

The Importance of Teaching

by Daniel Punnose

This sermon emphasizes the importance of not just hearing or understanding God's Word, but actively applying it in our lives. It warns against false teachers motivated by money and materialism, urging believers to prioritize love for God and others over worldly gain. The message stresses the need for sound doctrine, careful teaching, and practical application of Scripture to bring about life change and godly character development.

Duration: 25:51

Scripture: James 1:22, John 14:15, Titus 1:7, Matthew 6:33, Revelation 2:4, Psalms 119:9, Psalms 119:11, Psalms 119:105

Topics: "Application of God's Word", "Discernment in Teaching"

Description

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Transcript

An excellent teacher not only focuses on the information of the subject, but is also concerned about the application, that the students actually practice what is being taught. Someone has once said, education and learning is not complete until action takes place. It's a good point to think about, especially when we read and study God's Word, that we have not learned it simply because we read it and understood it, or heard a message and was enjoying the message.

But until action takes place, experience becomes part of our life, we have not practically learned it. It's quite fascinating how people who are not married, single people that don't have any children, they will often look at parents who have children and when their children misbehave or make noise, especially in the airplane or the bus, they will get annoyed and they will come up with what they think is the right solution if only those people did this, or I read this in this book, or this magazine column said this about raising children. They have no idea until they have children on their own what it actually means to raise children.

It's easy to say, but it's more difficult to do. And what God's Word wants from us, and what God wants from us, is that we don't simply be satisfied with understanding, reading, or listening, but rather that we are with

the heart of practicing and putting into practical steps what God is speaking to us through His Word. In the letter of James we read, it says, let us be doers of the Word, not just hearers, otherwise we deceive ourselves.

See, the danger is if we come to the place where we are consistently practicing, reading, and listening, but not putting into action, we will train ourself, in a sense, in close disobedience. To become a person who is satisfied with the information and the happy feelings, but never takes a further step to actually see life change takes place, character change, and development in godliness, will find themselves 15 or 20 years down the road exactly in the same place of simply being satisfied with the information, but yet never seeing their life changed. Jesus, in speaking, said those who have ears, let them hear.

Not talking about literal ears, but He's saying if you understand, then do something about it. Jesus, talking to those who are following Him, said, you call me Lord, Lord, and yet you do not do the things I tell you. When you think of the word Lord, which we read very often in scripture, Lord is a title.

It's not necessarily a title only reserved for Jesus, even though often Jesus is referred to as Lord Jesus Christ. We read about Abraham being called Lord and other people being called Lord. Lord as a title means master.

It's a relationship word. If I say Lord to someone, then that means I am claiming to be a servant. If I say teacher to someone, I am saying that I am a student.

If I say pastor or minister or father, I am saying that I am part of the congregation which they lead. It is a relationship title to say Lord. But Jesus said, why do you call me Lord, Lord, master, master, and yet do not do the things I tell you to do? The most important thing is not how fast we read through God's word, how many chapters in the Bible we can go through, or how many times we have read the Bible.

All of that is important. But what is more important is to take what we read and understand and actually put it into practice in our life, asking God to help us by His Holy Spirit so that this Christian life that we are to live is not a life lived in our own strength and our own wisdom, but it is empowered by God for His glory. We read in the letter of Titus, Paul writing this small letter, almost like a postcard to Titus, telling him that he has left him in Crete to set in order the things that still remain.

First of all, appointing elders and putting them in different places to watch over the believers and keep things of God in order. And the qualification of the elders he listed, being kind and patient, not quick to be angry, hospitable, blameless, good reputation, all these different things are listed there for those who would be in God's service. And these qualifications are excellent qualities to ask God to have in our own life and to pray that God would do this for us.

Paul also tells Titus, listen, you also need to be careful of these false teachers who are teaching the believers things that are not according to Scripture or the truth. These Jewish false teachers were coming into the group and they were adding to what God has already said. And Titus is warned to watch carefully because these are rebellious and deceiving men.

Their purpose is to derail people and to hurt them almost like con artists for the sake of dishonest gain. The warning for us is this. We as servants of God should never consider money, materialism, position or power as the motivating factor for why we serve God.

We are to serve God because he has called us into the ministry, because we were led into the ministry by him. Jesus, talking to his disciples whom he called, said, do not worry about this life, what you will wear or what you will eat or where you will stay, basically saying, don't worry about materialism or our own needs. He says the Father knows what we need.

He knows every hair on our head. He knows when the sparrow falls. Jesus speaking the Sermon on the Mount tells us that when we pray, know that our Father already knows what we need before we pray.

