

When I was in college I took a class in Judo. One day the teacher decided that it would be a good idea if he videotaped part of a class and then replayed it on a TV monitor for us to see. He could then point out, to all of us, things we were doing right or wrong. So he borrowed a camera and walked around recording our practice for the first part of a class. These cameras had not been on the market but a few years at that point. They were expensive and almost no one had them.

At one point during the filming, he turned the camera sideways to get a wider angle shot. Well when he played it back and it got to the point of filming that he had turned the camera sideways the picture on the TV turned sideways. We all had to cock our heads sideways to try to see what was happening.

It turns out the teacher had never used this equipment before. He had received a short lesson from someone on how to work it and he used it in class without trying it out ahead of time. We all had a good laugh that day, and learned something about using a video camera. The teacher knew the basics of working the camera and playing it back on the TV, but there was more he needed to know.

This is an example of learning. Let me give you another one. The pastor of one of our local churches is in China this week. He has gone to teach Chinese pastors. He is not teaching them the Bible. Since they have so few Bibles, they have memorized large portions of the Bible. They know what the Bible says better than many Americans who carry Bibles around with us.

What they don't know is hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is the theory and methods of Bible interpretation. They have not had anyone to teach them hermeneutics.

They also don't know homiletics, the study of preaching and rhetoric. They have not had anyone to teach them these things. Their churches are illegal, and so they have not been able to form Bible colleges or seminaries.

In short, they know the Bible. What they need is to be taught how to interpret the Bible. They need to be taught how the Bible fits together. They need to learn the principles of sermon preparation and delivery. And that is what this mission trip is about.

The group has been limited to 25 and they move to a different location each day, so as not to draw attention to these gatherings. All the men he is teaching have been in prison for preaching Jesus Christ. If caught the pastors would go back to prison and the American preacher would be made to leave the country.

I tell you this story about them because knowing what the Bible says does not mean you are Biblically educated. There is much about the Bible, the subjects of the Bible, and how they fit together that you will not learn just by reading through the Bible. For example, if you read the first three books of the New Testament, you might think that they are all alike. The truth is that Matthew, Mark, and Luke were written for different audiences and each have a different emphasis. They are intended to emphasize

different things about Jesus. You likely would not pick up on this just by reading them without someone teaching you the differences.

Let me give you one more example of the need for further learning. When you purchase a new automobile, it comes with an owners manual. The owners manual tells you a lot about your car and how it works. But even if you memorize the manual it will not teach you how to drive. Nor will it teach you how to repair your car. Other teaching is required to learn those things.

Now let's apply this to the good news of Jesus. The good news brought you to Jesus and salvation. But there is more to being a mature follower of Jesus than understanding and accepting the good news. Jesus expects obedience from His followers. Look with me at what Jesus said to His disciples in Matthew 28.

Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV) Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations (peoples), baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

Salvation involves more than accepting the good news. The good news will get you to heaven, but only if you respond to it correctly. Responding correctly includes the right kind of repentance. **Christian repentance is the kind that grows into obedience to Jesus.** Any repentance short of that is not Christian repentance, and is not part of Christian salvation. So if you feel sorry for your sin, but don't seek to obey Jesus, your sorrow for sin is not Christian repentance. Christian repentance includes sorrow for sin, but must result in obedience to Jesus. Jesus expects obedience from His followers.

Look again at Matthew 28. Obedience to Jesus includes teaching new Christians to obey all of what Jesus commands.

And the apostles of Jesus obeyed this. In the book of Acts, we see the apostles of Jesus fulfilling the first two commands. They made disciples. They did this by testifying to the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. When they did so the Holy Spirit convicted people of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Some of those people put their faith in Jesus, for the forgiveness of their sins, and repented of their sins with obedience to Jesus. They became followers of Jesus and were baptized in His name.

The apostles then began obeying Jesus' third command in Matthew 28 and began teaching these new disciples.

Acts 2:42 (NIV) They (the new disciples) devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching...

Note that the apostles were teaching. The apostles had already been taught by Jesus for the previous three years. He had taught and they had learned. And now that Jesus was gone, they were obeying by teaching. These are the three parts of fulfilling Jesus' command in Matthew 28.

Christian, learn the commands of Jesus. The apostles had already learned the commands of Jesus. Jesus himself had done the teaching.

Christian, obey the commands of Jesus. Learning the commands should result in obedience. Even if you memorize the commands of Jesus, that isn't the same as obeying the commands of Jesus. Obedience is when you actually do what Jesus has commanded.

