

Developing Teachers

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CHAPTER 1

DEVELOPING TEACHERS

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19, 20)

The Lord is sending us out, and what is the message He has given us to proclaim? The good news of the Gospel — yes, and the good news of Jesus, but specifically, *“Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand.”*

In verse 18, Jesus said, *“All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me.”* Since all authority has been given to him, he now says to us, *“Therefore, go.”* God has given that authority to Jesus, and Jesus has now given it to us. *“Therefore go,”* in the authority of His name.

“I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing... And I will do whatever you ask in my name...” (John 14:12, 13). He sent the disciples out in His name to do the works of God. As they went, those works were accomplished and people were set free.

We need to understand that the kingdom of God is within us, right now. It is within us. *“Therefore, go.”* Don’t sit around; don’t wait for something to happen. *“Therefore go,”* and God will make something happen!

It is interesting to take note of the disciples after Jesus’ ascension. He was gone; the Father took him to Himself, and they stood there watching the clouds, just looking up. (Acts 1:9-11) Then the angels came and exhorted the disciples: *“Why are you still standing around? You just received a commission. Don’t just stand here. This same Jesus is going to come back in the same way he left, but He has given you a commission. Get about it.”* (Paraphrased)

They received a commission, it begins with, *“Go.”* Do not wait around. *“Make disciples of all nations... teaching them.”* Note the significance of teaching. It is part of the commission that God has given to us through our Lord Jesus. To teach people everything that Jesus taught, so they can come

into the kingdom of God, become disciples, and have everything that God has intended for them in this life.

Disciples are those who not only have been taught, but who are applying what they have been taught to their lives. They are living examples of the teaching and they have a mission, which is to make more disciples. It continues and continues.

Now how is he going to be with them always? (Matthew 28:20)

“All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.” (John 14:25-26)

What we have here is – Help! The Holy Spirit of God is going to work with us, bringing to remembrance what Jesus has taught through His Word and through the teachers which God has established in the Body of Christ.

The five-fold offices are listed in Ephesians: *“It was He [Jesus] who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the Body of Christ may be built up...”* (Ephesians 4:11-12)

For works of service: Telling people about the Word of God, about the love of Jesus, and testifying to what you have seen and heard, and what you know to be true. (1st John 1:3) Speaking the truth in love so that all parts may grow up and start taking their place, functioning the way God would have them to function.

Everywhere you go, whatever you are doing, God wants to use you. That is part of having the kingdom of God within you. He is not of this world; nor are we of this world. We carry the kingdom of God with us. When we are around people who do not know Jesus, we have something to touch them with, namely the kingdom of God. When they get a touch from the Lord, they don’t want the rest of the world anymore. They want more of His kingdom. God wants to use every one of His people, and it is not possible to have the kingdom of God within us and not have the desire to share it with somebody else.

Throughout the book of Acts you will find how the church functioned and operated (church government). In Acts 13 there were prophets and teachers in the same church. Barnabas and Paul were sent to build up that church. Barnabas was sent there first to encourage the people in the faith and to teach them the Word of God. As they grew in the Word, he called in Paul. Each had his place and his function. Each one knew what he was supposed to do.

Let us examine some qualities or qualifications that God has established in His Word for people who are to be in positions for the work of the Lord, that is, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers.

“Here is a trustworthy saying: if anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task.” (1st Timothy 3:1)

Your Bible might read “bishop” instead of overseer. In the early church, there was an order. There were offices set down, and they oversaw each other.

A bishop, or an overseer, would be similar to an apostle, similar to Paul having charge over churches. He established them and got them going, and then he turned them over to pastors and teachers to continue that work. He continued to look out for it. When he said something, it affected that church, and they followed his leadership.

Even the pastors of that church followed the leadership of the apostle. He was set by God to be over the churches that he established. He set it up and even though he was not there, he took the apostolic authority time and time again, saying, “I have already judged the situation here, do this...” You find the whole church, the ministers and everyone doing what was set down.

A person who sets his heart on being an overseer desires a noble task. I want to note here that people can desire to do something, and it can be a human desire. Sometimes our human desires are not what the Holy Spirit desires for us, even though it may be a “good” thing. We want to learn to flow with what God wants to do in the way He wants to do it. It is then that we get God’s results. A person cannot take an office to himself except God has established him. (John 3:27)

“Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, (moderate, not given to extremes or excesses), self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to much wine, not violent, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.” (1st Timothy 3:2-3)

These are qualities that are to be found in an overseer. These people are consistent and stable. They are an example of what they teach and believe. In 1st Timothy 2:2, Paul said to *“commit these things to reliable men who are qualified to teach others.”* Teach them to do what? To become disciples of the Lord Jesus. Note, it says “reliable men.” A disciple is not someone who is one day hot and the next day cold. They appeared that way when they were with Jesus. Maybe even in the same day they were hot-cold-hot-cold, but not so after they obeyed Jesus and adhered to the commandment and commission He gave them.

“He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. [If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church?]” (1st Timothy 3:4-5)

This means that the ministry of God always begins at home. First things first. “Well, I want to win the world for Jesus...” Jesus said to start at home, and then reach the world for Him.

“He must not be a recent covert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil.” (1st Timothy 3:6) Know this: the devil was not a recent covert. The devil was God’s right hand angel. He actually ran everything under God. He was the head of the heavenly choir. Not recognizing the wonderful place he had, he started to think, “I want to run the show. I want to be God.”

Well, God is very jealous of His position, likewise are those He has established that way. However, God has put on my heart to cultivate the ministry He has for each of His people, and I believe in giving a lot of rope. I want them to develop and come into everything that God has for them.

Ultimately however, God has given me the rope to hold. If they are running with too much rope, we just tug it back. This is the purpose of an overseer, which will help God’s people. I always tell people, myself included, that individuals are expendable. God is concerned about the whole Body of Christ (the church) functioning the way that God wants it to function.

There is a danger that comes to people. This is why we do not set them into places too quickly, because we want to prove them out, give a little time, and see faithfulness. We want to see various qualities of God exhibited through them. Then, little by little, we start to give responsibilities to work with. We have seen marvelous results. We want to give freedom, but that freedom is always channeled. One of the tests of whether anybody will be used of God is how they honor God's authorities.

"He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap." (1st Timothy 3:7)

If I am going to represent the Lord Jesus in the community, I need to have a good reputation. The devil's trap in verse 6 would be pride. In verse 7 it would be guilt and condemnation, intended to undermine the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ through you. Proverbs 21:1 says, *"A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold."*

Deacons are mentioned in 1st Timothy 3:8 and in the book of Acts. Stephen was a deacon. Deacons were set up by the apostles to carry out duties. They pertained duties so that the apostles could spend their time in the Word of God, in prayer and in ministry.

The apostles said, *"Choose men from the midst who have a good reputation, who are filled with the Holy Spirit, who honor God and move in wisdom."* (Acts 6:3) A deacon is essentially a servant. They have the same qualifications as the overseers.

"Deacons likewise are to be men of worthy respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience." (1st Timothy 3:8-9)

I know of a church where an individual who wasn't even born again was permitted to be an elder (or in the context of this scripture, a deacon) merely to keep him at the church. What is a sorry state of affairs! It says that church cannot be very spiritual, the way I read the Bible.

"They must first be tested, and then if there is nothing against them let them serve as deacons. In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of

respect, not malicious talkers, but temperate and trustworthy in everything.”
(1st Timothy 3:10-11)

“A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well. Those who have served well, gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.” (1st Timothy 3:12-13) Rewards come to those that are faithful.

Now note where everything begins: first, within the person, within each one’s own heart; second, the ministry to the family, and then to the church.

“The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and to appoint elders in every town as I directed you.” (Titus 1:5) (Not by popular vote of the church, but by appointment).

Titus was told to appoint pastors and teachers to watch over this area. He had spent time there with these people and he had watched. They had been trained, disciplined and instructed, and now from that body they were choosing people to look out for the flock.

These people were not those who were concerned about their own bellies. They were concerned about the work of God and about the people of God. They were not concerned about their own position; they were not concerned about their own finances and needs. (1st Peter 5:1-5)

“An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God’s work, he must be blameless – not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given too much wine, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain.” (Titus 1:6-7)

This is a carbon copy of what we read in 1st Timothy 1. A principle of God is being established here. This is a totally different situation and a totally different place.

“Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.” (Titus 1:8-9)

Here comes the disciplining process. Not only does he hold on to what he has learned, but he turns to tell others. Have you ever wondered how the teachings of God were spread about in the Israelite camp? They were passed down by word of mouth from generation to generation. You will find that it did not vary at all.

It was passed down correctly, precisely, and that is the way it continued. Now, that is good teaching. What we communicate to people should be communicated in just the way we gave it to them. That way people are going to get the truth, and the truth is going to make them free. (John 8:31)

“For there are many rebellious people, many mere talkers, and deceivers.”
(Titus 1:10)

These are teachers, but mere talkers; there is nothing behind their words, and God is not behind them. They are deceivers, and they are rebellious people. The apostles have a very distinct way of putting it. By referring to them as rebellious people, they are saying that they are rebellious to the teaching. This is how authority speaks. Jesus said, *“If they receive you, then they receive me.”* (Luke 9:48)

In other words, if they do not receive what we teach, they do not receive the Lord. They are rebellious. This is something you will find more and more in these last days. The ministry of God will not be respected. It says they have to be silenced. (Titus 1:11)

“You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine. Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love and in endurance. Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can train or teach the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.” (Titus 2:1-5)

The Bible even tells you what to teach who. *“Teach slaves to be subject to their masters.”* (Titus 2:9) This could be referring to employees subject to their employers — not to talk back to them, to try to please them, not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted.

These areas need to be considered if one is considering working for the Lord, in the capacity of an apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor or teacher. This is God's order.

CHAPTER 2

PROVOKING TO LOVE AND GOOD WORKS THROUGH TEACHING

“And let us consider how we may spur one another toward love and good deeds.” (Hebrews 10:24)

One of the qualities a teacher should have is the ability to actually provoke people to love and good deeds (works). Create a hunger within the listener. Otherwise they will stay a listener. *“Do not merely listen to the Word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”* (James 1:22)

When people are provoked, you have them on the fine edge because they are under conviction in their heart, and God is dealing with them. As you put out the pure Word of God, it will cut and it will provoke (spur).

“The Word of God is sharper than a two edged sword.” (Hebrews 4:12) It is not just a one edged sword. It works both ways, which makes it wonderful for you because when you are using that sword, any way you slash it, it is going to cut.

A teacher has to be able to provoke people; however, we should watch the direction in which we are provoking them. When I was going through school, I had a speech class where we worked on persuasion speeches. We had just received a bill in the mail from that speech class and nobody understood what it was about. When my turn came to do a five minute persuasion speech, I got up there, and I had the whole place roaring and ready to riot over this bill. Afterward, the instructor called me aside, and gave me a bad grade. I said, “But sir, the crowd was moved, they were completely persuaded! And not only were they completely persuaded, but you were moved too!”

He sat me down, and I saw the wisdom of God come over him. He looked at me for a few minutes and then he grinned. He said, “Randy, God has given you an ability to move the multitudes. God has given you that ability; it is not something you got from yourself. But remember this: you have got to watch the way you are moving the multitudes!” I have never forgotten that, because it was very true.

I am a mover, but when I am teaching, I watch that what I am teaching is from the heart of God, that it is going to build the people up and move them in a way that God wants them moved. I have never seen God wanting anybody to incite a riot, and these classmates of mine were ready! Especially if you are speaking something that directly affects others' pocketbooks; you will incite them. *"Blessed are the peacemakers..."*

How important to provoke people to godly things! Sometimes as you are communicating to people, you will have to put the old proverbial tack under their rear! (Hebrews 10:24) You have to incite them to godliness. Incite them to take authority in the name of Jesus, not lie down and let the devil run all over their life.

Motivate them! Do you know that there are 7,000 plus promises in the Word of God for our lives in the Book? There is the wisdom of God in any given situation no matter what it is in our lives, or in somebody else's life.

I believe in getting the Word of God in me, not just for myself, but for the benefit of others, and I believe this is the higher order. If I get it in me, it is naturally going to come out. So as I am creative for somebody else, I get blessed. You don't have to run around being concerned about yourself, you can look out for somebody else. That is always God's higher order.

One night a brother was teaching about healing. I knew that he had physical needs, but I was appreciating that he communicated to others regarding God's principles on healing. If you communicate the Word of God to others, then the message will get stronger in you. All we have to do is practice what we preach. It actually gets simpler and simpler the more we do it.

One time I had to tell an individual that he had spiritual pride. The influence that was hovering around him did not like it, but I didn't care because I knew it was not really him; that wasn't his heart. He got provoked, which is a part of growth in people. This man could have sat with that junk for a long time, but he was provoked to godliness. As they were provoked, the Spirit of God rose up inside. Many times this is what people need — a kick in the rear or a slap in the face, spiritually speaking, to wake them up to the fact that they are either out of line with God or they are not doing anything with what God has given them. It gets them moving.

I was in a class at one time where I already knew the material like the back of my hand. It was like nothing to me. I was asking some questions to incite the class. (I guess I had a nasty tendency to do that.) I asked questions that the teacher knew I already had the answers to. He looked at me and I saw that glow come over him and thought, “Oh no!” (You usually know when you are wrong.) He said to me, “The Word of God tells us that we are not to respond to foolish questions that are intended to engender strife.” That word just cut right through everything, exposed me as a smart aleck, and I felt like crawling under the desk.

Afterwards he came up to me and said, “Randy, God has given you so much potential and ability, why are you wasting it on messing around?” It really cut me because it was true. How many more profitable things can a person accomplish if he gets out about it instead of messing around? Nothing is really accomplished that way. I was provoked to godliness.

A teacher, and a teacher of God especially, can look out over the people, and see what God is doing in them. When he does not see them moving in the potential that God would have accomplished, He will provoke them, because He loves them and He knows exactly how to get through to that person.

I am a representative of the Lord Jesus Christ. When I speak God is going to move and touch somebody’s life. In some way or another, I know they are going to be moved.

This intensity has to be within you on a daily basis if you are going to instruct people in the way of righteousness, holiness and godliness. Many times you do not have many opportunities to reach people. Every time you stand up in the name of Jesus you have to make it count.

We are co-laborers with the Lord Jesus Christ (1st Corinthians 3:9), working hand in hand together with Him. He gives the words, and we speak them. Then He confirms it, and it changes people’s lives. There is one thing that people are going to appreciate, even if they do not understand it, and that is conviction in your heart (intensity). When I am laughing or when I am serious, I am intense. The time is short and we have to make the most of the moment.

