

A Teachable Spirit

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Introduction:

1. A teachable spirit is one of the most desirable and key character traits for success with God and men.
2. A very destructive and offensive default of men is the quiet or verbal know-it-all that will not learn.
3. Verses of *teach me* in Psalms (Ps 25:4-5; 27:11; 86:11; 119:12,26,33,64,66,68,108,124,135; 143:10).
4. Verses of *lead me* by David in the Psalms (Psalms 5:8; 25:5; 27:11; 31:3; 43:3; 61:2; 139:24; 143:10).
5. Never forget David's two chapters about the Bible – Psalm 19 and 119 – for they exalt Bible learning.
6. Solomon valued teachability as the highest indicator of wisdom and success (Prov 1:5,23-27; 2:2; 3:1-3; 4:4,10-13,20; 5:1-2,11-14; 6:20-21,23; 7:1-3; 8:6-7; 9:8-9; 10:17; 12:1; 13:1,18; 15:5,10,14,31-32; 17:10; 18:15; 21:11; 22:15,17; 23:9,12,22; 25:12; 27:5; 28:9; 29:15; Ecclesiastes 4:13; 7:5; 12:9).
7. No wonder David was God's favorite and Solomon earth's wisest – they had two very teachable spirits.
8. Our church has just passed through its 40th anniversary, and our trajectory has been due to teachability.
9. Let us never forget the lesson here, the benefits we previously derived, and beg God for much more.
10. Growing in favor with God and men is our goal – only one way to do it – crave learning for change.
11. Thinking is overrated; assuming thoughts improve you endorses evolution – something out of nothing.
12. We do not need rationalization or realization – we need revelation from God and His chosen officers.
13. The information age and growth of the Internet spreads more lies than it does truth. Listen and watch!
14. The Bible is absolutely perfect revelation for advancing in knowledge (Ps 19:7-10; II Tim 3:16-17).
15. But we need teachers to know it, from principles to advanced truth (II Tim 3:15; Heb 5:11-14; 6:1-3).
16. Men in their great ignorance should humbly beg and cry, like Solomon, for infinite Wisdom to teach.

ITS BENEFITS

1. Our great God has perfect understanding of all things to share with His adopted children.
 1. He has it all from business to marriage to politics to true religion to maximizing life.
 2. He has 10,000 blessings hidden behind doors that we can only obtain using His keys.
 3. The wisdom of the Law of Moses made Israel the envy of the world (Deut 4:5-8).
 4. The wisdom of Proverbs brings emails every day describing benefits and conviction.
2. Humanity, by God's will, arrives absolutely and totally ignorant, including sanitation.
 1. We are born like a wild ass's colt, but we know even less than such a colt after birth.
 2. But it is worse than that, each person arrives depraved – loving lies and hating truth.
 3. Depravity includes ignorance, self-deceit, pride, resentment of correction (Jer 17:9).
3. Progress in any part of life requires change. Change requires criticism and reformation.
 1. Success needs growth; growth needs change; change needs correction and teaching.

2. Change means you are doing it the wrong way; someone must tell you the right way.
3. A teachable spirit is necessary to grow and prosper in any life role or opportunity.
4. The goal or object of teaching in the Bible is truth and wisdom and their related terms.
 1. Wisdom, given by teaching, beats silver, gold, rubies (Pr 3:13-18; 4:1-13; 8:10-11).
 2. Lady Wisdom, after listing benefits for men and nations, stressed life (Pr 8:35-36).
 3. It can save from terrible results of sin in life (Pr 1:20-33; 2:10-22; 5:11-14; 15:31).
5. Refer to the introduction above, where many verses of David and Solomon are listed.

