

Prepare to Teach

Attributes of a Good Teacher

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During the days of the Feast of Tabernacles our pattern of life is temporarily different from what it is like the rest of the year. It is a non-permanent change because we are showing that this life is transitory. If we are to live again after this life, we must receive eternal life as a special gift from God.

It is important to realize that many religious people outside the church do not understand that we do not already have immortal souls. In the Millennium, however, everybody worldwide will understand that we are mortal and temporary, and that we need God's gift. This is one of the truths we signify by observing the Feast of Temporary dwellings.

What is this life all about? We know for sure that it has a beginning and an end, and that we are on a pilgrimage, between the two points. What is supposed to happen during this pilgrimage? What should we be doing and accomplishing with the precious little time that is allotted to us in this life?

God had the answer preserved for us in Ecclesiastes 12.

Ecclesiastes 12:13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter:
Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all.

You will recall in the sermonette that Warren Lee talked about the fear of God, and how important it is to us, especially today. Since this mortal life fast slips away, the wise, sensible and logical way to use our time is to prepare for that next life. We must get into the right relationship with God so that He sees us as worthy of eternal life. As logical as this is, very few people ever stop to consider this fact, much less do anything about it.

But, it does not stop at working to have a right relationship with God. We know that we must pass on what we learned, and we must give hope to our children and others who ask for a reason for the hope that is in us.

Whom does God hold responsible for teaching those He calls to His way of life?

Matthew 28:19-20 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

It is the church's job to announce the good news, and to teach it. God requires this act of love

and concern from us, this urgent call to sound the alarm. Is this only our responsibility in this life, to teach God's way of life, to announce His coming, His rulership, His government and His way of life? God uses the preaching of that warning message to call others to help advance His work further, to call those He can train for rulership with and under Christ in the world tomorrow.

Many benefits flow from preaching the good news of Christ's return to set up His Kingdom. No wonder the eight-day fall festival is the pinnacle celebration of the church's year that portrays this worldwide utopia. Christ will eventually reconcile the whole world to Himself. Each and every one of us, as His instruments here on earth and as part of His church, has a hand in that responsibility to teach.

One Government, one Ruler, one Kingdom, teaching and practicing the way of life that leads to peace, unity, harmony and friendship. This is God's way of fulfilling His plan, and we are right in the midst of it. We cannot waste the time that we have in this life, we must make use of every minute detail of it.

The Feast of Tabernacles pictures the successful implementation of that plan. It portrays a major pivotal event in scripture.

Acts 3:19-21 But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way of punishing them, because of the people, since they all glorified God for what had been done.

The Church of God is pioneering the only true solution: joyful, voluntary submission to the laws of God. The church is most certainly the "light of the world." If it were not, then there would be no purpose for the perpetuation of human life on this planet. And, God would allow mankind to destroy itself.

The Church of God is the kingdom in embryo. That means we must be seen practicing, and teaching, the way of life that works—the way of cooperation, courtesy and consideration. If the world is to be changed it must start with us as individuals. One of the ways in which we can do something is to become teachers ourselves. There is an increase of knowledge that has never been seen in the history of man like it is today. We have to channel our minds to the Word of God, and what God inspires through the ministry in the church, and learn it as well as we can.

We were born to teach, but a person cannot teach until he has first been a learner. That is where we are today; each and every one of us is learning God's way of life. We are learning the way that God's government works so that we can teach it in the World Tomorrow.

God's Kingdom, the government of God administered by the Family of God, will soon be set up on earth, at the return of Jesus Christ. Those who faithfully served God throughout the ages will be resurrected to immortal life. God's chosen servants of our time who have faithfully endured will be instantly changed into spirit-composed children of God. We will have the mind of God, as we have a portion of it, so to speak, today, but we will have a full measure of it then. We will be

able to teach in a way that will be instructive, helpful and meaningful, and in a way that the students will be able to understand.

What will we teach in the Millennium? We will have the responsibility to teach about God and His truth. More specifically, we will instruct people about raising God-fearing families, wisely using our planet, and establishing benevolent government operations. These are things we should be learning about right now, in our present lives.

