
Words of Truth

Some People Are Not Ready To Learn

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Sometimes we focus on what to teach people and forget the question of when to teach people. Certainly, I do not intend to downplay the importance of being ready and capable of teaching the truth. We should all, on some level, be teachers (Matthew 5:14-16, Ephesians 4:15, Philippians 2:14-16, I Timothy 4:12, and Titus 2:1-8). We should all, whether in word or deed, be teachers of the truth (Ephesians 4:25). However, these things are often so focused upon that we neglect to consider that some people just aren't ready or even capable of learning the truth.

Jesus said this: *"Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you"* (Matthew 7:6). Chew on that statement for a moment. Reread it and think about it. In context, we have to make sure our lives are right (Matthew 7:1-5). Therefore, teaching anyone starts with examining yourself first. Then, before we begin to teach, we have to properly examine the person we want to teach (John 7:24). We have to make sure that we are not going to present the truth to someone who will trample it or turn against us for teaching it. How many people does that eliminate?

In teaching His disciples prior to them going out to evangelize, Jesus said this: *"And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. And when ye come into an house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city. Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves"* (Matthew 10:11-16). You can see this practiced in another context after Jesus ascended into Heaven (Acts 13:13-51). Sometimes people, even whole cities, are not capable or ready to learn the truth. The sad reality is that they will be destroyed for it (II Thessalonians 2:10). There is nothing you or I can do for that person though. The preparation and readiness for the Gospel does not come from the teacher. The preparation and readiness for the Gospel comes from the student.

It Is THEIR Task To Be Ready Seekers

There was a man named Ezra that obeyed God. Guess where his obedience started. It started with HIM preparing his heart to seek the law and to do it (Ezra 7:10). On the other hand, a man named Rehoboam did evil. Where do you think that started? It started with him NOT preparing his heart to seek the Lord (II Chronicles 12:13-14). The right actions and a willingness to learn will always begin with a person seeking God with his or her whole heart (Psalms 119:1-3).

Notice this parable and the explanation that follows it: *“And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable: A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be? And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand. Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience”* (Luke 8:4-15).

Did Jesus lie in the Parable you just read above? Would you consider Jesus a liar? If you think that you can teach someone that is not ready to learn aren't you essentially calling Jesus a liar? Our Lord knows, as we should, that you have to be willing, ready, and able to learn to be obedient to Him.

Judging Readiness

Let's say you can see, through fruit (Matthew 7:20), that someone is willing to learn. You can see they will accept the truth. That does not mean they are ready for it all though. Concerning His hand picked disciples, Jesus who knows men better than we (John 2:24-25), said this: *“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now”* (John 16:12). By example (I Peter 2:21-22), Jesus shows us in that Scripture that we have to assess a person's readiness for certain things they need to learn. Sometimes that person will not be ready to learn because their mindset is not right (I Corinthians 3:1-2). Sometimes, even with a ready mind and heart, some things will just be over that person's head (Mark 4:33). Sometimes a person will just not be ready for other reasons (Hebrews 5:11-6:3). Sometimes a person will just never be ready to learn (Proverbs 23:9). We have to judge that or we err in teaching in a way that is contrary to the Scriptures. We cannot allow our hearts to get beyond God's will!

Conclusion

Like God (I Timothy 2:4), we want everyone to be saved. The reality is, that will not happen (Luke 13:23-24). As the earthen vessels that carry the Gospel (II Corinthians 4:7), we have to be sure we are not trying to get people to listen to something that they are not ready, willing, and/or capable of learning. That is the commands we have seen in this brief study. Even Jesus, whom epitomizes what it means to love the lost souls of men (John 10:17-18, Galatians 2:20, and Ephesians 5:2), did not try and teach people that were not willing to learn (Matthew 13:54-58). Thus, we may only teach those whom are ready to learn!