As people of God, we are responsible to Him for what we teach or share and what we say to people out on the streets. This does not get me uptight, but

provokes within me an urgency that I need to know what the Word of God says. Then I will have something to say. Lastly, I have to put it into action and help others also. That is why we get results in this ministry — because people are literally provoked to do the Word of God. When they do, they get God’s results. Then they see the blessing and the changes, and they say, “Oh, it works.”

However, in regard to most people, they will not do something unless they are provoked. Why is that? They may be used to a certain way of doing things. Often times they may feel insecure about their ability. Like a momma bird when she kicks those babies out of the nest, she knows they are able to fly, though the babies don’t realize it yet. This is the way it is with most people.

They do not believe that when they put their hand on people and pray in the name of Jesus that God is going to make them well. They don’t know they can talk in new tongues as they start to speak to God by the Holy Spirit. They do not even know that they can forgive. After they come to the Lord, they learn about God’s forgiveness for themselves. They cannot have God’s forgiveness for themselves and not for someone else. We learn that God is in us, and we apply that forgiveness to others.

The reason why so many people do not receive anything from God is because they never step out and let God do something with their faith. I remember when I told a brother, “I want you to teach on Thursday night.” At that time, this brother had all kinds of fears and insecurities; I could see the paralysis come all over him. As he began to teach, after a period of time, I noticed the Spirit of God rose up and it was no longer this brother teaching, but it was Jesus ministering the word of God through him.

I was so blessed to see the freedom, and to see what God had put in his heart coming forth. I have no greater joy than to watch people developing into what God has for them. He was provoked to get about and do what God had for him.

Jesus was a master provoker. I have looked through the gospels, and I have read what Jesus said and did, and I have studied his mannerisms. I have envisioned Him coming up to those disciples saying, “Follow me.” I can just picture Matthew sitting there with all that money, leaving the whole kit and caboodle. Let me tell you, that was a master miracle for a tax collector

to leave all that money sitting there to follow Jesus! He was provoked, because Jesus had the audacity to say, "Follow Me." Matthew's spirit came alive as he noticed, "God is touching me here."

Matthew did not understand the fullness of it, but he noted a sense of the divine touch of God. Why else would he do something like that? Leave everything behind and leave his whole way of life to follow some guy that he did not even know. He hadn't even checked out Jesus' credentials. He hadn't even heard Jesus. Let me tell you, it has to be a touch of the divine to be motivated like that. But that is the God we serve, the God we know. He is a provoker, and He intends for us, His people, to do likewise.

How can we do that? How can I provoke people to love and good works? First, be an example. Be a living example of it. Do not tell somebody to do something that you yourself would not be willing to do. Then, be diligent about being a living example of it. If you are going to be an example to people, you have to be consistent.

One more thing you have to learn and understand as a teacher is that when the Spirit of God is giving you something to share, to provoke those people, you cannot be moved by what you see. The Lord shows you people. Some are set free, some look like they are in the process of being set free, and others are plain furious and fuming. It doesn't take any great spiritual discernment to see it either. I have seen them gnashing their teeth. However, you have to know that when you provoke people to love and good works, and they are provoked, they hate your guts and they are ready to do you in. You cannot be moved.

That is the point of the glory of God, because you spoke the truth in love, (Ephesians 4), so that the people could grow up in the faith. They would not grow up in the faith if they were not provoked to love and to good works. You spoke the truth in love, and truth (the word) in love is what cuts people. It is what brings conviction. You can speak the truth, but if you do not speak it in love, it will not bring any lasting change or true repentance. It will not bring changed behavior or godly results, but truth spoken in love just tears into a person. People cannot stand themselves any longer until they do something about it. They will either respond to it or they will try to get rid of you!

You cannot be moved by people at that point. You have to hold your ground. There is a word in Jeremiah about the faces of people. (Jeremiah 1:8, 17-19) God gave me that word many years ago. He said He would save me from the faces of people. So I should not care what is on their countenances when I am telling the truth, in love.

If I was concerned about faces, many times I would not say the things that God has given me to say. It would be a whole lot easier to please people, but then they would not be helped. Their life would not be conformed to the godliness and holiness that God wants.

Sometimes people have their own notions about what they are to do, and God never intended them to do it. As a result, they are going to miss God unless somebody comes along and provokes them in the right direction. Your responsibility as a teacher is to watch the direction in which you provoke people.

How are you provoked at this point?

CHAPTER 3

GODLY TEACHING BRINGS LIFE

Many people are afraid to teach because they have read in the Bible that teachers are held more responsible and accountable than anybody else. (James 3:1) It says that not everybody should desire to be a teacher, but I look at it in another way.

There must be a greater blessing that goes with greater responsibility. one of the first things a teacher needs to learn is that if he is really doing his job, the greater blessing is going to come from those who are receiving the Word of God and doing something with it. That shuts down all pride and ideas about entertaining. Some people like to be up in front of others, but when they get up there they do not really know what to do. We see this working in children, as they run right up there, wanting to be the center of attention, but don't know what to do when they get it.

When teachers stand before the people they should have something to teach. A teacher should be prepared in his heart to minister to the people of God. (By a time of prayer, a time of waiting on the Lord, and just being quiet before God. Asking Him what He wants you to teach, how He wants you to teach, what verses to have, etc.) If he has done this, then he will find that the Holy Spirit has put together the whole message.

God will be faithful to give the message because you have spent time before Him. Though you have read the Word and studied it, many times what you have been studying is not even what you finally teach. Because you have prepared yourself, when the time comes, God will bring forth what He wants the people to have. Gain understanding on that.

You will find that God will give you examples, like situations in life surrounding you that will be just what you need to fit into your lesson. God will put it together. However, when the time finally comes to go before the people, make sure that you have something to say. Many figure that when they get up there, then they will have what to say. Maybe, or maybe not.

Usually, the best subject to teach on is what the Lord has been doing in your heart – in your life. Something you have learned or are learning. Those people are just like you. If it meant something to you, it will mean

something to them. If *“there is no temptation that has befallen man except that which is common to man,”* (1st Corinthians 10:13), then everything I go through, somebody else must be going through also. If not right at this moment, then maybe tomorrow. Or maybe next week, or three months down the road. When they do, they will have something to work with. Whether you are teaching or witnessing, or just talking with somebody, go with what is the strongest in your heart. I have found throughout the Bible, most of Jesus’ teaching opportunities came in everyday life situations, and all He did was put a Scripture to it.

Share what is in your heart. If God is ministering something to you, then you want to communicate that, and He will send somebody across your path that needs to hear exactly what you are sharing. God is concerned about the Body as a whole. When we start to understand that, no longer do we want to be the star on the team, nor do we want to be the dropout. We just want to be faithful to do our part. We become concerned about the whole Body crossing the finish line together.

Jeremiah, chapter one talks about how the Lord will give the words to say. The Holy Spirit will call to remembrance everything that you have learned. Note, you cannot have something called to remembrance if you have not heard it, or learned it. There needs to be something in there to work with.

The Bible says we are to teach one another. How do we do that? With the Word of God. *“Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom and as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.”* (Colossians 3:16)

There is a combination working here. First, we let the Word of Christ dwell in us richly as we teach. Paul is talking to the Body of Christ here, not only the ones who stand behind podiums. It says we teach one another. *“To teach and admonish one another with all wisdom.”* Second, *“and as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude or thanksgiving in your hearts to God.”* The teaching and the praise and worship go together.

In John, chapter 4, Jesus was at the well. There was a woman drawing water, and since Jesus did not have anything to draw water with, the woman asked Him, “Do you want some water?” He accepted, but in the mean time He took her out of the realm of physical water, and started talking in a spiritual sense regarding “Living water.” Good teaching always uses

something physical and draws people into the spiritual sense of it. Good witnessing does the same thing.

Not only is Jesus giving a masterful example on how to witness, but also on how to counsel, teach, flow in the Spirit (and just plain let God use you). He simply takes a physical example, a life situation, and draws them all into everything God has. (John 4:6-29)

You have to train people. We have to teach our children, training them up in the ways of the Lord; we have to teach our wives, training them in the ways of godliness. I have to train myself in godliness; you have to train yourself. Employers have to train employees; this is just a part of life. What God gives to you, you then give to somebody else. If you have gone through an adverse situation, but spent time in the Word of God and built up your faith in that circumstance, then that is something you should communicate to people.

Jesus said, “... *My words are spirit and they are life.*” (John 6:63) Living teaching. We can get up and teach anything from the Word, but when we are dealing with spiritual things, it is not only truth that we are communicating, but Spirit also. What God is saying here regarding that verse is that we are not to get up there and simply read such and such. I want to bring what the Spirit of God wants shared for this particular occasion. As I am sharing what the Spirit of God wants communicated with people, then that will produce life, encouragement, strength, joy, or whatever God knows that the people need. Why is it important? You want the people to have their needs met. There is really no one in this Body who is without a need.

“Spirit and life.” Not just truth. So there is more than just communicating something that is true. If you have a need for a physical healing, and I am talking about how many cattle crossed the Red Sea, how many kings were in the Old Testament, or how smart Solomon was, is that going to help you? No. What is going to help you? Healing! Ministry on healing. Both through the Word of God as well as through personal testimony. That is living teaching.

The key to teaching God’s way is being led of the Spirit, and putting forth truth by the Spirit. The result is life and that life comes as people hear how Jesus has changed me or changed you. That is living teaching. It produces

faith in people. Then faith sparks up, and people think, “Yes, God did it for them, He will do it for me also.” Living teaching – living water.

Godly teaching will always bring life to the hearer. They may not want to hear what is coming forth by the Spirit of God, but if they yield to it, it brings life. It brings health, blessing and provision. Spirit, life, truth.

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” (2nd Timothy 2:15)

Is that difficult to do? No. It is simply a matter of discipline. Sit down and say, “Father, in the name of Jesus, I ask Your Holy Spirit to direct me to scriptures you want me to learn about right now, that you want me to study.” You do not just pick up the Bible, and start to read; you would be wasting your time. You might get a lot of knowledge, but you will not get what you need at that moment by the spirit of God. *“Those who are the sons of God are led by the Spirit of God.” (Romans 8:14)*

One time just before a service we were praying for a brother whom I had asked to teach; I was interceding for him that his words would flow and that there would be no sense of striving. We saw a change right in the middle of the teaching. At one point, the teaching just ceased, and I was about ready to give the brother the high sign to cut it off. At that point our intercession came through, and the Spirit of God took over.

I am showing you here the importance of staying tuned to the Holy Spirit whether you are teaching or praying for people. Whether you are witnessing, helping, or encouraging people, be sensitive to the needs the Spirit is showing you. You will learn that this is something that does not take a lot of effort. If one is in the spirit, things just flow. This is the difference between striving and flowing.

A wise teacher learns that if he does not have anything to say, he sits down. He does not ramble or try to cover it, (I call it shwaffling). It will not go anywhere because it is done out of his own heart, his own striving, his own lack of preparation. I am of the opinion that if teachers do not have anything to teach, then they would do wise to say, “I don’t have anything to teach,” and sit down!

One of the greatest pitfalls of teaching is a lack of preparation. In many instances after you have been teaching for a period of time you get accustomed to the Word of God. You may have lessons or scriptures that you can quickly quote, one after the other. I could probably go into 300 different areas at any given moment. However, there is such a thing as preparation in the spirit. Then when God gives something to say, you say it.

Imagine someone comes to another brother asking questions. The brother does not really have an answer to give, but he figures, “Well, I have to give them something, or put something out there for them.” What is he going to tell them? We are supposed to know answers, see. But a wise teacher who does not know will say, “I don’t know the answer. I don’t know what to tell you right now, but if you give me a little bit of time, I would be happy to start searching and find the answer.”

I thank God for grace and mercy every day. I thank God for the fact that if I am out of line, I can ask forgiveness, I can repent, and God will forgive me. Many times He will enable me to go on and other times He will just say, “Sit still a minute and think about what just happened.” Especially when people’s lives are on the line.

Again, one of the greatest pitfalls is when you already know the Scriptures, you have taught lessons in times past, and there are many different ways to go. What does God want? James 1:19 says to be slow to speak... Speak when we have heard the Lord. If we have not heard the Lord, “*Be slow to speak.*” Scriptures without the understanding are not going to help anybody. Counsel without the understanding is not going to help anybody. All we end up with is empty words.

When you are teaching, remember not to use terms that I call “fillers.” “Okay,” “You know,” etc. Make sure the words have meaning to them, when you teach. Words need to have meaning. They have to be for a purpose, to accomplish something.

Isaiah 55:11 says that God’s Word never comes down that it doesn’t produce something. The words we are speaking have to be producing something.

Just think about your normal everyday life and the words that you say. Are they profitable to the hearer? Are they going to edify or build them up? Are

they profitable to us? We might notice that sometimes the words we speak are actually downers that get us into big trouble.

There are times with people when you only have one shot, and it has to be right from the heart of God, it has to be good, it has to be clean. It has to minister. This is serious.

We thank you, Lord, that You are able by Your Spirit to show us clearly that without Your Spirit ministering, things are just empty and vain. But by your Spirit things become full, rich, and alive, your people are ministered to, needs are met, and people grow up in the faith.

We thank you, Lord, that You are doing a good and perfect work in every one of us by Your Spirit. This lesson is very important for all of us because we are going to stand before You someday, and we will have to give an account for every word that we have spoken. We thank you that this lesson about preparation and getting what is from the heart of God is going to be something that will change our approach to people in the time ahead. It will also change our whole approach to ourselves as we learn to become even more diligent and disciplined concerning the things of Your Spirit. Forgive all of us for any areas where we have not done what You would have us to do. Lord, I know that I am teaching out of experience, having been in that same place myself, and as I asked your forgiveness, I thank you that You forgave and You are forgiving even now in the areas we have not shown diligence in loving one another and caring for one another. Help us not to just do godly things while we are with each other in a place of worship, but that we look out for each other when we leave this place, and that we care for people the way you would have us to care. Lord, we thank you for the ability that you have given to us to do what is pleasing in Your sight, in Jesus' name. And whether we do it, Lord, by Your Spirit in a serious tone or we do it in a hilarious tone, You will be glorified by the words we speak.