Therefore, pray like this, our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive those who trespass against us. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever, amen. In that prayer we see that first of all we are glorifying and acknowledging God's sovereignty. We are also asking for his will to be done in our life as it is done perfectly in heaven.

Heaven is heaven because God's will is done perfectly. The battle that we will always have is our will versus God's will. And when we decide that we want to be disciples of Christ, it says we must deny ourself, pick up our cross and follow him, laying down our own will.

And then the prayer continues asking God to give us our daily bread. Lord, don't give me more than I need and don't give me too less than I'll be in want, but give me my daily bread. Give me just what I need for today.

Jesus telling the disciples not to worry because God knows all things, the hairs on the head, the sparrow that falls, the flowers in the field are taken care of. And Jesus says, if this is how God takes care of flowers, birds and grass, how much more he will take care of you. He says, therefore, seek first the kingdom and all these things will be given unto you.

The promise is if we follow the Lord wholeheartedly, God will take care of all of our needs. And you must think not just financial needs, but what about marriage, your parents, what your daily needs are, your encouragement, where you will stay, your clothes, all these things will be taken care of. It's unfortunate that today we have teaching that tells us if you just come to Jesus as your Lord and Savior, everything is for you.

You can say you want this and want that and want this and want that and God will give it to you, almost like a Santa Claus or a Christmas father. We have a long list of grocery items that we simply give to God and he has to give it to us, like God is at our mercy. Until we understand that God is holy and he is to be revered.

He does love us, but the Bible also says he's a consuming fire. We must approach God with an amazing openness and freedom, knowing that we can boldly come to the throne of grace at the same time, recognizing that even the angels cover their faces and worship God, saying holy, holy, holy. There must be a balance.

And as we approach God in that way, realizing that he is almighty and reverent, we will seek first the kingdom, knowing that he is going to take care of us and we don't have to worry about our life or worry about the normal things that everyone else is running around for, usually money, materialism, and entertainment. Those three things are usually what defines and drives people's lives. And what a

miserable life.

And so Paul is warning Titus about these false teachers that they are actually doing this ministry and false teaching for getting money. Anyone who claims to be a follower of Christ, especially a servant of God, and is after money disqualifies himself. Too many young people will be called by God to do something specific, and very often ministry is difficult.

And when someone else over here offers more money, they will jump from what God has called them to do to what the money is being offered to do. So who called them? God or money? Now, it's no problem if there is money involved with being supported by doing what you are called to do, but that should never be the motivating factor. I've seen godly young men and young women and godly older men and older women who have chosen to take an even lesser salary because they knew God was leading them to do something specific, which would actually mean living at even a simpler means.

Their motivation? God's leading, not money. Anytime you find some preacher or some prophet who is prophesying or teaching or preaching, simply for the sake of money, be very, very careful of that person. Why? Because if the motivation is money and materialism, they will not say the truth completely.

They will say what you want to hear or what they think you want to hear so that you will give them what they want. It's a manipulative way of doing things. The challenge for us who are pastors and clergy and fathers, deacons and elders, and in some sort of spiritual role where we are teaching or helping others, let us check our motivation to make sure that materialism is not the motivating factor behind what we do.

Jesus, writing to the churches in Revelation, tells one of the churches, I appreciate you for all the work that you do. You're careful to continue doing everything so correctly. But this one thing I have against you, you have forgotten your first love.

The motivating factor for why you do what you do is off. Jesus, in John's Gospel, chapter 14, says, If you love me, you will obey me. Love is the motivating factor why we obey Jesus.

And then he continues in chapter 15, If you obey me, you abide in me. And if you abide in me, your life bears fruit. Just like a branch that is in the vine or in the tree, it does not have to struggle.

As long as we stay connected to the main source of nutrients, we will be fine. And then it says it's the Father's will that our life not simply bear fruit, but much fruit and lasting good fruit. How do we do this? By loving God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and loving our neighbor as ourself.

Never let materialism, money, power, or position become the motivating factor why we serve God or we do good in the name of the Lord. It should be simply because we love Jesus with all of our heart that we bless, serve, and love others. When Jesus washed the feet of the disciples, he asked them, Have you understood what I have done for you? And they said, Yes.

And he said, Then do this. Because Jesus loved us, we are to love others, bless others, serve others, not expecting anything back in return. My brother, my sister, this is a challenge that Paul is giving to Titus, warning him about these false teachers and warning him to be very careful with these false teachers and to not accommodate them.

Paul now switches over to a little bit of a different subject. In chapter 2 of Titus, he begins to give some instructions to the older men, the older women, and the slaves or employees, employers in talking about

how we are to live our life in such a way that brings honor and glory to God. And in verse 1 it says, You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine.

