

All to Be Teachers

#0281

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—July 12, 1974

This last week, I've been happy to have had special emphasis given to education. Quite a number have come in for the workshop and elementary teaching methods. More and more parents want to learn how to teach their children, and others who are not parents are interested in learning these methods from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy.

When Christ was here 2,000 years ago, although He had not been trained in the conventional schools, He was recognized by one of the greatest leaders in the Jewish nation as a teacher come from God. Nicodemus said that and it's recorded by John in the third chapter of his Gospel.

Jesus longed to teach not merely a few disciples, but everybody. In one of the greatest sermons He ever preached, the sixth chapter of John's gospel, He quoted the Old Testament prophecy:

"...they shall be all taught of God..." John 6:45.

He not only longed to teach everybody, He longed for everybody He taught to, in turn, become a teacher. In Matthew 28:19, we hear Him saying to all His followers as He left this earth and went back to Heaven:

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations..." Matthew 28:19.

The picture we get of Jesus' plan is that all are to be taught, and all, in turn, are to become teachers. This thought is beautifully expressed in the book *Ministry of Healing*:

"...both a learner and a teacher as long as life shall last"
Ministry of Healing, page 402.

We see that life is not broken up into two periods—one in which we're learning all the time and finally reach a certain point, and then we *teach* all the time after that. In Heaven's plan of education, we are to be both learners and teachers as long as life shall last. What a joy to be learning every day and teaching; that is sharing with others what we've learned.

There's something more in this sentence—I read just the last part of it. Notice:

"Whatever his calling, he is to be both a learner and a teacher as long as life shall last" *Ibid*.

You've just been listening to a physician who is not merely a medical practitioner, he's a what? A teacher. Do you all agree with me? Was he doing some teaching here tonight? Did any of you learn anything? I did. Yes.

You're listening now to a minister. Is he to be a teacher too? That's right. We have a number of people here tonight that are called teachers—in the elementary classroom, and on other levels. But this says whatever our calling we're to be both learners and teachers as long as life shall last.

What about the cook; is the cook to be a teacher? Oh, yes. Are fathers and mothers teachers? Yes. Thank God, He's putting His Spirit upon many parents who are longing to be better teachers.

But whatever our calling—farmers, electricians, bookkeepers, musicians, colporteurs, in the home, in the school, in our work departments, out meeting people in the homes, whatever our calling—we're to be learners and teachers as long as life shall last.

Is a nurse is to be a teacher? Oh, yes. Everything in our medical work, everything in our homes, everything in the work of the homes of the people, everything that God has called men to do, He wants them to be learners and teachers.

What do we teach? We teach what we know. Jesus said that to Nicodemus: "We speak what we know."

May I suggest to you these three things? A teacher then is one who *knows* the way, one who *shows* the way, and one who *goes* the way. His example must agree with his precept, otherwise, he's not a true teacher. So he *knows* the way, he *shows* the way, he *goes* the way. Leave out any one of that triad, then he is not a true teacher.

To teach we must know, but it's not enough to know. To teach we must show, but it's not enough to show. We must know and show and go the way of truth, the way of righteousness.

What do we teach? We teach skills because life is made up of doing things. We teach knowledge and information. But most of all, we're seeking to develop characters.

In Christian education, it is not enough to ask, "What does this student know?" It is not enough if we add to that, "What can he do?" The basic question is: "What is he?" Not merely what does he know? "What is his character?"

In all this work of learning and teaching, there must be motivation. Whatever we do, we have some reason for doing it. Someone has said that the greatest treason is to do the right thing for the wrong reason. And in Christian education, we are concerned more with why a student does something, and why a teacher does something than what it is they do. Paul gives us the great motive of Christian life:

“For the love of Christ constraineth us” 2 Corinthians 5:14.

Love then is the great motive which impels, propels, compels, urging us on with irresistible force. If we love, this leads us to work and to teach others how to work. If we love, this leads us to learn facts and teach others those facts. And most of all, if we love, we seek to become acquainted with God and share this secret with others.

In all these areas, God is arranging not only the opportunity for information but for experiment. This is the special thought that I want to leave with you.

For Christian education, whether we think of it in the classroom or in the home, in the shop or in the field, Christian education is learned in the laboratory. No mere study of books, even though they be inspired books, can take the place of laboratory experiments. The Bible itself points this out. And again and again, both in the stories that show how God teaches men and in the epistles in which the prophets and apostles gave us instruction, in all these ways, God tells us that it takes the experiences of life to really teach us these lessons and develop these characters.

For example, James tells us in the first chapter of his epistle:

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations...” James 1:2.

The word ‘temptation’ there is not limited to being invited to do something wrong. It’s temptation in the thought of tests, experiences of every kind that try us, test us. Why does James say we should count it a joy when we fall into these different experiences?

“...knowing this, that the trying of your faith works patience” James 1:3.

Does it work patience in you? Some people seem to think it works impatience. Well, all the experiments in the laboratory don’t work out the way the book says. Am I correct?

What do you do in the laboratory, whether it’s in the chemistry laboratory or the kitchen laboratory at home when you try a recipe and it doesn’t work? Try it again. If it doesn’t work at that time, what do you do? You read the recipe again more carefully and seek to apply it more carefully.

