

Sound Doctrine  
Through  
Revelation Knowledge



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# 1

## Revelation Knowledge vs. Reasoned Knowledge and the Implications for Bible Colleges

Some opinions you hold for years, without ever questioning the foundation for your beliefs. That was certainly true of my view of how to develop sound doctrine. It was absolutely clear to me that I was to use my mind to think about the Scriptures, reading them, studying them, memorizing them, and collating them into systems of truth that made sense to me. The result of this cognitive analysis would undoubtedly be sound doctrine.

This process is so common and accepted that for many years I never stopped to question it. There didn't seem to be any possibility that it wasn't the right methodology. However, I am now convinced that it is a deceptive course, for it results in man's knowledge, based on man's ability and man's perspective, which is often formed in man's culture.

The Bible is even clear to speak against this process, warning, "Lean not to your own understanding, [but] in all your ways acknowledge Him..." for His thoughts are higher than your thoughts and His ways higher than your ways (Prov. 3:5 and Is. 55:9).

I knew those verses. I just never applied them or considered their impact on the way I was using my intellect. I mean, either I use my mind, or I don't. With a choice like that, it seemed quite obvious which I was to do. However, those aren't the only two alternatives. It is possible to allow Satan to use my mind, and it is also possible to invite God to use it. Since I had never heard any teaching on how God could use my brain, I was fairly well trapped in rationalism, the god of my culture.

Eventually, I did learn how to let God use my mind. I discovered that He moves as a flowing river within me and that, when my (spiritual) eyes are fixed on Him and my mind is tuned to flow, a stream of thoughts or "anointed reason" takes over, and I can live in revelation knowledge, rather than rational knowledge (Jn. 7:37-39; Heb. 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 2:9-10). (This idea is further developed in our books *Communion With God* and *Wading Deeper into the River of God*.)

## 2 Sound Doctrine Through Revelation Knowledge

I also discovered that the Bible is very adamant that there are **two kinds of knowledge**: man's knowledge and God's knowledge. Man's knowledge comes through man's reasoning; God's knowledge comes through revelation. Man's is considered evil; God's is good. The highlights of this astounding revelation are summarized in this chapter. It may shake you to the core of your being, for it requires a totally different way of living, a way that results in an anointed lifestyle rather than simply a natural life. Rather than depending on self and your own use of your abilities, you will learn to live out of the Holy Spirit, and out of God's use of your faculties.

The painful point that Scripture makes is not that one way is good but the other better. No, man's way is evil, in that it is succumbing to satan's temptation (that I can be like God, knowing good and evil) and the other way is God's divine plan (I live as a branch grafted into a vine).

Following is what I discovered when I went to the Scripture to explore "two kinds of knowledge."

**Thesis:** Knowledge that is received or transmitted through revelation brings one under a blessing, while knowledge that is received or transmitted through reason brings one under a curse.

### The Bible requires:

- Biblical meditation over western study
- Biblical revelation over western reason

### God's Original Design for Man: To Live by Revelation Knowledge

God designed man to be a daily recipient of revelation knowledge. In the Garden of Eden, man walked and talked with God. Adam and Eve received revelation knowledge daily from Almighty God. Jesus again demonstrated this lifestyle of doing nothing from His own initiative, but only what He heard and saw the Father doing (Jn. 5: 19,20,30).

### Satan's Temptation: That Man Descend to Reasoned Knowledge

Satan entered God's perfect plan with a temptation: Man could become like God, and man could know right from wrong. Man would no longer need to receive revelation from God, but he could turn to his own mind and he himself could know – separate and apart from God (Gen. 3:5).

In suggesting to man that he could become like God and he could know, satan was suggesting two things: self consciousness, and reliance upon reason or rationalism as a way of establishing truth.

Mankind accepted this lie and fell from revelation to reasoned knowledge. As a result, he was cursed. Part of that curse was that God cut man off from the Tree of Life (Gen. 3:22), where Jesus was the vine and man was a branch and there was a flow of revelation through man on an ongoing daily basis (Jn. 15).

Moreover, man soon learned that he is not able to fulfill God's purposes for his life by living out of reason or knowledge, because man's thoughts are not God's thoughts nor are man's ways God's ways. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are God's thoughts higher than man's thoughts (Isa. 55: 9). Man is commanded not to depend upon his own judgments (Prov. 3:5)

### Serving God using reasoned knowledge results in catastrophe

No matter how hard man tried to cooperate with the visions that God gave to him, it only brought a curse rather than a blessing.

**Abram** and Sarai thought and reasoned together about how they could bring forth the completion of the vision that God had given to them of blessing the earth through their seed. However, the result of their thoughts was Ishmael. Ishmael was rejected by God, and brought a curse that has lasted for thousands of years (Gen. 16, 17).

**Moses** knew in his heart that God had called him to deliver his people from Egyptian bondage. Using his own thoughts and efforts, he killed the first Egyptian he saw hurting an Israelite. God rejected this offering of reason and self-effort from Moses, and took him to the backside of the wilderness for forty years, where He taught him to see vision and to hear His voice. Then God brought Moses back out of the wilderness as a Spirit-anointed leader who moved by revelation knowledge and not by reason.

**Peter** used reasoned knowledge and self-effort to defend Jesus by force when the soldiers came to take Him from Gethsemane. Jesus rebuked Peter, telling him to put the sword away and undoing the results of his efforts. Peter subsequently learned how to receive revelation knowledge and the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

**Paul** was a man who received the best-reasoned religious education of his day. It was built squarely around sound theology – about who God is and what God wants from His people. However, this training missed the element of revelation knowledge, and thus missed the fulfillment of the promises of which it taught.

Then God entered into Paul's life with revelation on the Damascus road, and Paul followed this experience with three years of private tutoring by the Holy Spirit, alone in the Arabian Wilderness – most likely at Mount Sinai (Gal. 1:17,18).

Paul then compared the two kinds of knowledge he had received – first with reasoned, theological, biblical understanding, and then with knowledge that came from revelation and intimacy and the

Spirit of God. He said that he counted his first rational education as manure (Phil. 3:1-10) when compared with the value of knowing (*ginosko* - having intimacy and revelation knowledge from) God.

### **The Bible does not endorse reasoned knowledge**

Man's use of reason is never endorsed in Scripture. Reason is only mentioned on two occasions in the Gospels. Each time Jesus rebuked the individuals for their faulty way of thinking.

- The Disciples (Matt. 16:5-12; Mk. 8:15-18)  
“Then they reasoned among themselves... but Jesus said, “...Perceive ye not, neither understand? Have ye your heart yet hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? And having ears, hear ye not?”
- The Pharisees (Mark 2:5-12; Lk. 5:21-24)  
“Why reason ye these things in your hearts?”

They were reasoning incorrectly.

### **People who apply reason to the moves of God generally come against them**

Stephen said, “Which of the prophets did you not kill?” (Acts 7:52). To prove his point, the religious people stoned him on the spot. When I looked at the Toronto-type renewal, my reasoning said, “Everything is to be done decently and in order.” However, when I tuned to my spirit, God said to me, “How do you get drunk decently and in order?” Had I been living only out of reason, I would have rejected the Toronto blessing. Since I was trained to live out of my heart and out of revelation, I have embraced it.

## Two Kinds of Knowledge

### Man's/satan's knowledge

1. Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil
2. From reason – mind
3. Through study
4. Called “Knowledge”
5. From below – producing pride
6. Greek (detached knowledge)
7. Paul's initial religious training (dung)

### God's knowledge

- Tree of Life  
Through revelation – heart  
Through meditation  
Called “True Knowledge”  
From above - producing humility  
Hebrew (*Lamad* training)  
Paul's re-training in the wilderness

### Summary

- Any training that centers on man, the mind, and study will result in man's knowledge.
- Man's thoughts are not God's thoughts; man's ways are not God's ways (Isa. 55:9). Even man's religious thoughts are not God's thoughts and man's religious ways are not God's ways (“Which of the prophets did your fathers not kill?” Acts 7:51,52).
- Training that centers on God, the heart, and divine revelation will result in God's knowledge.

### Supporting Scriptural Foundation for the Comparative List Above

#### POINT 1 - THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE VERSUS THE TREE OF LIFE

Satan tempted Eve to doubt God's words and love toward her and to become like God **herself, knowing good and evil**. He claimed that she could live out of her own mind, rather than out of communion with God. She chose reason over revelation, and began to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thus being cut off from the Tree of Life (i.e. the divine flow of God within her). See Genesis 3.

#### POINT 2 – GOD CHOOSES REVELATION RATHER THAN REASON

“But just as it is written,  
‘THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN  
AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD,  
AND WHICH HAVE NOT ENTERED THE  
HEART OF MAN,  
ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR

THOSE WHO LOVE HIM.’

For to us **God revealed them through the Spirit**; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.” (I Cor. 2:9-10 NASU)

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart  
And **do not lean on your own understanding**.  
In all your ways acknowledge Him,  
And He will make your paths straight.  
Do not be wise in your own eyes;  
Fear the LORD and turn away from evil.”  
(Prov. 3:5-7 NASU)

The **only** command in the Bible to reason is found in Isaiah 1:18. You will note two things about this command: 1) Reason is only encouraged if done together with God. 2) When you reason together with God, He uses imagery, which is a right brain function and not normally considered as part of the reasoning process in the western culture.

“Come now, and let us reason together,  
Says the LORD,

‘Though your sins are like scarlet,  
They shall be as white as snow;  
Though they are red like crimson,  
They shall be as wool.’  
(Isa. 1:18 NKJV)

**POINT 3 – GOD CHOOSES MEDITATION RATHER THAN STUDY**

The Greek in II Timothy 2:15 does not say, “*Study* to show yourself approved...a workman that needeth not to be ashamed...” This is a mistranslation.

In the Greek, and in the NASB, it says,

“*Be diligent* to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.” (II Tim. 2:15 NASU)

There is no verse in the Bible recommending “study.” Instead, the Bible recommends, some 20 times, meditation. Joshua 1:8 is an example of this. Biblical meditation is very different from study, as the following pages on “Study versus Meditation” illustrate.

**POINT 4 – REVELATION KNOWLEDGE IS CALLED “TRUE KNOWLEDGE.” IT IS ACTUALLY KNOWLEDGE COMING FROM THE SPIRIT AND THUS IS SOMETIMES CALLED THE SPIRIT OF KNOWLEDGE.**

“Seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the **true knowledge** of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.” (II Pet.1:3 NASU)

“And the Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him,  
The spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
The spirit of counsel and strength,  
The **spirit of knowledge** and the fear of the LORD.”  
(Isa.11:2 NAS)

Rational knowledge comes from the mind through reason and study. True knowledge comes from the heart, through meditation and revelation by the

Holy Spirit. Webster defines rationalism as “reliance upon reason for the establishing of religious truth.” Rationalism and Christianity are totally different, for nowhere does the Bible recommend the reliance upon reason to establish your Christian beliefs. Any exhaustive study of the word “reason” in the Bible will convince you of this.

**POINT 5 – KNOWLEDGE FROM ABOVE VERSUS KNOWLEDGE FROM BELOW**

James differentiates between **two sources** of knowledge: It is either from above, or it is not from above. It is interesting that he only offers two alternatives. Many of us would want to include three – above (God), self, or satan. James indicates that earthly, natural knowledge is no better than demonic knowledge.

“This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic.

For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.” (Jas. 3:15-17 NASU)

Knowledge (man’s reasoned knowledge) makes arrogant (I Cor. 8:1 NASU).

**Paul’s reliance upon the Spirit (I Corinthians 2)**

“And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

“Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away;

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but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory; the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; but just as it is written, 'THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND WHICH HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM.' For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.

"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one. For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ." (NASU)

### POINT 6 - GREEK VERSUS HEBREW LEARNING

See the page comparing Greek and Hebrew learning at the end of this chapter (*Lamad Learning*).

### POINT 7 – PAUL WAS TRAINED FIRST BY REASON, AND THEN BY REVELATION

Paul was trained in one of the best Bible schools of his day, using the Bible, reason, and theology. Then he had to be totally retrained by God, using revelation knowledge, initially on the Damascus road, and then during three years in the Arabian wilderness (Gal. 1:16.18). Paul describes his first Bible school training as being from dogs and from evil workers. He equates it with manure.

Philippians 3:1-11 KJV

"Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe. **Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the circumcision.** For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:

"Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; **as touching the law, a Pharisee;** Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, **and do count them but dung,** that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."

### Is there a third kind of knowledge – natural knowledge from self?

Aren't things like algebra, physics, history, and technical skills just natural, and not necessarily godly or demonic? What does the Bible teach? Can knowledge come from self, and be transmitted from yourself to another person? Yes, it can. The question is, "Is this knowledge God's, satan's or self's?"

To answer this question, we will recall what the Bible teaches about self, what the Bible teaches about the function of man when God first created him and when He redeemed him.

The New Testament offers four pictures of man: he is *a vessel, a temple, a branch* grafted into a vine

and a *body* of which Jesus is the head. In all four of these pictures, you will note that man has not been designed to operate alone, but out of another, out of an indwelling Spirit.

That is consistent with God's intent at creation. Man was designed to live in and out of communion with Almighty God. He was to be nourished by the Tree of Life. Man communed daily with God, even as Jesus did: "I can do nothing on my own initiative. As I hear I judge" (Jn. 5:19,20,30). Jesus chose not to live out of His own reasoning, but out of a divine flow of words, pictures, and anointing. Jesus did not choose natural knowledge, but divinely imparted revelation knowledge.

At the new birth, the Christian reconnects with the indwelling Spirit of God (I Cor. 6:17), and learns to live out of this inner union (Gal. 5:25 – to walk and live by the Spirit). We live now as a branch grafted into a vine, drawing from the river of God within our spirits. We have discovered the river, we tune to the river, we experience the river, and we live out of the river (Ezek.47:1 ff).

All knowledge has a spiritual base (Isa. 11:2). That base will either be God, satan, or self. Self is quickly host for satan, for there are no spiritual vacuums in the universe. What we do not consciously offer to God to fill, satan quickly usurps.

**Paul's first Bible school training endorsed a belief in the use of the mind as central to the acquisition of religious knowledge.**

Paul was thoroughly trained in two distinctly different ways: first using reason, rationalism, and theology (Phil. 3:10), and secondly through revelation knowledge (Acts 9:22, Gal. 1:17). During his first Bible school learning experience, his situation could be represented as follows:

- His heart hungered for God.
- His zeal was fervent.
- He was trained in the best Jewish educational academy the world had to offer.
- The training did not come from revelation

knowledge or revelation experience. It did not demand interaction with God on a spiritual level (direct inner encounter with God).

- The training did require a mental commitment to thoroughly study, memorize, and obey the Bible, an emotional commitment (a heart of repentance), and a commitment of one's will to zealously follow after God.
- Paul offered his mind, emotions, and will to God in his seminary training. He was a model student, performing at an "A level" in each and every aspect of his learning (Phil. 3:1-10).

Isn't that enough? If we had a Bible school requiring all of the above (Bible study, obedience to the Word, repentance, and zeal) and a student dutifully fulfilled all these requirements, would that not be great? Not according to Paul. He called it all "dung." That is a pretty strong word for such a wonderful Bible school program! Why did Paul call it dung? What was it missing? What did it need to make it a true Christian training experience of value, and not just a stinking pile of manure?

**Paul's retraining by the Spirit: Total reliance upon the Holy Spirit's revelation**

Paul's training needed spiritual encounter. It needed to make room for God to meet Paul directly with dreams, visions, revelation, and anointing. That is what Paul received on the Damascus Road and in his three years in the Arabian Desert (Gal. 1:17). That is what Moses learned at the burning bush and during his forty years in the backside of the wilderness. And that is what Jesus received during His forty days of temptation by satan in the wilderness.

Paul's first education (as a Pharisee) missed actual spiritual encounter. He learned about God rather than experiencing God. His class times did not lead him into the experience of God, but rather the study of God. As a result, he ended up in religion rather than in Christianity. Religion is the stirring up of the soul of man (man's use of the mind, will, and emotions) to follow God. The mind is stirred, so one sets it to study and believe. The will is

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stirred, so that one sets it toward seeking God, and the emotions are stirred so that one chooses to love God.

Growth in Christianity, on the other hand, is an encounter of the spirit of man with the indwelling Spirit of God. It is the *experience* of revelation and anointing of God, through receiving the dream, vision, voice, and power of Almighty God. Christianity is the restoration of the ongoing divine communion God had with Adam in the Garden of Eden and the with the second Adam, Jesus, who did nothing out of His own initiative – which one could assume meant that He did not reason on His own, without the Holy Spirit being part of the process. Religion encourages man to stir up his soul to obey and follow after God. Christianity is God coming to man.

### Bible College Weighed in the Balance – Reason versus Revelation Knowledge

Every class offered by a Bible school will present either Christianity or religion to the student. If what is presented is birthed from revelation knowledge, and the process by which it is imparted is through revelation knowledge (i.e. the *lamad* method) then Christianity, revelatory truth, and the blessing have been imparted. If what is offered is from a reasoned knowledge base without incorporating revelation, or if it is imparted using reason, rather than revelation, then religion, rationalism, man's traditions, and the curse have been given. Religion detracts from revival, renewal, and the move of God. Christianity spurs renewal onward.

- Knowledge that is received or transmitted through reason brings one under a curse.
- Knowledge that is received or transmitted through revelation brings one under a blessing.

If you choose to teach theology in a Bible school, I believe it must meet two criteria:

1. It must be theology that came from revelation knowledge and not reason; else it will be “the traditions of men.”

2. It must be transmitted in a revelatory way (i.e. *lamad* style education); else it will train the student to live out of and rely upon reason, which is the opposite of the way he must live if he is to succeed in renewal. In renewal, one must live out of and rely upon revelation knowledge.

### A Christian Leadership University student journaled:

**Me:** Lord, I do so love to hear your voice. But once I hear it, I never want to leave and although I have the full support of my boss (pastor) I don't think she'll understand when I am late for work every morning. So do you mind if we move these meetings to evening?

**God:** I'll be here anytime you are.

**Me:** Wow. I wish I could be here anytime you are!

**God:** So do I, my daughter. That *was* my original plan, you know. I so enjoyed walking with Adam and Eve, *until they started thinking more than listening.* (emphasis added)

### Derek Prince's comments on education

Derek Prince, a well-known Pentecostal theologian, whose radio broadcasts cover half the world's population, who wrote his doctoral thesis on logic, and who is able to teach Greek and Hebrew on the graduate level in England, puts it this way:

“To put human ability in the place of divine grace is to exalt the carnal above the spiritual. The effect will be manifested in many different areas. For example:

Theology will be exalted above revelation;  
Intellectual education above character building;  
Psychology above discernment;  
Program above the leading of the Holy Spirit;  
Eloquence above supernatural power;  
Reasoning above the walk of faith;  
Laws above love.

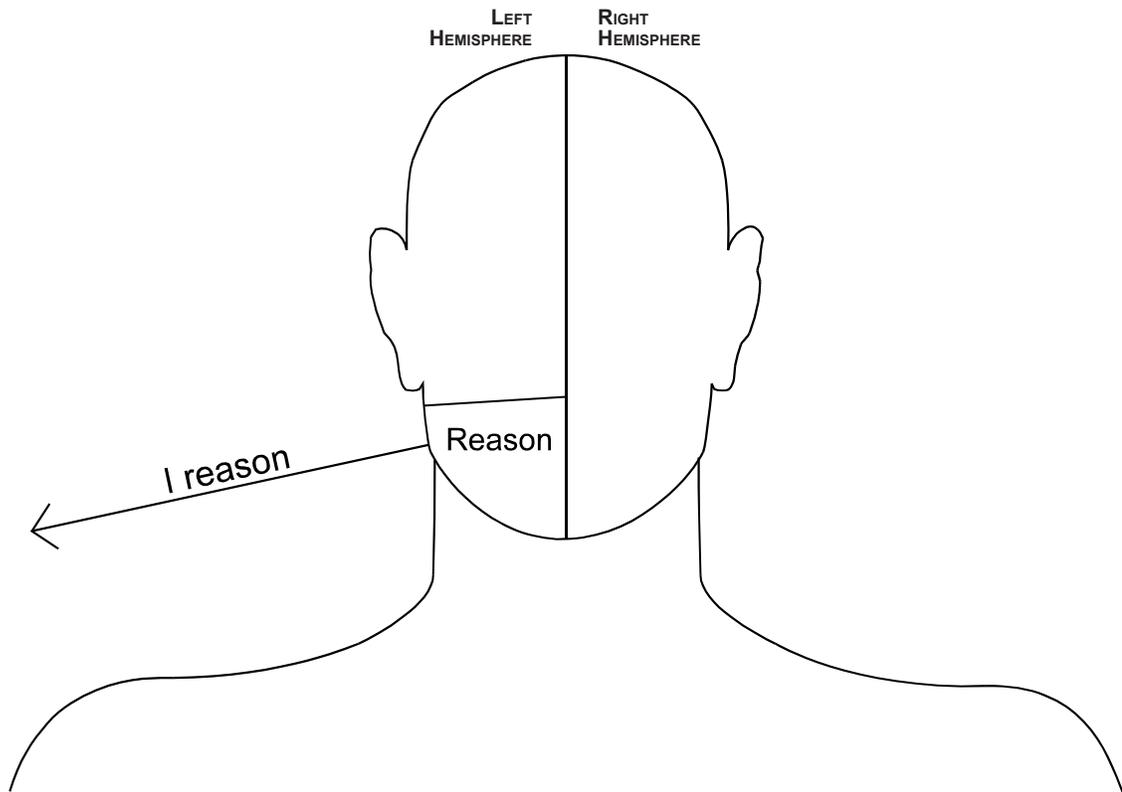
All of these errors are different manifestations of one great basic error; putting man in a place God has reserved solely for the Lord Jesus Christ.”

(Page 90, 91 of *Blessings Or Curse*  
by Derek Prince)

# Study

(Greek/Western)

“Application of the mental faculties  
to the acquisition of knowledge”  
(Webster)



## Study (My use of one part of one hemisphere of my brain)

1. Is nowhere endorsed in Scripture (II Tim. 2:15 is a mis-translation in the KJV Bible).
2. Is self in action (Humanism - a false god).
3. Is self using reason (Rationalism - a false god).
4. Results in wisdom from below - earthly, natural, demonic (Jas. 3:15). For example, reason caused Peter to be at odds with the purposes of God (Jn. 18:10,11).