CHAPTER 4

PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACH

“Command and teach all these things. Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. Until I come devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.” (1st Timothy 4:11-13)

It is not enough to teach the principles of God if you are not living them. We need to set an example. It is one thing to say something, it is another thing to follow through. It is one thing to testify about Jesus, it is another thing to live Jesus. If you testify about Jesus and you do not live Jesus, your testimony isn’t worth a nickel. It is worth nothing. You do not have a testimony unless you are living it. Set an example in purity. We are talking about holiness of life. This means not lying or cheating, integrity in our dealings, seeking to do what God says to do from a pure heart. No deceitfulness whatsoever, not doing it for anybody else’s benefit, not putting on a show (whited sepulchers: white outside, inside stinking and rotting), saying one thing, living and doing another. *“Set an example in purity.”*

Preaching is a different form of communication. Preaching is how people get saved, how they come to Jesus, how the backsliders slide back in. It is all done through teaching and exhortation. Teaching is where one takes a principle from the Word of God and builds a case that shows people what it is and how it works.

“Do not neglect your gift which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you.” (1st Timothy 11:14)

Concentrate on the gift that God has placed within you. Do not be running off trying to be like somebody else. Concentrate on what God has given to you. God is going to confirm what He has given you, not what He gave to somebody else.

“Be diligent in these matters. Give yourself wholly to them, completely, so that everyone may see your progress.” (1st Timothy 11:15)

We are going right back to the teacher living what he is teaching. If you live what you teach, you are going to see God confirm it. If you do not, you will not, until you start doing it. It all starts with you. When people see your progress, it will encourage them. They figure, “If God did it for them, then God will do it for me also.”

“Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.” (1st Timothy 11:16)

Do not be looking at somebody else’s life, watch your own first. Do not be looking at some other ministry. Look at your own, and get about it with all your heart. Watch your doctrine closely, and make sure that what you are teaching the people is true. Not just something you have heard from somebody else! When you know the truth and you believe it with all your heart, then God will confirm it in your life and in others’ lives. Persevere in them, stick with it, do not give up because someone disagrees with you. All that matters is that God is in agreement with you. If it saves you, it will save them.

“Do not merely listen to the Word and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.” (James 1:22) In other words, practice what you preach.

“Anyone who listens to the Word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.” (James 1:23-24)

Maybe you were having a problem in your life, and someone comes along with that same problem. You were giving them such wonderful counsel, such wonderful instruction and teaching, and you’re thinking, “Boy, that was good!” The Spirit of God speaks up inside you and says, “Yes, why don’t you do it?”

“But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it – he will be blessed in what he does.” It is one thing to teach people something, it is another thing to do it.

“When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at His teachings, because He taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.” (Matthew 7:28)

They were accusing Jesus, saying that he did not keep the Sabbath according to the law. They said that because they did not understand the truth concerning God's holy day, as to what would and would not be done. They figured if he was healing people on God's holy Sabbath, then He was a violator of the Sabbath because you are not supposed to work. Jesus was actually keeping God's Sabbath holy, doing the works of God the way God intended the Sabbath to be kept. God confirmed the way Jesus kept the Sabbath with signs and wonders following. He confirmed what Jesus did. God confirmed nothing the Pharisees said, and nothing they did. They did not know the Lord.

People who are just talkers do not know the Lord. The ones who know the Lord are the doers. *"Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father which is in heaven."* (Matthew 7:21) If you yourself are not doing what you are teaching, then you don't have any credibility.

"Then the disciple went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it." (Mark 16:20)

Why did God confirm their word? They believed, and were acting on their faith in Jesus. You cannot do it without believing it. If you know God and love God, you keep his commandments. If you do not know and love God, then you do not keep his commandments. (John 14:15, 23) The true teacher will be teaching by example. Whose example? Somebody out there? No, their own life, their own example. Is that boastful and prideful? No. The Bible says to make yourself an example. Read 1st Peter 5. This will encourage you. Jesus said if you have seen me, you have seen the Father. (John 14:9) It should be that if you see me, you see Jesus. Carry it out. When people see you, they should see Jesus. *"I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."* (Galatians 2:20)

A teacher should be certain not only to communicate what the Word of God says is true, but to live it as an example. Then he has something to teach.

When people wonder, “Why didn’t it work? I did everything just right.” Could it have been that you did not spend the time with God, as the person who did receive from the Lord? Could it be that you do not spend the same time in meditation on the Word as the person did? Could it be that maybe you are not loving people the way that God wants you to love them?

The Pharisees were going through the motions, and they were good at it too. Jesus said that they go throughout the whole world looking for somebody they can convert, but they make the state of the person they converted worse than theirs! (Matthew 23:15)

If you want an interesting study, do a little study on what Jesus says about the Pharisees. Then make sure you are not one. They are the ones who put up a good religious front. They will even run around telling people about Jesus. “*Didn’t we cast out devils in Your name, didn’t we prophesy in Your name, didn’t we do many wonderful works in Your name?*” (Matthew 7:22) Jesus says, “*Depart from me ye workers of iniquity, I never knew you.*” (Matthew 7:23) They are running around doing all kinds of things in the name of Jesus, but Jesus says depart from Him. Why? Because they didn’t do the will of God. (Matthew 7:21-23)

I want to encourage teachers, that as we are communicating the Word of God, we cannot be talking out of both sides of our mouths, prophesying the Word of the Lord with one side, and our own thing out of the other. Nor can we tell people how God’s Word is true and then turn around and lie. I cannot expect God to confirm my words when I am not doing His Word. “Well, I’m going to speak to that mountain to move in the name of Jesus.” What about the lie you told yesterday and have not asked God’s forgiveness for? What about the unforgiveness in the heart, the grudge. The way the Bible reads, the two go together. If you want the power of God to flow, and you want people’s lives to be changed as you are teaching then you have to live His principles.

I appreciated a brother here a while back who shared, “I can’t stand up here and teach.” I said, “Why not?” He said, “My life is out of line with God.” I appreciated that. There is no anointing upon a teacher who is out of line with God.

If you want God to confirm your word, you have to walk with Him and talk with Him. You have to praise Him and worship Him with all your being.

You have to do what He says, and let me tell you, it is not grievous; it is a delight. It is a joy. There is no greater joy than doing the word of God.

Many people are wanting to lay hands on the sick and see them recover. Many people want to witness, and do these things. I say, "Praise God! They have a desire." But we have to have more than desire, we have to have more than zeal. We even have to have more than knowledge. We have to have something called obedience. It is joyful, loving, thankful obedience to a loving God. That is when we will see things happen.

The Pharisees said Jesus was a sinner, who did not give praise to God. Jesus gave the praise to God, but they accused Him because they could not do what He did. They did not know God. I want to know God with all my heart, and I want to live what I learn from my Father. Then I expect my Father to confirm that.

Something I have learned over the years about anointing is that it does not always work the same way. One has to flow with the Spirit, with what God wants to accomplish.

You have to learn to be a doer of the Word, then be obedient to it, (believing and doing). Then you will be a right example. You will be a praiser and thanker and worshiper. God will confirm His Word through you. Jesus is working through His Body.

I have seen some people others to Jesus and then literally drop them on somebody else's doorstep, and not take care of them. In fact, one time a guy dropped someone off at a vacant house. Such a person does not know God. He expected that Christian baby to take off on his own. We have to get new believers fellowshiping with other believers. Get them not only hearing the Word but doing it. That is why the Body of Christ is really weak. They do not do the work. They talk up a storm... "Oh Hallelujah..." Well, who is it for? God? That is the difference between Jesus and the Pharisees.

The Pharisees talked up a storm for the people for recognition of themselves. Jesus did not do a whole lot of talking if you really look at the gospels. He did more action, working miracles and healings. One healing is worth 50 sermons. He worked the works of God. The Pharisees talked it, Jesus lived it. Big difference. Who did the people follow? Jesus. He lived it. People know a phony when they see one; after a while, they catch on.

The purpose of this book is to train people to teach. Those who read it and receive the Word of God get the privilege to be a part of the blessing that comes with sharing the Word of God. So we, on the one hand, can train teachers, and on the other hand God's people get blessed with His word. It serves a wonderful purpose.

“You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus,” (2nd Timothy 2:1), (the term for grace means ability). When we come into the Lord Jesus, not only are we God's children, not only are we forgiven, saved, and have eternal life, but we have been given ability. Many of God's people are still running around thinking they are weak, that they cannot say a word that will have any profit to anyone. If I still think that I am no good and that I am a worm, then I cannot minister anything that will bring life.

God has given us ability. He has given the ability to teach. What a teacher does is simply communicate truth. I want to emphasize this to make clear the point that what you are communicating had better be true.

The Word tells us in John 8:31-32, *“If you continue in my Word, then you are my disciples, and you will know the truth and the truth will make you free.”*

A teacher needs to continue in the Word of God, hear the Word of God, read it, study it, think on it, and the next thing you know, you are able to teach it.

The Word of God has to be the center of our lives.

CHAPTER 5

TEACHING THROUGH QUESTIONS

One way of teaching is through answering questions. Questions take on different forms. Some come from people's personal lives and situations. For example, if people ask, "How do I deal with this problem?", you simply take the Word of God that applies to what is going on in their life, and then you give it to them...both barrels! So they have something to work with. Those who are making decisions in their lives do not always know which way to go. After they ask the Lord, they hear a little voice inside their head say one thing, then another little voice says just the opposite. They have to sort out which one is the Spirit of God. Which one is a devil trying to talk to them? Which one is their own thoughts? We have to know to get the will of God.

Other times people have questions about a doctrine. An example of this type of teaching can be found in John 3:3. Here Jesus is talking to a fellow named Nicodemus, who was one of the Pharisees and a very important man in the Jewish council. For fear of the other Pharisees, he comes to Jesus at night, however, he was open to the Spirit of God. He wanted some further instruction, and further understanding. Jesus replied to Nicodemus in verse 3, *"I tell you the truth, unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* Then Nicodemus asks this question, *"How can a man be born when he is old?"* He was coming to Jesus with a personal question from within his own life. In other words, "I know Jesus, that you are true, and that you are sent from God." Jesus put something out there, it affected the fellow, and then with a personal response, he asked a question. Jesus was a master at teaching from questions. *"How can a man be born when he is old?" "How can I go back into my mother's womb?"*

Jesus answered, *"I tell you the truth. Unless a man is born of water, and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to Spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying you must be born again. The wind blows wherever it pleases, you hear it sound but you cannot tell where it comes from, or where its going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."* (John 3:5-8)

God's Spirit moves where it wills. People are born again as they open their hearts. "How can this be?" Nicodemus asked. "You are Israel's teachers, said Jesus, and do you not understand these things?" (John 3:9-10)

Jesus answered Nicodemus' question, however, people's backgrounds, traditions and doctrines often get in the way of being able to hear and receive the fruits of the Spirit of God.

Another type of doctrinal question arose during a recent teaching of 1st John 5.

"This is the one who came by water and blood – Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three that testify, the Spirit, the water and the blood." (1st John 5:6-8)

The speaker interpreted the water as meaning the Word of God. The Holy Spirit showed me that there was a question in people's minds as to this interpretation, so I did a further study.

I believe in having two or three witnesses within the Word of God. A principle that is true in the Word should be true from the front cover to the back cover.

"Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the Word." (Ephesians 5:25-26)

The water is through the Word, not baptism. Not water baptism. That is what most people think it is. The baptism is not the issue for salvation; faith is.

"Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned." (Mark 16:16)

Faith in God is the issue. Then, because I have faith in God, I repent, I believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and I am water baptized in fulfillment of what the Word of God tells me to do. Baptism comes after I have faith in God and specifically saying with my own mouth, "Jesus Christ, You are my Lord."

“Unless a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” (John 3:5)

The only way a person can be born again is through hearing the Word of God. Specifically, the Good News of what Jesus has done for us in giving the love of God and the life of God. As we receive and thank the Lord for what He has done, we invite the Lord Jesus into our hearts, and at that moment we are born again. The only way that can happen is by the Holy Spirit working from the outside, through the Word of God going out, making my heart alive to God.

What bearing does that have on the passage out of 1st John 5? In heaven we have the Father God bearing witness to Jesus, we have the Word, which is Jesus bearing witness, and we have the Spirit bearing witness. *“And there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water and the blood.”* (1st John 5:7-8) What is the water? The Word. Every time I share the Word of God I am bearing witness to Jesus Christ. Then the third witness is the blood that was shed on the cross.

As we minister, all three are working together. The Holy Spirit will be working. You will see the Word of God working. You will see the blood of Jesus. Those three are the operatives in this world. And they all bear witness to Jesus.

That is what Nicodemus was coming with: a doctrinal kind of question, asking, “How can I be born again?” Jesus zoomed right into the man’s heart. This is what he needed – to be born again. As you minister, you need to go right for the issues. What does that person need in their life tonight? Go right for it.

Wisdom in Witnessing

Sometimes you might be answering questions merely from audience participation. One fellow had a question concerning motives and attitudes, and discernment in dealing with whether or not to witness to certain individuals. Should he go ahead and witness and minister to the need he sees, or should he wait for reinforcements?

I answered this question by ministering confidence to him by the Holy Spirit and through the Word of God. We must know what God says through His Word. The Holy Spirit cannot bring to remembrance something we have never read or learned.

“After you receive the Holy Spirit you will receive power...” (Acts 1:8) To do what? To witness! If I have the Holy Spirit and I talk in new tongues, I have the ability within me by the Holy Spirit to witness, and I need to know that. It does not matter what the situation, or what is going on, I have the ability because I have the boldness and the power of the Holy Spirit of God in me.

“I am sending you out like sheep among wolves, therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. But be on your guard against men they will hand you over to the local councils, flog you in their synagogues, on my account you will be brought before governors, kings, as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.” (Matthew 10:16-20)

God is going to promote His people so His witness can get to the high authorities of this earth. In the meantime, expect persecution. It is just part and parcel of witnessing. Anytime you go out there to witness about Jesus unto a foreign world, there will be people that hate you.

There are going to be people that will not want to hear anything you have to say, but interestingly enough it says you will be sent to these same people who do not want to hear anything you have to say. Why? They cannot be born against unless they hear the Word of God! We are going to love them and speak the Word of God with boldness and confidence. The only way a person can do that is after they have received the Holy Spirit, when it is done in power by God’s ability.

So the person who has a question about how to witness or when to speak, when not to speak, needs to see that God is going to give the words to say.

“Devote yourselves to prayer being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it

clearly, as I should. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.”

(Colossians 4:2-4)

A key to effective witnessing (and teaching) would be to devote yourself to prayer and intercession. A wonderful blessing came to our witnessing team as they discovered the importance of interceding before they go out.