ITS IDENTITY

1. Refer to the top text above for Solomon's example of a teachable spirit (I Kgs 3:5-10).
 1. If Solomon, favorite of his father, Israel's great king, prayed for wisdom, we should.
 2. We should not read the event as if it were Aladdin and his lamp but for teachability.
2. Refer to the introduction above, where many verses of David and Solomon are listed.
 1. If David, the favorite of God and Israel prayed like that, how much more should we?
 2. If Solomon, the wisest man ever, exalted teachability so, then you should crave it.
3. What is it? The desire to hear correction and instruction, embrace them, and do them.
4. The regathered Jews requested Ezra to preach and responded to it in spectacular fashion.
 1. They wept, made mirth, desired more, repented, and reformed (Ne 8:9,12,13,14-18).
 2. This is the greatest recorded preaching service by spirit before and after preaching.
 3. The Sermon on the Mount also ended well but without such detail (Matt 7:28-29).
 4. No amount of preacher praise can match book burning at Ephesus (Acts 19:17-20).
5. David showed his teachable spirit in action when he submitted to Nathan and Abigail.
 1. When confronted by Nathan, David confessed his great sin instantly (II Sam 12:13).
 2. If you need or want the long version of David's humble contrition (Psalm 51:1-19).
 3. But David also humbled himself to a farmer's wife when in a rage (I Sam 25:4-25).
 4. Corinth cleared themselves in all things in Paul's inspired judgment (II Cor 7:8-11).
 5. Teachability has results – change, growth, improvement, prosperity, success, etc.
6. The Ethiopian eunuch admitted his ignorance, begged help, and listened (Acts 8:26-40).
 1. He was a man of great authority in a chariot, and Philip was a pitiful Jew in contrast.
 2. He had the humility to admit helplessness and the transparency to admit confusion.
 3. God surely prepared this man, like Cornelius and Lydia, by opening hearts. Is yours?
 4. He was willing to receive whatever the man of God said and raised baptism himself.
7. Cornelius had the perfect attitude to hear Peter, as we should hear sermons (Acts 10:33).
 1. This man with considerable qualifications and authority from Rome sent for a Jew.
 2. There is good reason to believe Peter's uneducated background was easily perceived.
 3. Not only does he make a glorious confession here, but he fell down to worship Peter.

4. Samuel while young already had a teachable spirit, *Speak; for thy servant heareth.*
5. Saul of Tarsus, a young man, answered Christ's call, *What wilt thou have me to do?*
8. The Bereans were called noble first and foremost for willing reception (Acts 17:11-12).
 1. They did not have a critical spirit and reluctant learning – they had very ready minds.
 2. Their further effort was to confirm, not criticize, and it resulted in their conversion.
9. The Gentiles were very teachable in stark contrast to the Jews (Acts 13:42-52; 28:28).

ITS ENEMIES

1. What are they? A thing or person that dulls or hinders you craving reproof or teaching.
2. Depravity being what it is precludes a man from discerning his own folly (Jer 17:9-10).
 1. Fools are not teachable (Pr 27:11), due to too stupid, stubborn, rebellious (Pr 26:16).
 2. Youthful folly, bound in the heart, thinks it knows more than its parents (Pr 30:17).
 3. Scorners are even worse (Pr 9:7-8), due to too arrogant and self-righteous (Pr 26:12).
 4. A servant that understands his faults and their correction will only seethe (Pr 29:19).
3. Self-righteousness is the worst sin, for who can teach, correct, or rebuke such a person.
 1. Israel was stiffnecked: stubborn rebels (De 31:27; Je 11:7; 17:23; 25:4; 35:14; 44:4).
 2. Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, so reject your thoughts (Pr 21:2; 16:25).
 3. Fools want to talk so much they cannot recognize their folly (Pr 18:2; Jas 1:19-20).
4. There are many miscellaneous enemies to having a teachable spirit and exercising it.
 1. Fools fear the unknown – a corrected life might not be as much as fun as their habits.
 2. Laziness stops fools, since listening, learning, and applying takes effort and energy.
 3. Pride rises in most men when they are corrected and criticized for their way of things.
 4. Fools fear cost to change – peer pressure, having to explain it, denying friends, etc.
 5. Peer pressure is influence of friends and foes in ones circle that requires status quo.
 6. Humility is needed to accept correction and instruction; most people are not humble.
 7. Contentment with things as they are – especially in America's comfort – stops many.
 8. Loss of first love for God and Christ, which dulls any desire to do better for them.
 9. No ambition or passion for God, due to not being saved or being carnal, dulls them.
 10. Love of this world seduces the soul, steals the time, and moves God to harden you.
 11. The curse of perilous times as Christians turn from truth (II Tim 4:3-4; I Thess 5:20).
 12. Most Christians and churches do not care – *we promise not to throw the book at you.*
 13. There are more classes and seminars than ever, but less learning (II Timothy 3:6-7).
 14. Video games and every kind of interactive entertainment distraction is now possible.
 15. Paul warned Ephesus of carnal sleep and death costing light from Christ (Eph 5:14).
 16. Friends not caring about growing and learning will pull you down (I Cor 15:33-34).
 17. Resentment of authority in a wild generation like America feeds a haughty spirit.

