

Better

INTELLECTUALLY



Acts 17:10-12

There's a common saying: "You don't know what you don't know." No matter how much we've learned or experienced, we're always working with limited understanding. We all have blind spots – gaps in our knowledge and flaws in our thinking that we don't see.

Scripture reminds us that God's thoughts are not our thoughts and His ways are not our ways (Isaiah 55:8–9). He operates on a level infinitely beyond ours. And that means no matter how long we've followed Christ, there is always more to learn, more to understand, and more to be changed by.

That's why being teachable is such an important trait for every believer. Not just for new Christians or pastors or "theologians", but for all of us. Teachability is the willingness to admit you don't know everything, the hunger to grow in wisdom and understanding, and the humility to be shaped by truth.

In Acts 17, we meet a group of believers in the town of Berea who modeled this posture. Luke says they were "more noble" because they received the message with eagerness and examined the Scriptures daily to see if what they were hearing was true. They didn't just nod along. They didn't blindly reject or accept. They leaned in with humble hearts and hungry minds.

This is the invitation for us, too: to be disciples who are open to correction, eager to grow, and grounded in truth. Because we don't know what we don't know, but God does. And He's ready to teach those who are willing to learn.

ICEBREAKER

If you could instantly become an expert in any subject or skill, what would you choose and why?

READ IT

Read Acts 17:10-12

GET IT

1. How were the Jews in Berea described in comparison with those from Thessalonica?
2. How did the Bereans receive Paul's teaching?
3. What did they do after hearing the word that Paul and Silas shared with them?
4. What was the result of their teachable posture?

LIVE IT

Teachable Posture: Eager to Learn

The Bereans had the right posture for growth, they were open, humble, and ready to learn. Luke says they were “more noble,” a word that described not status but *character*. They didn't scoff at Paul's teaching or assume they knew better. They listened carefully with spiritual curiosity. They *welcomed* the opportunity to grow.

That kind of posture matters. In a world full of noise, strong opinions, and resistance to correction, teachable people stand out. They're not gullible, but they are open, not clinging to what's comfortable but pursuing what's true. They're humble enough to admit they haven't arrived, and hungry enough to want to learn more.

Teachability begins with *openness*. That means being receptive to ideas, perspectives, or even corrections that challenge us. And not just about spiritual things, but about relationships, work, parenting, leadership, even how we understand the world around us.

The Bereans' eagerness didn't make them naive. It made them noble. And it gave them the foundation to pursue truth faithfully.

5. What are some common situations or emotions that make it hard for people to stay teachable?

6. Why is it important to stay teachable not just in spiritual matters, but in areas like relationships, work, marriage, parenting, or leadership ... etc?
7. What kinds of personal disciplines could help you cultivate a posture of openness and eagerness to learn and grow?
8. What's an area of your life right now (spiritually, relationally, professionally or even personally) where you sense a desire to grow or learn? What step will you take this week to pursue that growth with a teachable spirit?

Teachable Practice: Examining the Truth

The Bereans didn't stop at curiosity. Their eagerness to learn led them to open the Scriptures and search them diligently on a *daily* basis. The word *examining* (Greek: *anakinō*) means to investigate, question, or scrutinize something carefully. It's the same word used for legal cross-examinations. In other words, they weren't flipping through the Bible for inspirational quotes. They were weighing Paul's message against the truth of God's Word.

That's what teachability looks like in practice: it's not blind belief or shallow agreement, but an intentional, thoughtful pursuit of truth. And it's a practice we're called to develop not just for spiritual growth, but for every area of life. Whether we're discerning advice at work, processing a cultural message, or evaluating a decision, we need to ask: *Does this line up with God's truth?*

This is where Mac Lake's disciplines of asking questions, listening deeply, and reading daily come into play.⁷ Teachable people don't just collect facts, they seek understanding. They ask clarifying questions. They listen for insight, not just affirmation. And they return to Scripture again and again as their source of wisdom.