So the first thing that he is telling Titus here about teaching is that we must be careful of what we say. Paul warns Timothy, another young man in the faith, that he must watch his life and doctrine because then he will save himself and those who follow. Think about this.

If I teach wrongly to my congregation or my Sunday school class, I am not just hurting one person, I am hurting a group of 50 people or 300 people or 1,000 people. God will hold me accountable for each one of their lives when I teach wrongly. And so Paul is warning Titus, you must be careful to teach sound doctrine.

He is not saying go through the doctrines of Scripture and teach the doctrines, which some people get so crazy over fighting about doctrinal issues, but he is saying when you teach, teach correctly. Paul tells Timothy also that a servant of God should be able to handle God's Word properly. For those of us who have the responsibility of teaching, we must be faithful to spend time with God, filling our life with His thoughts, but also we must take time to study God's Word and to be clear about what it says.

My encouragement for you is if you have never done inductive Bible study, enroll in a course in inductive Bible study. It's simply how to look at Scripture and understand and interpret it and apply it to your life. It does not qualify you to teach it, but it helps you to look and it forces you to find application and to be very careful of the context.

If you want to teach carefully, three suggestions. One, read the passage of Scripture over and over and over and over again, until you are very clear with what it's saying and the context around it. Read the verses before and afterwards.

Just like any book or any letter or any email that you read, there is a context. You cannot simply take a novel or a mystery like Sherlock Holmes and turn to one page that you like, pull out one paragraph, and then begin to give all kinds of explanation based on just that one paragraph. You must know the surrounding story and context.

It's common sense literature and grammar. We all know this in school. Read the passage over and over and over again.

Second, look for the simplest meaning. Don't try to come up with some complicated meaning. Keep the Scripture simple.

God's Word will do its work in the people's lives. We don't have to try to make something happen. The Holy Spirit will take what is being taught and it will work in their life.

When you are teaching, speak slowly. If God has given you something to say, then speak it clearly and slowly. Don't rush ahead.

Too many times, people who teach God's Word go so fast that they are adding words and adding things in between because they are running out of what to say. We must help people to think through what God's Word says. Read it carefully.

Look for the simple meaning and communicate that meaning in a very simple way. Use stories and illustrations to highlight and explain God's Word. Thirdly, lastly, give practical application.

I'm not simply talking about ideas like faith is a good idea, being godly is a good idea, but tell people practically how to do this. We actually read this in Nehemiah 8.8 where they read from the Book of the Law and it says they read carefully, gave the sense or the meaning and helped the people to understand. They read carefully, they helped the people to understand by simple meaning, and they gave the ways that they could practice application.

Inductive Bible study is simply that. Observing carefully, interpreting simply and applying to our lives. My brothers, my sisters, if we have the opportunity to teach the Bible to our children, to a Sunday school class, to a Bible study group, to our friends at a church, whatever the opportunity that God has given to us, take the opportunity with great fear and reverence and take God's Word and speak it slowly and help people to understand and show them how God is using this in your own life and can help them and always leave them with hope.

Paul tells Titus, listen, teach the doctrines of Scripture carefully. Why is he saying this? Because God's Word is so powerful and it can change our lives. These false teachers, their motivation is not godliness, their motivation is money.

Be careful as you continue to teach God's Word and study it that you never make God's Word a tool for making money or gaining materialism. The challenge is for all of us to be faithful students of God's Word so that God's Word is filling our life and heart. Psalm 119 verse 9 says, How can a young man keep his way straight or a young woman keep their way straight by living according to God's Word? Not reading, not memorizing, not simply hearing, not simply watching on TV but taking it and putting it to life and living it in simple obedience.

Verse 11 of the same Psalm, it says, I hide your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. In the same Psalm 105 it says, Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. God's Word is so powerful and it can be very powerful when it's taught.

It is not meant to be a preaching book but a book that tells us how to live our life and what the purpose of our life is and what God thinks of us and what God has for us in the future. Let's pray and ask the Lord to help us to watch our life carefully that we would stay away from false teachers embrace the truths of Scripture putting it into our life so that God can use it to lead us and guide us. Father, we thank you for your grace.

We thank you for your mercy. We ask Lord that you would help us as we read your Word, we hide it in our hearts that it would become the motivating factor for everything that we do and everything that we say and everything that we are. Father, we ask that it would be love that is what we have in our hearts in obedience to you.

I pray for your blessings upon each of my brothers and sisters watch over them their families, their children in Jesus name, Amen. My brother, my sister, remember this, the Bible has the answers for life and God's promises always comes true. May the Lord bless you as you experience His grace and love in your life today.

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