
Words of Truth

Being A Living Lesson For Others

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We certainly understand that we have to teach people the word of God for them to be able to be saved (Psalms 19:7, Acts 8:12, Romans 1:16, and II Corinthians 4:1-7). We understand that only the word of God can properly lead someone to spiritual rebirth (I Peter 1:23-25). What is frustrating for us at times is that there are people we want to teach that are unwilling to have a study of the Scriptures with us. What do we do then?

The inspired Apostle Peter wrote something that helps us to understand what we should do when someone will not study with us. Notice: *“Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price”* (I Peter 3:1-4).

In the instructions you just read the direct application is for a Christian woman who is trying to teach her non-Christian husband. He is unwilling to allow the word of God to work on him. So, Peter instructed the woman to let him be won by her conversation. That word means this: “Behavior: — conversation. Manner of life, conduct, behavior, deportment” (Strong’s # 391). We need to understand that this does not just apply to a wife trying to convert her husband.

This lesson, even using the same word “conversation”, also applies to those whom by vocation preach the word of God. Notice what Paul wrote to the evangelist Timothy: *“Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee”* (I Timothy 4:12-16).

From our study thus far, we can see how powerful being an example of godliness is. Being a godly example can open a person’s mind, which was otherwise shut, to considering the salvation of their souls. Being an example of godliness is just as important in the life of an evangelist as is actually preaching the truth. Understanding these things should move us to have the proper approach to how we study the Scriptures. Sometimes brethren get caught up in studying the Scriptures so that they know how to answer questions about their faithfulness (Colossians 4:5-6 and I Peter 3:15), but forget another significant purpose of learning.

Learning So You Can Present Yourself To God And Others In An Approved Manner

How many of us can quote this verse: *“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”* (II Timothy 2:15)? Whether you can quote it or not, have you thought about what the first five words of this verse mean? The word translated “study” means: “to be prompt, diligence, endeavoring...” (Strong’s # 4704). The word translated as “shew” (Strong’s # 3936) is translated in other Scriptures as “prove” (Acts 24:13), “present” (Romans 12:1, Ephesians 5:27, Colossians 1:22, and Colossians 1:28), “commendeth” (I Corinthians 8:8), etc. So ask yourself, are you showing diligence in presenting yourself as one whom is acceptable unto God?

In II Timothy 2:15 we certainly must rightly divide the word of truth. We must know it to do so. However, the main thrust of the verse is not just to know the truth. The main thrust of the verse is to live the truth! Knowing the Scriptures and being able to teach them is essentially useless to you and others if you are not living them (Romans 2:1-29). How can you give the right answer to someone and expect them to obey it if you are not doing so yourself (Matthew 23:1-5)?

Being a faithful example of God’s word is something we have all been taught and have taught for many years. Many of us can quote this: *“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven”* (Matthew 5:14-16). If we are lights in the world, doesn’t that mean we are not in darkness at all (Ephesians 5:6-11 and I John 1:5-6)? We learn through the Scriptures how to live as Christians in this world (Luke 4:4 and II Peter 1:1-11). This means we must study to learn to live the Gospel blamelessly before others.

Living The Gospel Blamelessly

Consider this: *“Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain”* (Philippians 2:14-16). Aren’t those three Scriptures you just read pretty clear? We are to be blameless (Ephesians 1:3-4, Colossians 1:21-22, I Thessalonians 3:13, and II Peter 3:10-14). We are to be harmless (Romans 16:19; cf. Matthew 10:16). We are supposed to live in a manner that we show we are the sons of God [not to exclude daughters; II Corinthians 6:14-18] (Ephesians 5:1). We are to be without rebuke (Titus 2:7-8 and I Peter 2:12). While living amongst the ungodly of this world (I Corinthians 5:9-13), yet not being as the ungodly (John 17:14-17), we are to shine as lights (Proverbs 4:14-19).

Conclusion

A faithful teacher of God’s word must spend much time in study to be sure he is not twisting the Scriptures (II Peter 3:15-18). A faithful teacher of the truth has to be sure he is speaking sound words (Ecclesiastes 12:10 and Titus 2:1). Apply that to your life. Study the Scriptures so that you can live a sermon, rightly divided, before others!