

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

July 19

2009

GOOD TEACHERS

I believe it would be impossible to place too much emphasis upon proper teaching of God's word. The importance of teaching is emphasized by Christ when He said, *"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me"* (John 6:44,45). Jesus clearly shows that the Father "draws" men as they are taught and hear and learn of the Father. This is the only way men can come to Christ. However, in order for this teaching, hearing and learning to take place there must be good teachers. What does it take to be a good teacher?

Good teachers will teach the truth. We need to follow the example of Ezekiel of old as he said, *"Thus saith the Lord God"* (Ezekiel 5:5). Time and again in his writing he says he is speaking that which the Lord spoke unto him. Paul told Timothy to *"preach the word"* (2 Timothy 4:2). The teaching of personal opinions or simply those things the people wish to hear is not good teaching. Paul told the Ephesian elders he *"...kept back nothing that was profitable unto you"* (Acts 20:20) and that he had *"not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God"* (Acts 20:27). One who refuses to teach all the truth, whatever the reason may be, is not a good teacher.

The apostle Paul told the young evangelist Timothy *"...the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also"* (2

Timothy 2:2). Note, he said these things should be committed to "faithful" men. No one can be effective in teaching others if he is not going to demonstrate faithfulness in his own life. He told this same Timothy to *"be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity"* (1 Timothy 4:12). Those who would be good teachers need to talk and act in such a way as to reflect the word they are seeking to teach. I have known those who had a great deal of knowledge of God's word and could verbally present the word in an excellent way, however their effectiveness as teachers was destroyed by unfaithfulness in their own lives. If your speech, manner of dress or service to the Lord is not in harmony with God's word you cannot be a good teacher.

Paul also said these men would be "able" to teach others. To have the ability to teach demands a knowledge of the word. One cannot teach that which he does not know. To gain this knowledge one must be willing to make the sacrifice of time and effort necessary to study and learn the word of God. Many will acknowledge the truth of what I am saying but they will not devote the time or energy necessary to gain a knowledge of the Bible. Some will not even put forth the effort to attend the regular periods of Bible study available to them. These are neither "faithful" or "able."

Every Christian should have a desire to teach others. Paul expressed the attitude every Christian should have toward teaching others when he said to the Romans, *"So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also"* (Romans 1:15). Yes, we need good teachers but let us realize that, as Christians, being a good teacher is just another way of saying that I am faithfully serving the Lord for I cannot faithfully serve Him if I do not seek to teach others. In doing so, as Paul told Timothy, we *"shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee"* (1 Timothy 4:16).

✍ James Hahn



SPIRIT OF COMPROMISE

One of Satan's most effective weapons against the people of God has always been the appeal to compromise. When the enemies of Nehemiah failed to hinder the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem by

their ridicule and threats of carnal warfare they attempted to get Nehemiah to come down to the plain of Ono to meet with them (Nehemiah 6:2). However, Nehemiah refused to leave the great work he was doing because he knew their intent.

Even today we see such appeals being made by the enemies of truth. In recent months I have read many articles written by various individuals that seem to suggest that since one can not know everything he must not oppose or reject anything.

If you dare suggest that you can not accept a certain belief or practice you are immediately labeled as a narrow-minded legalist "know-it-all" who believes everyone must agree with you on everything or else be rejected. This kind of thinking has caused many to decide that we cannot speak out against anyone regardless of what he may believe or practice.

I do not know of anyone who claims to know everything or demands that his opinions be made the standard of authority, but I do know those who believe that the word of God is the final standard of authority and if anyone teaches or practices anything contrary to its teaching he is not acceptable to God and must not be upheld in his error. Paul commanded the Ephesians to *"have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them"* (Ephesians 5:11). How can this command be obeyed if we are not even able to determine what "works of darkness" really are?

Every person must read and study the word of God for himself. No one should discourage such individual study. However, the encouragement of personal and individual study does not demand that I accept every idea or conclusion such individuals set forth. In fact, if through my own study of the word of God I am convinced that certain doctrines are false, I must, in order to have a clear conscience, refuse such teachings. It is true that I may be wrong in my conclusions, but this does not change the fact that I cannot violate my conscience by upholding something I believe to be contrary to the will of God.

Some brethren have accepted ideas and have engaged in activities which many brethren do not believe to be right. When brethren speak out in opposition to such ideas and refuse to condone these brethren in their practices they are often met with ridicule or some of the charges we mentioned earlier in this article. Brethren, I respect your

right to study for yourself and your right to believe what you believe, however don't assume that I (or others) are just closed minded or bound by tradition if we do not accept your conclusions. Some of you leave the impression by your writings and/or your comments that if someone does not agree with you or is unwilling to accept you and your ideas it is simply because he is unwilling to study or is so steeped in traditionalism that he will not change. Did it ever occur to you that the one offering opposition to your teaching may have studied just as much as you have and that his opposition is based on his belief in what the word of God teaches and not just because "he has always believed that way"?

There are some things that are contrary to God's will. The person who truly desires to please God will not engage in such nor will he bid Godspeed to those who do so (2 John 9-11). Paul spoke of some as being "false brethren" (Galatians 2:4) and concerning these he said, *"To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you"* (Galatians 2:5).

Let us continue to encourage all to study the word of God for themselves, but let us not encourage compromise with error or expect brethren to support and encourage us in that which they believe to be contrary to truth.

✍ James Hahn

Belleville church of Christ

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Schedule of Services

Sun. Bible Study. 9:30 a.m.
Sun. Morning Worship. . . . 10:30 a.m.
Sun. Evening Worship. 5:00 p.m.
Wed. Bible Study. 7:00 p.m.

Elders

Charles Carpenter. . . . (317) 839-3873
James Hahn. (317) 745-1507

Deacons

Leon Nevins (317) 272-2966
Don Perry. (765) 676-5825
Alvin Stanley. (317) 831-3514

Evangelist

James Hahn. (317) 745-1507