As you devote yourself to prayer, God prepares things in the spirit realm. Pray that He prepares the hearts of the people you see and that He prepares your own heart to be more sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Then, when you see a certain person, you will know they are not the right one. You will go to another one... and bingo! They ask you how to be born again. Tell them as much as they can receive, then when you see a dead pan look on their face, say, “Thank you, Jesus.” We will talk to you again later.”

This is very effective because if God has not prepared the heart, it can be like walking into the lion’s den. Save yourself a lot of grief. Other times, God will send you to people, and you are going right into the lion’s den. But who is going with you? Jesus.

Pray that the witness be clear and concise, and exactly what needs to be heard. Use some wisdom, don’t just walk up ready to force-feed the gospel to some one who is not ready to receive.

There is a timing involved in things too. You do not walk into a bar and start witnessing about Jesus. They will call the authorities on you, and have you hauled off to the police department because you failed to use wisdom and discretion. “God told me to go where the sinners are.” Why don’t you catch them when they are outside of the bar? The only time you can talk to a drunk is when he is sober. Wisdom and discretion.

“Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened. But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. It is better, if it is

God's will for you to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.” (1st Peter 3:13-17)

If you are sharing Jesus with someone, even if you suffer for it, you are blessed. I would much rather be on the sharing side, than on the “keep my mouth shut” side, and have somebody come back later and say, “Why didn’t you tell me that?” It says, “Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and praise your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16)

People might be afraid of what you are sharing. Jesus means commitment, life, a whole new way of doing things, and they are afraid of that. They will try to make you afraid to share because if you do not, no conviction falls on them and they don’t have to deal with it. If you start sharing those things about Jesus and living those things, then they have to do something with it.

You know in your heart that what you share is true. Jesus Christ is Lord. He is the Way, the Truth, the Life. No man comes to the Father except by Him. And you know it. He is your life, and you want to tell the world about it. “...set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to every one who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.” (1st Peter 3:15)

Look at this closely, “*Always be ready to give an answer.*” The only way you can do that is to study. Study, pray, watch and get yourself ready. The only way that I can give an answer to that question is because of what has been put in my heart in the past, and now the Holy Spirit brings it out.

There are many people out there that would love to ask. Answer their questions, don’t give them “the whole nine yards” as the expression goes. Just answer their question. If you cannot, then say, “I don’t know, but I would be happy to find it out for you.” Or, “Why don’t you come with me, and we will go see someone I am sure can help you.” Don’t be on some pride trip where you think you have to have all the answers. If you don’t know, search the word of God and get the answer.

Note, “*To everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have...*” (1st Peter 3:15) They have seen something in your life change, and they say, “You have something different, I would like to know about it.” Then you start from there.

CHAPTER 6

DELIVERANCE THROUGH TEACHING THE WORD OF GOD

“He sent forth His Word and healed them. He rescued them from the grave.” (Psalm 107:20)

As the Word is sent forth in deliverance teaching, it is going to heal people and deliver them. It will cause them to grow up in the faith. Now this particular type of teaching will actually cause garbage in people’s lives to rise up so that it can be dealt with. Attitudes that may be out of line, and any influences that are not of God will rise up also. Freedom will start to come to the people that hear. As that Word is sent forth, it is going to produce something.

“As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my Word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.” (Isaiah 55:10-11)

The Word going forth will produce whatever it was intended to produce. If I am ministering against fear, I speak out the Word dealing with that fear area. The next thing you know, anybody who had any fears would be free from those fears. That is deliverance teaching.

It is simply taking an area, putting the Word of God out there in that area and as I do so, it is going to produce freedom.

Matthew 18:18 deals with the fact that whatever we bind on earth is bound in heaven. Whatever we loose on earth we loose in heaven. So when we are speaking in this form of teaching, we are actually binding and loosing. Binding up the devil, freeing forgiveness into people’s lives. We are freeing the love of God. As that goes out, it has to have an effect. It cannot be any other way.

Matthew 18:19 speaks of praying, but it is actually talking about the fact that what we speak on this earth, God is going to honor in heaven. So when you go by the Holy Spirit of God, you speak what God gives to say and God will

work with you. We are co-laborers together with God. (1st Corinthians 3:9) God will honor in heaven what we speak on earth. When I received that truth into my heart, and began to apply it, amazing things started to happen.

One night I came home at a time when things were being (that I was seeing), and I got down on my knees before the Lord. All of a sudden I just started pounding on the bed. What came out of my spirit was, “God, you have to honor what I spoke on earth. I spoke your Word, you have to honor it.” Now God knows that, but this was me knowing it. This is when the whole team comes together. God knows and is hastening to perform His Word as it says in Jeremiah 1. He wants to and He is just waiting for somebody to come and speak it out to set people free. That was the night that it got inside of me; I knew it! We are ambassadors for Christ (2nd Corinthians 5:20) What we speak, God is going to honor.

We really need to watch what we speak, so that it be by the Holy Spirit of God because God will only honor and confirm His Word. A word can be spoken, but it is not the word that God wants spoken at that particular time. The word that God wants spoken at that time is going to bring His results. It will set the people free who are listening.

In Mark 11:22-24, we see that as we operate in the God-like kind of faith, when we speak to that mountain to move, it will move. As you teach in this way, you are basically speaking to the mountain. You may or may not know who has that mountain, but one thing that I know for sure is that something which is common to one is common to all. No temptation has befallen people that is not common to everyone. (1st Corinthians 10:13) If somebody has a problem, even if it is you and you are talking about it, it is going to set somebody else free out there. The mountain has to move if you do not doubt in your heart about His ability. This is the key to deliverance teaching.

When you speak forth the word of God, you have to know without a shadow of a doubt in your heart that what you are speaking is going to happen.
“Believe in your heart that those things you speak will come to pass, and you will have whatsoever things you say.”

Go back to Genesis, chapter one and you see the Lord is speaking, He speaks in faith. You not only speak the truth in love, you speak the truth in faith. I always go into a meeting expecting that nobody within the range of my voice will leave without a super abundant touch from God, in one way or

the other. They will be shaken. They may not like what I have to say, but they are shaken because they got a touch from God. They may love what I have to say, but that is not my concern. I have learned not to care. What God wants accomplished is going to be accomplished. It is important that you not care whether the people like what you are saying or not. Otherwise you tend to start thinking, “Did I say the right things? Did I make everybody happy?”

The day I make everybody happy is the day I am not doing my job. When the Spirit of God works through me in that form of teaching, it is not going to make a lot of people happy, because they are faced with making some changes in their lives. They may or may not be willing to change. They might not even come back. That is really their problem. We spoke the truth in love. We spoke the Word of God to set them free if they would receive the Word and do it.

Jesus spoke to the storm, “*Be still.*” He spoke it in faith, and it became still. He spoke to the Pharisees and quieted them down. Many times He just asked them their own questions. They could not answer them, so He figured He didn’t have to. That is God’s wisdom. When you speak, the wisdom of God will come forth and many times you will discern people’s thoughts as the Spirit is ministering. You will discern motives, and they go away thinking, ‘How did he know what I was thinking?’ Well, it is merely the Spirit of God, He knows everything. This convicts a person’s heart. They know then they have been in the presence of God. They know that a prophet has been in their midst. Whether they receive it or not, they know that the truth has come forth.

One way or another, things will happen when you speak that truth in love.

Jesus went to Lazarus after he had been dead and in the grave four days. He said, “Lazarus come forth.” Everybody else thought, “Oh, no.” The guy is stinking by now. They did not have our modern day embalming methods. The guy is decaying. These people were thinking about their convenience, not about his best. But Jesus had them roll away the stone, and He said, “*Lazarus, come forth.*” It says he spoke it with a loud voice. Your word and reputation is on the line when you do something like that. You better know something is going to happen. “Lazarus, come forth!”

“Father I know you hear me always.” (John 11:42) That is one of the most precious verses to me. I know my Father always hears me. I know that every time I call, He answers. I know it is always “Yes.” Why? I am speaking forth the Word and will of God in love, and I know I have to get His results.

I still remember that night I was pounding on that mattress. “Father, you have to honor this word!” It was a situation in which a young boy had just been messed up in an automobile accident, and they said he would not live, but God raised Him up. This is what we are dealing with; God has to honor that Word. However, you have to believe it when you speak it, and you have to speak that truth in love.

This boy was unconscious. I told the parents that he was just asleep; he would wake up and be just fine. Then I walked out of there. Sure enough, four days later, he came right out of it like he had been sleeping.

“They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach.” (Mark 1:21) Jesus was teaching, and note what happened. He is a master at deliverance teaching. *“The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law.”* (Mark 1:22)

He knew that what he said was true. He spoke the truth in love. It was the divine wisdom of God, and behind every word he spoke the Holy Spirit began to move to touch people’s lives, and they recognized the difference.

“Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an evil spirit cried out, ‘What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are – the Holy One of God.’ ‘Be quiet!’ said Jesus sternly. ‘Come out of him.’ The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek. The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, ‘What is this? A new teaching – and with authority. He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him.’ News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.” (Mark 1:23-28)

As Jesus spoke, it provoked the devils that were influencing people to manifest there in the meeting, and they started speaking out. We see this all the time in our meetings. You cannot be in the presence of God without the garbage starting to come out, for it is part of the ministry of the Holy Spirit –

to set people free. The key is doing exactly what the Holy Spirit wants done, and saying what the Holy Spirit wants said in the way He wants it said. The result is people being set free.

I want to encourage you to 1) get the Word of God inside you, so you know what God says; 2) do not be concerned about what you are going to say and how you are going to say it when you are talking with people. Let God help you with that. Many times people will come up with a fear or a doubt and you simply take the Word and minister it to them.

This is the way that most people minister to others and it is very effective. You simply take the Word of God and say, “This is what God says for this area that you are concerned about.” The promise will set them free. However, it has to be emphasized that this is what God says. This is not my word, but what God says. God then uses us to explain and get the point across to people.

CHAPTER 7

TEACHING THROUGH WORD STUDY

As you read in your Bible you will find that what the words mean in the Bible are not necessarily the way they come out in our bible. Any time you translate something from one language into another language something is lost. You will also find that there are many words that are translated one way but have many different forms. When you are teaching this way, what you are doing is simply taking a topic or a word definition and bring it out to the people. Many times when I am teaching, I will do a combination of things. We may do a topical study in a certain area. I will go through the concordance and pick out certain ones that apply to certain areas.

Do a word study with Strong's Concordance. It was the man's (Strong's) ministry to spend his whole life going through the King James Version of the Bible and categorizing every word. He listed every time a word was used in the Bible. It is all there.

For example take the word "love." Show the people the meaning of the term in the specific setting that it is in the Bible. In a single verse the same term is used two or three times, but it may mean two or three different things.

"Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (John 2:15)

The first form of love is "agapao." This word means to love in a social or moral sense. It may be an obligation. This means that I am not obligated in a social, moral (obligation) sense to love the world. *"Do not love the world."* This form of love often operates from the head, not the heart, like returning a favor due to obligation or etiquette.

"If anyone loves the world [agapao again], the love of the Father is not in him." (1st John 2:15) This ties in very clearly with passages like James 4:4, *"You adulterous people, do not you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God?"* So if there is any "agapao" towards the world, then one has no "agape" toward God or from God. In other words, there is no love there.

“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.” (1st John 4:7-8)

In this passage, that first term, love, is agapao, and you will see why. *“For love [agape] comes from God. Everyone who loves [agape] has been born of God and knows God.” (1st John 4:7)*

The first meaning of love shows that from a moral sense, I am obligated to love others because I love God and God loves me. The same thing is found in Romans, where it says to *“offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – which is your spiritual worship.” (Romans 12:1)* Since God has already set me free, He saved me – spirit, mind and body – the least I can now do out of a moral obligation to God is to say, “Thank you, and now, God, this is Your body.” This is our reasonable service. The least we can do.

“Love [agape] the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love [agape] your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.” (Mark 12:30-31)

With agape there is a heart commitment. The agapao is nothing more than a head commitment. Agape comes from the heart. It is pure, it is unconditional.

“To love [agape] him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love [agape] your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.” (Mark 12:33)

Agape love involves a total commitment of the soul, the mind, and the body. This is the way in which God is committed to His people, and when God’s love is flowing through His people, it will come through His people the same way. That is why it will always produce God’s results. People will actually be confronted with the love of God.

Matthew 5:43-44, 46 are examples using the “agapao” kind of love.

The third form of love is called “phileo.” This means to be a friend. It involves a personal attachment. A friendship kind of love. It is a matter of sentiment. Feelings. You are drawn to a person and there is a bond there.

“Everyone with me sends your greetings. Greet those who love us in the faith.” (Titus 3:15)

This is “phileo.” It is a friendship, a bond. It does not matter how far apart they are, no matter how much time it has been since they have seen each other, when they see each other, it’s just like old times. There is no time or distance to the relationship. It is a real friendship. It will last and last.

The next form of love is called “philandros.” This means to be fond of and affectionate. This form of love also involves a sexual aspect. We note it would involve a love between a husband and a wife.

An example of this type of love can be found in Titus.

“Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands...” (Titus 2:4)

The next form is “philarguria.” This one is a form of avarice or greed. The love of money. Covetousness.

“For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil.” (1st Timothy 6:10)

The next form of love is called “philadelphia.” It means a fraternal affection. Love of brethren. Brotherly love. 1st Thessalonians 4:9; Hebrews 13:1; 1st Peter 1:22 and Romans 12:10 are all Scriptures with references to this form of the word love.

“Now about brotherly love, we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other.” (1st Thessalonians 4:9)

Note in this example, *“brotherly love [Philadelphia], ...for you are taught of God to love [agapao].”* Now why would agapao be used there? Because of moral, social obligation. God’s moral law obligates us. It is good obligation.

The last form of love is “philadelphos.” which means love as brethren.

“Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble.” (1st Peter 3:8)

One form is love *of* brethren (philadelphia), the other one is love *as* brethren (philadelphos). The difference is, 1) there is love coming from the brethren – the love of the brethren; 2) we love as brethren, meaning that we are to love somebody as though we are brothers. If somebody comes in off the streets, and they love Jesus, we are to love them as brethren.

So you are seeing how you can read the same word, but the meaning has changed a bit. This is why it is very important to get the exact meaning. You do not need to be an expert in Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic and be a Bible scholar in order to teach. I always laugh at that because I have had many years of study in different languages, and I do not even use it.

Many people really get discouraged because they think they have to have all kinds of training before they can be of any use to God. This is not true. Pick up a concordance. It has the Hebrew and the Greek. Why should I spend my whole life trying to figure out Greek and Hebrew words when one man has already done it? It is accurate too.