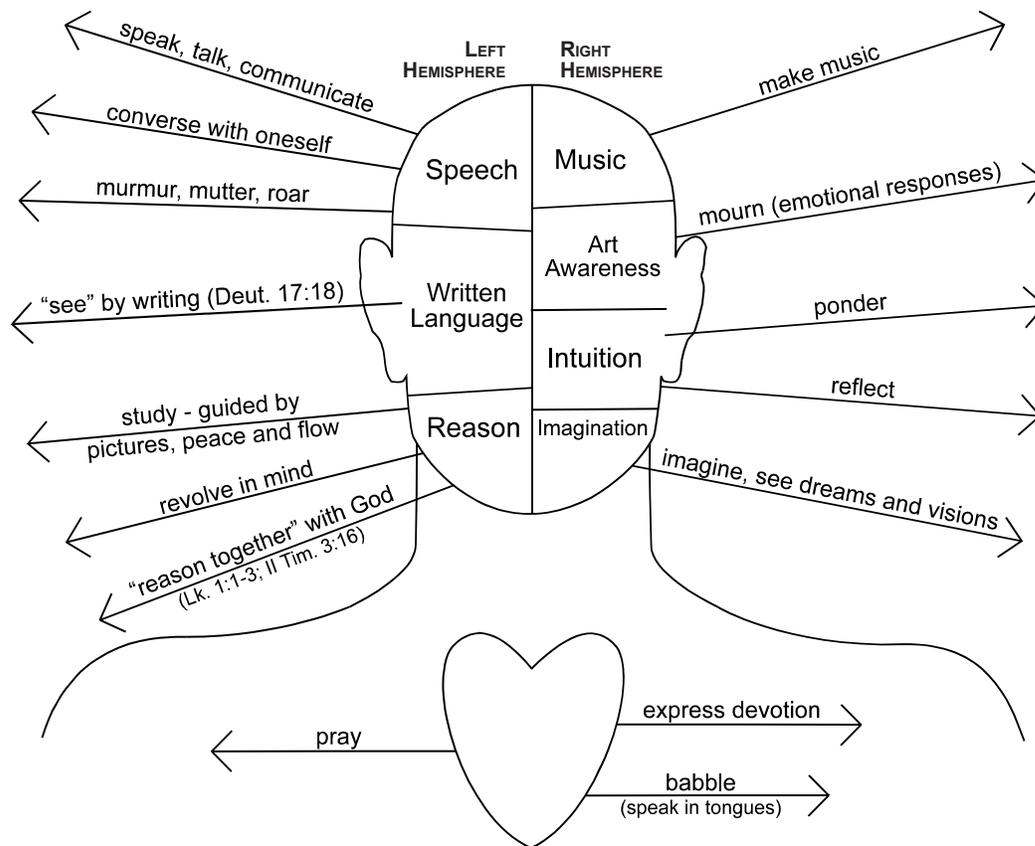
## Study violates the following biblical principles:

1. Gal. 2:20 - I resurrect self, which no longer lives.
2. Rom. 12:1 - I am using my faculties rather than presenting them to God to use.
3. Is. 1:18 - I'm reasoning, rather than reasoning together with God.
4. Gen. 3:5 - I've fallen prey to the temptation of the Garden of Eden that "I can know good and evil."

# Meditation

(Hebrew/Lamad)

“To murmur; to converse with oneself, and hence aloud; speak; talk; babbling; communication; mutter; roar; mourn; a murmuring sound; i.e., a musical notation; to study; to ponder; revolve in the mind; imagine; pray; prayer; reflection; devotion”  
*(Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance\*)*



**Meditation (God’s use of every part of both hemispheres of my brain as He fills and flows out through my heart by His Spirit)**

1. Is endorsed 18 times in the KJV Bible.
2. Is God in action within the individual.
3. Is God granting revelation through the heart and mind which has been yielded to Him.
4. Results in wisdom from above - pure, peaceable, gentle (Jas. 3:17).

**Meditation applies the following biblical principles:**

1. Gal. 2:20 - I let Christ live through me.
2. Rom. 12:1 - I am yielding my outer faculties to the indwelling Spirit (to “flow” - Jn. 7:38).
3. Is. 11:2 When reasoning together with God, I receive a **spirit** of wisdom and understanding and knowledge.
4. Jn. 5:19,20,30 - I’m living as Jesus did, out of divine initiative, doing what I see and hear my Father doing.

\*Old Testament numbers: 1897, 1900, 1901, 1902, 7878, 7879, 7881; New Testament numbers: 3191, 4304

## Biblical Meditation

Resulting in illumination, revelation knowledge, anointed reasoning

### Do Not Do This:

LEFT-BRAIN

STUDY/RATIONAL HUMANISM

1. Have unconfessed sin
2. Have a pre-conceived attitude
3. Be independent: "I can..."
4. Read quickly
5. Rely on reason & analysis only
  
6. Read without specific purpose
7. Take credit for insights

### But Do This:

WHOLE-BRAIN/HEART

MEDITATION/DIVINE REVELATION

1. Be washed by Jesus' blood
2. Have a teachable attitude
3. Pray: "Lord, show me"
4. Slow down, ponder, muse
5. Combine anointed reason, flowing pictures, music & speech
6. Read with focused purpose
7. Glorify God for insights

## The Seven Steps of Biblical Meditation Explained:

### 1. LORD, CLEANSE ME BY YOUR BLOOD:

Since receiving divine revelation is at the heart of biblical meditation, you must prepare yourself to receive from the Holy Spirit by repenting and being cleansed by the blood of the Lamb. You must be obedient to previous revelations from God (Matt. 7: 6), and confess any sin in your life, so you are not cut off from ongoing revelation (Is. 59: 1,2; I Jn. 1:9).

### 2. LORD, GRANT ME A TEACHABLE

**ATTITUDE:** Revelation is given to those who maintain an attitude of humility, and it is withheld from the proud and the arrogant. So keep an open, humble attitude before God, allowing Him the freedom to shed greater light on any ideas you currently hold and to alter them as He sees fit (Jas. 4:6; II Pet. 1:19).

### 3. LORD, I WILL NOT USE MY FACULTIES

**MYSELF:** You can do nothing of your own initiative but only what you hear and see by the Spirit (Jn. 5:19,20,30). You do not have a mind to use, but a mind to present to God so He can use it and fill it with anointed reason and divine vision (Prov. 3:5-7; Rom. 12:1,2). If you use your mind yourself, it is a dead work (Heb. 6:1,2).

### 4. LORD, I PRAY THAT THE EYES OF MY

**HEART MIGHT BE ENLIGHTENED:** Slow down as you read, mulling the text over and over in your heart and mind, praying constantly for God to give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him (Eph. 1:17,18; Ps. 119:18).

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### 5. LORD, I PRESENT THE ABILITIES TO

#### REASON AND TO IMAGINE TO YOU TO FILL AND FLOW THROUGH BY YOUR SPIRIT:

Meditation involves presenting your faculties to God for Him to fill and use. These include your left-brain reasoning capacities as well as your right-brain visual capacities. Look for the river of God (i.e., "Spirit flow") to guide and fill both hemispheres, granting you anointed reasoning and dream and vision (Jn. 7:37-39). Music can assist you, as can muttering, speaking, and writing as you go through the discovery process (II Kings 3:15).

### 6. LORD, SHOW ME THE SOLUTION TO THE

**PROBLEM I AM FACING:** Focused attention brings additional energies of concentration of heart and mind, which help release revelation. For example, note the difference between a ray of sunlight hitting a piece of paper, and sunlight going through a magnifying glass to hit a piece of paper. The focused energy creates a ray so concentrated that the paper bursts into flames. When you have a hunger to master a new understanding and discipline, that hungry and searching heart will cause you to see things you would not normally see (Matt. 5:6).

### 7. THANK YOU, LORD, FOR WHAT YOU HAVE

**SHOWN ME:** Realizing that the revelation came from the indwelling Holy Spirit, give all the glory to God for what has been revealed (Eph. 3:21).

### The Hebrew and Greek definitions of meditation

According to *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, there are several Hebrew and Greek words which underlie the words "meditate" and "meditation" in the Old and New Testaments. The *Strong's* numbers for these words in the Old Testament are: 1897, 1900, 1901, 1902, 7878, 7879, 7881. The New Testament numbers are 3191 and 4304.

THE LITERAL MEANINGS OF MEDITATE AND MEDITATION as listed by *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* are:

"To murmur; to converse with oneself, and hence aloud; speak; talk; babbling; communication; mutter; roar; mourn; a murmuring sound; i.e., a musical notation; to study; to ponder; revolve in the mind; imagine; pray; prayer; reflection; devotion."

#### LEFT-HEMISPHERE FUNCTIONS LISTED ABOVE INCLUDE:

study, revolve in the mind, murmur, mutter, converse, speak, talk, communication (Note: Reason and speech are left-brain.)

#### RIGHT-HEMISPHERE FUNCTIONS LISTED ABOVE INCLUDE:

imagine, a musical notation, mourn, babbling (Note: Tongue speaking has been registered in experiments at Fuller Theological Seminary as taking place in the right hemisphere. Pictures, music and emotion are also right-brain.)

#### HEART (OR THIRD-BRAIN) FUNCTIONS LISTED ABOVE INCLUDE:

pray, prayer, devotion, reflection, ponder (i.e., enlightened reasoning by adding Spirit-flow to the reasoning process - Eph. 1:17,18.)

Meditation results in illumined verses every time one reads the Bible and every time he meditates on any subject. Illumination is experienced as insights jumping off the page and hitting you between the eyes.

### Meditation is a whole-brain and heart process, and study is often left-hemisphere only

I asked a pastor who scored as extremely left-brain (2.4) on the Brain Preference Indicator Test how he studied the Bible. Did he use pictures a fair amount? He replied, "Never." Then I asked a right-brain pastor (6.7) how he studied the Bible. Did he use

pictures much? He said, "Always." He had a constant stream of flowing pictures when he studied. (Note: 5.0 is perfectly balanced.)

Do you see that a left-brain person will tend to study the Bible differently than a right-brain person? We tend to miss this, because we assume that everyone else studies the way we do. This could not be further from the truth. Left-brain people study using primarily logic, reason, and analysis. Right-brain people study (or could we say, meditate) using primarily pictures and flow combined with reason, analysis, speech, and song.

**REPENTING FOR STUDYING:** So, in meditation, the whole brain is being controlled and guided by the indwelling Holy Spirit, whereas in study, primarily the left brain is being used, and it is under the control of self. Wow! What a startling insight, especially when we realize that the Bible (NASB) **never** encourages study, but 20 times does encourage meditation. Look up the Greek in the three instances that the King James Version uses "study," and you will see that they are all inaccurate

translations. So I, a left-brain individual, repented for studying, and purposed in my heart to only meditate from now on when I come to the Word of God or to any topic that God sets before me to explore.

### **Another Great Aid to "Seeing": Writing Out Scripture**

When you write or type out a verse, you discover words which you otherwise might have missed.

The following is the law which God gave for new kings who had just been crowned and were coming to sit upon their throne for the first time:

*"Now it shall come about when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself a copy of this law on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests" (Deut. 17:18).*

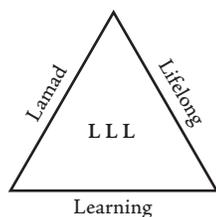
Since we are kings and priests, are we to do any less (I Pet. 2:9)? Let us make the writing out of Scriptures an important part of our lives.

# The Lamad Method of Learning

The Hebrew language uses one root (*lamad*) for the two words “to teach” and “to learn”. In the Hebrew culture, the teacher has not taught unless the student has learned. All learning and teaching is ultimately to be found in the fear of the Lord. The goal of teaching is not the impartation of facts but the changing of lives. For the Hebrews, knowledge (*yadah*) involves personal encounter and response to God’s revelation.

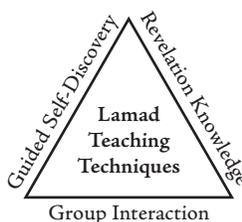
In the *lamad* method of learning, we are returning to the Hebraic concept of education, including this personal encounter and revelation. The classroom becomes a place of impassioned discussion and the sharing of real-life experience. It is a place where we meet God and share in the life experiences of others. The classroom becomes a place where we practice truth. The classroom is not separated from life but is actually part of our lives.

## Lamad Curriculum Emphasizes:



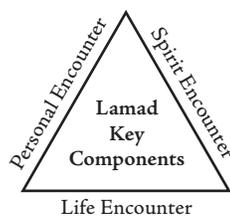
### Lamad Lifelong Learning

Learning is to be lifelong. It is impossible to cram education into the early years of our lives. Learning, transformation, assimilation, and creativity are lifelong matters, with extended periods of time being given to first one topic and then another, until one’s giftedness has been multiplied many fold (Matt. 25: 20).



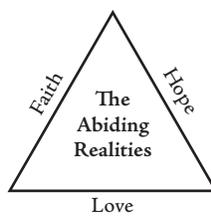
### Lamad Teaching Techniques

Personal encounter demands a teaching style of guided self-discovery, where the student is guided in his own uncovering of the truth. Lamad learning encourages the flow of revelation within the hearts of the students. Discovery often happens best in a lively interchange within the classroom. Therefore, effective group interaction must be promoted and guided by the Lamad teacher.



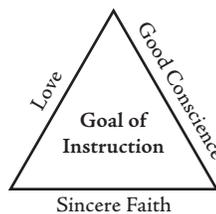
### Lamad Key Components

The Greeks emphasized “detached information,” while the Hebrews stressed “personal encounter.” It was important to the Hebrews that each learner personally encounter and be transformed by what was before them. Spiritual encounter and response to the revelation of God is the central dynamic of Scripture. The classroom is life. If we offer classes, we must make sure they are life encounters in which we practice truth.



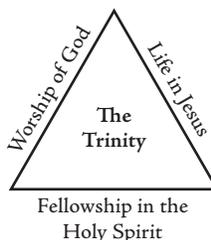
### The Abiding Realities

“Now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love” (I Cor. 13: 13). Certain things are central to life and eternity; others are not. Anger, fear, and doubt are temporary and will be swallowed up by the realities that abide forever: faith, hope, and love. The Lamad curriculum constantly emphasizes the abiding realities, instilling them in the lives of its students.



### Goal of Instruction

Lamad learning recognizes the GOAL of our instruction is love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith (I Tim. 1:5). You will notice that all of these are HEART realities. The mind is made to serve the heart. All training is to be heart-focused. Mankind has been FORBIDDEN to eat from the “tree of knowledge of good and evil.” Instead, he is to eat from the “tree of Life,” Jesus Christ!



### The Trinity

Man is to live caught in the flow of God. This is accomplished by lifting up our eyes in worship to the King, becoming consumed by His presence. While we are in the Lord’s presence, we acknowledge that we no longer live, but that Christ is our life, and the life we now live is by faith (Gal. 2:20). We live out of daily fellowship with the Holy Spirit, recognizing that everything done outside of Divine Flow is a dead work.

### **Additional Resources**

- For 5500 verses that support the above concepts, please read *How Do You Know?* by Mark and Patti Virkler
- For a summary of how one would teach using the anointing, and how to draw students into spiritual encounter in the class, read “Spirit Anointed Teaching Seminar Guide” (with the cassettes) by Mark and Patti Virkler.

### **Personal Application**

1. What has been your own experience of reasoned knowledge and revelation knowledge? Have you had positive or negative experiences? Write these down and share them with someone with whom you pray or fellowship.
2. What is God saying to you about the two kinds of knowledge? Write down what God impressed on you as you read this chapter, and share it with someone with whom you pray or fellowship.
3. Which concepts in Scripture about discerning the two kinds of knowledge were new to you as you read this chapter? Which of these concepts did the Lord impress on you most? Write these out and

share them with someone with whom you pray or fellowship.

4. What issues brought out in this chapter resonated with your heart? Which disturbed your heart? Write these down and share them with someone else you pray or fellowship with.
5. Write a list of the characteristics of the two kinds of knowledge that are most significant to you. Do you live more comfortably in reasoned knowledge or revelation knowledge? Who among your teachers ministers primarily reasoned knowledge? Revelation knowledge?
6. Ask God what He would say to you concerning the principles presented in this chapter. Share this journaling with another.

### **Group Application**

1. Invite group members to share the answers to the questions above, as they feel free to do so.
2. Have the group break into pairs and pray about the most significant issues raised for each person in reading this chapter and answering the questions above.



# 2

## What Is the Role of Theology or Doctrine?

### **My Struggle**

I took a course on systematic theology in college, and found that it mostly dealt with concepts I was not particularly concerned about. However, after graduating from college and beginning ministry, I faced struggles, problems, and issues that I chose to explore in great depth, using both my heart and my mind to seek divine answers. I finally put an entire year into looking for an answer to one question I was struggling with, which was how to hear God's voice. By the end of that year, I had discovered it was actually quite easy – easy to do, but very difficult to learn in the culture in which I lived. During my year of searching, God led me through a maze of misunderstanding, past the minefields of cultural errors, and into the brilliance of His revealed truth that set me free. And the freedom He gave to me I have been able to pass on to others for many years.

That year I learned more than how to hear God's voice. I learned a process for discovering truth that I had not known before. I learned that if I would give a year of my life to growth and understanding in a

specific troubling area, God would give me mastery through revelation knowledge and divine insight. And I learned that His solutions are extremely simple. Once I move myself, and the cultural barriers, out of the way, His path is easy. His way is childlike.

I believe it is time to declare that this is the way to discover Spirit-anointed theology and Spirit-anointed doctrine. This method ought to replace the typical cram course on systematic theology offered in Bible colleges. The distilled intellectual essence of theological truths, passed down through the ages in a logical format, is not relevant to my life because it did not arise from the issues of my life, I did not personally struggle with it, fight for it, or experience the divine ecstasy of revelation knowledge released in my heart with illumination and victory.

The "shorter way" of distilled truth is actually the "longer way," because it bypasses the heart and goes straight to the head. But true Christianity is a divine encounter and therefore it is primarily of the heart, not the mind. The shortcut of removing the heart

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and replacing it with the head is no shortcut at all, but instead puts you back on the path to legalism and religion. Christ came to offer true Christianity, heart Christianity, flowing from a relationship with the Father through the Holy Spirit. As a discipler, I cannot improve on that but rather must be comfortable that His approach is the best. Western rationalism is not an improvement on Christian experience. It is time for us to return to biblically-demonstrated Christianity, and to call others to come with us, to set aside the compartmentalization of western rationalism, and to return to the true reality of heart Christianity.

I embarked on a Bible meditation of doctrine (or theology) using the approach I have discussed above to discover what role it is to have in my life and in a Bible school. Here is what I found: The mind is not the source of sound doctrine. The Bible is crystal clear that sound doctrine is a function of the heart.

After looking up **every verse** with the word “doctrine” in the New American Standard Bible, I am convinced that

### Sound doctrine incorporates the following experiences:

1. The humble in heart seeking God (Matt. 5:8),
2. Receiving enlightenment from God (I Jn. 2:8),
3. Growing in faith and love (Gal. 5:6), and
4. Being transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit (I Jn. 2:9)
5. Within the context of life and community (II Cor. 13:1; Acts 15).

**Sound doctrine** incorporates the experiences of the humble in heart seeking God, being enlightened by God, growing in faith and love, and experiencing transformation by the power of the Holy Spirit while nurturing a relationship with life and community.

Sound doctrine comes to a praying, listening, hearing and obedient heart.  
“So give Thy servant a hearing heart...”  
(I Kings 3:9 NASB)

### I have noticed...

There are many biblically-stated promises to those who walk in faith, hope and love (the abiding realities of I Cor. 13:13). These qualities are the way into the Lord’s presence (Heb. 10:19-22), as well as the goal of our instruction (I Tim. 1:5).

However, there are no biblically-stated promises for study, reason or correct theology, as far as I can see. This fact in itself is absolutely astounding.

### Theology is wrong if:

1. It is a result of man’s reasoning rather than anointed reasoning (Prov. 3:5-8 compared with I Cor. 2.2:9-10; Lk. 1:1-3 combined with II Tim. 3:16).
2. It is a result of man’s study rather than biblical meditation (Phil. 3:1-10 - Paul repudiates all his traditional learning). Meditation is encouraged in place of study (Josh. 1:8). II Timothy 2:15 is a mistranslation. In the Greek, the word is not “study” but “be diligent.” Since this is the only verse that seems to recommend study, it becomes evident that the western approach to study is never endorsed in Scripture.
3. It fosters a critical and judgmental spirit (Matt. 7:2; Jn. 5:30; 7:24; 8:15,16).
4. It encourages you to live out of your theology rather than your relationship with God. (Gal. 5:25 – we are to walk and live in the Spirit; Heb.12:1-2 – we are to fix our eyes upon Jesus, not upon our theology.)
5. It does not focus on building faith, hope and love, which are the abiding realities (I Cor. 13:13).
6. It does not teach you to encounter the Lord by the Spirit. I Timothy 1:5 states that the goal of our instruction (teaching or doctrine)

is the development of the qualities by which we enter into the throne room of God (Heb. 10:19-23).

7. If it teaches detached knowledge (Greek-style education), rather than personal encounter with the Holy Spirit (Hebrew-styled *lamad* education).

“Theology and doctrine are not legitimate, if they are not the result of revelation-dependent study (*lamad*).” Dr. Gary Greig

Courses on theology must utilize the *lamad* method or else they draw the student back into rationalism and away from a living relationship with the King of kings. I have not seen a systematic theology book that does this. Instead the standard texts encourage head knowledge, and are a hindrance rather than an aid in the Christian life, training the student to rely on the staff of reasoning rather than the staff of revelation. This, of course, leads away from true Christianity and toward the false religion of rationalism.

### Following are some thoughts on doctrine from Dr. Gary Greig:

1. The Greek word for ‘doctrine’ is *didaskalia*, literally “teaching”:
2. All Scripture was written to give us teaching/doctrine. Therefore, narrative accounts (Abraham and patriarchal accounts, historical books, the Gospels, Acts) as well as straight didactic texts (Proverbs, Psalms, New Testament Epistles, etc.) BOTH represent source material for doctrine/theology, not just didactic texts (Rom. 15:4; II Tim. 3:16).
3. The father of our faith, Abraham (Rom. 4:16), and his faith-walk of listening to and depending on hearing God’s voice and then obeying God should be the foundational model for the development of all doctrine/theology. It should also be the foundation of ALL training in theology/doctrine, and ministry preparation, since Abraham is

the model of the faith about which we are forming teaching/doctrine/theology and ministry practice.

