tell you your speed in relation to the posted speed limit. If you are going too fast they give you a gentle warning that helps you change your speed before getting a ticket. These familiar street signs parallel some powerful principles that we should realize about spiritual things.

Why Point Out When Others are Doing Wrong?

When I say to the wicked, “You shall surely die,” and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand (Ezek. 3:18).

Christians often struggle with having to tell people around us that something they are doing is wrong. It seems unkind, judgmental, and mean-spirited. What if we

thought of this like the warning signs we see on the street? Do we resent that those signs prevent us from facing a penalty? No. We appreciate that it keeps us from getting a ticket. Efforts to teach others, spread the gospel, or turn souls from error and sin are the same way. They are more than just an effort **“to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life”**—they are loving words that flash a warning aimed at saving the souls of those who will head them.

What If There Is no Warning Sign?

Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul (Ezek. 3:19).

Sometimes we make the false assumption that if we tell someone they are doing something wrong we are the ones defining their behavior as wrong. That is not true. If a street doesn't have a warning sign it doesn't mean there is no speed limit. Whether we see a posted speed limit or not, if we violate the limit a municipality has set we will be penalized. The flashing warning sign helps a driver see what the speed is, but whether a warning is provided or not the speed limit is still in place. In the same way, God's law stands. It stands whether we warn others or not. It stands whether people ignore it or not. The

wicked man **“shall die in his iniquity.”** Warning people what God's word says does not set God's law—it informs those who may be unaware of its demands.

Warning Signs Irritate Some People

Again, when a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die; because you did not give him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; but his blood I will require at your hand. Nevertheless if you warn the righteous man that the righteous should not sin, and he does not sin, he shall surely live because he took warning; also you will have delivered your soul (Ezek. 3:20-21).

If we are in a hurry to get somewhere and unexpectedly encounter a warning sign it might irritate us. Perhaps we thought we were driving at an acceptable speed. The inconvenience of slowing down can be annoying but it is far less annoying than getting a \$100.00 ticket for speeding! For some people, however, the