

The Importance of Teachability

“Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning.” Proverbs 9:9

- Merriam-Webster defines teachability as, “The ability to learn by instruction.” Let’s break this definition down into its component parts:
 - Ability:
 - To be able to do something is to have the capacity for it. With few exceptions, the capacity to know, think, feel, or do something requires the possession of pertinent information, the wisdom to apply that information to a given task or situation, and the skill to use that wisdom to produce an intended outcome.
 - As with any ability, teachability requires practice. The more you allow yourself to be taught, the easier being teachable becomes.
 - Learn:
 - To learn is “to gain knowledge or understanding of or skill in by study, instruction, or experience.” (Merriam-Webster)
 - Learning requires the pursuit of knowledge. It is a proactive endeavor. You must seek it out with genuine interest, curiosity, and purposeful recall.
 - Learning requires being instructed by someone who knows more than you. It requires humility in recognizing you don’t know everything and you have understanding to gain from others.
 - Instruction:
 - Merriam Webster defines instruction as, “a direction calling for compliance.”
 - The Hebrew word for instruction is “muwcar” (pronounced moo-sawr), meaning: chastening, correction, punishment, chastise, disciplines.
 - Instruction is both informative and corrective. It requires responsiveness and a willingness to implement that which has been taught.
 - The instructor provides information, correction, reproof, discipline; the learner accepts instructions and applies them to her life with humility and gratitude.

- Who is the student?
 - Everyone, but especially younger people. We all have something to learn. It is our job to want and seek instruction, especially from people who are older and/or wiser than we are.
 - Psalm 25:9: “He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way.”
 - Psalm 86:11: “Teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear your name.”
 - Proverbs 5:5: “ Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”
- Who is the teacher?
 - The Holy Spirit:
 - The Holy Spirit is our great instructor. He reveals God’s Word to us, grants us wisdom and understanding, and reminds us of God’s words and will.
 - John 14:26: “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”
 - Parents, Biological and Spiritual:
 - Believing parents and spiritual mentors are a gift from the Lord in providing wisdom and instruction from God’s Word.
 - Ephesians 6:4: “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”
 - Proverbs 1:8-9: “Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and forsake not your mother's teaching, for they are a graceful garland for your head and pendants for your neck.”
 - 1 Thessalonians 2: 7-8: “But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.”
- What should be taught/learned?
 - God’s Word:
 - God’s Word is the ultimate source of wisdom and Truth.

- 2 Timothy 3:16-17: “All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be equipped, having been thoroughly equipped for every good work.”
- Wisdom:
 - God’s Word provides the wisdom we need to live our lives for the glory of God.
 - Colossians 3:16-17: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with gratefulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”
- Practical & Christian Living Skills:
 - Titus 2:3-5: “Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, so that they may instruct the young women in sensibility: to love their husbands, to love their children, *to be* sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be slandered.”
- What does teachability require?
 - Humility:
 - Ecclesiastes 4:13: “A poor yet wise lad is better than an old and foolish king who no longer knows *how* to receive advice.”
 - Gratitude:
 - Teachability requires gratitude. A teachable heart loves instruction, especially when it comes from God’s Word, and is thankful for it.
 - Colossians 3:14-15: “Above all these things *put on* love, which is the perfect bond of unity. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body, and be thankful.”
 - Action:
 - Exposure to instruction is only effective if it is put into action.
 - James 1:22: “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”
 - Discernment:
 - Who you learn from and what you learn is just as important as being willing to learn. Take care to ensure the people you learn from are grounded in Scripture,

richly divide the Word of Truth, and exemplify godly living empowered by the work of the Holy Spirit.

- Romans 12:12: ““Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”
- Signs you may be unteachable:
 - There aren't people in your life with whom you are frequently, genuinely, and transparently honest.
 - This is a self-protective measure taken to keep people at arm's length, preserve one's image, and prevent correction, conviction, and the burden of change. Often, we don't let people in because we don't want life to get too messy - relying on others is inherently intimate and sometimes we just don't want to let others see our mess or we don't want them “messing” with our lives. Fear is the motivator in both of those instances.
 - There aren't people in your life from whom you consistently seek counsel.
 - You generally make decisions in a vacuum, rarely asking for advice and seldom taking it when it is provided. You tend to move through life independently of others and want to keep it that way, often times because you are impatient and just want to get things done. Waiting around for counsel seems counterproductive and inefficient, so you just don't seek it.
 - You think you can or should do it all, all by yourself.
 - You don't ask for help, even when you need it. You might even be struggling, but you think you're supposed to know or do more than you are able to, so you struggle in silence rather than asking for help.
 - When someone corrects you, your knee-jerk reaction is to defend yourself, discount their concerns, or feel wounded.
 - You don't take correction, reproof, discipline, or instruction well. You don't think you deserve to have others judging you or calling you out. You distance yourself from those who speak uncomfortable truths into your life and feel victimized by the counsel of others.
- Application:
 - Pray for humility:
 - Teachability is a skill that requires humility and humility is a work of the Holy Spirit. Pray for it frequently and earnestly.

- Love God's Word:
 - Foster a longing to be instructed by God. Read His Word to receive His wisdom and cling to it in all of life's circumstances. Study it deeply and ask the Holy Spirit to enable you to apply it to your life.
- Seek instruction:
 - Go out of your way to seek instruction from those who are older and/or wiser than you in both biblical and practical sense. Ask to learn from others and apply what they teach you.
- Ask for help:
 - Be humble enough to ask for help when you need it. Be honest with yourself and others about your shortcomings and let them come along side you to help carry your burdens.
- Be "easy to feed":
 - As pastor Caleb Lawson says, "Christians should be easy to feed." Look for God's wisdom wherever you can. Be eager to learn His truth from His Word and His people. Accept godly instruction and apply it diligently to your life.
- Be thankful:
 - Gratitude is the antidote to a great many sins. Foster a heart of gratitude toward the Lord for providing His wisdom and instruction through His Word and those whom He has brought into your life to correct, convict, exhort, and encourage you. Thank those who love you enough to tell you the truth and bless them for their willingness to instruct you.