4. A balance between teaching cognitive truth and practical ministry is found in Hebrews 6: 1-2 where the “elementary teaching” (here the Greek *logos* ‘word’ is a synonym of *didaskalia* ‘teaching’) includes conveying information (eternal judgment and aspects of repentance, faith, baptisms, & resurrection) as well as instruction in practical Spirit-empowered ministry (baptism in the Spirit as in Acts 19: 1-7, the laying on of hands [the chief way of healing the sick in the Gospels and Acts], resurrection [perhaps training in how to raise the dead like Jesus and Peter did]: Hebrews 6:1-2 “Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.”
5. The foundation of Paul’s own ‘sound doctrine’ (I Tim. 1:10; II Tim. 4:3; Tit. 1: 9; 2:1) was an ENCOUNTER with the Spirit of Jesus on the road to Damascus, where his doctrine about the Messiah was CORRECTED by the Spirit. The heart of the gospel preached by Paul, that faith in Christ alone justified believers before God, was revelationally received from the Spirit (Gal. 1:12-2:10), and then it was also informed by what was passed down to Paul from other Christians (I Cor. 15:3ff “what I received” and the information about who Christ appeared to in Jerusalem after the resurrection).
6. According to I John 2:27, the anointing of the Holy Spirit is to be the core and foundational source of teaching/doctrine in each believer’s life, but obviously this revelationally-based teaching of the Spirit will be supplemented by teaching from other Christians, as indeed John’s letter in I John

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teaches the recipients about discerning false prophets and demonic teachings.

7. Pure doctrine is an issue of the heart, not just the mind -- a "listening heart" (the Hebrew of I Kings 3:9) which is what Solomon asked for and received from the Lord and from which all of his divine wisdom flowed.

(End of section by Dr. Gary Greig)

### May I suggest that proper teaching is "anoined teaching"?

"So Jesus answered them and said, 'My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me. If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself.'" (John 7:16-17).

It is astounding that Jesus would not teach out of His own knowledge base, but He relied on the Father giving Him the words through the working of the Holy Spirit within Him. If this is our pattern, then teaching is different than I had believed.

### A Brief Review of All Uses of the Word "Doctrine\*" in the NASB

It has always seemed wise to me when pursuing a subject to look up every verse in the Bible on the topic, praying, "God, please give me a spirit of wisdom and revelation concerning what this verse is teaching me about this area." Here is what I saw.

"**Doctrine\***" in the NASB (15 times) –  
Cautioned against half of the time

\***Note: Theology** in the NASB (0 times) -  
Thus perhaps not endorsed – especially if one's theology were the fruit of **man's** reasoning.

### Jesus rebuked the doctrines from men:

"And He said to them, 'Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written:

"THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS,  
BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME.  
BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME,  
TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.'"  
(Mark 7:6-7)

### **Rather than being swayed by doctrine, we are to mature in our intimacy with Christ:**

"As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ." (Eph. 4:14-15)

### **We are cautioned about focusing on strange doctrines, myths, genealogies, and speculation, rather than pushing on in one's growth in faith:**

"As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith. But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith."  
(I Tim. 1:3-5)

### **Words of faith (sound doctrine) are contrasted to doctrines of demons:**

"But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude; for it

is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer. In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following. But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness;" (I Tim. 4:1-7)

**Be respectful so that Christianity is not evilly spoken of. Any doctrine not conforming to godliness is wrong, as is any doctrine that contradicts the words of Jesus or encourages disputes about words, which cause envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and ongoing friction.**

"All who are under the yoke as slaves are to regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and our doctrine will not be spoken against. Those who have believers as their masters must not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but must serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved. Teach and preach these principles. If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment." (I Tim 6: 1-6 NAS)

**Teachings of personal desires and myths are counter to sound doctrine:**

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own

desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths." (II Tim. 4: 3-4 NASB)

**We are to exhort with sound doctrine, and refute those who contradict, including rebellious men, empty talkers, deceivers, especially the legalists, and those who pay attention to religious myths and commandments of men. If you are pure and believing, then everything is pure. If you are unbelieving, then nothing is pure.**

"Holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict. For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain. One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, 'Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.' This testimony is true. For this reason reprove them severely so that they may be sound in the faith, not paying attention to Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth. To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed." (Titus 1:9-16)

**Speak sound doctrine. (However, a precise definition of sound doctrine is not given here.)**

"But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine." (Titus 2:1)

**We are encouraged to have pure doctrine (not defined), which results in behavior that does not allow our enemies the opportunity to say anything bad about us, and makes us non-argumentative.**

"Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance.

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Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored. Likewise urge the young men to be sensible; in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, **with purity in doctrine**, dignified, sound in speech which is beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us. Urge bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith **so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect**. For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you.” (Titus 2:2-15)

Exact definitions of the content of good and bad doctrines are not given in the Scriptures examined above. However, the following comparison may be made:

### **A biblical overview of the characteristics of bad doctrine:**

Composed of the precepts of men (i.e. man’s reasoning).

Includes myths and endless genealogies, giving rise to mere speculation - conceptualization.

Comes from deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons (deceit is at the core).

Examples include forbidding marriage and advocating abstaining from foods.

Full of worldly fables fit for old women (vain words are the problem).

### **and of those who promote bad doctrine:**

Honor God with their lips but their hearts are far away.

Are hypocritical liars who have seared consciences (heart again).

Are conceited and understand nothing (pride is the problem).

Have a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words (speculation).

Cause envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, constant friction (heart issues of envy, strife, suspicion are the problems).

Have depraved minds and are deprived of the truth (problem is the spirit of the mind).

Want their ears tickled (wrong desires).

Follow their own desires (selfish desires).

Turn away their ears from the truth (wrong desires).

Turn aside to myths (mental speculation).

Are empty talkers and deceivers (mental speculation – deceit).

Are religious legalists who upset those of grace (legalism).

Teach for money (wrong motives).

Are defiled in mind and conscience

Are unbelieving (missing the abiding reality of faith – I Cor. 13:13).

Say they know God but deny Him in their deeds (lifestyle most important)

Are detestable and disobedient and worthless (lawless).

**A biblical overview of the characteristics of sound doctrine:  
(Notice that each item below deals with issues of the heart.)**

Causes a growing up into Christ (i.e. a growth in experiencing His indwelling presence – hence, promotes spiritual encounter with Christ).

Promotes an increase in faith, which furthers the administration of God (heart).

Its goal is love from a pure heart, a good conscience and a sincere faith (all heart issues and the abiding realities of I Cor. 13:13).

**and of those who promote it:**

Believe that everything is to be received from God with gratitude (heart attitude).

Discipline themselves for the purpose of godliness (a godly heart motivation).

Show honor and respect (pure heart).

Hold fast the faithful word (diligent - a heart attitude).

Exhort in sound doctrine and refute those who contradict (heart of a warrior).

To the pure all things are pure.

**A contrasting summary of all 15 NASB verses that contain the word “doctrine”**

<b>Characteristics of Man’s Doctrine</b>	<b>Characteristics of Sound Doctrine</b>
Man’s conceptualization of biblical truth (Mk. 7:6-7)	Revelation-knowledge truth (Phil. 3:1-10, I Cor. 2:9-10, Jn. 5:19-20-30)
Changes with current trends (Eph. 4:14-15)	Promotes a growth in intimacy with Christ (Eph. 4:14-15)
Myths, genealogies, speculation (I Tim. 1:3-5)	Promotes love from a pure heart, good conscience and a sincere faith (I Tim. 1:3-5)
Encompasses worldly fables (I Tim. 4:7)	Disciplines for the purpose of godliness (I Tim. 4:7, I Tim. 6:1-6)
Produces envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction (I Tim. 6:1-6)	Produces godliness and contentment (I Tim. 6:6)

***Summary - Reason versus Revelation:** Man’s doctrines are birthed in man’s mental conceptualizations and deal with mental questions and issues, producing envy, strife and friction. Sound doctrine begins with revelation knowledge in one’s heart and promotes a growth in intimacy with the indwelling Christ, which results in a godly lifestyle.*

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### Where man's doctrine comes from

From demons, from deceitful spirits  
(I Tim. 4:1-7)

### Where divine doctrine comes from

from above (James 3:17)

*Summary - Demonic versus the Divine: Man's doctrines are filled with ideas from demons. Sound doctrine is pure.*

.....

### Characteristics of those who promote man's doctrine

Hypocritical liars, seared consciences  
(I Tim. 4:1-7)

Conceited, understand nothing; morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words (I Tim. 6:1-6)

Men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth (I Tim. 6:1-6)

Teach for money (I Tim. 6:1-6, Titus 1:9-16)

Teach to tickle people's ears  
(II Tim. 4:3-4)

Rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, teaching spirituality through works (Titus 1:9-16)

Defiled and unbelieving – thus nothing is pure to them (Titus 1:9-16)

Seek their own glory (Jn. 7:18)

### Characteristics of those who promote divine doctrine

Show reverence, honor and respect  
(I Tim. 6:1-6)

Hold fast the faithful word which is in accordance with sound teaching, and able to exhort in sound doctrine and refute those who contradict (Titus 1:9-16)

Men with pure minds  
(Titus 1:15)

Teach because they love the truth  
(II Thess. 2:10)

Teach what the Holy Spirit gives  
(Jn. 7:16,17)

Spirituality is through grace alone  
(Eph. 2:9)

Believing and pure – thus all is pure to them (Titus 1:9-16)

Seek the glory of God (Jn. 7:18)

*Summary - Pure versus Impure Hearts: Man's doctrines come from men who are proud, hypocritical, defiled, unbelieving, and who have impure hearts. Sound doctrines come through men who have humble, believing and pure hearts.*

.....

### Examples of Man's Doctrine

Forbid marriage, advocate abstaining from foods (I Tim. 4:7)

### Examples of Divine Doctrine

Prayerfully and gratefully receive all food  
(I Tim. 4:7)

*Summary - Issues versus Relationship: Man focuses on issues; sound doctrine focuses on prayer, faith and worship.*

**The Bible's concluding discourse on doctrine:**

“Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance. Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored. Likewise urge the young men to be sensible; in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, **with purity in doctrine**, dignified, sound in speech which is beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us. Urge bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith **so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect**. For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you.” (Titus 2:2-15)

*Summary - Godliness through intimacy: The heart of sound doctrine is that it brings about intimacy with Christ, who grants righteous attitudes, motivations, character traits and actions.*

**Sound doctrine is birthed within the context of life, as God's revelation intersects the path we are on.**

While reasoned theology may come through a book or a classroom, it appears, biblically speaking, that sound doctrine is formed on the anvils of life. Moses received his sound doctrine at a burning bush on the backside of a desert (Ex. 3). The shepherds

heard sound doctrine when a heavenly chorus sang to them as they kept their sheep on a hillside in Galilee (Luke 2:8-20). Paul learned his sound doctrine in a revelatory experience on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-19), and then through three years alone with God in the Arabian wilderness (Gal. 1:15-18). The disciples developed their sound theology by living and walking with Jesus while He dwelt on this earth. After His death, they received revelation in their spirits as they walked down the Emmaus road and dialogued with Jesus (Lk. 24:13-35), and in the upper room through revelation of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1-2). Apollos gained his sound doctrine when his ministry was observed by Priscilla and Aquila, who then took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately (Acts 18:24-26).

The Bible is full of people receiving sound doctrine through revelation while they walked along the road of life. Very seldom, biblically speaking, do we see sound doctrine coming from a classroom. In fact, those in the classroom seemed to either miss the moves of God around them (no “Bible school” students showed up at the birth of Jesus), or they were trained to fight against the moves of God (Paul was, after his “Bible school” training, the chief persecutor of the Church). Unfortunately, in the classroom, eager students are usually taught to act according to reasoned theology, rather than revelation knowledge. As a result, they often live in either blindness or opposition to what God is doing in their world.

If the classroom does not lead the student away from man's reasoning and into revelation knowledge, then the classroom becomes a place that stands in opposition to what God is doing.

**Sound doctrine is confirmed within the Christian community.**

If we accept the premise that sound doctrine comes through revelation knowledge, what then keeps me from having my obtuse personal spiritual revelation and you having your obtuse personal spiritual

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revelation, and neither of us ever actually coming to truth? It is our inter-connectedness with the body of Christ.

When Paul returned from three years of revelation in the Arabian wilderness, he went to Jerusalem and spent 15 days with Peter (Gal. 1:18). Fourteen years later he again went to Jerusalem because of the revelation that he had received, and submitted it to the church leaders to make sure that they could agree with it and cover it (Gal. 2:1-2). And when division broke out concerning his revelation and ministry, it was at the Jerusalem counsel that it was settled (Acts 15). It was Paul who said that everything should be confirmed by the mouths of two or three witnesses (II Cor. 13:1).

The Bible declares that in the multitude of counselors there is safety (Prov. 11:14). God resists the proud and draws near to the humble (James 4:6). We are to remain humble enough to believe that what God has shown us, He has also shown to others who are seeking His face, and that other spiritual members of the body of Christ can confirm the revelation we ourselves have received. Truth exists not only within us **but also between us**. "For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ...For the body

is not one member, but many" (I Cor. 12:12-14, 27). **Together** we are the body of Christ.

**In summary: Sound doctrine incorporates the following experiences:**

1. The humble in heart seeking God (Matt. 5:8),
2. Receiving enlightenment from God (I Jn. 2:8),
3. Growing in faith and love (Gal. 5:6), and
4. Being transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit (I Jn. 2:9)
5. Within the context of life and community (II Cor. 13:1; Acts 15)

**Sound doctrine** incorporates the experiences of the humble in heart seeking God, being enlightened by God, growing in faith and love, and experiencing transformation by the power of the Holy Spirit while maintaining a relationship with life and community.

One point of clarification: The above five items are **necessary experiences**, not simply mental concepts. They can be found in all of Paul's writings. Digressions in various directions can often be seen, but these five pillars remain intact in all his writings and doctrinal theses.

### Rational Theology

1. Begins with man's reasoning
2. Continues with man's reason
3. Concludes with reasoned theology
4. Is transmitted through reason
5. Is generally quite rigid

### Sound Doctrine

1. Begins with the issues life brings to us
2. Adds the revelation of God
3. Concludes with anointed life transformation
4. Is transmitted through *lamad* instruction
5. Is generally fluid, growing with life's revelation

The vast majority of the Bible is narrative in style rather than didactic. However, even the sections of the Bible which are systematic (Romans, Hebrews, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, etc.) begin with a life situation, add the revelation of God to it, and call for life changes as a result of what has been revealed. This is sound doctrine.

### My Evaluation of Theology Books

Derek Prince's book *The Spirit Filled Believers Handbook*, which covers the six foundation doctrines of Hebrews 6:1,2 is my favorite systematic theology book, in that it is fully charismatic, and deals with the doctrines that God says are "foundational." Unfortunately, it is not very *lamad* (interactive). It is primarily didactic.

Wayne Grudem has an interesting book entitled *Systematic Theology*. It uses plain English and is down-to-earth. It is practical, devotional and has application questions, memory verses and songs at the end of each chapter, making it *lamad*. Unfortunately, it is not fully charismatic.

A typical evangelical systematic theological book would be *Comprehensive Handbook of Christian Doctrine* by John Lawson. In it we find chapters on God, Jesus, the cross, the resurrection, the Holy Spirit, the church, grace, the Bible, personal religion and the future.

Following are issues that my life has told me are important doctrines that should be covered, but are generally missed in Protestant systematic theology books: How is truth discovered? How do you sense your heart/spirit? How do you live in the spirit, walk in the spirit, and pray in the spirit? How do you hear God's voice? The writing out of your dialogue with Almighty God (journaling) is demonstrated in hundreds of chapters of Scripture, yet it is not found in systematic theology books. How do you live out of divine initiative, as Jesus did? How do you receive God's voice through dreams? How do you interpret your dreams so you can properly hear and respond to God's voice in them? (One-third of the Bible deals with dreams, visions and the stories and actions that come from these dreams and visions. That's a lot of the Bible to miss.) How do you open yourself to receive visions? How do you learn to operate in the gifts of the Holy Spirit? How do you live in the "abiding realities" of faith, hope and love (I Cor. 13:13)? How do these abiding realities release God into your life by granting you access to the throne of God (Heb. 10:

19-22)? (These qualities are to be the goal of our instruction [I Tim. 1:5]. The Bible promises us everything we need in life if we can learn to walk in faith, hope and love.)

"Orthodoxy, or right opinions, is, at best, but a very slender part of religion, if it can be allowed to be any part of it at all..." John Wesley (*A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists*: volume 8 of the older edition of the works, p 249)

May the twenty-first century produce books on "sound doctrine," which place revelation knowledge at the heart of the process, and draw the reader into revelation knowledge through the learning process!

### To review: Sound doctrine incorporates the following experiences:

1. The humble in heart seeking God (Matt. 5:8),
2. Receiving enlightenment from God (I Jn. 2:8),
3. Growing in faith and love (Gal. 5:6), and
4. Being transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit (I Jn. 2:9)
5. Within the context of life and community (II Cor. 13:1; Acts 15)

**Assignment:** Prayerfully meditate on the following books and see if you find the above distinguishing experiences of sound doctrine incorporated into these New Testament theological writings.

Romans  
Galatians  
Ephesians  
Philippians  
Colossians  
Hebrews

Record what you discover from the above meditation upon Scripture. Pray: "Lord, what do You want to say to me concerning sound doctrine?" Record what He says. Share what you are learning with a friend or with others in your group.



# 3

## Teaching as the Foundation of Doctrine and Theology

Since there were only 15 verses on doctrine in the entire New American Standard Bible, no verses on theology, and a good half of the 15 verses deal with wrong doctrine, is there any place else we can go to find additional instruction concerning doctrine?

The Greek word for doctrine is *didaskalia*, literally meaning “teaching.” Therefore, in addition to examining the word “doctrine” (which we did in the last chapter), we will now explore the verses which discuss “teaching,” specifically in reference to answering the questions: “What exactly should teaching look like, biblically speaking?” and “What is the biblically-stated role of doctrine or systematic theology?” There are 292 verses in the NASB which have the work “teach\*” in them. A summary of a prayerful review of these 292 verses is provided in this chapter and the next. In this chapter, we will deal with the New Testament verses on teaching; in the next we will look at what the Old Testaments says about it.

As you go through these verses, ask yourself, “Does what I am learning adjust my view of what teaching is supposed to be?” Underline key ideas in the verses that answer the questions asked in the captions above the verses.

**Christian teaching revolves around the good news of the advancement of the Kingdom of God, with a demonstration of the casting down of satan’s kingdom.**

**How is the overthrow of satan’s kingdom demonstrated in Jesus’ teaching style?**

“Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people.” (Matt. 4:23)

“Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and

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proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness." (Matt. 9:35)

"They were all amazed, so that they debated among themselves, saying, 'What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him.'" (Mk.1:27)

"When the Sabbath came, He began to teach in the synagogue; and the many listeners were astonished, saying, 'Where did this man get these things, and what is this wisdom given to Him, and such miracles as these performed by His hands?'" (Mk.6:2)

"One day He was teaching; and there were some Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem; and the power of the Lord was present for Him to perform healing." (Lk. 5:17)

"On another Sabbath He entered the synagogue and was teaching; and there was a man there whose right hand was withered..." (Lk. 6:6).

"This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, 'Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.'" (Jn. 3:2)

**What was the response of the crowds to Jesus' teaching? What characteristic of Jesus' teaching brought about this response?**

"When Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes." (Matt. 7:28,29)

**What motivated Jesus' teaching?**

"When Jesus went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things." (Mk. 6:34)

**What characterized Jesus' teaching style? Why?**

"All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables, and He did not speak to them without a parable." (Matt. 13:34)

We say that a picture is worth a thousand words, and that pictures are the language of the heart. How critical do you think it is to use (verbal, word) pictures in your communication process?

**What is to be the content of our teaching?**

"Preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ." (Acts 28:31)

**What is to be the goal of teaching?**

"We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ." (Col. 1:28)

**What advances the administration of God?**

"Furthering the administration of God which is by faith." (I Tim. 1:4)

**What is to be the goal of our teaching? Are these head or heart realities? What is the specific value of these three things?**

"But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith." (I Tim. 1:5)

**Note what gives us access into the presence of God.**

"Let us draw near (i.e. into the presence of God) with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water." (Heb. 10:22)

**Who appoints teachers to teach?**

"And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers." (Eph. 4:11)

“For which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher.” (II Tim. 1:11)

**From Whom did Jesus’ teaching come?**

“So Jesus answered them and said, ‘My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me.’” (Jn. 7:16)

**Who teaches us what to say?**

“For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.” (Lk. 12:12)

**Who is our inner Teacher? What is He doing within us? Have you experienced this?**

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.” (Jn. 14:26)

“As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.” (I Jn. 2:27)

“AND THEY SHALL NOT TEACH EVERYONE HIS FELLOW CITIZEN, AND EVERYONE HIS BROTHER, SAYING, ‘KNOW THE LORD,’ FOR ALL WILL KNOW ME, FROM THE LEAST TO THE GREATEST OF THEM.” (Heb. 8:11)

**What does the obedient Christian’s spirit know?**

“If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself.” (Jn. 7:17)

**What is to be the proper response to sound teaching?**

“But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed.” (Rom. 6:17)

**Which Scriptures can be used as a base for teaching?**

“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.” (II Tim. 3:16)

**What are the elementary teachings that all Christians should be taught?**

“Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.” (Heb. 6:1,2)

**How does man’s teaching differ from God’s teaching?**

“Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind, and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God. If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, ‘Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!’ (which all refer to things destined to perish with use) -- in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence.” (Col. 2:18-23)

**What are some characteristics of false teachers?**

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires.” (II Tim. 4:3)

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“Be on guard against him yourself, for he vigorously opposed our teaching.” (II Tim. 4:15)

“Who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain. One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, ‘Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.’ This testimony is true. For this reason reprove them severely so that they may be sound in the faith, not paying attention to Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth. To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.” (Tit. 1:11-16)

“But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.” (II Pet. 2:1)

“Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son.” (II Jn. 9)

“If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting.” (II Jn 10)

“As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith. But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. For some men, straying from these things, have

turned aside to fruitless discussion, wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions.” (I Tim. 1:3-7)

### What will teachers face?

“Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment.” (James 3:1)

### My prayerful summary concerning sound teaching:

The heart of biblical teaching (sound doctrine) is the advancement of the kingdom of God, which is by faith. We teach how to grow in our intimacy with God through the Holy Spirit, which gives us access into the presence of God where we receive divine direction and divine empowerment so we can do the supernatural works of God in defeating the kingdom of satan and increasing the kingdom of Christ. The Holy Spirit births sound teaching within the teacher, and the Holy Spirit within the listener witnesses that the teaching he is hearing is sound. Sound teaching focuses primarily on heart realities, building faith, hope, love, and a clear conscience.