ITS GROWTH

1. What is it? To increase your passion for Bible teaching and zeal to reform and obey it.
2. Prayer is more important than Bible reading, for God can teach you or send teachers.
 1. Humbly admit your ignorance with honesty, denigration, explanation (I Kgs 3:6-9).
 2. Has God offered you wisdom like He did Solomon? He has (Jas 1:5; Luke 11:9-13)!
 3. Ask God to open your eyes and show you wonderful things in the Bible (Ps 119:18).
 4. Beg God for wisdom, cry out for it, and then seek it like hid treasure (Prov 2:1-9).
 5. Check David's other prayer requests in the introduction to this outline and pray them.
 6. He prayed for God to incline his heart and make him go His way (Ps 119:27,35-36).
 7. Believe God can and will teach you no matter your station in life (Matt 11:25-27).
 8. Be ready even in the night to be taught by God (Job 33:14-17; Ps 16:7; 17:3; Is 26:9).
3. Start by asking parents, especially if under 30 (Pr 1:8-9; 4:1-3; 5:1-2; 6:20-21; 31:1-3).
 1. God chose your parents; He rejected 4 billion other parents available this generation.
 2. Obeying and honoring parents is the easiest and best way to life success (Ep 6:1-3).
 3. Converted parents, like for nearly all the children in this church, are vastly superior.
 4. Parents can only help you if you open up, reveal your fears and hopes, and ask them.
4. Love church assemblies; prepare, pray, and participate passionately (Ps 27:4; 73:17).
 1. Like parents, God chose your pastor and moves him by His Spirit for your profit.
 2. Do not resent negative preaching – you need it the most (II Cor 10:4-6; I Kgs 22:8).
 3. Do not despise Bible preaching like most Christians (I Thess 5:20; II Tim 4:3-4).
 4. It involves hearing, retaining, applying (Pr 8:5-6,32-34 compared to Jas 1:21-25).
 5. Reject bad teachers (preachers) that lack wise instruction (Pr 14:7; Rom 16:17-18).
 6. Find good teachers (preachers) and lay hold of their doctrine (Heb 13:7-9; Pr 18:1).
 7. The Bible is mainly for the man of God; it teaches five human offices of instruction.
5. Bible reading is to learn new things from God (Ps 119:18; Heb 5:12-14; II Pet 1:19-21).
 1. When you read, do you beg God to give you His wisdom and annihilate your own?
 2. Do you read every word as if it truly were the words of the living God (I Thess 2:13).
 3. The divine library is a great gift – enter reverently, eagerly (Ps 19:7-11; I Pet 2:1-3).
 4. If you do not take time to pray, read, and pray at home, you lack desire for learning.
6. Hold nothing sacred – persons, things, doctrines – above God's wisdom; be willing to flush or burn anything (Pr 29:25; I Kgs 15:13; Gal 2:12; II Kgs 18:4; John 12:42-43).
 1. Be willing to burn or flush anything God corrects e.g. Lucifer, child baptism, etc.
 2. If you are unwilling to give up anything or anyone, He says you do not deserve truth.
7. Reject any proud self-deception thinking you are wise (I Cor 1:19-20,26-29; 3:18-20).
 1. Love correction, reproof, rebuke, or warnings rather than resent them (Prov 27:5-6).
 2. Be willing to ask for help like the eunuch did. No sincere question will be rejected.

3. Be humble to take correction – you are wrong; someone else is right – so listen well.
4. Paul exposed 12 followers of Apollos and rebaptized them quickly (Acts 19:1-7).
8. Be willing to do things differently than previous teaching or years of habits or tradition.
 1. Progress requires change, and doing things the same old way means no progress.
 2. Grasp this fact about change, then love it, then seek it by changing something today.
 3. Discomfort with a new way of serving God reflects one more aspect of depravity.
9. If a person repents and desires teaching, God will send teachers (I Samuel 7:3-6; 12:23).
10. Solomon's prayer pleased the Lord, and the king got much more than he had asked for.

Conclusion:

1. Recognizing the direct and indirect benefits and rewards of teachability and the truth should be enough.
2. God seeks worshippers that worship in spirit and truth (John 4:20-24), our goal, but it must be taught.
3. God warned through Solomon of His just judgment against those neglecting His word (Proverbs 28:9).
4. Faithful and wise teachers allocate scarce resources away from fools and scorners to wise receivers.
5. As a church, let us diligently examine ourselves and keep ourselves open to all instruction God gives.
6. We cannot ask for truth and wisdom too much; we cannot thank Him too much for truth and wisdom.

For Further Study:

1. *Noble Hearers*
2. *Great Preaching Service*
3. *The Worst Sin*
4. *Author of Confusion*
5. *Truth Is Not a Right*
6. *Do We Need Teachers?*
7. *Proverb Commentaries*
8. *Men Growing Up*
9. *Grow Up*
10. *Textbook of Textbooks*