**TEACHERS (#5)**

***Habits of Good Bible Teachers***

I’ve done it many times, and I am guessing you have done it too. I study about and then dream about becoming like some of the great characters of the Bible. If I could wave a magic wand and turn you into any Biblical man or woman, who would you choose to become? If you are a man you might daydream of being like Noah, Abraham, Moses, David or Elijah from the Old Testament, or Peter, John, Paul or Barnabas from the New Testament. If you are a woman you might hope to be a Sarah, Ruth, Abigail or Esther from the Old, or a Mary, Elizabeth, Dorcas or Priscilla from the New. We all want to be someone that God has approved of and smiles upon.

I have a secret Make-A-Wish Bible character that I would like to meet and then to be like. Apollos.

I am a Bible teacher and therefore I have a desire to be a ***good*** Bible teacher. To do that I must develop certain habits that I practice day-in and day-out to become proficient in my trade. Just like any tradesman, whether a carpenter, plumber, salesman, accountant, homemaker or financial advisor, you must have daily habits that drive you toward excellence. While I can’t possibly know the full biography of Apollos, I can assume with a high probability of accuracy that he had a strong work ethic and a consistency to his daily habits. Luke described Apollos in Acts 18:24-28.

24 Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. 25 This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. 26 So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. 27 And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace; 28 for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.

How do you think Apollos came to be known as an “*eloquent*” man, and one who was “*mighty in the scriptures*?” Eloquence does not just mean you are a wordsmith who can hypnotize an audience with a passionate speech, but instead in this context it carries the idea of one who could “*speak boldly*” in a public setting (vs. 26), and who could “*greatly help those who believe through grace*” (vs. 27), and could “*vigorously refute the Jews publicly”* (vs. 28). His eloquence came from a solid command of the subject at hand, which is seen in his being “*mighty in the Scriptures.*” He had been converted by being “*instructed in the way of the Lord*” (vs. 25), and then humbly allowing a husband and wife team to “*explain the way of God more accurately*” to him when he was wrong. This allowed him to “*show from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ*” (vs. 28). What’s not to admire about Apollos? He was both gifted and humble. Those qualities made him a powerful gospel teacher.

Hidden in that great text about Apollos are habits that had to be a part of his life in order to become such a great teacher. Why do I say that? Because every quality teacher I have ever known had to have developed certain habits to reach their level of excellence. Here are what I believe to be the four essential habits of good teachers:

**1. The Habit of Preparation.**Good teachers don’t “wing” it, relying on past knowledge to prepare for a lesson. They make every class or sermon fresh and relevant to that particular audience. While many of the lessons that Jesus or Paul taught had similar points, they always directed their thoughts to the needs of that group of people, whether Jews or Greeks or barbarians. To do that takes careful preparation.

**2. The Habit of Prayer**Study Paul’s epistles and you will see one common thread through them all – his intense prayers for those he was teaching. Daily, fervent prayers were offered “*without ceasing*” for everyone he sought to persuade to Christ. Without petitioning God’s help both before and after the presentation leaves the lesson lacking and impotent.

**3. The Habit of Study***Preparation* meant thinking through WHO you are going to speak to and why. *Study* means thinking through WHAT you are going to present. In 2 Tim. 2:15 “*give diligence*” is translated “*study*” in the old King James when it tells us to “*show yourself approved unto God, a workman that does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*.” Good teachers commit to a lifetime habit of daily research and meditation of the Scriptures. They “*search the Scriptures daily*” (Ac. 17:11). They become, like Apollos, “*mighty in the Scriptures*” by being able to “*give an answer to everyone who asks a reason of the hope… with meekness and fear*” (I Pet. 3:15).

**4. The Habit of Love**My Social Security number is 123-45-6789. My Visa number is 9876-5432-1000. To the government or financial institutions all I am is a number, not a name. To God, and to those who love the souls God has created in His image, I am a name, not a number. You can just feel it in those words about Apollos that he was passionate to save lost souls. That love came through in his presentations, whether public or private. He loved every person with *AGAPE’* (I Cor. 13:4-7) and *PHILEO* (2 Pet. 1:7) love. Like Paul, he would have also said, “*My hearts desire and prayer for \_\_\_\_ is that they may be saved*” (Rom. 10:1). Without the habit of love I may “*have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge*” and “*have all faith so that I could remove mountains*” – but in the end “*I am nothing*!” (I Cor. 13:2).

At this stage in my life I know for certain I will never be an Apollos. That was a dream in my youth that has vanished with age. But what does remain is what every Bible teacher should aspire to – I want to be an effective communicator of God’s Word! To do that I can yet work on the habits of Preparation, Prayer, Study and Love. “…*and the greatest of these is love*,” for, as the old saying goes, “they don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.” Let all of us who have the privilege to teach the Bible give ourselves to both knowing and caring.

My hearts desire and prayer for you is that you may be saved. – Rick