### Personal Application

1. What has been your own experience of teaching? Have you had positive or negative experiences? Write these out and share them with someone you pray or fellowship with.
2. What is God saying to you about proper teaching? Write down what God impressed on you as you read this chapter, and share it with someone you pray or fellowship with.
3. Which concepts in Scripture concerning teaching were new to you as you read this chapter? Which of these concepts did the Lord impress on you most? Write these out and share them with someone you pray or fellowship with.
4. What issues brought out in this chapter resonated with your heart? Which disturbed

your heart? Write these down and share them with someone else you pray or fellowship with.

5. Write a list of the characteristics of proper teaching that are most significant to you. Who have you heard that exemplifies teaching, as Jesus did it?
6. Ask God what He would say to you concerning the principles presented in this chapter. Share this journaling with another.

### **Group Application**

1. Invite group members to share the answers to the questions above, as they feel free to do so.
2. Have the group break into pairs and pray for the most significant issues raised for each person in reading this chapter and answering the questions above.



# 4

## Teaching and Discipleship in the Old Testament and New Testament

Mentoring that Keeps the Holy Spirit at the Center of Training  
and Keeps Healing at the Heart of Proclaiming the Gospel

Dr. Gary S. Greig

The way that I made it through my undergraduate and graduate school degree programs was through continual prayer and conscious dependence on the Lord—praying for wisdom and understanding in all my studies. I finished a B.A. degree at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Israel, in 1983 and a Ph.D. in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations from the University of Chicago in 1990. All my studies at the Hebrew University were in modern Hebrew, which I had to learn before entering my course of study there. When I told my academic advisor, Aviva Rosen, an older Israeli woman, that I had no family in Israel and had just had a summer to study modern Hebrew before entering the classroom where all my lectures would be in Hebrew, she exclaimed in Hebrew “My God!” And I thought, “Yes Lord, only you, God, can help me do this and succeed!” I had received prophetic words before traveling to Israel that the Lord would be with me and give me success, and I leaned hard on those prophetic promises in my prayers.

In my department of the University of Chicago, doctoral course-work and dissertation research normally took doctoral students ten years to complete, but I was able to complete the necessary course-work and research in seven years between 1983 and 1990. I say this not to praise myself. I was an average-to-above-average student all my life. I say this to demonstrate how the power of prayer and conscious dependence on God’s Spirit for all knowledge and wisdom can and should transform a Christian’s study in traditional academic degree-work, including seminary and Bible college degree-work.

Countless times, I remember praying and asking the Lord for wisdom in what I was studying, and He would prompt me to look in a certain book or journal, or He would let me stumble across the exact information I needed. Once a ruthless junior instructor at the University of Chicago, teaching a course in Old Egyptian (the oldest and most

difficult form of ancient Egyptian), gave the class an impossible assignment to translate a very difficult Old Egyptian hieroglyphic inscription without giving us the normal references to journal articles analyzing the text. We had two days to translate the text into English and our grades (and chances for university scholarships) were depending on it. Well, my knee-jerk reaction was to pray and cry out to God for mercy! As I was doing so the Lord seemed to point to one volume of the Journal of Egyptian Archaeology among about 100 similar volumes. The quiet prompting of the Holy Spirit was persistent, “Look at that volume!” I picked out the volume, which had perhaps 200 pages of articles, and the first page I opened to was an article analyzing and translating the very Old Egyptian hieroglyphic text that we had been assigned in the class! Needless to say, I was thanking the Lord as I shared the information with my classmates, who were not Christians but among whom the Lord got the glory! As a result we were all ready for the next class, though our instructor had no idea how we were all so well-prepared to translate and discuss the text!

Experiences like this taught me what the Old Testament means when it says, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowing the Holy One is understanding” (Prov. 9:10). The Lord already knows all there is to know. That is why Scripture calls Him the “Spirit of Truth” who will “guide you into all truth” (John 16:13; cf. John 14:17; 15:26; 1 John 4:6). We fail to honor the Lord, the Spirit of Truth, when we do not seek Him for all knowledge and understanding that we wish to acquire. The sin of the Garden was that Adam and Eve impatiently grabbed for the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil without calling on or waiting for the Lord (Gen 3:6). They made it happen by themselves without consciously waiting for or depending on the Lord. And this is what happens in every classroom where Christian leaders in universities, colleges, seminaries, and Bible colleges—even with the best of intentions—try to figure it out for themselves, just them and their gray matter, apart from consciously depending on and asking the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth.

The Old and New Testaments present all teaching, education, and ministry preparation as a process of depending on God’s Spirit within a framework of mentoring modeled after the nuclear family.

## Old Testament Foundations

### The Old Testament Model of Teaching and Training

In the Old Testament, teaching, mentoring, and discipleship followed a pattern of teachers and students consciously listening to and depending on the Lord, and a pattern of parents teaching their children. These patterns of teaching and training were marked by parental authority, trust and respect.

### Abraham Listened and Obeyed

In Romans 4:16 Paul says that Abraham is the father of our faith. From a simple perusal of Genesis 12-25, it is clear that Abraham’s faith-walk was characterized by listening to and depending on the Lord’s voice and then obeying God, even in cases where the consequences were uncertain, intimidating, and painful:

**Gen. 12:1, 4** “The LORD had said to Abram, ‘Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you.’ . . . So Abram left, as the LORD had told him.”

**Gen. 15:4-6** “Then the word of the LORD came to him: ‘This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir. . . . Look up at the heavens and count the stars -- if indeed you can count them. . . . So shall your offspring be . . .’ Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.”

**Gen. 15:9-10** “So the LORD said to him, ‘Bring me a heifer, a goat and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon.’ Abram brought all these to him.”

**Gen 17:9-11, 23** “Then God said to Abraham, ‘As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come. . . . Every male among you shall be circumcised.’ . . . On that very day Abraham took his son Ishmael and all those born in his household or bought with his money, every male in his household, and circumcised them, as God told him.”

**Gen. 21:9-14** “But Sarah saw that the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham was mocking, and she said to Abraham, ‘Get rid of that slave woman and her son, for that slave woman’s son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac.’ The matter distressed Abraham greatly because it concerned his son. But God said to him, ‘Do not be so distressed about the boy and your maidservant. Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.’ . . . Early the next morning Abraham took some food and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar. He set them on her shoulders and then sent her off with the boy.”

**Gen. 22:2-3** “Then God said, ‘Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about.’ Early the next morning Abraham got up and saddled his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about.”

Since Abraham is the model of the faith about which we are forming teaching, doctrine, theology and ministry practice, this pattern of listening to and obeying God’s voice should be the foundational model for the development of all doctrine and theology in the Church. It should also be the foundation of all Christian education and all training in theology and ministry preparation.

## Solomon Had a Listening Heart

Solomon is remembered for his unusual knowledge and wisdom (1 Kg. 4:29-34):

**1Kings 4:29-30, 34** “God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore. Solomon’s wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the men of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt. . . . Men of all nations came to listen to Solomon’s wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom.”

The Queen of Sheba came thousands of miles to investigate Solomon’s wisdom, according to I Kings 10:1-9.

What we need to note about Solomon’s wisdom is that it came from a “listening heart.” The Hebrew phrase *lev shomea* in I Kings 3:9 is literally to be translated “listening heart,”<sup>1</sup> and it is described three verses later with the Hebrew phrase *lev hakham venavon* “a wise and discerning heart.”

**1Kings 3:9-12** “So give your servant a listening heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours? . . . So God said to him, ‘. . . I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be.’”

What is clear from this passage is that the special anointing of wisdom from God’s Spirit that was bestowed on Solomon consisted of a heart that listened to God’s voice and received the wisdom needed for the moment. Solomon demonstrated the wisdom God gave him in the case of the two prostitutes in I Kings 3:16-28. Two aspects of the supernatural wisdom that God gave him are illustrated in the case. First, ethical, righteous insight—what is right before the Lord—is

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demonstrated. Secondly, shrewdness and skillful insight—how to find out whose baby it was—are illustrated in Solomon’s response to the prostitutes.

Thus, wisdom, and along with it, pure doctrine and sound theology, are issues of the heart, not just the mind—a “listening heart” that looks for and listens to the voice of God’s Spirit to lead one into all truth.

### Proverbs 2: All Wisdom Comes from Asking God

The same principle seen in the historical narratives of Abraham and Solomon is seen in the didactic wisdom literature of the Old Testament. Proverbs chapter 2 establishes the same foundational principle of wisdom in the book of Proverbs and in the corpus of Hebrew wisdom literature (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs). Proverbs 2 shows that wisdom comes from asking the Lord for wisdom and consciously listening to His voice:

**Prov. 2:3-10** “If you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, . . . then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. . . . Then you will understand what is right and just and fair -- every good path. For wisdom will enter your heart.”

This passage makes clear that wisdom comes from asking the Lord for it. The Hebrew phrase *da’at ’elohim* “knowledge of God” refers to intimate interaction with God. The Hebrew noun *da’at* “knowledge” refers to *intimate* knowledge, since it comes from the same root as the verb *yada’* “to know” which includes the connotations to “know by experience”<sup>2</sup> (Josh. 23:14; Hos. 13:4; 9:7; Isa. 9:8; Ps. 14:4; Job 20:20) and “to know sexually”<sup>3</sup> (Gen. 4:1, 17, 25; 24:16; 38:26; etc). Proverbs 2:3-10 shows that this kind of “knowledge of God” includes calling out to Him for insight and understanding. The passage clearly shows that it is the spontaneity of hearing God’s voice and intimate relationship

with God that causes true wisdom and knowledge to enter one’s heart.

This pattern of calling out to the Lord for wisdom and knowledge and then listening to His voice provides the foundation for all biblical models of teaching and training which will be touched on below, especially the foundational parent-child teaching model.

### The Parent-Child Teaching Model Based on the Ten Commandments

The Old Testament parent-child model of teaching and training is based on the fifth commandment of the Ten Commandments, “Honor your father and your mother so that you may live long in the land” (Ex. 20:12; Deut. 5:16).<sup>4</sup> And it is practically worked out in Deuteronomy 6:4-7:

**Deut. 6:4-7** “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 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.”

The parent-child teaching model communicates trust, accountability, authority, and respect.

The Ten Commandments in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 are the foundational principles of the relationship of God’s people to God<sup>5</sup> and are a sort of table of contents to all covenant law in the Old Testament. The Ten Commandments are still in force in the new covenant according to Romans 13:8-9.

The fifth commandment is recognized by Old Testament scholars to represent parental authority as the pattern for all human authority under God<sup>6</sup>—religious authority, educational authority, civil authority, and state authority. The laws of Deuteronomy are arranged in a way that

corresponds loosely to the order of topics in the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy 5, which acts as a sort of Table of Contents to the laws in Deuteronomy.<sup>7</sup> In the spread of legal topics covered in Deuteronomy, laws about religious, civil, and state authority in Deuteronomy 17-18 fall under the category of the fifth commandment to honor father and mother.<sup>8</sup> Deuteronomy 17-18 covers the authority of judges, priests, kings, and prophets. The image of father and mother, then, was the model of human authority in ancient Israel and in Scripture, and this parental model forms the basis of parent-child educational and training patterns in the Old and New Testaments.

### The Corporate, National Application of the Parent-Child Teaching Model

Against this background, Proverbs 1:8's command about the teaching and instructions of fathers and mothers takes on more significance (Proverbs 1:8 is also mirrored by similar statements in Prov. 6:20; 23:22; 30:17; 31:1; Ex. 21:17; Lev. 19:3; 20:9; Deut. 27:16; Ezek. 22:7):

**Prov. 1:8** "Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching."

Most of us have read this as just applying to individual families, but that is not the only way it was understood in ancient Israel. The book of Proverbs and all Old Testament wisdom literature (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes) were written to train not only individual families in ancient Israel but also to train the nation and its leaders as a whole. Instruction in ancient Israel took place in three institutions:<sup>9</sup>

- 1) the family (Deut. 6:4ff);
- 2) the royal court (the setting of Prov. 1:1 and Eccl. 1:1);
- 3) the scribal schools (Jer. 8:8-9; Prov. 25:1)

Proverbs 25:1 says the scribes of King Hezekiah's court copied and compiled certain proverbs of Solomon—these proverbs were considered relevant to the royal court where Israel's leaders were trained:

**Prov. 25:1** "These are more proverbs of Solomon, copied by the men of Hezekiah king of Judah."

Ecclesiastes 12:9-10 adds to this picture that teaching the nation's leaders was part of the purpose of compiling, copying, and studying wisdom literature in the royal court.

**Eccl. 12:9-14** "Not only was the Teacher wise, but also he imparted knowledge to the people. He pondered and searched out and set in order many proverbs. The Teacher searched to find just the right words, and what he wrote was upright and true. The words of the wise are like goads, their collected sayings like firmly embedded nails --given by one Shepherd. Furthermore, my son, beware (of them). Of making many books there is no end, and much study wearies the body. Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole [duty] of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil."

Therefore Proverbs 1:8's command about listening to parents' teaching and instruction applied not just to individual families but also to the nation as a whole and national leaders. After all, the nation came from one family—Abraham's family. The nation as a whole was to listen to spiritual leaders whom God raised up among them; they were to listen to the instruction of spiritual fathers in the faith—Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Gideon, David, Elijah, Elisha, and all the prophets—and not to forsake the teaching of spiritual mothers in the faith—Miriam (Ex. 15:20; Mic. 6:4), Deborah (Jud. 4-5), Huldah the prophetess (2 Kg. 22); the "noble

wife” of Proverbs 31—Prov. 31:26 “she speaks with wisdom and faithful instruction is on her tongue.”

### The “Sons of the Prophets:” Prophetic Ministry Training Schools

The “sons of the prophets” made up regional training schools for prophetic ministry in ancient Israel, where prophetic trainees looked to senior prophets as spiritual fathers. Training in prophetic ministry is found throughout the Hebrew Bible, and all Old Testament scholars recognize this.<sup>10</sup> The prophets had disciples who were mentored and trained by them. Isaiah 8: 16 mentions “my disciples.” The name “sons of the prophets” is used of these groups of disciples in the Hebrew Bible (II Kgs. 2: 3, 5, 7, 15; 4:1, 38; 5:22; 6:1; 9:1). Elisha prayed for and helped his servant to see in the Spirit in II Kings 6:16-17, just like Elijah mentored and trained Elisha as his disciple (I Kgs. 19:16-21).

It is clear from such passages that these groups of “the sons of the prophets” were under the general supervision of a senior prophet. They often lived with and ate with the senior prophet. And it is clear from such passages as II Kings 6:1-7 (and II Kgs. 4:38; 9:1) that a senior prophet like Elisha supervised, mentored, and trained these groups of less experienced prophets:

**II Kgs. 6:1-7** “The sons of the prophets said to Elisha, ‘Look, the place where we meet with you is too small for us. Let us go to the Jordan, where each of us can get a pole; and let us build a place there for us to live.’ And he said, ‘Go.’ Then one of them said, ‘Won’t you please come with your servants?’ ‘I will,’ Elisha replied. And he went with them. They went to the Jordan and began to cut down trees. As one of them was cutting down a tree, the iron axhead fell into the water. ‘Oh, my lord,’ he cried out, ‘it was borrowed!’ The man of God asked, ‘Where did it fall?’ When he showed him the place,

Elisha cut a stick and threw it there, and made the iron float. ‘Lift it out,’ he said. Then the man reached out his hand and took it.”

The prophet Amos even goes out of his way in Amos 7:14 to make it clear that he did not come up in such schools of the prophets by saying “I am not a prophet nor the son of a prophet. Indeed I am a herdsman . . . and the Lord took me.” In other words, he did not get the “conventional” training most prophets received among the “sons of the prophets.”

The senior prophet, who mentored and trained the younger prophets, was considered to be a spiritual father to those being trained, as II Kings 2:11-12 makes clear:

**II Kgs. 2:11-12** “As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind. Elisha saw this and cried out, ‘My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!’ And Elisha saw him no more. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them apart.”

### Deborah as a Prophetic “Mother in Israel”

The fifth commandment and the corporate, national application of Proverbs 1:8 (and the related passages Prov. 6:20; 23:22; 30:17; 31:1; Ex. 21:17; Lev. 19:3; 20:9; Deut. 27:16; Ezek. 22:7) explains why Deborah was recognized as a “mother in Israel” (Jud. 5:7). She was recognized, like the other judges of the period, as a spiritual leader, judging, teaching, and leading the nation in Judges 4-5.

**Jud. 4:4-8** “Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that time. She held court under the Palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites came to her to have their disputes decided. She

sent for Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali and said to him, "The LORD, the God of Israel, commands you: "Go, take with you ten thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulun and lead the way to Mount Tabor. I will lure Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his troops to the Kishon River and give him into your hands." Barak said to her, "If you go with me, I will go; but if you don't go with me, I won't go."

Judges 4-5 gives no evidence whatsoever for the oft-heard claim that Deborah's leadership represents an exception or aberration because of lack of male leadership. (Barak's timidity comes after her leadership is recognized.) On the contrary, Deborah is presented by the book of Judges as one of the model-judges, a godly leader without obvious sin or fault.<sup>11</sup> And God used Deborah to call a man, Barak, to his place of leadership in Judges 4:6. The account of Deborah is at the beginning of the book of Judges where accounts of model judges are found. The sequence of accounts of the judges goes from the model judge, Othniel, in Judges 3 to the end of the book of Judges containing accounts of judges who sank into various levels of sin like Samson (powerfully anointed but chasing foreign women in obvious disobedience to God's law) in Judges 13-16.<sup>12</sup> Deborah's account is toward the "model-judge" beginning of the book of Judges.

## Intertestamental Jewish and Rabbinic Training & Teaching

### Training in Word and Deed According to the Old Testament Parent-child Model

Intertestamental Jewish and Rabbinic teaching and learning continued the Old Testament patterns and was based on an intimate relationship between teacher and pupil. The teacher's spoken word was learned and his example imitated. The very title of Rabbinic Mishnaic tractates like *Pirke*

*Avot*, "Sayings of the Fathers," suggests that the Old Testament parent-child model was central to Rabbinic training. The Apocryphal book of Ben Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) reflects the views of intertestamental Judaism on teaching and training. Ben Sirach exhorts the prospective student to find a wise teacher. The pupil is to "attach" himself to his teacher (6:34) and virtually live in his house (6:36):

**Ben Sirach 6:34, 36** "Take your stand in the throng of elders: which of them is wise? Attach yourself to him. . . . If you see a man of understanding, go to him early, And let your feet wear out his doorstep."

For the Rabbis, teaching *Torah* ("the Law" referring to revelation written and oral) was not merely an academic task. All learning was lived out. There was no separation of head knowledge from practical learning. This is why Rabbi Shammai says, "Make your *Torah* a fixed duty. Say little and do much" (*Pirke Avot* I.15). Their disciples saw "living *Torah*" in their teacher's life. Finkelstein gives this example of rabbinic training in word and deed:

So anxious was [Rabbi] Akiba . . . to master . . . the rules of proper behavior that he followed every action of his teachers with the closest scrutiny and recorded their slightest habits, . . . . On one occasion he actually followed Joshua into a privy. "And I learned from him three good habits," he said many years afterward. "How could you be so disrespectful to your teacher?" asked Ben Azzai. "I considered everything part of the *Torah* and I needed to learn."<sup>13</sup>

It is safe to assume that the Old Testament pattern of listening to and depending on the Lord's voice was also known in this period. But it is clear that by the time Jesus interacted with the Jewish religious leaders, the latter had largely neglected the foundational principle of listening to and depending on the Lord's voice:

**John 5:37-40** “And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent. You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.”

## New Testament Teaching and Training

Unfortunately, the place of the Lord Himself as primary teacher, seen in the Old Testament patterns above, seems to have been usurped by human teachers in intertestamental period Judaism, and this required a major correction in the New Testament in passages like the following:

**Matt. 15:7-9** “You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: “These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.”

**John 5:37-40** “And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent. You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.”

**John 7:17** “If anyone chooses to do God’s will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.”

**John 10:27-28** “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them

eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.”

**1 Cor. 2:13** “This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.”

**1 John 2:27** “As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit -- just as it has taught you, remain in him.”

The foundation of Paul’s own “sound doctrine” (1 Tim. 1:10; 2 Tim. 4:3; Tit 1:9; 2:1) was an *encounter* with the Spirit of Jesus on the road to Damascus, where his doctrine about the Messiah was *corrected* by the Holy Spirit in a space of probably 30 seconds! The heart of the gospel preached by Paul—that faith in Christ alone justified believers before God—was revelationally received by Paul from the Holy Spirit, according to Galatians 1:12-2:10. And this revelationally-received gospel was also informed by what was passed down to Paul from other Christians: In 1 Corinthians 15:3ff Paul mentions “what I received,” and he also mentions the information about who Christ appeared to in Jerusalem after the resurrection, which he obviously received from Christian leaders in Jerusalem.

According to 1 John 2:27 the anointing of the Holy Spirit is to be the core and foundational source of teaching and doctrine in each believer’s life, but obviously this revelationally-based teaching of the Spirit will be supplemented by teaching from other Christians, as indeed John’s letter in 1 John teaches the recipients about discerning false prophets and demonic teachings.

Thus the New Testament strongly emphasizes the same pattern seen in the Old Testament—the primary place of God and His Spirit as the teacher of every believer, and the primary place of listening to His voice and depending on His Spirit’s direction

and teaching. Within this context all human-level teaching, mentoring, and discipleship was to take place in the church. And Jesus' ministry, based on these patterns, was to be the model for every believer in the church.