We cannot say that I am a Democrat, or I am a Republican, or I am an Independent, because we are not related to that in any way. Our minds just do not connect with that way of government. We have to be learning God's government, and how it will be set up on earth in the future.

Richard spoke about property rights yesterday. All of those laws, ordinances, principles and statutes will have to be taught. If we have not learned them ourselves, how will we teach them? If we are not learning to be teachers today, then we are, in a sense, shorting ourselves in our life in the World Tomorrow, as far as our teaching capacity.

Revelation 5:10 tells us that we will become "kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth." Each of us will fulfill both the offices of king and priest. As kings, we will enforce God's law, while ruling the earth under Christ, the King of kings. And, just as ancient Israel's priests were to teach God's way to the nation, as priests we will be responsible for teaching the knowledge of God's way of life to those coming out of the tribulation and going into the Millennium.

In Micah 4:2, we read that God will establish His authority first. Then, as Micah puts it, "God will teach many nations His ways." How will He do this? He will do it through His church, through us. Micah goes on to say, ". . . for out of Zion the law shall go forth and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

God's government will be restored to the earth. Satan will have been removed. Man's human nature will be changed. Selflessness will permeate life rather than self-centeredness. We have to learn these things now, if we are going to be effective teachers in the Millennium.

Isaiah 2:3 Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

This is a similar comment to what Micah said. More and more people will learn of, and turn to, God's way. We will be responsible, as teachers, for filling the earth with the knowledge of God's way. To try to do that now, as the church does, in preaching the gospel to the world, by way of the internet, magazines and so forth, is almost like throwing a needle into a haystack and looking for it. If God does not call a person today, they will not come across that information. It is all done supernaturally, by the power and authority of God, and He determines whose mind He will open. In the World Tomorrow, God's Word will go out everywhere and it will be the dominant information that goes out. Everyone will hear it.

What qualities will we need to be able to teach God's way in the world tomorrow? Whatever those qualities are, we need to be developing them now. I am trying to inspire you to really work hard to learn as much as you can about God's way of life. You teenagers and young adults who are just beginning to build your lives, it is not a matter of only learning what the Bible says, and God's way of life, but it is also getting a good education so that you can learn trades and things that will be helpful in the World Tomorrow, so that you can teach the right way to make a living at that time. There is a wonderful and an exciting future ahead of you, as far as teaching those things to others. You should feel very excited about it.

Let us look at some of the most important qualities of good teachers, and the character traits we should be practicing now, in preparation for our responsibility of teaching the world during the Millennium.

Jesus was called "Teacher" more than anything else. He is the supreme expression of the divine Teacher, showing compassion combined with clarity, power and authority in His instruction.

Unlike the rabbis who taught in fixed locations, we find Jesus teaching in the temple, in towns and villages, in synagogues, in homes, as He travels along the road, and even from an anchored boat. Christ could teach in any situation, at any time, and make the teaching fit the time at hand. Jesus, the Teacher, is adaptable to any setting, and is as much at home under the open sky as under the roof of a house or synagogue.

While the rabbis exclusively taught their chosen "gifted and talented" group of students, we find that Jesus taught his disciples as a special focus of his teaching, but not exclusively. He also taught the crowds that came to Him. Jesus designed and presented His instruction to the ability of those who were listening to Him. His example, and what and how He taught it, is a fine example to us. For the last several years in the Bible Study in the Forerunner, we have been going through the parables. They are an excellent teaching tool, and Christ used them so effectively, and we can learn from that as well.

Jesus was the epitome of the good teacher! So, what does it take to be a good teacher? Let us look at seven good teaching qualities that are eternal, and very applicable to us today as members of the church. We should be applying these now, in our lives, as members of the church, and we will also apply them in the Millennium, in teaching those coming out of the Tribulation.

1. Good teachers have a fear of the Lord

The voice of Wisdom points to God as the source of wisdom; so, wisdom is to be found in the "fear of the Lord."

Job 28:20-28 "From where then does wisdom come? And where is the place of understanding? It is hidden from the eyes of all living, And concealed from the birds of the air. Destruction and Death say, 'We have heard a report about it with our ears.' God understands its way, And He knows its place. For He looks to the ends of the earth, And sees under the whole heavens, To establish a weight for the wind, And

apportion the waters by measure. When He made a law for the rain,
And a path for the thunderbolt, Then He saw wisdom and declared it;
He prepared it, indeed, He searched it out. And to man He said,
'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, And to depart from evil is
understanding.'