Christian, teach other Christians how to obey the commands of Jesus. When you start trying to obey the commands of Jesus, you will realize there is more sin in you than you first realized. You are going to find it hard to obey Jesus. It is hard because there is sin in you. There are sinful desires in you. And they conflict with what Jesus wants for you. The missionary Paul, in Romans 7, described it as a battle that takes place in you.

Gradually, the more you trust in Jesus, and pray for help, and try, your self-control will get stronger. You may learn practical steps that help you obey. It is these experiences of failure and eventual success that you can teach to other, less experienced, Christians.

Now let's take this back to Jesus' command to teach. Jesus was giving this command to his apostles. They in turn were to teach other Christians to obey Jesus' commands. His commands included this command to teach others to obey His commands. So what Jesus wanted to end up with was something like this: fully obedient disciples, who make fully obedient disciples, who make in turn make fully obedient disciples, and on and on.

This was the pattern that God gave the Israelites in the wilderness. God values this process of learning, obeying, and teaching, learning, obeying, and teaching. Look with me at what God commanded Moses to say to the Israelites.

Deuteronomy 4:9 (NIV) Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them.

By their experiences with God they had learned of God's power, love, and faithfulness. He had rescued them from slavery in Egypt and provided for their needs in the wilderness. They were supposed to hold on to these memories and pass them down from one generation to another. They became family history stories of God's faithfulness. Look at the next passage.

Deuteronomy 6:6-9 (NIV) These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

The part about lying down is when you have those heart to heart talks at bedtime about the day just lived. The part about when you get up is reminding your children in the morning how to live by faith in God all during the day. And then he speaks of using reminders. You might use Post-it notes in the lunch box or on the mirror.

Now, I remind you that while we are not under these commands, these Old Testament laws show the values of God. God values His people teaching each other obedience to His commands. His expectation was that this would continue from one generation to the next.

The home is the primary place of children learning spiritual truth.

Ephesians 6:4 (NIV) Fathers... bring them (your children) up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

Parents, you have a big job. The church can supplement what you parents do, but your children need to hear from you about how to obey Jesus. Then they need to see you doing so.

God's pattern of education is learning, obeying, and teaching. As followers of Jesus Christ, Southern Baptists have accepted this pattern, not just for the family, but beyond it.

XII. Education

The cause of education in the kingdom of Christ is co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian schools is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people.

In Christian education there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life is always limited and never absolute. The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is limited by the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists.

Deut. 4:1, 5, 9, 14; 6:1-10; 31:12-13; Neh. 8:1-8; Job. 28:28; Psalms 19:7ff.; 119:11; Prov. 3:13ff.; 4:1-10; 8:1-7, 11; 15:14; Eccl. 7:19; Matt. 5:2; 7:24ff.; 28:19-20; Luke 2:40; 1 Cor. 1:18-31; Eph. 4:11-16; Phil. 4:8; Col. 2:3,8-9; 1 Tim. 1:3-7; 2 Tim. 2:15; 3:14-17; Heb. 5:12-6:3; James 1:5; 3:17.

We value Christian education in the home, the church, and with Christian schools, colleges and seminaries.

Our Sunday School and Discipleship ministries are vital to the overall work of our church. We believe in the value of studying the Bible together. Some of you attend worship here regularly, but have not been involved in a study group. I encourage you to do so. There is benefit to you of being in such a group. There is also the benefit to others by your participation in such a group. Others can learn from your experiences.

Sermons are not geared for asking questions and receiving answers. Nor do they make use of the personal experiences of each Christian. This kind of teaching is best done in smaller groups where there is interaction between the members of the group. In such groups we can learn from each other's experiences of trying to live obedient to Jesus.

We also value continuing education with a Biblical worldview. There are numerous colleges and universities connected to different Baptist state conventions across the United States. And through our Cooperative Program giving we support the work of our six seminaries that educate pastors, missionaries, and college or seminary professors.

Christians teaching Christians is God's way of training us in obedience. I encourage you to increase your obedience through participation in one of our Bible Study groups.

Invitation

In a few minutes, we are going to sing our last song. It is number 601, titled, "Teach Me, O Lord, I Pray."

As we sing this, renew your commitment to serving Jesus. Make a commitment to learn and obey all of what He commands His followers to do.

VBS workers. We are going to be engaged in teaching next month. We need to learn the themes and Bible lessons for ourselves, so we can live them and then teach them to the children who will be here. Commit yourself to learning and obedience in preparation for Vacation Bible School.

If anyone here has not yet become a follower of Jesus Christ, today is a good day to do so.