

The Discipline of Openness (Being Teachable)

1. I want you, for a moment, to regard the human face. It is a remarkable construct. And it might even be a remarkable signal – and instruction. Information is received, shared, and exchanged in a variety of ways from this one location.
2. Most of the face functions primarily as a receiver. We intake information from our skin, two ears, two eyes, two nostrils, our tongue and our hair (although that is really a skin reception via small glands). To GIVE information to another, we have our mouth and our expression. That's it.
3. So, to recap, we are designed to receive information – a LOT more information than we are expected to give. We do not learn through the mouth (though misuse of the mouth can bring a lesson down on you). We learn through all these other receptors.
4. God designed us for community, which should be obvious by now. What might not be obvious is that our faces and brains were built to be in a community. It makes sense, then, that our faces would be built to receive information many, many more times than we are expected to share it.
5. When we speak, we are cutting off any possible receipt of information (except for, perhaps, facial expressions and reactions of others if 1) we are in close proximity to them or if 2) we pay attention.
6. Notice how speaking doesn't come up in this Biblical definition of a wise person [James 3:13-18]. This is wisdom – to be a hearer, worker, and server more than you are a talker (perhaps why there is a warning for teachers). Why the absence of speaking in this definition? Because James has dealt with speaking already in this chapter. [James 3:1-12]
7. James makes sure we understand how dangerous the tongue is and even he misses one big reason that speaking should not be our first response: you shut off teachability as long as you are talking.

8. And you don't even have to talk! You can just be preparing to talk. A multitude of studies show that we miss so much because we are preparing to talk. (jokes at a party, points at a debate) We can also close down our ears when we hear something that we disagree with. We have become unteachable.
9. We can get our feelings hurt and decide not to listen. The phrase "Facts don't care about your feelings" was recently countered by an interviewee on TV with "My feelings don't care about your facts!" What an interesting way to go through life.
10. I can remember studying the Bible with people and coming to baptism only to have them say "If I'm baptized, I'm saying that my mother is in hell." While that isn't true and it is sitting there like a hanging curve ball, I am interested here in the mindset that is on display: if a new fact puts my current world order into disarray, I must ignore the new fact. You become, in a word, unteachable.
11. We can even be chided into becoming unteachable. Others can chide you for not taking a position or for being wishy-washy when you are really just trying to stay open, teachable.
12. In other words, remaining teachable is hard work. Assuming you've already learned what you need to know and that others need not bother you...that's easy! But reading material you disagree with, befriending people who are not like you, and keeping your eyes open, your ears open, and your mouth shut is hard!
13. If the Holy Spirit is doing something new...are you reachable? Only if you're teachable. If the Good Shepherd needs to move you to another place, will you hear him? [\[John 10:27\]](#)
14. I was introduced to Lectio Divina back about 15yrs ago. It took me awhile to get into it – reading and praying a passage again and again or singing a song again and again. Eventually, I got the point of it and have benefited from it. There is another ancient custom that I think we need to bring in here to help us with being teachable: Visio Divina.

15. [Psalm 8:3; 19:1-4; 24:1] God speaks to us through creation. [Romans 1:18-20] Campbell called these God's Two Books – the scripture and creation.
16. Ted Loder was describing Visio Divina when he said this: "I am so thankful to be alive – breathing, moving, sensing, wide-eyed, cock-eared alive – in this mysterious instant, at this luminous time, on this nurturing earth, this blue pearl of great price whirling through uncharted space, attended by vigilant stars...I am...eager to miss no message of grace in this ballet of beauty or in the cramp of struggle of this incredible gift of life."
17. I won't go all Mr Science on you here, but we only see reflections. Our eyes seem shapes and colors that are reflected off the objects we observe. I find that interesting for I consider all creation to be a reflection of the wisdom, care, and character of our God.
18. In the 1500's Johann Kepler advanced the cause of science and helped pull Europe and, later, the world out of darkness by applying scientific – specially, mathematical – principles to every object in the universe and to the space in between (Plato and Aristotle believed Earth was a special case with special laws). He was the first to discover that planets have an elliptical, not circular, motion around the sun. He also believed Copernicus was correct and that the sun, not the earth, was the center of our solar system.
19. Sidebar: Kepler's mother was accused of being a witch and imprisoned. His logical defense of her got her released and shut down the hunt for witches in his area.
20. Kepler said this: "Science is merely thinking God's thoughts after Him. It would seem that Visio Divina was a part of his life. Whenever he was shown to be wrong, he embraced the correction, making him a remarkable man, indeed. He was teachable because he was humble and because he observed, he looked, he saw God.
21. Two people walk through a woods. One sees God in every leaf, every tree, every bird, and in the life in the soil. One sees only a woods...or their phone. You tend to find more of what you look for.

And we look for God only when we realize that we NEED to look for God and that we NEED to hear from Him, to be guided to be...taught.

22. To be teachable. Let's read these together:

Psalm 86:10-11

Psalm 25:4-5

Psalm 119: 16, 47

Psalm 1:1-2