This is the foundation that we should be building. Our teaching methods, habits and the foundation of our teaching should be on the fear of the Lord.

Human understanding alone, though it is God given, is not sufficient for wisdom. Proverbs 3:5 commands, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding."

We see in the colleges and universities, today, human reasoning being taught. It is confusing the world. We see over a hundred years or more of this human reasoning in teaching, even going back to the Greeks, and on back to Adam and Eve. It has led to confusion for the entire history of mankind, except where God has a specific hand with His people and His church.

The pursuit of knowledge, attempted without reference to God, is, at best, precarious and distorted and, if persistently pursued, becomes seriously misleading and damaging. However, wisdom embraces understanding correctly understood from the foundation of the proper fear of the Lord. Understanding must come from trust in God. There must be faith in God before there can be understanding and wisdom from Him. If you do not trust the person that is teaching you, you will not trust the information they are giving you.

Proverbs 16:22 says, "Understanding is a fountain of life." Wisdom, and with it true teaching, encompasses both mind and heart. Wisdom is the right use of knowledge. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, and it is the beginning of wisdom.

Deuteronomy 6:1-7 "Now this is the commandment, and these are the statutes and judgments which the LORD your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe them in the land which you are crossing over to possess, that you may fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe it, that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the LORD God of your fathers has promised you—'a land flowing with milk and honey.' Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up."

In order to be a good teacher to our children, we have to have the knowledge of God, and we have to desire it with all of our hearts, and with all of our souls, and with all of our strength. Where does that strength come from? As we have heard (from John Ritenbaugh in his last two sermons), the power and the authority of God comes from God; it belongs to Him, and that is where we will get it from.

There is much that is said about a teachable attitude in Paul's simple statement in Acts 9: 6 where he said, "So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" We know that at that time, Paul had just heard the voice of God, and was trembling. This is what we need to ask, on a daily basis, to God. We should start our day with, "Lord what do you want me to do today? What do you want me to teach today?" This is the question that the truly great teacher asks himself every day!

2. Good teachers are wise learners themselves and know their subjects

It is the wise learner who becomes the wise teacher. There are a lot of people that we run across in life who want to express their opinions and want to teach, but they have never been quite the good learner.

Proverbs 9:7-9 He who corrects a scoffer gets shame for himself, And he who rebukes a wicked man only harms himself. Do not correct a scoffer, lest he hate you; Rebuke a wise man, and he will love you. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; Teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.

To be wise, we have to be good learners. We must take what we have learned as wise learners, and become wise teachers. Of course, this requires humility.

There is nothing that exposes the distinction between the scorner and the wise man more than the effect of discipline on each: the scorner becomes worse, the wise man becomes better because of it. Sometimes, we see that in our children. We have one child who may be willing to listen more than another. Some have to take the tough route.

The wise learner does not go away to forget. He goes away to think over what he has heard. He chews it over, until he has finally digested it. People should use the wisdom they learn, not to talk about it necessarily, but to live by it first. Once we have lived by it, then we are able more easily to talk about it.

The Greek philosophers would talk about what they had learned, but never applied it in their personal lives. Plato, Socrates, and others, were all known to be perverts; they were homosexuals, many of them. So, we see the distorted information that they had. Yet, today the world just is in awe of what they taught, and the wisdom of the Greeks. It infiltrates and it winds its way into every bit of information that comes out of the universities and the public school system.

One ancient philosopher used the crude metaphor that sheep do not vomit up the grass in order to show the shepherd how much they have eaten; they digest it and use it to produce wool and milk.

The wise learner goes away not to forget what he learned, but quietly to think it over until he discovers what impact it has on his life, and on the lives of others, and how it can help others.

The wise learner seeks the master's company. After Jesus had spoken, the crowds dispersed; but there was a small group of students who hung around Him, not wanting to leave until they had learned more. It was to them that He unfolded the meaning of everything.