I believe in scholarship, but one should not let scholarship stand in the way of his growing in the Word of God. If you can use these resources that God has given through people, these are tools made available to us.

I do not rely on commentaries. They are people’s opinions and I do not rely on man’s opinion of the Bible. This is why I appreciate *Strong’s Concordance*. All it does is take any given word, life, like, love, etc., and breaks it down into all the different ways it is used. You have it right at your finger tips, you can take the pure Word of God itself without anybody’s commentary on it, and start to put it together.

In this kind of teaching, listeners have to follow closely and pay attention. It is a difficult type of teaching for people to grasp, but very rewarding if they stick with it. If you take notes, you will be able to remember it. If you do not, you will not remember anything except that there are lots of different words for love.

CHAPTER 8

TYPES OF TEACHING FOUND IN THE BIBLE

There are many other ways to teach and many types of literary and spoken forms used in the Bible. In this chapter, we will take a look at these different types of teaching.

Teaching that is very logical and “line on line,” just falling into place. Provokes people to think on a question and then provides an answer.

Other times you will see that a teaching poses a question, but does not give the answer. It allows you to come to a conclusion. This is called deductive and inductive. The latter allows you to make your own conclusions, while the former makes the conclusion for you.

In this chapter Paul’s teaching from the book of Romans shows that he logically sets up his arguments.

Letters and books are different forms of teaching than when we teach by speaking. However, when the people received this letter from Paul at Rome, an elder stood before the people in the church, and all he did was read the letter, from start to finish.

Paul had never been to Rome at the time of the Roman letter. He had heard about the church and was now writing to them. Paul began by setting up a rapport with the people to whom he was ministering. Speaking begins much the same way. He simply and boldly stated where he was coming from, and that he was not ashamed of the gospel. (Romans 1:16)

After he set up an inner rapport with the people, he expressed that he was “*obligated both to the Greeks and to the non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish.*” (Romans 1:14) He did not know who was at Rome, but there were Greeks and non-Greeks and certainly there were the wise and the foolish. He is relating to everyone.

You will find that as the Holy Spirit is ministering and teaching, there is not an individual within earshot who will not in some way or another be affected by the ministry of the Spirit of God.

Paul was getting everyone's attention. He was letting them know he had something to say. If somebody is ashamed to say something, they probably do not have anything of consequence to say. If they are uncertain, and unable to be bold, more than likely they do not have anything to say. Who do people listen to? The bold ones – right or wrong. They are the ones who get people's attention, and the people listen.

Paul sets up his argument by explaining God's wrath against mankind. He shows the condition of man. There is no one who is truly seeking after God in his heart and everyone is depraved and deprived. He shows that God is righteous in His judgment of these depraved and deprived people. He then tells about the law and the Jews, and explains that even the Jews cannot keep the law. No one is actually keeping the law.

He goes into the ceremonial teachings, showing that the only circumcision that is really going to matter is the circumcision of the heart (meaning you are set aside for God). (Romans 2:28-29) Circumcision in the Old Testament meant that you were a child of Israel, and as such a child of God. It was a sign that separated the Israelites from the rest of the world. You can show outward signs, but Paul says that outward circumcision does not mean anything anymore. We need to be circumcised in our hearts.

Paul elaborates on God's faithfulness as he logically sets it up, building his case. Paul was trained by one of the greatest teachers of his day. He could have been an attorney, the way this was written. He first shows the way God's wrath is upon the whole world. Then he shows how God has a right to judge, and His judgment is pure and holy. Then he tells of the faithfulness of God, and how He loves to help the people, though they do not deserve it. God wants to help those who are still rebellious against him.

Paul then explains how righteousness is through faith. The only way we can get right with God is through faith in Jesus Christ, and he gives an example of how that faith worked in the life of Abraham. The emphasis of the book of Romans is on faith. We are justified and declared not guilty before God, through our faith in the blood of Jesus. (Romans 3:24)

Paul then lays out the blessings of being justified or being declared not guilty before God, because of our faith in Jesus. God gave a free gift. We

could not earn it, we could not work for it. Nobody deserved it. God in His infinite love gave it to us through Jesus. We simply accept it by faith.

He gives a detailed explanation on how we received death through Adam, but life through Jesus. The logical argument goes on; we are now dead to sin in Jesus. In previous chapters it showed that everyone was depraved and deprived. Even the people who seemed like they were good were not good. Now he is starting to show that we are dead to sin in Jesus, justified by faith. Dead to sin! In other words God's ability has changed us so we do not have to sin anymore.

Thus we become slaves to righteousness. He has already shown us how we were slaves to sin and that nobody did any good. Every thing good that you wanted to do, you could not, but in Jesus the power is there to change. It is already done; all we have to do is recognize it. He shows that there is a struggle with sin that goes on with many people. (People often spend more time in chapter seven than in chapter eight. We need to read Romans from chapter one to chapter 12. You have to read the whole thing together if you are going to get the whole thing.)

In my spirit I am a slave to do the will of God. The Bible mentions a bond slave, which is a slave that has been freed. In other words, I was a slave to sin and death, but Jesus set me free. Now I am free to choose to go back and become a slave – to Jesus; not the devil, not the flesh, Jesus.

The law of sin and death is influencing my mind and my body. The law of life and health is operating on my spirit. Paul really knows how to get right to the point. *“Who will rescue me from this body of death?”* (Romans 7:24) People are dwelling on the fact that they have a body of death. My mind and body want to go with the devil and my spirit wants to go to God. *“Who can save me?”*

“Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Romans 7:25) The sinful nature is a slave to the law of sin, but note as he progresses into chapter eight, there is nothing but victory. You start to see that as you walk in the spirit you will fulfill the law of God. You will have complete control of your spirit, mind, and body because Jesus has set you free, and there is nothing to hold us back anymore from the abundant victory that God has promised. Paul convinces us that we were justified by faith and declared not guilty by faith in Jesus.

The end of Romans, chapter eight says, “*Nothing can separate me from the love of God.*” (Romans 8:35, 38-39) “*If God is for us who can be against us?*” (Romans 8:31) “*We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.*” (Romans 8:37)

Then Paul explains the plan of God and just how it works. He shows how the Jews are the chosen people of God, and we, because of God’s mercy, are grafted into the vine. The graft is not a part of the original tree, but receives all the benefits and blessings of the tree. This includes the Roman Church, and all of us. God chose the Jews, anointed them, sanctified them, and declared them holy, and then blinded them; not in their eyes but in their spirit, so that they refused to receive Jesus. For what purpose? So that we Gentiles could come in. (Romans 11:7-8)

The last chapters of the book of Romans deals with practical Christian living. I have never seen Paul’s method of teaching leave out practical instruction (what to do, what not to do). He says your spirit is in good shape. Now you have to do something with your body and mind. Offer your body up as a living sacrifice to the Lord, and let your mind be renewed by the Word. (Romans 12:1-2)

He goes into practical instruction: “*Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought but with sober judgment.*” (Romans 12:3)

Why would he put this before verses 4-8? Because they are dealing with ministry service gifts. You don’t have anything that God didn’t give you – from your faith to your socks, so why get puffed up in yourself? (1st Corinthians 4:6-7) God gives all the ability.

We find simple statements here: “*Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil. Cling to what is good.*” (Romans 12:9) These are simple, straightforward, instructive statements. “Do it,” is what he is saying.

So you see there are different types of teachings within the same letter, or book. This was communicated to the church at Rome. The elder or pastor of the church would stand up and read it. From Romans, chapter one to Romans 16. The whole letter is the message. Why is it that we can get 50 messages from Romans 1 – 16? God does things in a little different way. He draws out different truths at different times.

Similes

Simile: A figure of speech comparing two unlike things that is often introduced as “like” or “as.” For instance, “cheeks like roses” is a simile.

Whenever you see a “like” or “as,” or something similar, you are dealing with a form of teaching. He is not saying it is... he is saying it is like.

When you are teaching from the Word, you need to understand this. Say exactly what needs to be shared and communicate exactly what is meant.

An example of this is found in Luke 22:44. *“Being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.”*

It does not say (as is often taught) that he sweat drops of blood. I am a picker when it comes to the Word of God. I will go pick-pick-picking through the Word, and every word is significant in the way it is being communicated. When we are communicating, our words should say exactly what we want them to say.

The text says that his sweat was like drops of blood, not that it was drops of blood. What is the significance of this? Have you ever noticed when you are perspiring, the sweat will just start to come out of the skin and ooze around your face? (That’s why God made eyebrows.) Blood comes out in big drops. They have a lot of weight and they plop out. That is the way the sweat was coming out of him. It was coming out in big droplets.

The only time that kind of sweat is going to happen is when someone is in an intense state. Jesus was going through the anguish of the intense moment. This is not an unusual occurrence, such as when tears start to flow from a person who is in anguish. We are talking about intercession here. Jesus was in intense intercession just before the major work of God was completed there at the cross.

What you are seeing there is the form “like.” In other places you will see the term “as” being used.

“When the son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, He will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered

before him and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.” (Matthew 25:31-33)

Jesus switched the imagery into something that the people of his day could understand. It was a society where shepherds were commonplace around the hillsides, and he was showing the people that the sheep and the goats are always separated. He was separating them as a shepherd would separate the sheep from the goats. Jesus makes a distinction here. He put into picture form, an analogy that they can understand.

You will find that a simple analogy will make things become clear to people. That is what Jesus was doing, making it simple, saying the same truth in another way. Jesus was saying it in a way that would help people relate.

Note the word “as” in verse 32. This is a different type of communication. Other statements such as in verse 31 and the first half of 32 are simply narrative statements saying, “This is the way it is going to be.”

Parables

The parable is another form of communication. A parable is a hidden statement that contains a spiritual truth, but that truth is hidden. If you are not tuned into the Spirit, you will not understand. In Matthew 25:31 we noted that it was a simple statement of fact. *“The Lord is going to come in all His glory, his angels with him.”* In parables, the Lord Jesus took a spiritual truth and put a story around it, thus that truth was veiled. Only the hungry and the thirsty would really understand. The people who really want to understand what God is saying, are going to search and get the truths that are hidden within the parables.

Jesus was a master teacher, operating by the Holy Spirit of God who is the Teacher. Note that the majority of Jesus’ teaching was done in parables.

“Then he told them many things in parables, saying, “A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it

produced a crop – a hundred, sixty, or thirty times what was sown. He who has ears let him hear’.” (Matthew 13:3-9)

This was an agricultural society. They understood what he was talking about. Was there really anything spiritual about all that? If you were to listen to it at face value, you would think he was talking about what happened when a man went out and sowed his seed in his field. Nothing spiritual about that at all.

At the end of the parable, he said, “He who has ears, let him hear.” Jesus was a spiritual teacher and unless you had spiritual ears, you would not hear the meaning of his teachings.

Sometimes you will find that when you come right out and tell people things, they do not really want to hear it. They do not want to believe it, nor do they want to do anything with it. Teaching is a form of fishing. Witnessing is not the only form of fishing for men.

Jesus put something out that got their attention. It was a nice little story. Everybody likes to hear stories. You have a very simple farming story about sowing the seed.

“The disciples came to him and asked, ‘Why do you speak to the people in parables?’ He replied, ‘The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. This is why I speak to them in parables. Though seeing, they do not see, though hearing they do not hear or understand. In them is fulfilled the prophesy of Isaiah: ‘You will be ever hearing but never understanding, you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. For this people’s heart has become calloused. They hardly hear with their ears and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears and understand with their hearts, and turn, and I would heal them. But blessed are your eyes, because they see, and your ears because they hear. For I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it. Listen then, to what the parable of the sower means.’ ” (Matthew 13:10-18)

He did this quite often as he taught the multitudes in parables. Why did he do that when they did not understand? It was not given for them to understand. We think that Jesus wants everyone to understand everything, right? Apparently only the hungry and the thirsty are going to understand and receive.

Not everybody that hears the Word of God will receive the Word of God. That is what that parable is about. Then he proceeded to teach the disciples what the parable meant.

Follow closely the wording of the parable. Again, a parable is a spiritual truth that is hidden in another story form, talking about a subject that is relevant to the people. They understand the account, but the only way they are going to get the spiritual truth is to search and to dig into it.

From the time I was a boy I have read and understood the parables. I had no problem with parables. When I started pastoring and teaching on the parables, many people would come to me and say, “That was so wonderful, I never understood what that was talking about. Now it is all so clear.” Then I would go sit by myself and say, “Lord, what is wrong with those people? Why couldn’t they understand that? It’s so clear!” It finally dawned on me that it is hidden to people until the Holy Spirit brings it out and enlightens them.

Do you know why the disciples asked Jesus why he spoke to the people in parables all the time? Because they did not understand them either. That is why Jesus took them aside and would communicate to them what he was saying.

In Mark 14:15 Jesus said that the sower is the person who goes out to share the Word of God. The seed is the Word of God. Then, returning to Matthew we see all the ways in which the devil can come and steal that Word.. The birds are the devil coming to steal the Word right out of the person’s mind because they do not understand it. (Maybe by not asking any questions or not pursuing the issue to seek understanding, they have it stolen from them.) The rocky places represent the man who hears the Word and receives it with joy, but since he has no root, it lasts only a short time. When the trouble of persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away.

Jesus took one part after another and explained exactly what it meant. In a parable, every part is significant. It all has meaning, but that meaning can only be discerned through the Holy Spirit of God.

This is why people sometimes have dreams and visions. In many respects I would put them into this same category as a parable. The Lord will minister to His people through dreams and it will be a form of parable with all kinds of things happening. The only way it can be discerned is by the Spirit of God. He gives the keys to open it up. God hasn't given those keys to everybody. It says that Daniel was given a special gift to interpret visions and dreams. Note that this still works today. There are individuals that God has given the ability to understand visions and dreams, which are basically parables, that will not fall into place until the Spirit of God unlocks it and gives the meaning.

In Matthew 13 you will find another parable. *“The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away.”* (Matthew 13:24)

Jesus was using examples that these people understood very well. They were a farming and shepherding society, and understood the terms Jesus used. However, he did not give them any explanation. In fact, often he just went from parable to parable, possibly on the same theme, but without any understanding or explanation.