### The Parent-Child Model of Teaching and Discipleship in the New Testament

Jesus and the apostles continued to use the Old Testament parent-child language to describe their relationships with those they taught and discipled. The term "children" (Greek *hyioi* literally "sons" denoting "children") is often used in the New Testament to refer to disciples<sup>14</sup> (Mk. 10:24; John 13:33; 1 Cor. 4:14; 2 Cor. 6:11-13; Gal. 4:19; 1 Thes. 2:7, 11; 1 Tim. 1:2, 18; 2 Tim. 1:2; 2:1; Philemon 10; Heb. 2:11-13; 1 Pet. 5:18; 1 Jn. 2:1, 12, 13, 18, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21; 3 John 4):

**Mark 10:24** "The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, 'Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!'"

**John 13:33** "My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come."

**1 Cor. 4:14** "I am not writing this to shame you, but to warn you, as my dear children."

**Gal. 4:19** "My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you. . . ."

**1 Thes. 2:7** "But we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children."

**1 Thes. 2:11** "For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children."

**1 Tim. 1:2** "To Timothy my true son in the faith; Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord."

**Philem. 10** "I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains."

**Heb. 2:11-13** "Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. He says, 'I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises.' And again, 'I will put my trust in him.' And again he says, 'Here am I, and the children God has given me.'"

**1 John 2:1** "My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One."

**1 John 5:21** "Dear children, keep yourselves from idols."

Again, this parent-child relationship between teacher and disciple connotes trust, accountability, authority, and respect. This is the kind of mentoring relationship that is needed for ministry training and theological training to be fully biblical.

### Jesus Consciously Listened to and Depended on God the Father

Jesus' Kingdom message and Kingdom ministry followed the Old Testament patterns reviewed above. All of Jesus' life and teaching was based on the pattern of consciously listening to, watching, and depending on God the Father:

**John 3:34** "For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit."

**John 5:19** "Jesus gave them this answer: 'I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.'"

**John 7:16** “Jesus answered, ‘My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me.’”

**John 8:28** “So Jesus said, ‘When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am [the one I claim to be] and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me.’”

**John 12:49-50** “For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say.”

**John 14:10** “Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.”

Jesus came bearing the authority of the Kingdom of God in the power of the Spirit. The Kingdom was the in-breaking of God’s dynamic rule and it was the center of Jesus’ message (“the good news of the Kingdom of God” Luke 4:43).

### **Kingdom Conflict—We Are in a Multi-Dimensional Sin-War**

Jesus preached the in-breaking of God’s Kingdom against Satan’s Kingdom, and we would do well to keep it in mind, because all teaching and training and all doctrine and theology affect and are affected by this Kingdom conflict. When we receive Jesus and put our faith in Him we are born again as God’s children (John 1:12-13), we receive His Holy Spirit (Gal. 4:6; Eph. 1:13-14), and we come into God’s Kingdom (John 3:3, 16; Acts 26:18; Col. 1:12-14). We are then caught up in a war for human souls between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Satan (Matt. 11:12; 12:28-29; Mk. 1:15, 21-25, 39; John 12:31; Acts 10:38; Eph. 6:10-18; Col. 1:13-14; Heb. 2:14-15; Jas. 4:7-8; 1 John 3:8).

Satan’s Kingdom is the “The Kingdom of Darkness” (Col. 1:13 “dominion of darkness”). Satan takes advantage of our sinful human nature—“the flesh”—which is already hostile toward the things of God (Gal. 5:16-17). He is the “spirit that is now at work (Grk. *energein* “to work, energize”) in those who are disobedient” (Eph. 2:2)—Satan and his demons energize our fallen nature to sin. We are caught in the clash of God’s Kingdom advancing against the Kingdom of Darkness (Matt. 11:12; 12:28), and from Genesis to Revelation, it is a multi-dimensional sin-war.

God’s Kingdom is a “Kingdom of Light” (Col. 1:12). Jesus brought a more powerful Kingdom (Matt. 12:28). Jesus declared war on the oppressor (Luke 4:18-19; Acts 10:38). Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8), to reverse sin and the results of sin—lies, inner wounds, sickness, bondage, death, demonization. Our teaching, training, and theology should clearly cover these priorities of Jesus. Jesus defeated Satan one-on-one in the wilderness temptation (Matt. 4; Luke 4), over and over again in His healings (e.g., Luke 4:38-41), in casting out demons (e.g. Matt. 12:28), in forgiving sins (e.g., Luke 5:19-20), in calming weather (Luke 8:22-25), and in raising people from the dead (Luke 7:11-17; John 11:1-44). Jesus finally defeated Satan through His own death and resurrection (Col. 2:15).

### **Jesus’ Kingdom Message and Kingdom Ministry—Word and Deed, Preaching and Healing**

Through preaching and healing Jesus proclaimed the good news of God’s Kingdom, breaking in to free God’s people from the Kingdom of Darkness. Jesus’ message and His ministry were one. Jesus’ preaching and teaching about God’s Kingdom were regularly accompanied by healing and casting out demons, which demonstrated God’s Kingdom right then.

**Matt. 4:23** “Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.”

**Mk. 1:39** “So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.”

**Lk. 4:40-43** “The people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying hands on each one, he healed them. Moreover, demons came out of many people. . . They tried to keep him from leaving them. But he said, ‘I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to other towns also, because that is why I was sent.’”

**Lk. 5:15** “Crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses.”

**Lk. 5:17 (Mat. 9:1ff.; Mk. 2:1ff.)** “He was teaching. . . And the power of the Lord was present for him to heal the sick.”

Following are full references to Jesus’ preaching accompanied by healing & deliverance: **Matt.** 4:23; 9:35-36; 10:1, 7-8; 11:5; 12:15, 18; 15:30; 19:2 [cf. Mk. 10:1]; 21:14 [cf. Lk. 21:37]; **Mk.** 1: 38-39; 2:2, 11; 3:14-15; 6:12-13; 10:1 (cf. Mat. 19:2) **Lk.** 4:18; 5:17, 24; 6:6-11, 17-18; 7:22; 9:1-2; 10:9, 13; 13: 10-13, 22, 32; 14:4, 7ff.; 21:37 [cf. Mat. 21:14]; 16: 15-18, 20 **Jn.** 3:2; 7:14-15, 21-23, 31, 38; 10:25, 32, 38; 12:37, 49; 14:10, 12; **Acts** 1:1; 2:22; 10:38.

New Testament scholars have recognized for some time that alongside preaching, Jesus’ healing and casting out demons was His *primary* means of proclaiming the gospel of God’s Kingdom.

**Matt. 12:15-18** “Jesus withdrew from that place. Many followed him, and he healed all their sick, warning them not to tell who he was. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: ‘Here is my

servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations.”

R. H. Fuller sees the unity of his message and ministry. He writes, “. . . the miracles of Jesus are part and parcel of his kerygmatic activity. In fact, the miracles are part of the proclamation itself, quite as much as the spoken words of Jesus.”<sup>15</sup>

F.F. Bruce, the well-known evangelical British New Testament scholar, considered Jesus’ healing ministry an integral part of the message Jesus preached: “While the miracles served as signs, they were not performed in order to be signs. They were as much a part and parcel of Jesus’s ministry as was his preaching--not. . . seals affixed to the document to certify its genuineness but an integral element in the very text of the document.”<sup>16</sup>

The German New Testament scholar, Prof. Gerhard Friedrich of Tübingen, points out that the New Testament concept of preaching the gospel is more than verbally communicating the rational content of the gospel and that it includes demonstrating the power of the gospel through healing ministry:

*Euaggelizesthai* [“to preach the gospel”] is not just speaking and preaching; it is proclamation with full authority and power. Signs and wonders accompany the evangelical message. They belong together, for the Word is powerful and effective. The proclamation of the age of grace, of the rule of God, creates a healthy state in every respect. Bodily disorders are healed and man’s relationship to God is set right (Mt. 4:23; 9: 35; 11:5; Lk. 9:6; Acts 8:4-8; 10: 36ff.; 14:8-18; 16:17ff.; Rom. 15:16-20; 2 Cor. 12:12; Gal. 3: 5). Joy reigns where this Word is proclaimed (Acts 8:8). It brings

*soteria* ["salvation"] (1 Cor. 15:1f.). . . Hence, *euaggelizesthai* ["to preach the gospel"] is to offer salvation. It is the powerful proclamation of the good news, the impartation of *soteria* ["salvation"]. This would be missed if *euaggelizesthai* ["to preach the gospel"] were to take place in human fashion *en sophia logou* ["(merely) in the wisdom of words"] (1 Cor. 1:17).<sup>17</sup>

Professor Alan Richardson, a British New Testament scholar, affirmed that "The connexion between healing and salvation . . . is a characteristic feature of the Gospel tradition. miracles of healing are, as it were, symbolic demonstrations of God's forgiveness in action."<sup>18</sup>

The Dutch New Testament scholar, H. van der Loos, sees the healing and deliverance ministry of Jesus as part of Jesus' proclaiming God's Kingdom: "As evidential power it identifies Jesus as the Messiah-King and reveals His divine mission. As militant power it reveals Jesus as the adversary of all the forces of ruin. For Jesus has come to smash the forces of disease, sin and death, to dethrone Satan. This dual nature of the power function finds striking expression in Jesus' important pronouncement: 'But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God is come unto you,' Mt. 12:28, and cf. Lk. 11:20."<sup>19</sup>

### Jesus Trained the Disciples to Depend on God's Spirit and to Preach and Heal

Jesus taught the disciples to depend absolutely on God and to live by radical faith everywhere He sent them to preach the gospel. He told them to take no supplies with them but to radically depend on God the Father to provide their spiritual and physical needs wherever they were sent to preach the gospel and heal the sick:

**Matt. 10:7-11** "As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have

leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. Do not take along any gold or silver or copper in your belts; take no bag for the journey, or extra tunic, or sandals or a staff; for the worker is worth his keep. Whatever town or village you enter, search for some worthy person there and stay at his house until you leave."

**Mark 6:7-10** "Calling the Twelve to him, he sent them out two by two and gave them authority over evil spirits. These were his instructions: 'Take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. Wear sandals but not an extra tunic. Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town."

**Luke 9:1-6** "When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. He told them: 'Take nothing for the journey --no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra tunic. Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that town. If people do not welcome you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave their town, as a testimony against them.' So they set out and went from village to village, preaching the gospel and healing people everywhere."

Jesus taught the disciples to listen to His voice and depend on him, as they did His work:

**John 10:27-28** "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.

**John 15:5** "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

**John 14:12-13** “I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the miraculous<sup>20</sup> works that I am doing (*ta erga ha ego poio*). He will do greater (miraculous<sup>7</sup> works) than these (*meizona touton*), because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.”

Jesus taught His disciples to listen to and depend on the Holy Spirit to teach them all things, and Jesus also said that He Himself would come to the disciples through the Holy Spirit and speak to them after His death and resurrection:

**John 14:16-20** “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.”

**John 14:26** “But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”

**John 16:13-14** “But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.”

Jesus commissioned the disciples to do as He did, specifically to depend on God’s Spirit and to preach and to heal. Jesus called His disciples into an intimate relationship with Himself (“that they might be with him” Mark 3:14), taught them the

message of the kingdom orally (Mark 4:11), showed them the ministry of the Kingdom in His casting out demons and healing the sick, and then sent them with his authority and power to do the same.

**Mark 3:14-15** “And he appointed twelve, that they might be with him, and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to cast out the demons.”

**Mat. 10:1,7-8** “He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. . . . “As you go, preach this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven is near.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.”

**Lk. 9:1-2** “When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to heal diseases, and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.”

**Lk. 10:9** Jesus says to 70 of His disciples: “Heal the sick who are there. Tell them, ‘The kingdom of God is near you.’”

Following are the full references to Jesus commissioning the disciples to preach and heal: **Matt.** 10:1, 7-8; **Mk.** 6:7, 12-13; 16:14-20; **Lk.** 9:1-2; 10:1-9; **John** 14:12; **Acts** 3:6, 12; 4:29-30; 5:12-16, 20-21, 28, 42; 6:8, 10; 8:4-7, 12; 9:17-18 (cf. 22:13), 34-35; 14:3, 8-10, 15ff.; 15:12, 36; 18:5, 11 (cf. 2 Cor. 12:12; 1 Cor. 2:4-5); 19:8-12. **Rom.** 15:18-19; **1 Cor.** 2:4-5; 11:1; 12:1-11, 28-31; **2 Cor.** 12:12; **Gal.** 3:5; **Phil.** 4:9; **1 Thes.** 1:5-6; **Heb.** 2:3-4; 6:1-2; **Jas.** 5:13-16.

### Jesus Commanded the Apostles to Train All Disciples in the Early Church to Depend on God’s Spirit and to Preach and Heal

Just as Jesus trained His disciples to reproduce His message and His Kingdom ministry, they, in turn, were to train the Church to do the same (1 Cor. 11:

1 "Follow my example as I follow the example of Christ"; Phil. 4:9; 1 Thes. 1:6).

**Matt. 28:18-20** "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, 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. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

**John 14:12-13** "I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the miraculous<sup>21</sup> works that I am doing (*ta erga ha ego poio*). He will do greater (miraculous<sup>7</sup> works) than these (*meizona touton*), because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

Following are full references to all disciples in the Early Church being trained to preach and heal:

**Matt. 28:18-20**; **Jn. 14:12**; **Acts 6:8, 10** (Stephen a lay leader); 8:4-7, 12 (Philip a lay leader); 9:17-18 (cf. 22:13, 34-35 (Ananias a lay person)); **1 Cor. 11:1** (and **Rom. 15:18-19**); 12:1-11, 28-31; **Gal. 3:5**; **Phil. 4:9**; **1 Thes. 1:5-6**; **Heb. 2:3-4**; 6:1-2 (note among the "elementary teachings" training in laying on of hands, and note that laying on of hands was one of the standard means of healing the sick in the Gospels and Acts<sup>22</sup>); **Jas. 5:13-16**.

Paul practiced Holy Spirit-centered teaching and training in Acts 19:8-12: He invited the Spirit to come into the classroom and people got healed and delivered of demons in extraordinary ways:

**Acts 19:8-12** "Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions

daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord. God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were healed and the evil spirits left them."

### The Apostles Train All Disciples in the Early Church to Depend on God's Spirit and to Preach and Heal

The apostles not only proclaimed the Gospel with preaching and healing, but they also taught *all* the disciples they made to proclaim the Gospel with preaching and healing—non-apostles like Stephen (Acts 6:8, 10), Philip (Acts 8:4-7, 12); Ananias (Acts 9: 17-18; 22:12-16); congregations like the Corinthians (1 Cor. 11:1; 12:9); the Galatians (Gal. 3:5),<sup>23</sup> the Philippians (Phil. 4:9); the Thessalonians (1 Thes. 1:5-6); and Jewish Christian congregations (Heb. 6:1-2; James 5:14-16).

According to Acts 9:10-19 and 22:12-16, Ananias, a lay person, as far as we know, in the church of Damascus, had been trained:

- how to hear God's voice
- how to receive visions from God with specific instructions
- how to pray for someone (Saul in this case) to be filled with the Holy Spirit
- how to pray for healing (of Saul's blindness)
- how to prophecy over someone (Saul in this case)

**Acts 9:10-19** "In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, 'Ananias!' 'Yes, Lord,' he answered. The Lord told him, 'Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight.' 'Lord,' Ananias answered, 'I have heard many reports about

this man and all the harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem. And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name.' But the Lord said to Ananias, 'Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.' Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord --Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here --has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.' Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength. Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus."

there. He stood beside me and said, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight!' And at that very moment I was able to see him. Then he said: "The God of our fathers has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name."

**Acts 22:12-16** "A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living

The evidence above makes it clear that biblical discipleship and training involves, first and foremost, learning how to hear and depend on God's voice, learning how Jesus healed the sick as well as learning the message of the Kingdom, and teaching students in a context where they can be mentored by spiritual fathers and mothers in the faith. Jesus' ministry methods became a model for the disciples, and this is shown by the fact that under the Spirit's guidance, they healed the sick using many of the same words and methods Jesus Himself had used:

	Jesus		Apostles & Early Church
<b>Compare</b>	Mk. 2:11; 5:41; Lk. 5:24; 7:14; 8:54; Jn. 5:8 (" <u>Get up!</u> " <i>egeirein</i> )	<b>and</b>	Acts 3:6-7 (" <u>Get up!</u> " <i>egeirein</i> , majority of texts <sup>24</sup> ); 9:34, 40; 14:10 (" <u>Stand up!</u> " <i>anastethi</i> ).
<b>Compare</b>	Lk. 13:12 ( <i>eye contact</i> )	<b>and</b>	Acts 3:4; 14:9 ( <i>eye contact</i> ).
<b>Compare</b>	Jn. 5:8 (" <u>Walk!</u> " <i>peripatei</i> )	<b>and</b>	Acts 3:6 (" <u>Walk!</u> " <i>peripatei</i> ).
<b>Compare</b>	Lk. 18:42 (" <u>See again!</u> " <i>anablepson</i> )	<b>and</b>	Acts 22:13 (" <u>See again!</u> " <i>anablepson</i> ).
<b>Compare</b>	Mat. 9:25; Mk. 5:40 ( <u>putting away a weeping crowd</u> )	<b>and</b>	Acts 9:40 ( <u>putting away a weeping crowd</u> ).
<b>Compare</b>	Mk. 1:25; 5:8; 9:25; Lk. 4:35 (" <u>Come out!</u> " <i>exelthein</i> )	<b>and</b>	Acts 16:18 (" <u>Come out!</u> " <i>exelthein</i> ).
<b>Compare</b>	Mat. 8:3, 15; 9:25, 29; Mk. 1:31, 41; 5:41; 6:5; 8:23, 25; Lk. 4:40; 5:13; 8:54; 13:13; 14:4 ( <u>laying on of hands</u> )	<b>and</b>	Acts 8:12; 9:17; 28:8 ( <u>laying on of hands</u> ).

Referring to such parallels between the ministry methods of Jesus and those of the disciples, Dr. Cyril H. Powell has said, “In all this, Acts witnesses to the emergence of power in ways comparable to those recounted in the Gospels concerning Jesus. Jesus had said (in Luke only 6<sup>40</sup>) ‘Every disciple when he is fully equipped (*katertismenos*) shall be as his master.’ . . .”<sup>25</sup>

### Jesus Is Our Model in Everything (1 Cor. 11:1 “Follow my example as I follow the example of Christ”).

As mentioned above, Jesus *saw* God the Father and *heard* His voice. If Jesus is our model, then we will learn to do the same:

**John 5:19** “The Son of Man can do nothing by Himself; He can do only what He sees (Grk. *blepein* “to see”) His Father doing.”

**John 8:28-29** “I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him.”

**John 12:49** “For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it.”

**John 14:16-19** Jesus tells the disciples that they will see (Grk *theorein*) Him through the Spirit after His resurrection.

We must learn and teach others how to hear God’s voice and how to depend on His Spirit. Hearing God’s voice is the heritage of every child of God: **John 10:27-28** “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.” In learning and teaching others to hear God’s voice, I have found it very helpful to follow the procedure of **James 4:7-8**: “Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you.”

- a. Submit to God—forgive anyone you need to forgive; confess any sins God brings to mind.
- b. Resist the devil—forbid the enemy to interfere.
- c. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you—ask the Holy Spirit to come and fill you with the mind of Christ, and quiet your own thoughts.
- d. Wait in silence for 1-2 minutes at least and watch for the Lord’s response—a word or words that comes to mind, a picture (“vision”) coming to your mind’s eye, a Scripture passage, an impression

Faith-Picturing is another way to practice the Lord’s presence and to move in His presence and power: It is critical to understand that Scripture teaches us to keep our eyes on Jesus (Heb. 12:1-2) and to fix our thoughts on Jesus (Heb. 3:1). The great cloud of witnesses “saw” God’s promises even though they never received them while on this earth (Heb. 11:13).

Ephesians 4:18 speaks of the “eyes of the heart” being enlightened by the Holy Spirit. We know that this refers to the “mind’s eye,” because Daniel 7:1-2 show us where Daniel received visions from the Lord—“visions passed through his mind (Aramaic *resh* “head” Dan 7:1-2).” Furthermore, Psalm 16:8 was understood by early Jewish translators of the Hebrew Bible and by the early Church to refer to keeping one’s spiritual eyes on the Lord. The Hebrew of Psalm 16:8 reads: “I set the Lord always before me.” But in Acts 2:25 Peter quotes the Septuagint Greek version of Psalm 16:8, which reads: “I was seeing (*pro’oromen* imperf. mid. indicative) the Lord always before me” (Psalm 16:8). There are several other passages in the Psalms and prophets that encourage us to see the Lord in our mind’s-eye (see Psalms 17:15; 25:15; 105:4; 141:8; Amos 9:1):

Joshua 1:8 and Psalm 1:2 command us to meditate on or imagine/picture what Scripture describes

and says. The Hebrew verb used in Joshua 1:8 and Psalm 1:2, *bagah* means “meditate, imagine, devise [picture in the mind].”<sup>26</sup> Clearly this encourages us to picture Jesus and ask His Spirit to fill the picture, so that we, like the early church can look for and listen to Jesus through the Holy Spirit and cooperate with Him in doing what He is doing to heal the sick and to talk about His Kingdom.

## Conclusions

1. We must mentor and train our students in the kind of intimate, accountable relationships we see in the biblical parent – child model, linking students to the spiritual fathers in the faith and the spiritual mothers in the faith that are critical for their training and discipleship.
2. We must major, like Jesus, the apostles, and the Early Church, on training our students to hear God’s voice, keep their spiritual eyes on Jesus, depend on the Holy Spirit, and to heal the sick and cast out demons effectively.
3. We must major, like Paul, on inviting God’s Spirit into the classroom and the training event to work as He wants to, to be the Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Power, who demonstrates God’s Kingdom rule in the here-and-now.
4. To minimize or sideline training in healing prayer and deliverance prayer from our training agendas, as just one among many important courses or in favor of other popular ministry school courses (Leadership, Church Planting, Intercession, Worship, Ministry Gifts, Biblical Counseling, etc.), is to cut out the heart of Jesus’ Kingdom message and ministry and to miss Jesus’ own primary means of proclaiming the gospel.

Does your ministry training give healing and deliverance prayer training the primary, central importance Jesus and the Early Church gave it? If not, it is time to restructure and restructure your training programs and course offerings!

