

Your Ministry

Isn't this part of what the Great Commission of Christ

Lesson #5

Teaching

Scripture: Romans 12:6-7

Another "gift" given to some in the Body of Christ is "teaching" (v. 7). Those whose function in the Body is to teach might expect "manifestation" gifts such as "the word of wisdom" and "the word of knowledge" (I Corinthians 12:7-8) to be given occasionally as they minister to the saints. One kind of the "perfecting" gifts of God to the church are called "teachers" (Ephesians 4:11-12), and these people certainly must have the function gift of "teaching." Get your copy of Lesson #2 about the Gifts of the Spirit, and study especially the chart at the end, noticing the importance of teaching among the ministries God has given believers. As with the other function gifts, teaching is an activity that *all* believers should perform, but *some* are gifted to *specialize* in it.

1. To Teach or Not to Teach?

Read what Hebrews 5 says about all mature believers in Christ teaching:

"For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat." (v. 12)

After a period of "time," a Christian "ought" to become a teacher. So the scripture says. He ought to have progressed from milk to meat in his own spiritual diet, but he also ought to have moved from just taking in to also giving out the Word. In II Timothy 2:2, Paul writes about believers teaching other believers what they themselves have been taught.

"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."

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says?

"...teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. . ." (Matthew 28:20)

So we can see that the Lord wants every one of us to become a teacher eventually and in one sense. But James 3:1 gives us the other side of the coin.

"My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation."

The word translated "masters" is exactly the same Greek word in the original as the one translated "teachers" in Hebrews 5:12. The Book of James says that "brethren" (Christians) should not be many teachers. In other words, not every and even not *many* Christians should be teachers. It says that teachers have greater responsibility before God, and must answer for more than others at the Judgment Seat.

"Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. . . Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." (Hebrews 13:7 and 17)

Since they speak more than others, they will have more words for which to answer (Remember Matthew 12:36 and review all of James 3). Those who stand up before groups and teach them the Bible have an accountability for the souls of others that non-teachers

do not. So James 3:1 says that not many should be teachers. People should not be eager to take on the responsibility of teaching the Word of God. This work should be done only by those called and gifted by God to teach.

Obviously, there is a paradox here. Hebrews 5:12 and other passages (See II Timothy 2:2 and Titus 2:3-4) say that ordinary Christians should teach others when they grow to the point where they have things they can share. However, James 3:1 warns against too many Christians assuming the role of a teacher. The answer to this paradox is simple. There is a sense in which every believer will be called upon to teach another: a new Christian, his own children, a co-worker in the church, somebody with questions we can answer. However some are called and gifted to stand up and teach a class or a congregation. They specialize in doing something a lot that everybody will do a little.

Are you one of these divinely-ordained specialists?

2. What is Teaching?

The Greek word for teaching in the New Testament is derived from a word that means learning. A teacher is someone who causes people to learn. Look over Romans 12:6-8 and pick out the gifts that refer to a *speaking* specialty. These are “*prophecy*,” “*teaching*,” and “*exhortation*.” Exhortation, as we will see next week, is the kind of speaking that *helps* or *encourages* others. To prophesy is to *speak forth* the truth of God. Teaching is causing people to learn. Examining and comparing these words allows us to see the distinction between these three speaking ministries. A teacher is one who can cause others to learn. This carries the idea to illumining minds to *new truth*. To prophesy is to speak forth. We have all heard

somebody speak forth the truth in a very powerful way but not really communicate anything new. The prophets call us to obey the truth but may not do much about causing us to learn new things. The exhorter helps but may not teach. Teaching, in the sense of a function in the body of Christ, is the work of those called to expand our knowledge of the Word of God. Have you benefited from the ministry of a divinely-gifted teacher? The way they present their material is designed to make a light turn on in our minds. They may draw a diagram on a blackboard or an overhead transparency, or perhaps just in our minds, so that we can *see* the way one truth explains or follows another.

3. Who Should Teach?

Obviously, our Sunday School teachers should be chosen from among those with the gift of teaching. Christians whose function gift is teaching should also be working in Children’s Church. Probably our pastors should have the teaching gift. Teaching the Word is so important to the health and growth of Christ’s Body, and to the spiritual vitality of individual Christians, that everybody gifted to teach should be teaching in the church in some capacity. It is also important that those whose gifts do *not* include teaching *not* be pushed into teaching positions. Some have the idea that the *only* way to serve the Lord is to teach a class. Of course, we are learning that God gives individual believers a great variety of ministries and gifts, and that it is important to learn and practice our own gifts. Find your “*nitch*,” and serve the Lord according to the gifts He has given you.