In verse 24, Jesus gave the parable. He did not explain it and went right into another parable. *“The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed.”* He did not give them any understanding. He told them yet another parable in verse 33; *“The kingdom of heaven is like yeast.”*

“Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables. He did not say anything to them without using a parable. So it was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet: ‘I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world.’ ” (Matthew 13:34-35)

It was foretold that Jesus was going to teach things hidden since the creation. Note that after he finished teaching them, they were still hidden. Thus his often reply, *“Let them who have ears to hear, let them hear.”* Again, even after they heard, nobody understood. Who is the person who has ears to

hear? This is the person who is downright committed and serious about finding the truth. They will stick with it until they get the truth, and they will not go away without the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

His disciples came to him afterward and said, “*Explain to us the parable about the wheat in the field.*” (Matthew 13:16) Who was it that wanted to know what the stories meant? The disciples. You do not find anybody in the crowd coming and asking for an explanation. He answered and went into the explanation, every part being significant.

Jesus’ response to his disciples was also in parables. He talked to them that way. On the surface it was very simple. Even a child could understand what was being said, but the only ones to really understand everything would be the true seekers; they were going to find out.

“*Have you understood all these things?*” (Matthew 13:51)

Allegories

Allegory: The expression by means of symbolic fictional figures and actions of truths or generalizations about human existence. (A symbolic representation).

An allegory is a type of story or presentation of a truth which cannot be taken literally. You would miss the meaning of what is being said if you did. Luke 16:19-31 is an example of an allegorical.

When you are teaching an allegory, you are dealing with a spiritual truth, not the same as a parable but a spiritual truth put into another form. A truth that is real, using fictitious people and situations. In Luke 16:19-31 it is talking about a spiritual truth that a person who dies not knowing the Lord is separated from God. You cannot come back from the dead to tell anybody so you had better make the most of your time for God while you are here and alive.

Proverbs

Take any of the Proverbs and you will see that they are basically simple little truths put in couplets, meaning there are two of them, and they are always matched together.

An example of this could be found almost anywhere in the book of Proverbs: *“Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him.”* (Proverbs 22:15)

You will note that this is a form of teaching and in it a truth is put forth: *“Folly is bound up in the heart of a child.”* Now what are we going to do about that folly? *“But the rod of discipline will drive it far from him.”* End of truth.

One could get up, share that, and then sit down. That is teaching, but please note that a lot of people have a hard time with Proverbs due to the fact that they try to read through 3 or 4 chapters at a time, which would not be wise.

The Proverbs are intended for reading one of those couplets and thinking on it. (Then do it!) Note it goes right from *“Folly is bound up in the heart of a child,”* to *“He oppresses the poor to increase his wealth and he who gives gifts to the rich, both come to poverty.”* (Proverbs 22:16) These are totally different subjects and not related at all, yet that is the next verse. Couplets. The first part in verse 16 is, *“He who oppresses the poor and he who gives gifts to the rich,”* the second part is *“both come to poverty.”*

In every Proverb you will find a central truth of God. They all stand basically on their own.

“The mouth of an adulteress is a deep pit. He who is under the Lord’s wrath will fall into it.” (Proverbs 22:14)

Simple straightforward truth. This is why you don’t read or teach Proverbs verse on verse. You would end up getting people out into 50 different areas, and you would not be able to bring them back in any given session.

Prophetic Teaching

Through the different prophets like; Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and Daniel, you will see prophetic teaching flowing through the text. This can be another form of teaching. There are times even in our meetings that the Lord will actually teach through prophetic utterance.

Psalms

The book of Psalms contains hymns or songs. They were written in a form of poetry. This is merely a different form of communication or teaching. They were actually sung unto the Lord. They weren't taught at all. So apparently, when you are singing you can be communicating and teaching.

Narratives

The book of Acts is a good example of narrative. This is where there is a simple, chronological account explaining what has happened. It reads just like a diary. Basically, "On such and such a day at such and such a time such a thing was happening and these are the results that happened, then they went on to the next town, etc., etc."

Revelation (Symbolic Representation)

If you look at the book of Revelation, you will find a totally different kind of working. Revelation is symbolic material. It is different from a parable. In a parable, everything in a parable is significant. In symbolic writings some of the things may not represent anything. Other parts do represent something.

CHAPTER 9

INSTRUCTIONAL TEACHING

Another form of teaching called instructional teaching is merely giving instructions. There are several passages in the Word where instructions are given in very simple form of teaching.

Normally this does not involve much detail, and often is taken for granted that people know how to do these things. I do not really know what this world would do without instructions, for without them nothing would get accomplished.

While I was working my way through school, I sold garden equipment and toys. I always laughed about the statements on the boxes the toys came: “Simple enough for a child to put together.” Then I would unfold thirty pages of instructions, it was such a riot. You had to be some kind of engineer to figure out some of these things, and even then you might come up lacking. Maybe a child *could* put it together, but I don’t know about an adult.

One has to learn to follow instructions and follow them in just the way they are given. Have you ever tried to put something together without any instructions? Maybe you just figured, “Well, here it is. Simple enough. I’ll just connect this to this, and that to that,” and everything seems to go along just fine until you get almost to the end and there’s something not quite right. You cannot retrace your steps to find out where that extra part goes because you have not followed the instructions. As a result, you may have to tear it all down and start again.

Instructions are given for people to submit to or follow. When people follow God’s instructions, they will accomplish what He has planned. Another term for submission is obedience. Without obedience nothing gets accomplished, no one gets blessed.

In the book of Colossians 4:2-6, there is an example of a simple set of instructions written by Paul to the church.

“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.” (Colossians 4:2)

Instructions do not always have long explanations; they get right to the point. Paul is saying, “Pay attention to praying...Do it.” Praying doesn’t take any great instructions when you pray in tongues, does it? You simply talk in the tongues and you will get the perfect will of God into the situation. Say, “Father, give me utterance concerning this situation,” and begin to speak in tongues. It is as simple as that; however, the key to effective praying is watchfulness and thankfulness. Throughout the Bible you will find watchfulness and prayer usually in the same sentence. *“Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.”* (Mark 6:38) Here in Colossians 4:2 you see *“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.”* There is no sense praying if you are not thankful.

“And pray for us too that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.” (Colossians 4:3)

The specific instruction here is to pray that God opens doors so we are able to bring what God has given us to share.

“Pray that I may proclaim it clearly as I should.” (Colossians 4:4)

This is another instruction to the intercessors basically, but also to the Church. I believe that an interceding church is a church that is going someplace. Apparently it is important that the message be communicated clearly. I will ask people, “Was that clear?” I pray that we present it clearly so there isn’t anybody that does not understand. When I ask that question, I would not be asking to see if you were listening, but making sure you understand.

“Be wise in the way you act towards outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.” (Colossians 4:5)

Paul puts an instruction out there with a little explanation; to make the most of every opportunity. Now apparently that is a part of being wise in dealing with unbelievers, making the most of every opportunity.

“Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer anyone.” (Colossians 4:6)

This is how we make the most of every opportunity. Your conversation may be your words, but it also means your behavior or way of life. Many times it will flow in both directions. One’s life should actually present a question to people. They should wonder about what is going on with you, and you will be ready, willing and able to share with them, something to make them think a little bit. We call it fishing... Fish do not usually devour bait; they will swim around that bait and do a little nibbling before they bite. A good fisherman learns to wait until it has done a little nibbling and then when it bites, he reels it in. Sometimes a fisherman loses his bait. This isn’t necessarily a bad thing when you are spiritually fishing. They are nibbling. People may need a whole lot of answers before they finally bite and take it hook, line and sinker.

This is the kind of teacher that does not turn people off. They keep drawing them and drawing them, not giving them too much to handle at once. Just enough to answer their questions and that is it. Let them get hungry. This allows God to work with them and before long they will be looking for more.

As Paul was speaking, he was simply saying to be wise. He didn’t go into a 40 page instruction on how to do it, he said it in two simple verses. Apparently, when one is teaching instruction, one does not have to explain a whole lot of things. This is what we would call exhortation instruction.

“The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power forever.” (1st Peter 4:7-11)

If you are not clear minded and self-controlled, you are not able to pray very well. You will be distracted. *“A double-minded person is unstable in all his ways, and cannot expect to receive anything from God.” (James 1:8)*

1st Peter 4:7 deals with praying, and verse 8 with love. Hospitality without grumbling is not the kind that says, “Oh man, when are they going to leave! Why did they have to drop in at dinner time?”

When I was going through my last year at seminary, all my buddies used to show up at dinner time. What did they want? Dinner.

This is simple instruction given in one simple verse. In 1st Peter 4:10, Peter went into a different subject telling them that each of them should use whatever gift they have to serve others. The gift has been given to use, and that use is to serve others, not to glorify oneself. God’s grace is actually the power of God to set a person free. His Word says that God resists the proud, but gives grace (ability) to the humble. (James 4:6)

Then Peter went into various forms of God’s grace. If I open my mouth I should be speaking the Word of God. (1st Peter 4:11) Simple instruction. God will give strength sufficient for the day. If God has given a service ministry, He will also provide the strength to do what needs to be done. Note that he does not go into any great length.

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” (Ephesians 4:29-32)

In our conversation with one another, we are not to be about our own needs, but the needs of others. Speaking things that will be profitable to them. Anybody who knows anything about good conversation, knows that the finest thing to do with people is to talk about them. Boy, they will listen so attentively, they will be so into what is going on. Encourage them, ask questions about them. Get them to talk. As they begin to talk, their needs start to come out. Then you are able to let words come forth which are going to be helpful in building others up according to their needs. It is impossible to know what a person’s needs might be right at the moment unless God reveals something through a supernatural operation. Even when God does show something, He usually shows only a glimpse of it. So the

only way a person can find out about what the needs of a person are is to enter into conversation with them.

In this section of Ephesians chapter four, Paul is dealing with our mouths, words and attitudes that we have that grieve the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God is grieved about sin in our lives, by words in our mouths that are not helpful to people, that are frivolous or downgrading to what God would bring forth.

“Such things are bitterness, rage, anger, brawling, and slander, along with every form of malice or deceit. Be kind, compassionate to one another, forgiving each other just as Christ God forgave you.” (Ephesians 4:31-32).

The specific command is to be kind, compassionate, etc. to one another as he simply brings forth instruction. Forgive. Be compassionate. Be kind. This is also called exhortation, which is actually an encouragement for people to do something.

In Romans 12 you will find this same type of teaching is very simple and straightforward. It is basically a call to action.

“Love must be sincere. (Without hypocrisy.) Hate what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer. Share with God’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you. Bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice, mourn with those who mourn, live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud but be willing to associate with people with low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, be at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written, ‘for it is mine to avenge. I will repay saith the Lord.’ On the contrary, if your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he’s thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” (Romans 12:9-21)

No great explanations, examples or frills are given. Just simple straightforward commands and instruction. This kind of teaching demands

action. It demands a response, and it does not give anyone a choice. It simply says, “This is the way it is. Do it.”

When someone is asking, “What should I do?” then this is the point of instruction. For example, “What should I do as a Christian?” This portion of Scripture and the others listed before in this chapter would be excellent. The individual can then discern for himself how this applies to life personally.

Instruction teaching basically leaves no questions. “This is God’s way. Walk in it.”

CHAPTER 10

TECHNIQUE AND TOPICAL TEACHING

In the first chapter we learned the importance of preparation; preparing one's heart in the Lord, before coming to share. As one is teaching one should be able to say that it is the Lord's words that are coming forth.

“For God did not call us to impure but to live a holy life. Therefore he who rejects this instruction does not reject man, but God who gives you His Holy Spirit.” (1st Thessalonians 4:7-8)

A teacher needs to understand that he is representing the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a tremendous responsibility and that is why it says in James 3:1 not everybody should desire to do this. Unless God is calling, then one should not be doing it. How do you know if you are called? If you teach, and people listen, then more than likely something is going. Likewise, if you teach and no one shows, then there might be a problem. After a time or two you will know what you are supposed to be doing, and there will be a witness come forth.

Many times people start out and do their own thing, and end up falling on the face. You can always thank God when there are people around that care enough about you to help develop what God does want to do through you. There will be people around to help you that way... if you are open to listen.

When we are teaching, and it is the Word of God then the people should receive it as the Word of God, not as the mere opinion of man. The responsibility of the teacher is that he makes sure that they are not man's ideas, but God's message. The teacher's examples should be such that they come back to one of God's truths.

A teacher does this by 1) preparing; 2) asking the Lord what to teach; 3) studying. Studying will help a man *“rightly divide the Word.”* (2nd Timothy 2:15) A conviction then falls on people's hearts as they receive a truth from God which sets them free. The only way this comes is through study. As we have noted in passed chapters, we cannot just get up here and “shwaffle!” There is a certain amount of study that needs to be done in any given area.

Involved in that study, as one is before the Lord, are various examples to us in teaching. It may be something from your personal life, or a situation that you saw happen around you. Teachers can use personal examples as well as those of others, or perhaps a truth of God from some other source. No one has a monopoly on the Holy Ghost! God's truth comes through many different channels, and I have found that what is stirring in us is usually going on somewhere else also. This would be a truth that God is bringing to His people, to His Body.

The Lord may give different ways of communicating. A teacher needs to be open to how He wants that truth communicated. Part of preparation for any given teaching time is making sure you have everything you need to communicate the message well.

A visual aid could be part of your teaching materials, such as a chart. A chart should be very simple and to the point. This way the people will understand and get the point in a matter of minutes. Sometimes this can really bring your message together. This is merely one way of communicating.

Sometimes you will see a teacher act out the message. Maybe a story from the gospels and you act it out. Once we used a few men to give the example of the man who pointed with his finger saying, "I thank you, Lord, that I'm not like that other man standing over there." The self-righteousness in that man was really brought across. This is just a form of dramatics but it communicated the truth of God very effectively.

Other times you might involve people in what you are saying. I like to use people in telling about those three monkeys, "See no evil, Hear no evil, speak no evil." I always add a fourth one which is 'do no evil.' This was a very graphic form of communication regarding holiness. If one is holy on the inside, that holiness will also be displayed on the outside. By not seeing evil, especially looking for evil, not hearing evil, and then speaking no evil.

An example of one spiritual principle would be, the more you get the Word of God in you, the higher your "fuel" level rises. If your fuel level rises, you are able to increase your airspeed, meaning you are able to increase your service to God. The more of the Word you have in you, the more you are

able to go out and do service. A simple spiritual principle is that the more service you do, the more your joy increases.

There is something very important for people in serving others. God knows how important this is for us, which is why He has called us to service. Everybody has a sense of purpose that God has placed in us, which is fulfilled through service to Him. There is unspeakable joy that comes with leading someone to the Lord, or when you invite someone to a meeting and they decide to come. Or you are praying for people and you see God changing their lives. The joy that comes from doing these things is marvelous.