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## Example Healing Prayer Training Outline:

### Healing Prayer Steps--Listening to the Lord and to the Person

Methods and procedures do not heal. **Jesus does.** But these are some points which help us draw near to Jesus and discern what He wants to do through us in prayer.

1. Invite the Spirit of God to come, reveal his will, show us how to pray, and lead the time (Ps. 141:1 and 2 Cor. 3:17; Jas. 4:8)
  - a. Ask God to line up our will with his will, to give us the power and authority for ministering to the person, to help us cooperate with his Spirit in accomplishing his purposes for the person (Jn. 5:19; 15:5).
  
2. Interview and tentative diagnosis (Mk. 9:17-18, 21-22).
  - a. Listen to the person. ("Jesus asked the boy's father, 'How long has he been like this?' Mk. 9:21).
  - b. At the same time be sensitive to the Holy Spirit for insight about possible related causes--e.g., unforgiveness, anxiety and worry, demonization, sinning which led to damaged emotions or damaged relationships, etc.
  
3. Prayer selection and prayer engagement.
  - a. Assume God will send healing unless He has shown you otherwise ("the prayer of faith will make the sick person well" Jas. 5:15).
  - b. Keep your eyes OPEN so you don't miss the signs of the Holy Spirit's manifestations on the person.—some typical signs: eyelids fluttering, change in breathing, slight shaking, flush on skin, radiant sheen on the face, visible peace:

† Possible responses to the presence of God and the power of the Holy Spirit:

1. Shaking or trembling (Exo. 19:16; Ps. 2:11; 96:9; 114:7; 119:120; 1 Chron. 16:30; Ezra 9:4; Ps. 2:11; 119:20; Isa. 66:5; Jer. 5:22; 23:9; Dan. 10:10-11; Mat. 28:4; Acts 7:32; Heb. 12:21). S
2. Falling over--"resting" or "being slain" in the Spirit (1 Kgs. 8:11; Ezek. 1:28; 3:23; Dan. 8:17-18; 10:9; Mat. 28:4; Lk. 9:32; Jn. 18:6; Acts 9:4 (26:14); 1 Cor. 14:25; Rev. 1:17).
3. Intoxicated state of mind (Acts 2:4, 13, 15; Eph. 5:18; cf. 1 Sam. 1:12-17; 1 Sam. 19:23f.).
4. Laughing, shouting, or crying (Gen. 17:1, 3, 17; Ezra 3:13; Neh. 8:9; 12:43; Ps. 126:2; Prov. 14:13)
5. Feeling heat, energy (Mk. 5:30; cf. Col.1:29 *energeia // dunamis* ),
6. Deep peace (Rom. 15:13; 1 Cor. 14:33), etc.
7. Radiance on one's face (Acts 2:3; 6:15 and 7:55; 2 Cor. 3:18 (and Exo. 34:29)).

- c. Call the Holy Spirit down “Come Holy Spirit and rest on this person” (“O Lord God, . . . come to your resting place” 2 Chron. 6:41; “O Lord, I call to you; come quickly to me” Ps. 141:1; 2 Cor 3:17 “Now the Lord is the Spirit”)

† He is always with us (John 14:16-19; Psalm 139:7-10).

†† But He comes specially and manifests special anointing for special purposes (Luke 5:17 “the power of the Lord was present to heal” implying that there were times when the power of the Lord was not present; 1 Cor. 5:4 “When . . . the power of the Lord Jesus is present”; Isa. 55:6 “Seek the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near”).

††† We need Him to reveal His will, to lead and to empower whatever happens.

- d. WAIT--and this is hard--until you see signs of the Holy Spirit's presence on the person—often but not always eyelids fluttering, change in breathing, muscle spasm or rippling, shaking, flush on skin, radiant sheen on the face, visible peace, falling, laughing, crying (“And the power of the Lord was present for him to heal the sick” Luke 5:17; “Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him” Ps. 37:7).
- e. Pray with Petition/intercession to God and/or words from God spoken to a condition or demon or to the person (e.g. Mk. 1:25; 7:34; Luke 4:39; Jn. 11:41-43; Acts 28:8).  
 --Petition/Intercession (“So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, ‘Father, I thank you that you have heard me. . . .’” Jn. 11:41; “His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him” Acts 28:8).  
 --Command (“Be quiet! . . . Come out of him!” Mk. 1:25; Jesus spoke to a deaf man’s ears, “Be opened!” Mk. 7:34; Jesus “rebuked the fever, and it left her” Lk. 4:39).  
 --Pronouncement (“Your faith has healed you” Lk. 18:42; “Take your mat and go home” Mat. 9:6)
- d. **DIPSTICK (“check the oil”)**--Asking questions (“How are you feeling? Better? Worse?”) during prayer to find out what the Holy Spirit is doing, for more information or redirection (“Do you see anything?” Jesus said to a blind man during prayer Mk. 8:23; Elijah sent his servant to the edge of Mt. Carmel seven times to see if the rain he was praying for had come yet, James 5:18 and 1 Kings 18:41-44).

#### 4. Post-prayer counseling

- a. What should the person do to remain healed (John 5:14), or what should be done if the person was not healed?

### Personal Application

- 1) Have you learned how to hear God's voice like Abraham? What have been the greatest difficulties and the greatest successes you have experienced? Write these out and share them with someone you pray with or fellowship with.
- 2) What has God said to you about listening to and obeying His voice in your prayer time? In your journaling? In your dreams? In visions? Through prophecy from the body of Christ? Write these out and share them with someone you pray with or fellowship with.
- 3) Who would you identify as a spiritual father or a spiritual mother in your spiritual life? What were the positive and negative experiences you have had in being mentored or in mentoring others? Write these out and share them with someone you pray with or fellowship with.
- 4) How would you describe your experience or lack of experience in learning to depend on the Holy Spirit and in learning to heal the sick and cast out demons the way Jesus did? Where do you need to improve and focus your learning? Write these out and share them with someone you pray with or fellowship with.
- 5) Lord, what do you want to speak to me concerning teaching and discipleship? Record what He says and share it with someone you pray with or fellowship with.

### Group Application

- 1) Invite group members to share the answers to the questions above, as they feel free to do so.
- 2) Have the group break into pairs and pray in pairs for the most significant issues raised for each person in reading this chapter and answering the questions above.

### Footnotes

- <sup>1</sup> S. J. DeVries, 1 Kings (Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 12; Waco, TX: 1985), p. 46, note 9a-a.
- <sup>2</sup> F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1951), p. 393, meaning 1e.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 394, meaning 3.
- <sup>4</sup> J. Gamberoni, "Das Elterngesetz im Alten Testament," Biblische Zeitschrift 8 (1964), pp. 175-184.
- <sup>5</sup> A. E. Hill and J. H. Walton, A Survey of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), pp. 116-117; G. E. Mendenhall, The Tenth Generation (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), p. 200; J. I. Durham, Exodus (Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 3; Waco: Word, 1987), pp. 299, 336-337; M. Weinfeld, Deuteronomy 1-11 (The Anchor Bible, vol. 5; New York: Doubleday, 1991), pp. 246, 250, 257.
- <sup>6</sup> Hill and Walton, Survey of the Old Testament, p. 147; Durham, Exodus, p. 290; cf. Weinfeld, Deuteronomy, p. 311.
- <sup>7</sup> Hill and Walton, Survey of the Old Testament, pp. 145-148; S. Kaufman, "The Structure of the Deuteronomical Law," Maarav 1-2 (1978-79), pp. 105-158; J. Walton, "Deuteronomy: An Exposition of the Spirit of the Law," Grace Theological Journal 8 (1987), pp. 213-225.
- <sup>8</sup> Hill and Walton, Survey of the Old Testament, pp. 147-148.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 287.
- <sup>10</sup> R. R. Wilson, Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), p. 141; M. Cogan and H. Tadmor, II Kings (The Anchor Bible, vol. 11; New York: Doubleday, 1988), p. 31, n. 3;
- <sup>11</sup> R. G. Boling, Judges (The Anchor Bible, vol. 6a; New York: Doubleday, 1975), p. 98.
- <sup>12</sup> R. Dillard and T. Longman, An Introduction to the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), pp. 125-126; Boling, Judges, pp. 30, 82.
- <sup>13</sup> Louis Finkelstein, Akiba (N.Y.: Covici Friede Publishers, 1936), p. 181. See Mishnah tractates B. Berakot 62a; Yer. Berakot 9.8, 14c.
- <sup>14</sup> W. Bauer, W. F. Arndt, W. F. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 833.
- <sup>15</sup> R.H. Fuller, The Mission and Achievement of Jesus (Chicago: Alec. Allenson, 1954), p. 40; Many New Testament scholars have noted the revelatory nature of both word and deed in the ministry of Jesus, the apostles and the Early Church: O. Hofius, in C. Brown, ed., New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, vol. 2, pp. 632-633; K. Tagawa, Miracles et évangile (Études d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses), 62; Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1966), p. 87 (also see pp. 49-73, espec. pp. 53 and 73); A. Richardson, The Miracle-Stories of the Gospels (London: SCM Press, 1941), pp. 17, 35-45; H. van der

Loos, The Miracles of Jesus (Supplements to Novum Testamentum, vol. 8. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965), pp. 220-224, 252, 284-285; C. H. Powell, The Biblical Concept of Power (London: Epworth Press, 1963), p. 131-139; H. Hendrickx, The Miracle Stories of the Synoptic Gospels (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), p. 25; B. Klappert, New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, vol. 3, p. 1108; G. Dellling, "Botschaft und Wunder im Wirken Jesu," in H. Ristow and K. Matthiae, eds., Der historische Jesus und der kerygmatische Christus (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1961), p. 393; G. Friedrich, "euaggelizomai," in G. Kittel, ed., Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, vol. 2, p. 720; W. Grundmann, "dunamis," in G. Kittel, ed., Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, vol. 2, p. 311.

<sup>16</sup> F. F. Bruce, The Hard Sayings of Jesus (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1983), pp. 96-97.

<sup>17</sup> G. Friedrich, in G. Kittel, ed., Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, vol. II, p. 720.

<sup>18</sup> A. Richardson, The Miracle-Stories of the Gospels (London: SCM Press, 1941), p. 61f.

<sup>19</sup> H. van der Loos, The Miracles of Jesus (Supplements to Novum Testamentum, vol. 8. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965), p. 252.

<sup>20</sup> The Greek term, *erga* "works," when referring to Jesus and God the Father in the Gospel of John, denote miraculous works and are closely related to the *semeia*, "signs," of Jesus. So, for example, the healing of the man born blind in John 9 is referred to as "*the works of God (ta erga tou Theou)*" in Jn. 9:3 and as one of "*such signs (toiauta semeia)*" in Jn. 9:16 ("The deeds of God and Jesus, specifically the miracles" Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, and Danker, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, p. 308; R. C. Trench, Notes on the Miracles of Our Lord (London: Macmillan, 1856), p. 6; Rengstorff, "*semeion*," in G. Kittel, ed., Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, vol. 7, pp. 247-248).

<sup>21</sup> The Greek term, *erga* "works," when referring to Jesus and God the Father in the Gospel of John, denote miraculous works and are closely related to the *semeia*, "signs," of Jesus. So, for example, the healing of the man born blind in John 9 is referred to as "*the works of God (ta erga tou Theou)*" in Jn. 9:3 and as one of "*such signs (toiauta semeia)*" in Jn. 9:16 ("The deeds of God and Jesus, specifically the miracles" Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, and Danker, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, p. 308; R. C. Trench, Notes on the Miracles of Our Lord (London: Macmillan, 1856), p. 6; Rengstorff, "*semeion*," in G. Kittel, ed., Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, vol. 7, pp. 247-248).

<sup>22</sup> Mat. 9:29; Mk. 1:41; 5:23; 6:5; 7:32; 16:18; Lk. 4:40; 13:13; Acts 9:17; 28:8; Jas. 5:14 "let them pray over/upon [*epi*] him"); see E. Lohse, "*cheir*," in G. Kittel, ed., Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, vol 9, pp. 431-432.

<sup>23</sup> *Dunameis* "miracles" primarily refer to miraculous healing and deliverance from demons in the New Testament: compare Acts 2:22 and 10:38 (*dunameis* "miracles" = *iaomai* "heal"), and see passages cited in Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, and Danker, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, p. 208, column a, no. 4; cf. van der Loos, The Miracles of Jesus, pp. 252ff.; Grundmann, "*dunamai/dunamis*," in G. Kittel, ed., Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, vol. 2, pp. 301-302.

<sup>24</sup> Though it is not found in the best Greek manuscripts: see Bruce M. Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament (United Bible Societies, 1971), p. 307.

<sup>25</sup> C. Powell, The Biblical Concept of Power (London: Epworth Press, 1963), p. 138 and n. 36.

<sup>26</sup> Brown, Driver, Briggs, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, p. 211; cf. examples of the Hebrew verb referring to negative imagining in Psalm 2:1; Prov. 15:28; 24:2.



# 5

## Characteristics of False Teachers and False Prophets

Dr. Gary S. Greig

As a seminary professor I often met students with very strong prophetic gifting. Two young men that I will call George and John stand out in my mind as painful reminders that prophets and teachers who do not deal with their sins and heart issues can quickly go astray from the path the Lord intends for them and become false prophets and false teachers. Both George and John were students of mine when I was at Regent University School of Divinity, and both were highly gifted prophets and intercessors.

They both had been intercessors for me and my family and both had great prophetic authority from God. Both George and John would often know details of our lives and the spiritual warfare we were going through, before we would call and tell them to ask for prayer. John had tremendous insight and authority from God in spiritual warfare. Both had tremendous authority in personal prayer ministry, casting out demons and praying for inner healing of the wounds that held people bound to bitterness and demonic forces. God would answer both men's prayers and intercession in awesome ways, ways that

reminded me, as an Old Testament professor, of the ministry of Elijah and Elisha in I and II Kings.

At different times over the last seven years, both men had sought voluntarily to be under my leadership, mentoring, and spiritual covering, and I had asked them to minister alongside me on various occasions. Strangely enough, during the course of my relationship with them, both George and John started subtly exhibiting competitive, un-Christ-like behavior that I let go by too long before the Holy Spirit finally pressed me to say something to them. George started developing a critical attitude toward other students and eventually toward me. Because he could see in the Spirit (II Kings 6:17; II Sam. 24:17), he was repulsed by the demons he saw on many other needy students, which he discerned with great accuracy, and he would say things like, "I don't want to get near that person, they're so full of demons and garbage!" John on the other hand had a habit of being verbally controlling and competitive in meetings with three or more people and in his teaching style. He would interrupt and cut off

people and direct attention to himself through his verbal control. He was also very loose with his tongue when he was angry, cursing in a way that is inappropriate for Christian leaders (Eph. 4:29; 5:4) and claiming that because Jesus was his friend, Jesus didn't mind his rough language.

Unfortunately, both men started going astray and getting deceived more and more by the enemy, when they resisted my efforts to correct them lovingly and to help them see personal issues they needed to deal with and heart issues they needed to let the Lord heal them from. As my wife and I prayed for each of these men, the Lord showed us that their issues stemmed from generational iniquity patterns in their parents and wounds and pains inflicted on them by their parents. On the separate occasions when I followed the Lord's direction to speak to each of these men about their un-Christ-like behavior, to urge them to repent, and to offer to pray with them through the heart issues that fed their un-Christ-like behavior, both men refused to do so.

Both men refused to be accountable to me, in spite of the fact that they initially said God had told them to be accountable to me. In a rebellious fit of rage, George blew up at me in my office at Regent University, making angry accusations to my face to avoid dealing with his issues. After I had confronted him, John's icy coolness turned to bitter complaining that he couldn't help his verbal control problem, claiming he had disabilities that made him act that way. Over the following weeks and months John became increasingly competitive, deceptive, focussed on money until months later in one meeting he blew up at me for no apparent reason. He looked very guilty after the meeting, but avoided me and never apologized. When I confronted him about it a couple of days later, he apologized but claimed he did not know about his angry outburst at me in the meeting. The Holy Spirit immediately told me he was lying to me, confirming what was clear in his mood and body language after the meeting, which had told me and other witnesses that he knew precisely what he had done.

Fear of man, deception, and living in denial were *huge* issues in both men's lives, and it took me and my wife some time to unravel ourselves from both men's deception and clearly hear from the Lord on how to pray for them and how to confront them. Both men lacked any real accountability to Christian community or to other leaders outside their own circle of people they were teaching and mentoring. Their explosive anger at me made it clear that they did not want to be accountable to me either, even though they both said initially that that is exactly what they wanted. George protested, "I don't have to do the Matthew 18 thing with you—you're not my church!" I heard later from several pastors that for the next several months George had bounced from church to church exploding at pastor after pastor, when he was confronted on his issues.

John's rebelliousness and unwillingness to be accountable was more subtle and deceptive. After confronting him for the third time over several months, John said to me and my wife that the Lord had told him to no longer be accountable to me. My wife and I had noticed over the months that every time John would be questioned by the pastors of his church over the months that he was under my leadership, John would seek refuge with me, giving us various reasons why he should not be accountable to his pastors on this or that point, always blaming them or others for the problems they were confronting him about. We foolishly allowed him to use us to justify his lack of accountability to his pastors. And when I confronted John about his sins and issues, he would run to others to seek the same sort of refuge in them that he had earlier sought in me to avoid honest, open dialog with other leaders he claimed to be accountable to. John would also try to use deception and flattery to avoid discussing issues and sins I had confronted him with.

Both men developed inappropriate emotional attachments to other male and female prophets and intercessors, who gave them a sense of spiritual security and fulfillment. They looked for other prophetic people who would *need* them and their

prophetic gifts and prayers. While there was never sexual misconduct in either man's life, both let themselves become involved in codependent relationships with other prophetic intercessors that often involved more emotional intimacy than they had with their own wives. This was clearly wrong—Jesus meant it when He said, “So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate” (Matt. 19:6).

Our experience with both men was deeply painful for us. Sadly I had to release both men from ministering with me, praying for me and my family, and from being under my leadership and mentoring. The following material came as we asked the Lord why these men had gotten so far off track under our watch, and as we began to study Scripture on the theme of false prophets and false teachers. What the Lord has shown us is that we must catch such issues *much earlier* and not gloss over them for the sake of the person under our spiritual covering as well as for our sakes. By now we've learned that the earlier these sorts of issues are caught in the life and ministry of a prophet or teacher, the less heartache will be caused to the person and to us, as well as to the Lord.

The Bible has much to say about false teachers and false prophets. The New Testament's statements about false teachers find their origin in the Old Testament's teaching about false prophets. Jesus said that the last days would be filled with persecution of believers and betrayal among believers, and that as the gospel reaches every nation signaling the end, “many false prophets will appear and deceive many people” (Matt. 24:11):

**Matt. 24:9-14** “Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to

the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”

What we will see in biblical passages below is that many of these false prophets and teachers will begin as true prophets and teachers, who will not repent but who will *become* false prophets and teachers, as they use their gifts and the anointing of God's Spirit to serve themselves rather than the Lord.

Whole books have been written about the rise of false prophets in the church today, but some of these books give entirely false criteria for discerning false prophets from true prophets, and they fail to identify clear biblical criteria found in the Old and New Testaments for discerning false prophets and false teachers.

### Jesus' Criterion for Discerning False Prophets and False Teachers

The clear criterion that Jesus gives us in Matthew 7: 15-23 is the *fruit* of a prophet's heart and lifestyle. In this passage, Jesus is drawing on the Old Testament metaphor of fruit found in passages like Jeremiah 17:9-10—(translating the Hebrew directly)<sup>1</sup> “The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his ways, according to fruit of his practices.” The metaphor of fruit in this passage refers to good and bad *practices*—*lifestyle issues*—that proceed from a person's *heart*. And in Matthew 7:15-23 below, Jesus uses the same metaphor of fruit to refer to the godly or godless *lifestyle* and *character* of a prophet. Prophets and teachers can say “the right things” and have wildly anointed ministry, but it is their *character* and their *lifestyle* that will show whether they are true or false. This criterion is also echoed in many biblical passages that we will look at below:

**Matt. 7:15-23** “Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By

their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"

Jesus' words in Matthew 7:15-23 make it clear that operating under the anointing of God's Spirit and operating in gifts like prophecy and teaching do not, by themselves, constitute the good fruit that God is looking for. Rather, pleasing God ("he who does the will of my Father"), walking in intimate relationship with Him (contrast "I never knew you"), and turning away from evil (contrast "Away from me, you evildoers"), as one walks in the anointing of God's Spirit and does the works of Jesus, are what constitute bearing the good fruit that God is looking for. John the Baptist's message reminds us that producing *good fruit always* involves *repentance* and turning away from evil:

**Matt. 3:8-10** "Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham

as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."

So if you or I see a teacher or a prophet operating in true anointing and gifting, but who bears bad fruit in his or her character and lifestyle, and who is unwilling to repent and turn from his or her evil, especially when he or she has been lovingly confronted, we should stay clear of that teacher or prophet. God will lay the ax to the root of the tree in that teacher or prophet's life and ministry.

### Characteristics of False Prophets in the Old Testament: Deuteronomy 13 and 18

The Old Testament gives criteria for God's people to distinguish false prophets in Deuteronomy 13:1-5 and 18:14-22. We know from Deuteronomy 13:1-2 that false prophets may announce a miraculous sign or wonder and it may take place to entice God's people to follow other gods. But Deuteronomy 18:22 makes it clear that false prophets will be *less accurate* in their prophetic predictions than a true prophet of the Lord:

**Deut. 18:22** "If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him."

One must be careful how this criterion is applied to discern false prophets, because there are many cases in Scripture where true prophets of God spoke prophetic words that were not fulfilled for *other reasons than that they were false prophets*. Jonah's prophetic word, "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned" (Jonah 3:4), did not come true because Nineveh repented. Nathan's inaccurate word encouraging King David to build the temple,<sup>2</sup>

“Whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it, for the Lord is with you” (II Sam. 7:3), was later corrected by God in II Sam. 7:4ff.<sup>3</sup> David’s own prophetic word about Solomon, “I will give him rest from all his enemies on every side” (I Chron. 22:9), was not ultimately fulfilled: because of Solomon’s sins against the Lord, I Kings 11:14-25 makes it clear that the Lord raised up enemies against Solomon on several sides. Elisha was led by God in II Kings 8:10 to give an inaccurate word<sup>4</sup> to Hazael to report to Ben-Hadad, king of Aram, that the king would recover from illness, so that God could tell Hazael through Elisha that he would be the next king of Aram. Huldah’s prophecy in II Kings 22:20 (and II Chronicles 34:28) that King Josiah would “be buried in peace” did not come true: Josiah died and was buried in war not in peace.<sup>5</sup> Scholars recognize that the text of Chronicles emphasizes in II Chronicles 35:22 that Josiah died an early violent death<sup>6</sup>—the text clearly asserts that Josiah involved himself in a war God never told him to fight. Josiah “would not listen to what Neco [king of Egypt] had said at God’s command but went to fight him on the plain of Megiddo” (II Chron. 35:22).