The wise learner receives instruction about God's truth with meekness. So often in the universities today, we see the graduate coming out with a prideful attitude, not being able to be taught anything. In some of the corporations that I have worked for in the past, I remember them hiring some of these young whippersnappers, like I used to be. They would come in cocky, knowing what needed to be done in everything, and would not listen to advice. That is not the way that we learn, and that is not the way that we teach.

James 1:21 Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

The implication there is that if we are not humble and meek, and if we are not willing to learn, we cannot receive the "implanted word." We cannot understand or receive wisdom from God.

The Greek word "emphutos" is translated "implanted" in the New King James and "engrafted" in the King James. Both show the agricultural meaning of something intentionally planted, or grafted, to produce something more useful. God's Word is implanted in our hearts, as a seed is planted in the ground. It is grafted in so that it may become a part of us. It cannot go in one ear and out the other. It must be digested as it goes in, and made use of.

James tells us to strip ourselves of all sin. The word he uses for "lay aside" is the word used for laying aside, or stripping off, clothes. He tells us to rid ourselves of all filthiness, as a man strips off dirty clothes, or as a snake sloughs off its skin. In a sense, this is the first step that is necessary to becoming the wise learner.

The word translated "filthiness" can be used for the filth that soils clothes or soils the body. But, it has one very interesting connection. It is related to another Greek word used in a medical sense, and it means "wax in the ear."

Meekness is the frame of mind needed to be teachable. It is enduring injury with patience and without resentment. In contrast, resentment is the feeling of indignant displeasure, or ill-will, at something we regard as wrong, insulting, or injurious.

Meekness is the attitude of the person whose feelings and emotions are under perfect control. That definition, right there, tells me that we are rarely meek! We are trying to be, and we can be with God's help, but that is an area that we will always be working on as long as we are human beings. The Greek word from which meekness is translated is one of the toughest Greek words to translate, because it is a complex concept that no one word represents well.

The concept of meekness involves both serenity and power that is not lead away by emotion. Where does that power and authority need to come from? It comes from God because He is the

one that possesses it. Meekness comes from a balanced mind, guided by God's Spirit from which the fruit of meekness is produced.

After all of Job's miserable trials he finally became truly teachable because he stripped off his filthy spiritual clothes and became meek and repentant. Even though God called him a righteous man, he still had his problems to overcome. It was at this point that he became truly teachable with regard to having a true view of God.

Job 42:1-6 Then Job answered the LORD and said: "I know that You can do everything, And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You. You asked, 'Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. Listen, please, and let me speak; You said, 'I will question you, and you shall answer Me.' I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, And repent in dust and ashes."

Unless we are an expert in the field, we would not try to lecture on organic chemistry to a group of chemists. We would look like a fool if we did that! Similarly, we cannot teach God's way to someone unless we are an expert on the subject. Otherwise, we are just giving our opinions. As Job said to God, finally he could see God. What he saw, and what he realized, was that God was so great that Job's stature had no stature really.

During the Millennium, the subjects that we will be teaching will include God's law, and God's way of thinking and giving and understanding of the inspired written word of God. We will need to know these subjects thoroughly.

I Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

In order to have proper meekness and fear, we must understand where we stand in relationship to God.

A wise learner is always expanding his knowledge, learning more, and keeping up with new developments in his field in order to improve and maintain the effectiveness of his teaching. So Peter tells us, in II Peter 3:18, to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." That is not a request. That is not an admonishment. We could consider that a command to grow. Anyone who is not growing is going backwards.

We can grow by consistently praying, reading and studying the Bible, and then rightly applying what we learn. When we read God's inspired written word, God is speaking directly to us. Sometimes people say God never answers my prayers. We do not always understand the answer, and so we have to keep seeking it in His inspired written Word.

How and what to teach in the Millennium, in a general sense, is found in the Bible. There are a

lot of details to support the principles found there as well.

The teacher must possess understanding. One of the great difficulties of the expert is to understand why the non-expert, or the student, finds a thing so difficult to understand or to do. It is necessary for the good teacher to think with the learner's mind, and to see with the learner's eyes, before he can really explain and impart any kind of knowledge. We found that out in the Computer Information Center at Ambassador College when they began teaching the personal computer software to the ministers and employees in Pasadena. What they found was that some people learned by picking up a manual and reading it, and they could get right on there. Others had to get on and start banging away. Many of us struggled to learn this when we had been using slide rules just a few years earlier.