When you are teaching, you want to keep things simple. There should be a principle involved, whether you are acting something out, speaking an example from your own life, or something that is going on with somebody else. Always try to tie everything together under a certain topic, subject or principle. Don't shotgun when you are teaching. People shoot a little out here and a little out there, hoping it falls into place. When God is teaching, the direction He is going will be pretty well-defined; something very simple and clear that people can go home with, one central truth that will be the topic of the evening.

In this chapter we will look at what is known as topical Bible study. A topic such as holiness is presented. We see how Jesus makes us holy, and the changes that occur in our lives as we are holy before the Lord. I believe service for God is a fruit of holiness, as was discussed earlier.

“And the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.” (Mark 16:20) God confirms a holy life. When a person who is walking with God has something to say, it will be meaningful. It has been my experience that people usually listen to those that are walking the walk. That means they are not merely talking it, they are walking it. They have fruit in their lives which people see. People notice qualities such as integrity, honesty, and sincerity. They see the love of God, and they become open to receive that love. They also see an open person who is just like them to which they can relate.

Holiness will usually produce service, and service will produce joy. See Psalm 16:11. When you are working with people, take the people into consideration. If you can involve them in what you are teaching, then you

will not lose any of them. In addition, eye contact is very important. What you do in your mannerisms is also important. If you are excited about what you are sharing, they will be excited.

You want the people to participate in the lesson; you want them to live with you in what you have discovered in the Scripture. When you get finished with them, it will be just like they discovered it for themselves.

One thing I have learned about people is that a lesson will stick with them more if a person discovers it himself. A teacher does not or should not always give everyone all the answers. He will encourage them to search it out themselves.

If we are sharing topically, we take the subject that the Lord has given and get out the concordance. Forgiveness, holiness, love and faith are examples of topics.

When you are teaching people, you do not want to go too fast. Settle down a little bit. In the Psalms it will say, "Selah." This means to pause, meditate, think on this a minute.

After you have presented the topic, you have gone through it, put out your examples using the different methods (and you came prepared). The final step of what you are teaching is to draw some conclusions. Every good teaching time should always motivate people into some course of action.

It is not enough to simply have knowledge. We have to do something with it. So there has to be some form of practical application. This is an active step in all teaching. There should be a challenge.

In regards to the subject of holiness, ask the Lord how you can express the new life in holiness that God has given to you in service to others. This is a challenge.

CHAPTER 11

SPEAKING LIFE

What God has given me to share in this chapter is how to speak life. This does not always mean what you would think. Sometimes it seems like death has been spoken to certain situations. The things of God should be blessed, and the things that are not of God should be cursed. By exposing what is not of God, true life will be the result.

When God is bringing something forth in the flow of the Spirit, it will bring life to the hearer. It will stir the hearer up, and begin to bring change. This does not depend upon how exuberant or how dry the speaker is.

Something that is stirring up from the heart of God is not dependent on outside demonstrations. Someone jumping up and down, ranting and raving, pounding the pulpit and running around may or may not be the way God wants. A person may be sharing in a matter of fact sort of a way, but if it is by the Spirit of God, it will do a work in the hearer's heart. They will know that it is God speaking through the one sharing. When we are to speak, we are to speak life.

Philippians 3:3 says it is we that are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God. Teachers need to put, "We who teach by the Spirit of God." Teaching by the Spirit of God is what is going to bring life to the hearer and make things happen in people's lives. This is what God is going to confirm as His Word. He will not confirm our word, He will confirm His Word. It may not be what we want to hear, but what God wants them to hear.

"They took the things Moses commanded to the front of the Tent of Meeting, and the entire assembly came near and stood before the Lord. Then Moses said, 'This is what the Lord has commanded you to do, so that the glory of the Lord may appear to you.'" (Leviticus 9:5-6)

You can see a definite working which shows that God has specific ways He wants people to worship Him. God is a God of order, and He always has an authority through whom He works. This is a Biblical truth. One cannot take upon himself the attitude, "This is the way I am going to do things." You

will find that God has a way of doing things that is consistent throughout the whole Body of Christ.

God has a certain way He wants things done, and when people are not obedient to the Spirit of God and have their own ways, the Glory of the Lord will not fall.

Have you ever noticed how God is soft and gentle to the broken person? But to the proud, the rebellious and the stubborn, He looks at them square in the eye and says, “You are wrong! Unless you shape up, you are not going to have any blessing in your life.”

If people are offended when you are speaking under the authority of God, it is because you are saying something which they do not want to hear. If they do not want to be obedient to God, then that is their problem. Whoever is placed in the position to speak the Word of God at that point is instructed to speak life.

A man who was standing in the prayer line had all kinds of problems in his life. The Spirit of God had me point at him and say, “You are going to die unless you change your ways.” The guy suddenly started to shake and weep and then fell down under the power of God. He got up repenting, and his life changed. If he continued in that path and if he did not change his ways, he would have died. However, that individual did go back to his old ways and he is going to die if he does not change. “*The wages of sin is death.*” The Bible cannot be any clearer.

The glory of the Lord appeared to Moses, Aaron, and all the people. (Leviticus 9:23, 24) Fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed the burnt offering. The people saw it, shouted for joy and fell face down in the presence of God (in demonstration of the Spirit).

If we do not follow the leading of the Spirit in a service, we fall flat. As we follow His leading, God is going to accomplish what He has to accomplish and people will be set free.

In Leviticus 10:1-2, two sons of Aaron came and offered unauthorized fire. It was a fire foreign to God, and He did not want it offered. You can see the very stern consequences of it – they dropped over dead!

The consequences that happen to a person who is to minister to the people are greater than the consequences of what happens with the people themselves. Those ministering, teaching or speaking on behalf of the people, or to the people from the Lord, have the responsibility that it be a “Thus saith the Lord,” that it be under the direction of God.

There is a high responsibility and accountability, but that does not let you off if God has called you. You are responsible to follow what God has set down to do in the way God has said to do it.

“Moses then said to Aaron, This is what the Lord spoke of when He said, ‘Among those who approach me I will show myself holy; in the sight of all the people I will be honored.’ Aaron remained silent.” (Leviticus 10:3)

There was not the slightest bit of challenge, disagreement, or wavering thought in Aaron’s mind. This was the word of the Lord which was spoken. The life of God was spoken. To challenge it, to think twice about it, to doubt it, to communicate anything to the contrary would mean death to Aaron as well, and to the people who would follow a different thinking.

When a teacher is speaking the truth of God, they can speak it fearlessly because God is behind it Himself. And He will honor His Word.

“And Aaron remained silent. And Moses summoned Mishael and Elzaphan, sons of Aaron’s uncle Uzziel, and said to them, ‘Come here; carry your cousins outside the camp, away from the front of the sanctuary.’ So they came and carried them, still in their tunics, outside the camp, as Moses ordered. Then Moses said to Aaron and his sons Eleazar and Ithamar, ‘Do not let your hair become unkept, and do not tear your clothes, or you will die and the Lord will become angry with the whole community. But your relatives, all the house of Israel, may mourn for those the Lord has destroyed by fire. Do not leave the entrance to the Tent of Meeting or you will die, because the Lord’s anointing oil is on you.’ So they did as Moses said.”

They were not even to mourn over what had happened. That would be siding against God, and siding with sin. The two sons had willfully and knowingly violated the Word of God and the commandment of God which was to bring life. They were dealing with holy things.

One has to speak what God gives to say. One cannot speak anything to the contrary, or water down what God gives to say. One cannot give it in any other way than God says to give it. It has to be given in truth, so that people get help.

“Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks. The good man brings good things stored up in him and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.” (Matthew 12:33-37)

God judgment stands on a teacher who does not communicate what God says, in the spirit in which God wants it said. Some communicate the Word of God out of their own spirit, out of their own heart – dreaming dreams, seeing visions and giving prophetic words that are out of their own spirit, not from God.

The Word of life is the word that God wants communicated to a particular audience at that time; spoken from the heart of God. Any other word is not going to bring God’s results.

“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have been convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2nd Timothy 3:14-17)

The first and foremost point of the Bible from the front to the end is to lead a person to the Lord Jesus Christ. It lays out the simple plan of salvation, from the very beginning to the very end.

The Word of God also has some other functions as we note in verse 16. The Word of God is alive; it is going to do something. Jesus said, *“My words are spirit and they are life.”* (John 6:63) There is power behind the Word of God, and for the person who takes a hold of it, it will bring that life.

When you are teaching, you have to be communicating that life, and that power behind it. It is not done by how you speak, but by the Spirit of God through the words you speak. So whether you wave you arms, or whether you shout, or whether you talk softly, whatever you do, it better be by the Spirit of God. God has given to different individuals different ways to share, yet it is the same Spirit.

Sometimes carnal listeners are more attracted to one teacher over another. Recognize that people are that way. Be encouraged if they do not like the way you are communicating, especially if you are delivering the Word the way that God has given – just release that care. Give what God has in the way that God wants it given through you. Simply be obedient to that. *“If they have ears to hear, let them hear!”*

“All Scripture is God-breathed.” It is perfect, it is holy, there is no flaw in it. “It is useful for teaching...” (1st Timothy 3:17)

The Word of God is useful for teaching. Do not get caught up in teaching anything but the Word of God. The examples that you use should all tie in with the Word. Jesus often used different examples, and he did not quote chapter and verse, he used lessons. However, you will note that all of Jesus’ teachings came back to a truth that is found in the Word of God. Sometimes as we noted earlier, speaking life may seem like death at first. The need is to remain uncompromised in giving the word that God has given no matter what.

Teaching will be geared to specific situations which are happening. The church at Corinth was a church that many problems. Oftentimes the teaching is directed at problems. Paul addressed specific things in the first letter to the Corinthians.

We want to direct your attention to a rebuke that Paul gave in 1st Corinthians 5, and take a look at the fruit of it in 2nd Corinthians 7. This relates to something that once happened as a brother was teaching. In the Spirit we sensed that something was not right as it was being taught. This can happen to anybody at any time. If anybody thinks they cannot mess up, they should read 1st Corinthians 10 where it says, *“Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”* (1st Corinthians 10:12)

The Spirit of God called it, and dealt with it in a very firm rebuke. (You will note, a rebuke is stronger than correction). The rebuke went forth, the situation was dealt with, and the individual repented. There was much sorrow going on at that point. Not only with the person, but within the group that was present.

When one is teaching, oftentimes the occasion will arise that one will be able to direct remarks to a very specific situation, which is known by everyone, so enlightenment and understanding can come upon it.

Paul said that the entire church at Corinth was proud and puffed up because they had not dealt with open sin in the camp. (2nd Corinthians 7:8) There was a fellow committing sexual immorality with his step-mother. This situation was known to the entire church at Corinth and no one was doing anything about it. Paul said that he had judged this matter and that God's judgment was going to come down on that whole church unless they straightened out the situation. He said to remove the individual from the body until that individual repented. (1st Corinthians 5)

What you find happening in 2nd Corinthians 7 is that the church did what Paul said to do. Paul reflected on what he had to do in that situation. To take that kind of a stand is not going easy on your flesh. You will have to say something that you know will hurt, but it has to be said. *“Speak the truth in love.”* (Ephesians 4:15)

“Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it – I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while – yet now I am made happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led to repentance.” (2nd Corinthians 7:8-9)

His spirit was not sorry but the earthly man was. Watch that when you are teaching you are speaking the Word of God, in love, and know that it may hurt somebody.

Quite frankly, I did not enjoy spanking my children, but I knew that after it was done it would yield something toward godliness in them. Paul felt the same way.

When their heart broke, true repentance came forth. True repentance will cause a person to become obedient to God.

“Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret.” (2nd Corinthians 7:10)

CHAPTER 12

TEACH THEM JESUS

“Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshipped him, but some doubted.” (Matthew 28:16)

As teachers, we need to understand that there will be people who will not believe a word we are saying. Even though week after week people see miraculous signs and wonders following the Word of God, they still do not believe. They doubt what we are sharing. Teachers are to teach what they know is true with the confidence that comes from God.

Do not be discouraged because people look at you and do not want to hear what you have to share or eventually walk away. This should not phase you at all, just go in the confidence of the Spirit of God and rejoice in what God is doing, knowing that it is true whether people believe it or not.

The disciples are the ones that Jesus had prepared for about three years for the work of the ministry to go forth to lead the church.

What were they doubting at that point? They already knew He was risen from the dead, and they had seen Him several times. He was the one who told them to go to the mountain in Galilee. He showed them the holes in His hands, the hole in His side, what were they doubting now? I am telling you this to encourage you. These are the eleven that walked and talked with Him.

When they saw Him, they worshipped Him, but some doubted. This is why when you are teaching people, you teach them Jesus. You keep teaching them Jesus, keep putting Jesus in front of them. Keep putting Jesus' words in front of them. Keep re-instilling what they know is true.

I have found over the years that things I knew in my heart, at times I would doubt in my head. I rehearsed it over to get it stirred up in my head because my head is what I am going to act on eventually.

“They worshipped Him, but some doubted.” (Matthew 28:16) The way I understand worship that is not good. What does Jesus immediately do?

How many times over the years as we look at the gospels did He say, “Oh faithless generation, how long will I have to be with you and you still don’t have it.”

These are his leading remarks, but I do not see Jesus leaving them with a rebuke. A wise teacher or wise person never leaves people with a rebuke.

This is very important. You tear down only to build back up. A true teacher or prophet will tear down. The rebuke is intended to tear down.

Look at Jeremiah, chapter one. God told Jeremiah that He had imparted words to him that were intended to tear down the people and nations but then build them back up.

When you are communicating the Word of God, you have to tear down the garbage so that you can build up what is true and right before the Lord. You never want to leave people on a rebuke. It is the same thing in disciplining your child. You never want to leave them on the discipline. You want to immediately love, hug, encourage, and speak good things. “You are a son or daughter of the Lord. You are an obedient child of God.”

You want to speak that right back into them. What they did was out of line, but this is a training process. When you are teaching Jesus, you disciple them around Jesus. You are teaching people to be followers of Jesus, walking in His steps, just the way He walked, talked and responded. What did Jesus do in the situation? How did He handle it?

Some people have thought, “What are we going to do if Pastor Randy isn’t here?” The same thing the disciples did when Jesus took off.

We are not going anywhere yet, but someday we will be traveling around the world sharing the Lord Jesus Christ, sent out by you all. The work is going to have to continue at the headquarters and all the outreaches.

I am getting ready for that and so should you. Note: who is there? JESUS.