In such examples, we are dealing, in part, with the kind of contingency in prophecy that Jeremiah prophesies about in Jeremiah 18:7-10:

**Jer. 18:7-10** “If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned. And if at another time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be built up and planted, and if it does evil in my sight and does not obey me, then I will reconsider the good I had intended to do for it.”

So if the 100% fulfillment of a prophetic word is not a black-and-white biblical criterion for discerning true prophets from false prophets, what criterion does Scripture leave us? The leading criterion that Scripture gives us to discern false prophets is, as we saw above, the *good or bad character* of the prophet.

According to Deuteronomy 13:1-3 and 18:20, false prophets, even when they accurately prophesy a sign and a wonder, lead God’s people away from the Lord. They cause God’s people to disobey the Lord, and encourage God’s people to worship other gods:

**Deut. 13:1-3** “If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams, appears among you and announces to you a miraculous sign or wonder, and if the sign or wonder of which he has spoken takes place, and he says, ‘Let us follow other gods’ (gods you have not known) ‘and let us worship them,’ you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer.”

**Deut. 18:20** “But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded him to say, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, must be put to death.”

A false prophet can try to act like a true prophet, but if the effect of their words and teaching leads people away from the Lord or leads them to disobey the Lord, then that prophet is a false prophet. The effect of a false prophet’s words may be subtle. If the words of a prophet even subtly lead people not to depend on the Lord or lead them to rely on other sources of security rather than on the Lord—whether on the prophet himself or herself or people or systems or ways of thinking that are apart from the Lord—then that prophet is a false prophet.

Furthermore, the Hebrew of Deuteronomy 18:20 shows that false prophets will show *bad character*. They will have *significant negative issues* in their *character* and *lifestyle*. Deuteronomy 18:20 echoes what Jesus says in Matthew 7:15ff, that false prophets *bear bad fruit*. The Hebrew of Deuteronomy 18:20 literally says, “But the prophet *who acts presumptuously* in speaking<sup>7</sup> a word in my name. . . .” The Hebrew verb in the passage, *yazid*, means “to act proudly, presumptuously, rebelliously”<sup>8</sup> and it gives us a clear indication of the heart and character of a false prophet. It is the same verb used in Deuteronomy 1:43 of the Israelites

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*not listening* to the Lord's command at Kadesh but *rebellng* against His warning :

**Deut. 1:43** "So I told you, but you would not listen. You rebelled (*tazidu*) against the Lord's command and in your arrogance you marched up into the hill country."

A noun ("arrogance, insolence") from the same root as the verb is used in Proverbs 13:10 of *pride that does not humble itself and take advice from others*. The same verb and a noun ("insolence, arrogance") from the same root as the verb are used in Deuteronomy 17:12-13 of a person *not listening to or obeying priests and judges*. The verb is used in Nehemiah 9:16, 29 of the Israelites in the wilderness becoming *stiff-necked and refusing to listen to the Lord through Moses, not obeying the Lord's commands, and failing to remember all that He had done* for them. An adjective ("arrogant, insolent") from the same root as the verb is used in Isaiah 13:11 to describe those who are *haughty and ruthless*. In Malachi 3:15 the adjective ("arrogant, insolent") is used of *evildoers who challenge God*. The adjective ("arrogant, insolent") is used in Psalm 86:14 of *ruthless people who show no regard for God* and who are attacking David.

The verb *yazid* in Deuteronomy 18:20 gives us a good profile, then, of false prophets. False prophets will display an insolent, presumptuous, arrogant attitude. They will not humble themselves to be accountable to those God has made them accountable to or to listen to the advice of others. Their actions will either be subtly or overtly evil. They will show themselves to be unjust, self-serving, manipulative, deceptive, harsh, and greedy, as the following passages, which we'll look at below, demonstrate: Numbers 22-24 (Balaam); I Kings 13 (the old prophet from Bethel); I Kings 22 (Zedekiah the false prophet); Jeremiah 23:10-11, 14; Ezekiel 13:7, 10, 19, 22; Micah 2:6-11; 3:5.

### 1 Kings 13—True Prophets Can Become False Prophets

The narrative in I Kings 13:18 about the old

prophet from Bethel lying to the young prophet from Judah shows that true prophets can become false prophets. The old prophet from Bethel clearly had been a true prophet. I Kings 13:20 clearly says "the word of the Lord came to the old prophet," when God gave the old prophet a word of judgment concerning the young prophet from Judah. But the text clearly says that the old prophet lied to the younger prophet from Judah to get the latter to come home and eat with him:

**I Kgs. 13:15-18** "So the [old] prophet said to him, 'Come home with me and eat.' The man of God [from Judah] said, 'I cannot turn back and go with you, nor can I eat bread or drink water with you in this place. I have been told by the word of the LORD: "You must not eat bread or drink water there or return by the way you came.'" The old prophet answered, 'I too am a prophet, as you are. And an angel said to me by the word of the LORD: "Bring him back with you to your house so that he may eat bread and drink water.'" (But he was lying to him.)"

The old prophet from Bethel seems to have been lonely and wanting fellowship with the younger prophet from Judah. The older prophet showed he had a self-serving attitude when he lied to the younger prophet to get him to come and eat with him. Worse yet, the older prophet's lying to the younger prophet clearly constitutes presumptuous rebellion against the word of the Lord to the young prophet from Judah. The older prophet clearly led the younger prophet to disobey the Lord's word. And this action clearly falls into the descriptions of false prophets found in Deuteronomy 13 and 18.

Thus, the text of I Kings 13 is showing the reader that a true prophet could become a false prophet out of heart wounds that lead to self-serving motives like those of the old prophet from Bethel. The old prophet's loneliness led to his self-serving lying to the younger prophet. And this brings up a very *important* point—if prophets and teachers

do not deal with the wounds of their hearts, the wounds of their hearts may provide the occasion for Satan to push them to walk the road of the false prophet. If they refuse to be accountable for their sins and weaknesses, and if they refuse to let the Lord heal their hearts, prophets and teachers will become self-serving, manipulative, and deceitful, even to the point of turning others away from the Lord, like the old prophet from Bethel turned the young prophet from Judah away from obeying the Lord.

Graham Cooke's description of false prophecy is very helpful:

"False prophecy is deceptive... Deception is a lifestyle issue. It does not arrive overnight. It is caused by a lack of real accountability... False prophecy is deliberately speaking what others want to hear. It is given by manipulative people who are serving themselves not the Lord. False prophecy is used to gain control of people's lives; to bind people into churches and churches into networks; usually for reasons of personal gain and wealth."<sup>9</sup>

### I Kings 22—True Prophets May Give False Words Under Controlling Leaders

In I Kings 22 we read the account of the true prophet, Micaiah, son of Imlah, as he faces off with the 400 false prophets of Ahab's court. All the false prophets were prophesying that the Lord would give King Ahab victory against the Arameans at Ramoth Gilead in Transjordan, east of the Jordan river. At first, Micaiah, bows to the control and pressure of Ahab's messenger and actually gives *the same false prophetic word* that the 400 false prophets were giving to Ahab. It is actually *King Ahab*, not exactly a paragon of righteousness, who corrects Micaiah and tells him to give a true prophetic word from the Lord. And this leads to another very important point: this passage demonstrates that if they bow to ungodly pressure and control from leaders over

them, *true prophets* can give *false prophetic words* or words that are tainted with error:

**I Kgs. 22:13-17** "The messenger who had gone to summon Micaiah said to him, 'Look, as one man the other prophets are predicting success for the king. Let your word agree with theirs, and speak favorably.' But Micaiah said, 'As surely as the LORD lives, I can tell him only what the LORD tells me.' When he arrived, the king asked him, 'Micaiah, shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain?' Attack and be victorious,' he answered, 'for the LORD will give it into the king's hand.' The king said to him, 'How many times must I make you swear to tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?' Then Micaiah answered, 'I saw all Israel scattered on the hills like sheep without a shepherd, and the LORD said, "These people have no master. Let each one go home in peace."<sup>10</sup>

Ezekiel 14:2-4 also makes the point that prophets of the Lord may give false prophetic words to people who hang on to idols in their heart that are not surrendered to the Lord. Prophets must repent of the fear of man and of being more concerned about public recognition than being right with the Lord. People seeking prophetic words must repent of any idols they have set up in their hearts. Otherwise, as Ezekiel 14:2-4 makes clear, the Lord will let false prophetic words come to both the prophet and to the one seeking the prophetic word from the Lord:

**Ezek. 14:2-4, 9** (translating the Hebrew directly)<sup>10</sup> "Then the word of the LORD came to me: 'Son of man, these men have set up idols in their hearts and put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces. Should I let them inquire of me at all? Therefore speak to them and tell them, "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: 'When any Israelite sets up idols in his heart and puts the stumbling block of

his iniquity before his face and then goes to a prophet, I the LORD Myself will be brought to answer him according to the multitude of his idols... And if the prophet is deceived and speaks a word [to those who have set up idols in their hearts], I the LORD Myself will have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand against him and destroy him from among my people Israel.”””

### I Kings 22—False Prophets are Harsh, Arrogant, Competitive, and Self-Serving

After he is rebuked by King Ahab, the true prophet, Micaiah, gives a true prophetic word to Ahab that the Lord would lead Ahab to his death at Ramoth Gilead and that the Lord had sent a “lying spirit” into the mouths of the 400 false prophets prophesying victory to the king. The false prophet, Zedekiah, is understandably not flattered by this prophetic word. He illustrates the bad fruit of a false prophet—*competition, out-of-control anger, arrogance, defiance, and harshness*—when he slaps Micaiah in the face:

**I Kgs. 22:23-25** “So now the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouths of all these prophets of yours. The LORD has decreed disaster for you.’ Then Zedekiah son of Kenaanah went up and slapped Micaiah in the face. ‘Which way did the spirit from the LORD go when he went from me to speak to you?’ he asked. Micaiah replied, ‘You will find out on the day you go to hide in an inner room.’”

Below are more specific characteristics of false prophets and false teachers arranged by category and are drawn from both Old Testament and New Testament passages.

#### 1. False Prophets and Teachers Do Not Repent, and They Look the Other Way Concerning the Sins of God’s People.

False prophets and teachers do not turn away from

their own sins and they do not turn God’s people away from their sins. Jeremiah 23:14, 16-22 makes this clear

**Jer. 23:14, 16-22** “And among the prophets of Jerusalem I have seen something horrible: They commit adultery and live a lie. They strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that no one turns from his wickedness. They are all like Sodom to me; the people of Jerusalem are like Gomorrah... This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘Do not listen to what the prophets are prophesying to you; they fill you with false hopes. They speak visions from their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD. They keep saying to those who despise me, “The LORD says: You will have peace.” And to all who follow the stubbornness of their hearts they say, “No harm will come to you.” But which of them has stood in the council of the LORD to see or to hear his word? Who has listened and heard his word? See, the storm of the LORD will burst out in wrath, a whirlwind swirling down on the heads of the wicked. The anger of the LORD will not turn back until he fully accomplishes the purposes of his heart. In days to come you will understand it clearly. I did not send these prophets, yet they have run with their message; I did not speak to them, yet they have prophesied. But if they had stood in my council, they would have proclaimed my words to my people and would have turned them from their evil ways and from their evil deeds.”

**Ezek. 13:10** “They lead my people astray, saying, ‘Peace,’ when there is no peace, and... , when a flimsy wall is built, they cover it with whitewash.”

#### 2. False Prophets and Teachers Focus on Money and Are Self-Serving.

False prophets and teachers will have either an overt

or subtle focus on money and materialism. Balaam certainly did. Balaam's fruit was bad. He regularly cursed peoples with witchcraft (Num. 24:1), and he wanted to curse and undermine Israel for money (Num. 31:16; cf. Deut. 23:5). The text of Numbers 22 suggests that this is why the Lord got angry with him and opposed him, because he intended to do that which opposed the Lord's intention that he only bless Israel (Num. 22: 22, 32). Balaam would only get paid, and his trip to Moab would only make sense, if he got paid for *cursing* Israel (Num. 22:7; 24:10-11; Deut 23:5).

Other Old Testament and New Testament passages mention the greed of false prophets and teachers:

**Micah 3:5** "This is what the LORD says: 'As for the prophets who lead my people astray, if one feeds them, they proclaim "peace"; if he does not, they prepare to wage war against him."

**Micah 3:11** "Her leaders judge for a bribe, her priests teach for a price, and her prophets tell fortunes for money. Yet they lean upon the LORD and say, 'Is not the LORD among us? No disaster will come upon us.'"

**Rom. 16:18** "For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites."

**II Cor. 2:17** "Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, like men sent from God."

**II Pet. 2:3** "In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up."

### 3. False Prophets and Teachers Use Flattery, Are Deceptive, and Live in Denial.

**Jer. 8:10** "Therefore I will give their wives to other men and their fields to new owners. From the least to the greatest, all are greedy for gain; prophets and priests alike, all practice deceit."

**Jer. 23:14** "And among the prophets of Jerusalem I have seen something horrible: They commit adultery and live a lie."

**Rom. 16:18** "For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people."

**Eph. 4:14** "Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming."

**II Tim. 3:13** "While evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived."

### 4. False Prophets and Teachers Prophesy and Teach Their Own Thoughts, Not God's Thoughts.

**Jer. 23:16, 26** "This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'Do not listen to what the prophets are prophesying to you; they fill you with false hopes. They speak visions from their own minds, not from the mouth of the Lord... lying prophets, who prophesy the delusions of their own minds."

**Ezek. 13:1-3** "The word of the Lord came to me: 'Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel who are now prophesying. Say to those who prophesy out of their own imagination: "Hear the word of the Lord! This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Woe to the foolish prophets who follow their own spirit and have seen nothing!'"

### 5. False Prophets and Teachers Follow the Lusts of Their Flesh.

**Jer. 23:14** "And among the prophets of Jerusalem I have seen something horrible: They commit adultery and live a lie."

**II Tim. 3:6** “They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over weak-willed women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires.”

**II Pet. 2:18** “For they mouth empty, boastful words and, by appealing to the lustful desires of sinful human nature, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error.”

**Jude 8** “In the very same way, these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings.”

## 6. False Prophets and Teachers Pay Attention to Deceiving Spirits and Persecute the Godly.

It is clear from Job 42:7 that the Lord was angry with Eliphaz the Temanite and Job’s other friends, because they had not spoken what was true of Job. Job had not suffered because of his unrighteousness. The idea (or teaching) that Job was suffering because of his sins actually came from a deceiving spirit that Eliphaz describes in Job chapter 4. Eliphaz and his friends actually persecuted Job by falsely charging him with sin throughout the dialogues of Job 4-27:

**Job 4:1, 5, 8, 12-19** “Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied [to Job]: ‘...But now trouble comes to you, and you are discouraged; it strikes you, and you are dismayed... As I have observed, those who plow evil and those who sow trouble reap it... A word was secretly brought to me, my ears caught a whisper of it. Amid disquieting dreams in the night, when deep sleep falls on men, fear and trembling seized me and made all my bones shake. A spirit glided past my face, and the hair on my body stood on end. It stopped, but I could not tell what it was. A form stood before my eyes, and I heard a hushed voice:

“Can a mortal be more righteous than God? Can a man be more pure than his Maker? If God places no trust in his servants, if he charges his angels with error, how much more those who live in houses of clay, whose foundations are in the dust, who are crushed more readily than a moth!””

**I Tim. 4:1** “The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.”

## 7. False Prophets and Teachers Are Arrogant, Self-Willed, and Reject Authority Over Them.

**II Pet. 2:10, 18** “This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the sinful nature and despise authority... For they mouth empty, boastful words and, by appealing to the lustful desires of sinful human nature, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error.”

**Jude 8** “In the very same way, these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings.”

## 8. False Prophets and Teachers Move God’s People Away from Simple Devotion to the Lord.

**Rom. 16:17** “I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them.”

**II Cor. 11:3-4** “But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or

if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough.”

**9. They Annul God’s Commandments.**

**Matt. 5:19** “Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

**10. They Teach as Doctrines the Precepts of Men.**

**Matt. 15:9** “But in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.”

**11. They Are Uprooted by God.**

**Matt. 15:13** “But He answered and said, ‘Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be uprooted.’”

**12. They Follow Men’s Teachings, and Call Themselves by Men’s Names.**

**I Cor. 3:1-4** “And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men? For when one says, ‘I am of Paul,’ and another, ‘I am of Apollos,’ are you not mere men?”

**13. False Prophets and Teachers Lay Foundations Other Than Jesus.**

**I Cor. 3:11** “For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which I is Jesus Christ.”

**14. They Boast in Men, Rather Than in Jesus.**

**I Cor. 3:21-23** “So then let no one boast in men. For all things belong to you, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come; all things belong to you.”

**15. They Promote Divisions.**

**Rom. 16:17** “I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them.”

**I Cor. 11:18-19** “For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that divisions exist among you; and in part I believe it. For there must also be factions among you, so that those who are approved may become evident among you.”

**Tit. 3:10** “Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him.”

**16. They Preach a Gospel of Works Rather Than of Grace.**

**Gal. 1:6-8** and following “I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!”

**17. False Prophets and Teachers Use Trickery, Craftiness and Scheming.**

**Eph. 4:14** “As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine,

by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;"

**18. They Use Persuasive Argument to Deceive and Promote Their Falsehoods.**

**Col. 2:4** "I say this so that no one will delude you with persuasive argument."

**19. They Use Philosophy and Deception According to Men's Traditions.**

**Col. 2:8** "See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ."

**20. They Delight in Self-Abasement, Religion, "Don't Do This and Don't Do That," Worship of Angels and Visions from Fleshly Mind, Rather Than Holding On to Jesus, from Whom Everything Comes.**

**Col. 2:18-23** "Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind, and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God. If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, 'Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!' (which all refer to things destined to perish with use) -- in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence."

**21. False Prophets and Teachers Teach Strange Doctrines, Pay Attention to Myths and Endless Genealogies, Rather Than the Building of Faith.**

**I Tim. 1:3-4** "As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith."

**22. They Encourage Fruitless Discussions, Making Confident Assertions.**

**I Tim. 1:6-7** "For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion, wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions."

**23. They Don't Pursue Faith and a Good Conscience.**

**I Tim. 1:19** "Keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith."

**24. They Focus on Worldly Fables Rather Than Discipline toward Godliness.**

**I Tim. 4:7** "But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness;"

**25. They Don't Conform to Godliness, but Focus on Disputes about Words.**

**I Tim. 6:3-5** "If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and

with the doctrine conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.”

**26. False Prophets and Teachers Pursue False Knowledge, Going Astray from the Faith.**

**I Tim. 6:20-21** “O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called “knowledge” -- which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith.  
Grace be with you.”

**27. They Wrangle about Words.**

**II Tim. 2:14** “Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers.”

**28. They Upset People’s Faith with Empty Chatter.**

**II Tim. 2:16-18** “But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they upset the faith of some.”

**29. They Are Always Learning but Never Able to Come to the Knowledge of the Truth – and Follow Sexual Impulses.**

**II Tim. 3:6-9** “For among them are those who

enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected in regard to the faith. But they will not make further progress; for their folly will be obvious to all, just as Jannes’ and Jambres’ folly was also.”

**30. They Learn According to Their Own Desires – Rather Than through Revelation. Knowledge**

**II Tim. 4:3** “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires.”

**31. False Teachers and Prophets Follow Legalism.**

**Tit. 1:10-11** “For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain.”

**32. They Pay Attention to Jewish Myths and Commandments of Men.**

**Tit. 1:14** “not paying attention to Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth.”

**33. They Don’t Strengthen the Heart with Grace.**

**Heb. 13:9** “Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, through which those who were so occupied were not benefited.”

**34. They Deny Jesus, Have Unbridled Sensuality, Despise Authority, Are Greedy, Daring, and Self-Willed with Eyes Full of Adultery.**

**II Pet. 2:1-22** “But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep. For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter; and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds), then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment, and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority. Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties, whereas angels who are greater in might and power do not bring a reviling judgment against them before the Lord. But these, like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, reviling where they have no knowledge, will in

the destruction of those creatures also be destroyed, suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong. They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they carouse with you, having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children; forsaking the right way, they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; but he received a rebuke for his own transgression, for a mute donkey, speaking with a voice of a man, restrained the madness of the prophet. These are springs without water and mists driven by a storm, for whom the black darkness has been reserved. For speaking out arrogant words of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error, promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved. For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them. It has happened to them according to the true proverb, ‘A DOG RETURNS TO ITS OWN VOMIT,’ and, ‘A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire.’”

**35. They Do Not Confess that Jesus Is from God.**

**I Jn. 4:3** “and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.”

### 36. They Do Not Abide in the Teaching of Christ.

**II Jn. 7-9** “For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch yourselves, that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward. Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son.”

### 37. They Are Like Unreasoning Animals.

**Jude 4-11** “For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe. And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day, just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire. Yet in the same way these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties. But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!” But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they

are destroyed. Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.

### Personal Application

- 1) What has your own experience of the prophetic been like? Have you had positive or negative experiences? Write these out and share them with someone you pray or fellowship with.
- 2) What is God saying to you about prophets and teachers that you are being mentored by or that you are mentoring? Write down what God impressed on you as you read this chapter, and share it with someone you pray or fellowship with.
- 3) Which concepts in Scripture about discerning false prophets and teachers were new to you as you read this chapter? Which of these concepts did the Lord impress on you most? Write these out and share them with someone you pray or fellowship with.
- 4) What issues brought out in this chapter resonated with your heart? Which disturbed your heart? Write these down and share them with someone else you pray or fellowship with.
- 5) Write a list of the characteristics of false prophets and teachers that were most significant to you. Which characteristics have you observed in your own life? In the lives and ministries of those who are mentoring or teaching you? In the lives and ministries of those you are mentoring and teaching? Pray with someone else and ask the Lord for His timing and way to deal with these characteristics.
- 6) Lord, what do you want to speak to me concerning false teachers and false prophets? Record what He says and share it with someone you pray or fellowship with.

