

Teachable

Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have. – Luke 8:18

Spiritual well-being and growth are grounded in the assimilation of information. We cannot know God, nor can we get closer to Him, without the intrinsic exercise of learning about Him, as well as about ourselves.

Jesus cautioned His listeners to take heed how they heard Him. As humans, we tend to hear what we want to hear rather than what we need to receive. Spiritually speaking, salvation and sanctification happen when those two often opposing things intersect, i.e., when we desire to hear what we need to know. God has gone to great lengths to give us the latter. Genesis to Revelation offers us everything that is necessary for life and godliness. Desiring to hear what it says and what it means – what it really means – is our responsibility. Once we possess the desire, then we must take the extra step to also be careful as to how we receive it. The Scriptures give us a guide on developing a teachable spirit...

Our Lord Himself alluded to the teachable spirit in His opening parable of Matthew 13. The seed sown must find good ground in order to produce a harvest. The Word of God will not bring forth life-giving fruit unless the field of heart is receptive to it. Jesus characterized such hearts as honest and good with regard to their unbridled desire to know the truth, whatever the cost. Being teachable therefore means that we must be honest about who we are. We cannot regard ourselves as something if the Word of God requires us to be nothing. We must not think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think (Rom. 12:3). This kind of self-deprecation is the gateway to spiritual growth.

The Bereans gave a model of teachability. Luke tells us that they “received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things [which they heard from the apostles] were so” (Acts 17:11). Teachable spirits listen to God’s Word with a ready mind. They come hungry to the table. They do not want to be entertained, neither do they wish to be spoon fed. Rather, they seek to be challenged so that they may be changed. They have prepared themselves to listen, to take in, to learn. Further, the learning does not stop when the preacher ends his sermon, or when the chapter has been completed in the daily Bible reading. They search the Scriptures, through and through, to establish and re-establish the truths the Spirit has conveyed in the pages of His Word.

James reminds us all to be teachable, exhorting us to receive with meekness the engrafted word (James 1:21). Meekness – to be easily imposed upon. In this case, it means to put aside our pride, and permit God’s Word to show us what we are naturally, so that we can become what He intends us to be spiritually.

Let us strive to be a teachable people today, ardently desiring God’s Word and permitting it to transform us, changing us into His image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord (2 Cor. 3:18). -D. Murcek