So remember, God intends that all these trying experiences of life, whether we meet them in the classroom or in the home, in the factory, or wherever we labor, God intends that these experiences shall be developing in us characters.

I want to share with you three interesting pages from *Volume 4*:

“You could never be aware of your deficiencies unless you were brought where these deficiencies were developed by circumstances” *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 4*,

Do any of us have deficiencies? How do we learn what they are and correct them? We do not learn it just by studying books, my friend, on any level—elementary, high school, college, university, or anywhere else, or sitting at home. We find out our deficiencies by getting into the laboratory of life.

And this tells me that God, the wonderful Teacher, is planning my life deliberately to bring me into circumstances that show up my deficiencies.

But I don't like that. I want to be in circumstances that show not my deficiencies, but my *proficiencies*. I want opportunities to show what I can do successfully. That's very human. God, in His love, brings me again and again into situations and circumstances and providence where my deficiencies show up. This is part of the experimental education that God longs to lead everyone who will be led.

Another statement, this one the same volume, page 346:

“God permitted your surroundings to exist to develop character. But you could have made your surroundings; for by resisting or enduring temptation, circumstances are controlled by the might of the will in the name of Jesus. This is overcoming as Christ overcame” *Ibid.*, page 346

And now the third one, *Ministry of Healing*:

“Men can shape circumstances, but circumstances should not be allowed to shape the man. We should seize upon circumstances as instruments by which to work” *Ministry of Healing*, page 500.

So as we're closing this special week of attention to learning and teaching, I challenge each of you to be both a learner and a teacher as long as life shall last. And I invite you to face the glorious fact that the greatest part of education is experiment.

Not blind experiment, trial and error, but studying the inspired revelations that have come from the throne of God in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, and then trying out those principles in the daily life: meeting the tests and the trials, the opportunities and the disappointments in the spirit of the Master.

Thus we shall be prepared to be teachers, not merely here in this earth life, but through eternal ages. For did you know, my friend, that God is getting you ready to teach the people on other worlds. Had you thought of that mission? There are men and women and youth that God is planning to take with Him on a tour of the universe. He wants you to learn here in this world that which will be of tremendous interest and of infinite benefit to the other inhabitants of the universe.

The angels someday will listen while you teach some lessons. People far off, way out there in the universe, are waiting anxiously for you and me to finish our teacher-training course so they can sit at our feet.

Some of you know what I'm talking about. If there's anybody here that doesn't understand what I've just said, if you ask me, I'll give you some more proof.

I close with this thought, friends. Do not think because we have such a marvelous future that our preparation will necessarily be on some big stage in this world. When the disciples came to Jesus and asked Him who was the greatest in Heaven's work on earth, Jesus called a little child. And He said to those men that He was training to be preachers and teachers and medical missionaries, He said, "Listen, the greatest one in the kingdom is the one who humbles himself as this little child. And unless you are converted and become as little children, you will not even enter into the kingdom of Heaven."

I hope all of you have had stirred in your hearts the desire to be a teacher after Heaven's order. And I suggest to you that one of the best ways that you can develop teaching in Jesus' way is working with children. If you're parents, thank God for all the help you can get from Sabbath School teachers, and elementary school teacher. But listen: do not let all that help keep you from the joy, the challenge of training your own child after the manner of God.

You who do not have children of your own, if you will open your eyes and open your heart, in the Sabbath School work, in the Vacation Bible School work, in the branch-Sabbath School work, and in many other opportunities, Heaven may be calling you to learn with children the lessons that Jesus sought to teach His disciples in the long ago.

Dear Lord, I do not ask that Thou shouldst give
Some high work of Thine, some noble calling
or some wondrous task.
Give me a little hand to hold in mine,
Give me a little child to point the way
Over the strange, sweet path that leads to Thee.
Give me a little voice to teach to pray,
Give me two shining eyes Thy face to see;
The only crown I ask, Dear Lord to wear, is this:
That I may teach a little child.
I do not ask that I may ever stand
Among the wise, the worthy, or the great;
I only ask that softly, hand in hand,
A child and I may enter at the gate.

May we kneel in prayer?

Our Father, we thank Thee that You sent Your dear Son, your only Son down to this world to be our Teacher, that we might know what Heaven wants us to know. We thank Thee that He showed us how to learn as a child, and that He showed us how to teach.

Grant that we, like the fishermen of Galilee, may leave our nets and follow Thee that we may be made what Thou art. Grant that we, like Paul, that learned theologian and highly trained teacher, may come and put aside everything that would hinder, and count everything but loss that we may have the knowledge of Christ.

We pray that You'll bless every teacher, every parent. And Lord, make us all teachers as we've studied this evening hour. Grant that we may see in our homes and in our neighborhoods opportunities to share with others in a persuasive way, a convincing way, the precious things Thou has taught us concerning health, concerning salvation, and concerning practical life. We ask it in Jesus' name, amen.

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W. D. Frazee Sermons
435 Lifestyle Lane, Wildwood, GA 30757
1-800-WDF-1840 / 706-820-9755
www.WDFsermons.org
support@WDFsermons.org