

HOT TOPICS: TEACHABILITY

INTRODUCTION

Quotations:

Get over the idea that only children should spend their time in study. Be a student so long as you still have something to learn, and this will mean all your life. ~Henry L. Doherty

Some people will never learn anything, for this reason: because they understand everything too soon. ~Alexander Pope

I don't think much of a man who is not wiser today than he was yesterday. ~Abraham Lincoln

The purpose of learning is growth, and our minds, unlike our bodies, can continue growing as we continue to live. ~Mortimer Adler

Always walk through life as if you have something new to learn and you will. ~Vernon Howard

Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. ~Henry Ford

I am learning all the time. The tombstone will be my diploma. ~Eartha Kitt

These quotations illustrate the fact that learning should be an unending process.

Only God is omniscient, so there is something every other sentient being can learn!

Furthermore, I believe learning will be an *eternal* process! This is simply because we will never be omniscient!

Next point:

I am always ready to learn although I do not always like being taught. ~Winston Churchill

Churchill focuses for us an important truth about learning: even though we may recognize the need for lifelong learning, we still may dislike being taught!

We may enjoy learning as long as we are free to learn what we like, how we like, and when we like. In other words, being taught requires submission to someone else's idea of what we need to learn!

So who says we ought to be life-long learners? Who says we need to be teachable? God!!!

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

An Educational Mandate — Deuteronomy 6:1-9

1-3 *What are the working assumptions here?*

- God is the authority and the source of truth.
- Mankind is deficient in knowledge of the truth and the will to obey.
- God has revealed truth to Moses.
- Moses will teach the people of Israel God's truth.
- The people of Israel must live in obedience to the truth every day of their lives.
- This truth must be taught to subsequent generations.
- God will bless them if they obey. (A curse for disobedience is implied.)

4-9 There is specific content to be taught, learned, obeyed, and passed on. Here is the summary of the law: There is one God, and He is YHWH. You are to love Him with all your heart and soul and might. His commandments are to be on your heart.

What does it mean to love God?

Throughout the book of Deuteronomy (6:4-5; 10:12-13; 11:1-22; 19:9; 30:15-20) the love of God is connected with acknowledging His unique claim, heeding His voice, obedience, keeping and heeding His commandments, and serving Him.

In Deuteronomy 13:3 the presence of a false prophet is a test of love for God.

Jesus also states the connection between love for God and obedience to His commands in John 14:15 "If you love me, you will keep my commandments."

What does it mean for His commandments to be on your heart?

What does it mean for them to be bound on your hand, frontals on your forehead, written on your doorposts and gates?

Some Jews to this day obey this literally by wearing phylacteries on their hands and head, and by fastening a mezuzah to their doorpost. Is this what God requires?

We tend to compartmentalize life, relegating faith to those limited occasions when one is involved in church-related activities, typically confined to an hour or two on a Sunday morning, and if you're really spiritual, another hour or two during the week.

God's word is to govern the way you think, talk, and act. God's word is to permeate every moment of life. This is to be passed on to the next generation through *teaching*.

Your love for God is measured by your teachability!

Finding One's Life — Deuteronomy 30:11-20

11-14 The problem is not accessibility! You cannot say that God has not provided access to the truth and the opportunity to hear it!

15-20 God's command poses a simple choice: obedience, which brings life and prosperity (lit. good), or disobedience, which brings death and adversity (lit. evil).

Yes, this is the Old Covenant addressed to Israel as they were about to cross the Jordan River and take possession of the Promised Land. There is a specific historical reference for "other gods" and "the land," but we face the same enticement to worship other gods, and for us the promised land is the abundant life Jesus offered, and refers ultimately to eternal life.

So we face the same choice: life or death, prosperity or adversity. And the choice is made by obeying or disobeying God's commands.

And the explanation and application of God's commands to our lives is made through *teaching*.

Matthew 10:37-39 "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it."

Your access to abundant life comes through your teachability!

Responding to the Word of God — Deuteronomy 31:9-13

This passage presents similar concepts to what we have already seen, but adds the specific requirement of the regular reading of the law. This ensured that subsequent generations, who did not know Moses or experience God's miracles in Egypt, the wilderness, and in Canaan, would hear the record of God's works and God's commands.

They would receive regular reminder that their life was defined by their relationship to God, and exhortation to keep Him alone at the center.

Just as Jesus said in Matthew 4:4: "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Furthermore, this proper response to God's word is itself something to be handed down to the next generation:

2 Timothy 2:2

2 Timothy 3:14-17

Teachability itself is something that must be passed on to your children!

Related passages:

Psalm 78:1-8.

Nehemiah 8:1-18

The book of Proverbs is full of wisdom concerning teaching and learning:

Proverbs 1:1-9; 3:1-8; 6:20-23; 9:9-10 etc.

Teaching is also prominent in the New Testament:

It was a major element of Jesus' ministry:

Matthew 4:23

It is by Jesus' command an essential part of the ministry of the church:

Matthew 28:18-20

Ephesians 4:11-14

Colossians 3:16

1 Timothy 4:11-16

The consistent testimony of the scriptures is that teaching is the primary way that believers grow in the faith. And for teaching to be effective, each of us must be *teachable!*