You have to teach in a way that people understand, and you have to vary your teaching in different ways. This is one of the reasons that God gives ministers with different personalities and different teaching approaches—so that there is always something there for everyone.

Jesus did this very thing by coming to earth as a human being and suffering. Because of this, Jesus' teaching is attuned to the needs and questions of humanity, and He effectively responds to living situations that present themselves to Him. He is the perfect individual, the perfect Being for answering our questions, and teaching those things to us. We have to rely very heavily on His example and on His life when He lived here on earth.

3. Good teachers set good examples

It is common for human nature to refuse to believe God. It is usual behavior not to want to be taught, because learning is hard, it exposes what we do not know and requires a change in behavior.

When James wrote to the church he was concerned with common weaknesses in the church. He was concerned that they were surrendering to impatience, bitterness, materialism, disunity, spiritual apathy, and resistance to the truth when they felt forced to change. Since they had the same human nature that we have, we have similar problems to what they had to overcome. So James is right in there, trying to help the congregations understand how not to succumb to those things.

All these things affected their ability to learn. Many resisted and, while acknowledging they had to change, they were quick to point out the flaws in others, but turned a deaf-ear to anything that exposed their own inadequacies.

James saw this blind-eye approach as detrimental to persevering through trials. The most obvious result was that they very easily became angry at each other because they were frustrated with themselves, and so they looked for someone to blame.

James 1:19-20 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

"Swift to hear" involves an obedient response to God's Word. True hearing means more than

mere listening. The Word of God must be received and applied. Quick hearing requires a genuine faith that should produce a change in attitude. It should result in righteous actions. "Slow to speak," requires listening; and listening requires contemplation based on the correct principles of God. Guided by the Holy Spirit our tongues are then under the fruit of self-control.

"Slow to wrath" requires that we listen intently and speak little, without drawing conclusions based on emotion, and from inadequate information. Pride is always a major factor in unrighteous anger, but humility slows anger. These are very well known principles that we have been learning for years and years, and you are very familiar with them. These are absolutely necessary if we are going to be good teachers in the World Tomorrow.

4. Good teachers use authority properly

We, as members of the God family, will be able to exercise the power of a thousand hydrogen bombs at just the thought. We must control that power properly, in love, gentleness, self control, and the fear of God the Father. We must have a single-minded desire to help, and never hurt the humans under our authority. I remember, thirty years ago, one man saying to me that he could not wait until the Millennium, and he was a spirit being, and he could take lightning and destroy all of the steeples on the churches. I could not help to think that was not quite the approach that we should be taking. God will take care of that, anyway, during the Tribulation and the Day of the Lord. Certainly our focus should be on how to use that power and that authority, and we certainly will not get it until we have first learned how to use it and control our emotions.

I Corinthians 9:25 And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.

Good teachers are models of balance, self control and moderation. The wise teacher must at all costs avoid a sense of superiority. True teaching does not consist in telling people things, but it consists in learning things together. The teacher who tries to cram information into people's minds misses his responsibility. The teacher who stands on a pedestal and talks down will never be successful. True teaching consists of sharing and covering truth together as a family, as we do with our children at home. As I went through these points I felt smaller, and smaller, and smaller, as an effective teacher. We are all in this together, learning how to teach and how to learn together, with the fear of God and with meekness and humility.

5. Good teachers communicate well

This is something that we will all be working on till the day we die, no doubt. This, by extension, means that we are willing to explain again and again from different angles, as long as the person is sincerely trying to understand. It helps, as teachers, to try different ways of teaching. We should not be locked into the same type of sermon, or sermonettes, or articles that we write. I am going to take this opportunity to admonish many of you, who have any ability at all in writing, to send articles in. We have a data base that we pull from, and that data base sometimes get a bit low. If you want a way of learning how to teach now that will help you

in the World Tomorrow, then write articles. It is hard, but it gets easier, and it will help you immensely to crystallize God's way of