If you teach people right, you will teach them that wherever they are, whether at home, the grocery store, gas station, church or at play Jesus is there with them. As we turn to Jesus, his ability starts to come. Where is that ability? *“The same power that raised Christ from the dead now lives within us.”* We have to recognize that.

Note: At first the disciples hesitated, and stood around waiting. I do not know what they were waiting for; Jesus had already departed into the clouds and was gone. Possibly they were waiting for Him to come back.

We know they had an interesting view of the return of Jesus. Paul actually thought Jesus was going to return in his own lifetime. He was convinced about it in fact. I would say that is a real presence.

That kind of heart concern whether Jesus comes in three weeks or this moment says, “I am ready and waiting. In the meantime I am about His business.”

Teaching the presence of Jesus is something we try to communicate to people all the time. In the presence of the Lord is fullness of joy, healing, and abundant life. (Psalm 16:11)

Get the people off of themselves and get them on Jesus. That is good teaching, and they are free.

“Sanctify them by the truth, your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I sent them into the world.” (John 17:17) This is the discipline process.

“For them I sanctify myself that they too may be truly sanctified.” (John 17:19)

As we noted in previous chapters, the teacher has to know what he is talking about. We cannot teach from somebody else’s material that we do not know for a fact to be true. We have to know the material before we teach it.

I believe it is wisdom not to teach about something that you do not really know, the reason being that you would not be speaking it in faith. You do not know beyond a shadow of a doubt that the teaching is true. How can

you communicate it by the Spirit in faith? As a result, it will not produce faith in the heart of the hearer. As a result, it is a dead teaching.

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message.” (John 17:20) Note: People are going to believe in Jesus through the message of the disciples. Again, that goes on to today. *“...that all of them may be one.”* (John 17:21)

We are here over 2000 years later, and we fall right into this. We believed in the message of Jesus, and we are now communicating the message of Jesus. Others are believing in the message of Jesus and way back there, Jesus was praying for all those people.

I believe in following the example of Jesus. I pray for the people that you share with and reach. I pray for them. Train and equip everyone, and pray for the people that we are going to reach, and the people others are going to reach.

“I have given them the glory that you gave me that they may be one as we are one. I in them, you in me.” (John 17:22)

Note the working of the Holy Spirit is a togetherness. When you go, Jesus goes with you. He will confirm his Word with signs and wonders.

“After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them He was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere and the Lord worked with them and confirmed His Word by the signs that accompanied it.” (Mark 16:19-20)

As they taught about Jesus, God confirmed His Word. I believe the Word of God is also His presence. *“In the beginning was the Word.”* (John 1:1) the Word here means the divine reality, the presence of the living God. The living entity.

Jesus said his words are spirit and they are life. (John 6:63) When you speak the Word, you speak the presence. In the presence of God and people who are drawn into the presence of God, the reality of the Lord is there. When the reality of the Lord is there, then comes the power... and the love, the mercy, and the forgiveness because people are acknowledging the presence of God.

When we are making disciples, God is working with us the same way He worked with Jesus. Over the years I have seen that the same thing Jesus did with his disciples, we have done with our disciples. I would go back to the gospels and look at what Jesus did, then I would do the same thing as the Spirit prompted. It works today just as it did then.

Put the reality of the presence of the Lord in front of people. Teach them Jesus.

“That which was from the beginning which we have heard which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and which our hands have touched.” (1st John 1:1)

It was the same men who were worshipping Jesus that were doubting Jesus before he took off.

“This we proclaim concerning the word of life.” (1st John 1:1) Now he is talking about the word of life, but when you get down to it the Word and Jesus are the same. They are one. *“In the beginning was the word and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.”* (John 1:1)

“And we received his glory as the glory of the only begotten Son of God,” God come in the flesh. The fulfillment of the words of prophecy. When you believe that Word, you receive the presence of God.

“Faith cometh by hearing, hearing by the word of God.” (Romans 10:17) So as one receives the Word of God as true, one receives the God who gave the word. When you get that, you get everything... abundantly, the way the Bible talks about it.

“The life appeared, we have seen it and testify to it. And we proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and has appeared to us.” (1st John 1:2)

It isn't out there some place, it is real. It has changed the lives of these men, it has changed my life, it is changing your lives.

“We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us.” (1st John 1:3) Apparently when we teach the

Word of God and its truth, people will rise up in what is being communicated and then we will have fellowship. I do not have as much fellowship with people who are not filled with the Holy Spirit as I do with Holy Spirit tongue – talkers. We have Jesus, but we are not at the same understanding.

I am not in anyway criticizing or putting down or saying that I am better than somebody else. Many times people that do not talk in tongues feel that way, “You think you are better than we are.” That is not what we are saying. We just have a different understanding. I realize the reality of the power of the indwelling Christ, and the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit. There is a difference in fellowship, and we talk about different things. If I talked about some of these things in certain circles, I would be removed very quickly. They do not believe that.

Fellowship is based on belief. What you believe is what you are going to do.

“Our fellowship is with the Father, and with His son Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete. This is the message we heard from him and declare to you: God is light, in Him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light as he is in the light we’ll have fellowship one with the other, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves, the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and purify us of all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar, and his Word has no place in our lives. My dear children, I write this to you that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense, Jesus Christ the righteous one.” (1st John 1:3-2:2) If we ask forgiveness, God will forgive, but a true disciple does not go back and continue to do the same old thing.

Jesus is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. We know that we have come to know Him if we obey His commands. The man who says, “I know Him,” but does not do what He commands, is a liar and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys God’s Word, His love is truly made complete in him.” (1st John 4)

Obedience is what love really is. God's love is truly made complete in the people who obey His Word. These are the people who have really realized the love of God in Jesus Christ. They know that without what Jesus has done in their lives, they would be going no place. They are so thankful that they lovingly thankfully say, "God, you said it, I believe it, I am going to do it and I love you for it. I thank you for giving me the command."

Have you ever thanked God for giving you the commands? This is something we need to do much more, just thanking God that he has given us the commandments. The Bible says they are good. They are holy, they are eternal. They were given in love and through Jesus the divine love and commandment of God was fulfilled by living example.

"This is how we know we are in him. Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did." This is a true disciple. The only way that a person will actually become a true disciple of the Lord Jesus is for the teachers of the Lord to portray the Lord Jesus. Then people will see what and how to do it. I want to encourage you that Jesus is our example. We follow Jesus. As we follow Jesus, you follow us.

CHAPTER 13

DISCRETION

Use discretion as you teach. When you are witnessing, you need to use discretion. Use some wisdom when you are communicating to people. Sometimes you are able to communicate certain things, other times you cannot.

You will find a very wide range of people to share with. There may be some who have never ever opened the Bible, but that does not mean that they don't want to know what the Bible has to say. Anyone who sits for more than five minutes in a Bible teaching is open to something. Teachers, make the most of that five minutes, it may be the only five minutes you get with them.

You will also share with people that know the Bible backwards and forwards, cover to cover. There are various levels of understanding and growth in the Lord. There will be people who are anywhere from babies in the Lord to grown and mature adults in the Lord. There will be those sliding away from the Lord and those sliding back. So when you are sharing, you need to pray for wisdom, discretion, and discernment as to what to share with different folk. God will give it and it will be very helpful.

You should just let the Spirit of God communicate. Pray before you come up to minister, "Lord give me what You would have for me to minister and share. You know who is out there, what the needs are, what is going on in every heart and every life. I do not, but all that matters is that you do." Quite frankly, I would rather not know anything about anybody who will be at any certain meeting. I would rather let the Holy Spirit direct me, and that way I will get a pure reading on everything.

"Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful." (Colossians 4:2)

This is an act of the will that says, "I am setting myself apart to do this." I believe prayer is the key to anything – teaching or whatever God has called you to do, without prayer you will not have the power to do it. Prayer

always precedes everything that is of God. Prayer is a part of your personal preparation.

Watchfulness and thankfulness are two attitudes that should always be operating in you. Watchfulness keeps you on the right track. It sorts out what you are doing and saying, and why. What is going on with the people speaking to you? It is the Spirit of God speaking through them or is it something else trying to sidetrack you?

A thankful heart is a heart that says, “God I owe my life to you. Everything I have and am. Health, friends, brothers, accomplishments; I owe them all to God.” This is a thankful heart. A thankful heart will cause the power of God to move to communicate to other people. It will touch them. What will touch them is not our wonderful logic or fine thoughts and ability to communicate. What will touch them is the sincerity of heart that shows thankfulness to God.

Paul said, *“Pray for us that God will open doors for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ.”* (Colossians 4:3)

“Pray that I may proclaim it clearly as I should. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders, make the most of every opportunity.” (Colossians 4:4-5)
They may be believers who are outsiders when it comes to some things that are true in the Word of God but they do not believe it. An example of this is that many Christians believe that God heals, but it is not His will to heal everybody. Be wise in the way that you act towards people that believe things differently than you do. One has to use wisdom when sharing with people.

“Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt so that you may know how to answer everyone.” (Colossians 4:6)

There is a time to say things to people and there is a time to keep your mouth closed. Learn wisdom in knowing the difference. There is a time to share a little bit, and there is a time to back off. Wait on the discernment of God as to whether somebody is tuned in or tuned out. You cannot always tell by their faces. I have seen people that were so tuned in but they looked tuned out. They were really thinking about it, and it was really touching their heart.

“I have much more to say to you, more than you can now hear.” (John 16:12)

I want to share where people are at; giving them what they are able to receive. You do not give steak to a baby. It can only handle milk. It is the same thing in the Spirit, when you are sharing with somebody that is young in the Lord, you need to keep things very simple and on the basic truths of the Lord. They will get fed and start to grow.

Note, Jesus had a lot more to say to the disciples than they were ready to hear. One reason could be that they were not emotionally able to handle it.

An example, with the issue of speaking in unknown tongues, I tell people that they will not understand about speaking in other tongues until they are already using them.

“But when He, the Spirit of Truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth.” (John 16:13)

Jesus was talking about the time when the Holy Spirit will come, and the Holy Spirit would help them to understand all these other things. If you do not understand things that are being taught from the Word of God, or from what you have read in the Word, ask the Holy Spirit to show you, to teach you, to open your eyes and to help you understand.

A teacher asks the Holy Spirit to give the ability to get through to people and to say things the way that God would have it to be said. I find that God is very simple in the way He communicates. Everything falls right together as we open our hearts to the Lord.

This is the same for those on the listening end. We need to be praying that the Lord will speak through whomever is communicating the Word of God, and that the listeners will be able to receive it (not only hear it but understand it), and then respond accordingly.

Simon Peter asked Jesus if He was going to wash his feet. Jesus replied, *“You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.”* (John 13:7)

People may not understand all that is taught. It may be an area that is not understood until the last five minutes of the teaching. This happens quite often. I challenge the listener to search further into what is being shared. Just because one does not understand something does not mean that the teacher did not communicate correctly. It may be a person just hasn't completely received it yet.

As a teacher, know that eventually it will get through. Do not be overly concerned about whether they understand it right now. I find that they might understand it with their head, but not with their heart. Most of the people who heard Jesus did not understand what he was talking about. He spoke in parables. Only those who were diligently and sincerely seeking were going to get the answers.

“In reading this then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ which was not made known to men in other generations, as it has now been revealed by the Holy Spirit to God’s apostles and prophets.” (Ephesians 3:4-5)

Here we are dealing with progressive revelation. God will reveal one thing to us one day, and another thing to us the next day, and yet more on still another day. This is what I call God’s growth pattern. He has every one of us on a growth pattern. My growth pattern may be different than yours. Just as in the physical sense we grow in different heights and shapes, so it is with spiritual growth.

God has destined individuals to grow in certain ways, to certain heights, to do certain things. The preparation that God uses for one may be a little bit different for another. They will all have the same basic ingredients. Example: We all drank milk when we were babies, we all went on to cereal and then to chicken, beef, etc.

We all ate very similar things. In the same way, as I am dishing out the Word of God, everybody is getting the same food. Some are able to digest it better than others, but as people grow, they are better able to digest the Word of God.

Likewise, we all ate the same basic foods, and yet we still grow at different rates (physically). We have different builds, shapes, and heights. Progressive revelation will show that people will grow at different paces.

Take into consideration that some people might not be growing as fast as others, but it may not be their fault. Everybody is on a growth pattern. The key is that everybody is growing.

You cannot begin a good diet with the Word of God and be praying and seeking to do the will of God, and not be growing. It is impossible. If you feed yourself, you will grow.

People are not necessarily thick-headed, slow or even fast. Simply, the right timing in their life hasn't happened. They haven't opened themselves up to this. Granted, a lot of people have delayed the timing because they haven't opened their hearts to God; many times it was God's time three weeks ago and we are just now working into it. Sometimes we limit ourselves and we shut off things that God has for us.

Sooner or later, though, it will get through. All of a sudden, you can accept and apply to your life the thing that you had such a horrible problem with. A change has happened and growth has occurred.

However, sometimes the things that people need to hear loudly, they do not listen to. Then with other things they do not really need to hear, they say, "Turn up the volume!"

One day my kids had the T.V. on so loud, but I did not ask them, "Are you deaf?" I knew better. I know that people listen to things at a volume that is not necessary. I turned the volume down to about one-third of what they were previously listening to. Naturally they started to get upset, saying, "I can't hear." Well, that wasn't true, I could hear it in the other room.

The fact was that they did not want to hear it softly; they wanted to hear it loudly.

Timothy said people have itching ears and only hear what they want to hear. (2nd Timothy 4:3) They do not want to hear the things they should (which should be shouted from the rooftops), in which case they turn down the volume. If they can, they will get rid of whoever is speaking.

Other people walk around in a daze, under all kinds of different influences, and they don't hear what is being shared. They can't concentrate on what is

being shared and are unable to apply the teaching to their lives. They are what the Bible calls “dull of hearing.”

Dullness of hearing comes in several ways. 1) “I have already heard that teaching a thousand times if I heard it once.” This is an intellectual and prideful point of view; 2) Having all kinds of emotional things going on, or cares of the world (Luke 8:14); 3) We subject ourselves to physical things like drugs, alcohol and excessive eating. Notice how nobody makes you do these few things? It is a choice. 4) There is doubt and unbelief about what is being shared. A lack of trust in the integrity of the teacher will put up a wall.

When we are listening, we need to make sure that we not only hear what is said, but that we also hear the spirit in which it is said. People do not always communicate correctly what they mean to say. What one has to look at is the spirit behind it. Many times what people say and what they mean are not the same.