But this kind of examination takes effort. It takes discipline. And it takes time. That's why many people opt for shortcuts – just accepting what sounds good or going with what feels right. But the Bereans show us a better way: **truth is worth the work.**

9. **When you hear a new idea, whether in church, online, at work, or in conversation, how do you typically respond? What filters do you use to test whether it's true or helpful?**

10. **How do you keep Scripture central in your learning process? What are some habits that help you examine what you hear through the lens of God's Word?**

⁷ Mac Lake, *Leading Yourself: A Guide to Cultivating Personal Leadership* (100 Movements Publishing, 2024), 76-84.

11. When you're testing a new idea against Scripture, how do you make sure you're letting the Bible speak for itself and not just using it to confirm what you want to be true?

Teachable Product: Embracing What Is True

The end goal of teachability isn't simply *knowing more*, it's *growing more*. Luke tells us that "many of them therefore believed." Their belief wasn't shallow or rushed, it was the result of a faithful process of learning and examination so that once they were convinced of the truth, they embraced it fully.

That's the natural product of a teachable life: when God reveals truth through Scripture, feedback, life experience, or even failure, we respond in faith and obedience. We change our minds. We adjust our behavior. We believe and act differently than we did before.

It's easy to stop short of this step. Some people are open to hearing new ideas but never examine them. Others love to examine but never embrace anything, remaining a perpetual skeptic, never willing to commit.

But the Bereans show us the full path: posture → practice → product. They were eager, they examined, and when convinced, they embraced.

This final step calls for courage. Embracing truth often requires letting go of false assumptions, old habits, or even long-held traditions. It demands humility and trust – not just in the truth itself, but in the God who gives it. As Jesus said, "Your word is truth" (John 17:17). When we embrace God's truth, we embrace Him—and we are changed.

12. Why do you think it's tempting to stop short of full commitment, either by avoiding hard truths or staying stuck in analysis mode?

13. What truth has God made clear to you recently that you've struggled to fully embrace? What's holding you back?

14. When it comes to the three stages of teachability (Posture, Practice, and Product) where do you typically get stuck most often?

15. What would it look like for you to take intentional steps to break through those barriers in the next month?

INTRODUCING “BETTER: DISCIPLESHIP FROM THE INSIDE OUT”

Discipleship isn't just about what we know but who we are becoming. The call to follow Jesus is an invitation to a transformed life. Jesus calls us to a *better* way, one that begins in the heart and flows outward into every thought, every word, every relationship, and every decision.

When Jesus called His disciples, He reshaped their priorities, their values, and their way of life. As they walked with Him day by day, their character and conduct began to reflect His. That same transformation is His goal for us through the daily, patient work of His Spirit forming us from the inside out.

This series, *Better: Discipleship from the Inside Out*, takes that vision seriously. If we want to grow as disciples of Jesus, we must begin with the most foundational area of leadership, the leadership of our own lives. Self-leadership in the Christian life is not about willpower or self-improvement; it's about daily surrender to Christ and intentionally cultivating habits of life that align with His way.

Over the coming weeks, we will explore six areas where Jesus calls us to grow: missionally, emotionally, collaboratively, intellectually, physically, and relationally. These aren't separate compartments to check off, but connected aspects of a whole life shaped by the gospel. As we grow in one, we find the others strengthened. This is what discipleship does, it works from the inside out, touching every part of who we are.

While this series draws inspiration from Mac Lake's *Leading Yourself*, our purpose is not to teach a book but to preach the Bible. His framework provides a helpful structure, but the heart of this series is God's Word, anchored in Scripture, centered on Christ, and aimed at the transformation of His people.

Our prayer is that we will not only learn about the better way, but that we will live it. That we will see where our lives are divided and invite the Spirit to bring wholeness. That we will not settle for partial discipleship, but pursue an integrated life of faith that is shaped by Christ in every part, from the inside out.

WANT TO GO DEEPER?

Our small group series is built around many of the key ideas found in *Leading Yourself* by Mac Lake.

This practical and insightful book is a valuable companion to the discussions we'll be having together. If you're looking to grow in personal leadership, character, and spiritual maturity, we highly recommend picking up a copy to read alongside the weekly lessons.

DISCIPLING LEADERS SERIES

LEADING YOURSELF

TRAINING GUIDE

Developing the
Character and Competency
to Lead Yourself

Mac Lake

Foreword by John C. Maxwell

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