## Group Application

- 1) Invite group members to share the answers to the questions above, as they feel free to do so.
- 2) Have the group break into pairs and pray for the most significant issues raised for each person in reading this chapter and answering the questions above.

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> The NIV does not translate the passage directly enough for our purposes here.

<sup>2</sup> The language used in the passage is more than mere court language or a polite formality before the king, as shown by K. N. Jung, "Court Etiquette in the Old Testament" (Ph.D. dissertation, Drew University, 1979), pp. 24-31; A. A. Anderson, 2 Samuel (Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 11; Waco: Word, 1989), p. 117.

<sup>3</sup> E Kutsch, "Die Dynastie von Gottes Gnaden. Probleme der Nathanweissagung," Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche 58 (1961), p. 138, n. 1.

<sup>4</sup> M. Cogan and H. Tadmor, II Kings (The Anchor Bible, vol. 11; New York: Doubleday, 1988), p. 90.

<sup>5</sup> R. Althann, "Josiah," The Anchor Bible Dictionary, vol. 3

(New York: Doubleday, 1992), p. 1017; C. T. Begg, "The Death of Josiah in Chronicles: Another View," Vetus Testamentum 37 (1987), pp. 1-8; A. Malamat, "Josiah's Bid for Armageddon: The Background of the Judean-Egyptian Encounter in 609 B.C.," Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Studies 5 (1973), pp. 267-280; H. G. M. Williamson, "The Death of Josiah and the Continuing Development of the Deuteronomistic History," Vetus Testamentum 32 (1982), pp. 242-248.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*; The following passages make it very clear that in the language and metaphors of the Old Testament dying and being buried in peace do *not* mean dying in warfare and then being buried afterward: Jer. 34:4-5; 1 Kings 22:27-28; 2 Chron 18:26-27; 19:1; cf. Gen. 15:15; Ps. 4:8.

<sup>7</sup> For this rendering of the Hebrew preposition *l* + the infinitive construct, see B. K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), p. 609, no. 31.

<sup>8</sup> Brown, Driver, Briggs, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, p. 267.

<sup>9</sup> Graham Cooke, Developing Your Prophetic Gifting (Sovereign World, 1994), pp. 310-311.

<sup>10</sup> The NIV's translation of the Hebrew in this passage is too periphrastic and interpretive to use here.

# 6

## The History of Seminary Education and Theological Accreditation

Dr. Gary S. Greig

As a seminary professor, it always frustrated me to see the disconnection between the structure and priorities of the typical seminary, the spiritual life of seminarians, and the church. When I prayed and asked the Lord about this and began to do research, the Lord led me to the material and facts set forth below. Personally I have nothing against scholarship and research. I learned to love good scholarship and careful research at the Hebrew University, where I finished my B.A. degree in 1983 and at the University of Chicago, where I finished my Ph.D. in 1990. But as a Christian leader, I have a lot against scholarship supplanting clear biblical priorities in ministry training and the preparation of church leaders to preach the gospel, plant churches, and advance God's Kingdom in cities and nations.

### God Brings Revival in a Scholastic, Academic Framework

In the Reformation in the sixteenth century, God brought the church revival in a scholastic, academic

framework. The Reformation was a revival that turned God's people back to the authority of Scripture as God's Word. Historian George Marsden points out that the university was the initial base of this revival:

"The initial base of the Reformation was a university, and one of its first fruits was a curricular revision, increasing the emphasis on Greek and Hebrew in the curriculum."<sup>1</sup>

"The Evangelical reformers [Luther, Melanchthon, Zwingli, Calvin] formed their new doctrines in the give and take of academic debate, and the classroom lecture was the first medium they used to spread their message...If people would only read the Word, preferably in the original languages, they might learn the truth."<sup>2</sup>

Scholarship and technical knowledge of biblical languages and the biblical text were key to pastoral authority in the Reformation:

“Protestantism promoted a well-educated clergy, which quickly became the backbone of the international revolutionary movement...In villages throughout Protestant lands for centuries to come, the clergyman would be the best educated citizen and education would be a key to his authority...The claims of the Reformers hinged on the interpretation of texts and on a science of textual interpretation sufficient to challenge church authority.”<sup>3</sup>

Harvard College was the first seminary prototype founded in North America in 1636, and it continued Reformation patterns. Though it was a college and technically not a seminary, Harvard was founded to educate clergy:

“1636 was the year...of the legislation establishing Harvard College...The primary purpose of Harvard College was...the training of clergy.”<sup>4</sup>

Obviously, Harvard’s pattern of training and educating pastors had enormous seminal influence on the educational philosophy and the spiritual strongholds and attitudes found in all subsequent seminaries, universities, and accrediting associations in North America.

The goal of Puritan theological education at Harvard was to produce pastor-theologians or “a learned clergy,”<sup>5</sup> and so was the goal of all seminaries founded after Harvard to this day:

“The Puritans called it a ‘learned ministry’ and brought to New England an English educational approach centered in colleges designed to produce public servants. Once Harvard and Yale were established, students gained enough theology to serve as public leaders, but technical study of theology and preparation for the ministry were left for the years after graduation. Ministers had to pick up their theological studies by apprenticing themselves to an experienced pastor.”<sup>6</sup>

After the Unitarians got control of Harvard in 1805, more orthodox Congregationalists organized the first American seminary in 1808—Andover Theological Seminary—establishing a pattern of theological education that would influence all seminaries to this day:

“As pioneers in seminary education, Andover’s founders fashioned the essentials of the seminary experience for the next two centuries, right up to our own time. They stressed adequate funds, scholarly study of Christian theology, a professional, specialized faculty, and a sizable library. The three-year curriculum focused on three areas of study: Bible, church history, and theology. Four years later [1809], Presbyterians in New Jersey established Princeton Seminary.”<sup>7</sup>

## **The Scholastic Framework Becomes a Scholastic *Bottleneck* For Ministry Training**

### **The Scholastic Focus of the Seminaries**

Unfortunately, the scholastic, academic framework that God used to bring revival to the Church in the Reformation became a scholastic bottleneck that choked the life of God from seminaries and seminarians. Seminary leaders became enamored with scholarship more than practical ministry training:

“Ministers were to be not only theologians and preachers; they were to be ‘learned gentlemen’... Although seminary leaders issued frequent rhetorical appeals for more ministers, they showed scant interest in the average minister or in pastoral practice... The scholarly aspects of theology fascinated the founders of theological schools... The purpose of the seminary’s residence requirement was to train students to be ‘gentlemen theologians.’”<sup>8</sup>

“The image of the pastor-theologian is the ideal for most theological faculties.”<sup>9</sup>

The Murdock Report investigated graduate theological education in seminaries of the Pacific Northwest against the background of seminaries across the U.S. The Murdock Report cited the scholastic, academic focus of seminary faculty and seminary programs as one of the chief factors that cripples the seminaries’ ability to train seminarians to be effective pastors and church leaders:

“Seminaries...give their graduates skills to study the Bible and theology but not skills to lead the modern church...The seminaries...continue to emphasize academics...Pastors believe seminary professors do not understand their need for ministry skills or mentors. Professors often view pastors and the church as ‘anti-intellectual.’ Seminaries often turn a deaf ear to the needs of the local church and arrogantly defend scholarly education.”<sup>10</sup>

Dr. Kenneth Meyers, President of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, IL, underscores the problem of the scholastic focus in seminaries:

“The curriculum has called for professionals of the academy, rather than professionals of the church. The truth is, students will model their professors. In our [seminary] some 75% of faculty have never pastored a church longer than an intern[ship] during graduate studies. Is it no wonder that graduates come out ‘heady’ and lacking ministry skills?”<sup>11</sup>

Dr. Edward Farley, former professor of theology at Vanderbilt University Divinity School, describes the relentless pursuit of academic scholasticism in seminaries:

“Alumni and their affiliated denominations... tend to criticize the schools for being ‘too academic,’ straying too far from the canons of

denominational belief, or being insufficiently practical. But despite these recurring complaints, theological schools have more and more tended to make academic quality the central element in their reputations. Accordingly, faculty members are required to have earned the Ph.D. degree, and to be promising scholars who contribute to their fields and meet high standards for tenure and promotion. This commitment to having a first-rate academic faculty draws schools into the ethos of American higher education.”<sup>12</sup>

### **Squeezing God’s Spirit Out of Theological Study**

This narrow focus on scholasticism in seminary education left no room for the Holy Spirit to move or guide the learning process. From the very beginning at Harvard there was explicit rejection of the Holy Spirit’s power and guidance as something foreign to the structure of theological education and the related authority of Puritan clergy:

When the Great Awakening revivalist, George Whitefield, criticized Harvard and Yale for their spiritual decline in 1740, the leaders of Harvard and Yale criticized Whitefield and rejected Whitefield’s position that the Holy Spirit could directly guide and empower God’s people without the mediation of theologically trained clergy:

“The awakeners were claiming that New England’s colleges were already hopelessly secularized...The most notorious accusations came from George Whitefield. In 1740 the Grand Itinerant had been warmly welcomed both at Harvard and at Yale...Whitefield characterized the schools as ‘not far superior to our Universities in piety.’ This was a scathing insult, especially since in the same journal Whitefield wrote that Oxford and Cambridge were ‘sunk into mere Seminaries of Paganism. Christ or Christianity is scarce so much as named among them.’...His former hosts at the New England schools were in a rage....

“In 1744, when Whitefield was back in New England, the Harvard faculty replied indignantly, characterizing Whitefield as ‘an uncharitable, censorious and slanderous Man,’ and, worst of all, an ‘*Enthusiast*,’ meaning he claimed direct guidance from the Spirit of God...Harvard professors and their clerical supporters correctly perceived that Whitefield was a threat to their whole system of social authority.”<sup>13</sup>

The Puritan founders of Harvard and the Massachusetts Bay Colony also rejected the authority of the Holy Spirit directly guiding and empowering God’s people without the mediation of theologically trained clergy in the case of Anne Hutchinson, the daughter of an Anglican priest:

“1636 was the year not only of the legislation establishing Harvard College but also of the turmoil over the Anne Hutchinson case. These two famous events were related since they dealt with two sides of the question of authority... Anne Hutchinson...addressed theological issues (accusing most of the clergy of preaching works rather than grace) and thus defied the principle that formal university education... was the normal prerequisite for exercising theological authority...Most alarming to the authorities, Hutchinson was what we would today call a charismatic Christian who appealed to the direct voice of the Holy Spirit...Had Hutchinson’s appeal to a direct voice from God been allowed to stand, the whole Puritan system of hierarchical authority would have collapsed. Anyone, male or female, however unqualified they otherwise might be, would be able to challenge the biblical and theological principles on which the society was being built.”<sup>14</sup>

The scholastic focus of the Reformation became a strangle-hold allowing God to speak only to and through those who had “adequate” theological training to interpret the text of Scripture “properly”:

“The Word might be perspicuous in Protestant eyes, but it also took a sound logical training to be qualified to interpret it.”<sup>15</sup>

The Puritan founders of Harvard seem to have substituted adherence to “biblical principles” for the Holy Spirit’s guidance:

“The way in which to glorify God in all things, the Puritans argued, was to strictly follow biblical principles.”<sup>16</sup>

Much like the Pharisees, they substituted the study of the text of Scripture for the living voice of God’s Spirit: They uprooted the Tree of Life and planted the tree of the knowledge of good and evil:

**John 5:37-40** “The Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent. You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.”

### **Revival and the Outpouring of God’s Spirit Brings Necessary Correction**

But revival and the move of God’s Spirit to glorify Jesus set the focus of seminaries and colleges back on the Great Commission and showed the right place of scholarship in God’s Kingdom—to support and serve what God is already doing and *intentionally* to produce church-planters, missionaries, and evangelists:

“Most American college builders, however, were heirs to the Great Awakening as well as to classicism, Enlightenment moralism, and formal Christian practice. In the New Light tradition [of the Great Awakening] colleges were also part of a larger missionary and evangelistic enterprise... College revivals were crucial to

producing and motivating educated leaders for the missionary enterprise. Conversion of young men was in fact, one of the common rationales for promoting and sustaining colleges.”<sup>17</sup>

“Revivalism demoted the ideal of the learned pastor. Although some sophisticated advocates of the revival used well-developed theological arguments, especially in New England, doctrine was not the mainstay of the awakening. The revivalist moved the heart, not the head, and inspired action, not reflection.”<sup>18</sup>

In the 1790s and later, the Second Great Awakening revival led to the founding of colleges and seminaries and to the organization of mission societies.<sup>19</sup> Clearly revival in the Great Awakening and the Second Great Awakening focused the Church and theological education for a season on the *right target*—producing leaders for missions, church-planting, and fulfilling the Great Commission.

#### **Four Downsides to the Scholastic, Academic Focus of Seminaries**

There have been four downsides or negative consequences to the scholastic, academic focus of seminaries: 1) The separation of head from heart; 2) The separation of theological education from church life and ministry; 3) The seminary has come to be viewed as a poor investment for ministry preparation; and 4) Entrenched traditionalism has led to seminaries being structurally irreformable.

#### **Separation of Head from Heart**

The scholastic focus of seminaries has separated the head from the heart in theological education and ministry preparation:

“Pastors commented that ‘Seminary does not facilitate spiritual growth; it frequently lacks a deep spiritual base.’”<sup>20</sup>

“Dr. Kenneth Meyer, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School: ‘Faculty must be chosen for

“heart” as well as “head.”... Advancement must be evaluated on more than another monograph or book published.”<sup>21</sup>

“In a recent search to fill a position in New Testament, the search committee at my seminary had difficulty finding candidates who could integrate learning with faith. Of the more than 140 candidates considered, few had served full time in ministry, however broadly defined... We asked the candidate who many of us believed had the most impressive curriculum vitae to speak about her involvement in the church. The candidate replied: ‘My scholarship is my church.’... Training and forming future faculty is more than an academic enterprise. We have more and more seminary faculty who have never had full-time experience in ministry.”<sup>22</sup>

#### **Separation of Theological Education from Church Life and Ministry**

The scholastic focus of seminaries had separated theological education from the life and ministry of the Church. This started in North America at Harvard College in 1636:

“Harvard College was created by the civil government and governed by a board of overseers, or trustees, made up equally of clergy and magistrates... [This followed the] Reformation model, which was one step more secular in the sense of being less directly under church control. The Reformers... depended on the princes for their success....”<sup>23</sup>

The dichotomy between theological education and church life and ministry continued in pre-Civil War seminaries:

“Seminary founders... assumed that the day-by-day skills needed by the clergy would be learned in the give and take of [local church] community life. Nineteenth-century seminaries were the houses that theology built.”<sup>24</sup>

The division has only grown deeper in today's seminaries. Seminaries tend to take potential church leaders away from the life and concerns of the local church, in which they are supposed to serve, and place them in an academic environment of abstract scholasticism—much of which has no real bearing upon their pastoral responsibilities:

“Pastors surveyed by the Murdock Report felt that ‘many professors [in the seminaries] are not servants of the church.’”<sup>25</sup>

“There is a gap between the education provided and the pastors’ duties as performed. The churches expect the seminaries to send them well-rounded graduates who can fulfill these responsibilities successfully. Seminaries expect their graduates to learn administrative, leadership and nurturing skills in the church.”<sup>26</sup>

“The seminary faculty do not have a good understanding of the needs of [local churches] or the culture,’ Woodyard [Program Officer of the M. J. Murdock Charitable Trust] says.”<sup>27</sup>

“[There is an] overemphasis [in seminaries] on academic and theological training and classroom performance standards divorced from the real world of ministry.”<sup>28</sup>

“Modern training is primarily intellectual; New Testament training is primarily spiritual and practical. Modern training emphasizes the classroom; New Testament training emphasizes life and experience.”<sup>29</sup>

“To separate those who are to be trained for ministry from normal church life and activity and from the conditions in which their ministry is to be carried on is a serious mistake. One preparing for the ministry of evangelism and church planting needs the church and the evangelistic field just as the medical student needs the Hospital and the clinic.”<sup>30</sup>

“Schools which are separated from the local church are very apt also to be separated from that real world where the future minister must labor. The cloistered school is no place for the training of the future pastor, unless that future pastor plans to remain cloistered in his study while the world goes to hell.”<sup>31</sup>

### **Seminary Is Viewed as a Poor Investment for Ministry Preparation**

The imbalance of the scholastic bottleneck in most seminary programs and curricula has caused many pastors and church leaders to view seminary education as a poor investment—as inadequate to prepare leaders for real-world, real-time ministry in the local church:

“According to the ATS (the Association of Theological Schools, which accredits most seminaries in North America), evangelicals in the 1990s lay claim to 63 divinity schools and theological seminaries in North America, enrolling more than 30,000 students... Ironically, at the very moment evangelical theological education appears to have come of age, some influential parachurch and megachurch leaders are questioning the whole idea of formal theological education. The observation is made that if men who never spent a day in seminary can build successful ministries like Prison Fellowship, Focus on the Family, and Willow Creek Community Church, why have seminaries at all? In fact, a seminary degree will actually disqualify a candidate from a staff position at some megachurches.”<sup>32</sup>

“Pastors are highly educated but generally feel poorly prepared for the job they hold.”<sup>33</sup>

“In the pastors forums those who were seminary graduates reported that they found 70% to 80% of their seminary education did not apply to the duties they were expected to perform in the churches they served as ministers.”<sup>34</sup>

“With 50% of seminary graduates leaving professional ministry, seminaries are not doing a good job of training...Seminaries need more ‘practitioners’ as teachers. Seminaries need more ‘field service’ training. Professors need hands-on ministry experience. Seminaries must provide more mentoring for students.”<sup>35</sup>

“Pastors are mad at the seminary,’ says John Woodyard, program officer with the \$275 million Murdock Trust.”<sup>36</sup>

### **Entrenched Traditionalism Has Led to Seminaries Being Structurally Irreformable**

The entrenched traditionalism in seminary programs and curricula relies heavily on the scholastic, academic focus of pastoral training, which first emerged in the Reformation:

“In establishing the first seminaries, their founders established a tradition that bound many later people concerned with theological education...In America...it did not take many years for the past to become precedent, for precedents to become settled convictions, and for settled convictions to become the way that we have always done things. Thus, the Andover trustees’ early decision to mandate a three-year program of studies...became definitive for later generations. Theological educators have consistently maintained the three-year program, and when they dared to deviate from it (usually for financial reasons), they felt vaguely uncomfortable, as if they had on different colored socks.”<sup>37</sup>

“The traditional curriculum is neither user nor church-friendly. We are in a morass of traditional curriculum with little concern for application, and the curriculum has not kept up with the needs of the church.”<sup>38</sup>

“Within the present paradigm professors—the faculty—have control of their courses, their

classes, the curriculum, faculty hiring and tenure decisions. This existing structure is reinforced by tradition, the accrediting associations, and bureaucratic government structures. It cannot be changed by trustees, denominations, or administrators and donors. Yet, in many cases, what is needed is a realization by seminary boards, administration, and faculty that they will not survive if they continue to look to past successes and old paths rather than deal realistically with the changes needed to assure that their graduates will give leadership to the churches of the next century....

“Currently, major rewards for the seminary professor are research-based, academically and intellectually-based affirmations from published books and articles. Unless different spiritual, emotional, economic, and social rewards for the professor can be created, little or no change can be expected in seminary operations, relationships with the churches, or instruction for the students.”<sup>39</sup>

“Has this intense scrutiny of theological education had any effect on the schools and their programs? My impression, confirmed by people who keep close tabs on the scene, is No. Despite all the studies and discussions, the schools are much the way they were 15 years ago. Schools have taken a close look at themselves. Many have conducted curricular reviews and added or subtracted this or that item....But little or no genuine reform has taken place in either seminary or graduate degree programs....

“Are we to conclude, then, that seminaries cannot reform themselves? I am not sure that even a threat to institutional survival is powerful enough to offset a school’s structural resistance to reform. Given the way educational institutions conserve themselves, rapid and self-critical reform, accomplished within and by the faculty in cooperation with students and administration, does not seem possible.”<sup>40</sup>

## Theological Accreditation Reinforces the Scholastic, Academic Bottleneck in Seminaries

The scholastic bottleneck and the structural irreformability of seminary programs, curricula, and faculty are reinforced by theological accreditation, which assumes all the values of traditional theological education:

“[There is a] perception [in most seminaries] that seminary programs can not adapt existing programs and curriculum to fulfill the [need to teach] skills, abilities and priorities pastors and church members need and expect without jeopardizing their accreditation by regional and Association of Theological Schools standards.”<sup>41</sup>

More problematic for the Church, seminaries are accountable to accrediting associations, like the Association of Theological Schools, rather than to the churches for which they are educating leaders:

“Authority for the seminary rests in the control of accreditation associations. Evaluation is built around the shrouds of academic freedom and tenure as defined by their peers in the accreditation process.”<sup>42</sup>

The beginning of the ATS (Association of Theological Schools) was largely concerned with raising and standardizing academic, scholastic standards in seminaries. In 1924 the Conference of Theological Seminaries and Colleges in the United States and Canada met to discuss ways to improve theological education.

“After more than a decade of research, the Conference reorganized in 1936 as an accrediting agency, taking the name, the American Association of Theological Schools. The Association immediately established a set of Standards of Theological Education, which defined the ideal theological school...”<sup>43</sup>

Seminaries and theological schools of the late nineteenth century each had varying academic standards, a major concern of those who founded the Conference of Theological Seminaries and Colleges in the United States and Canada, which eventually became the ATS (Association of Theological Schools):

“Disagreement concerning standards [among seminaries and ministry training colleges of the early twentieth century] was indicative of uncertainty regarding the nature and purposes of theological education.... Standardization, as well as [academic] standards, was needed: a consensus among American theological seminaries and colleges as to what constituted the most adequate preparation for contemporary ministry.”<sup>44</sup>

### Beginnings of Theological Accreditation at Harvard

The Conference of Theological Seminaries was first formed at Harvard Divinity School, where in 1918 “more than a hundred representatives, from fifty-three institutions and fifteen denominations, were present.”<sup>45</sup> One of the chief complaints by academic leaders at the conference was the “diverse academic standards existing among the institutions responsible for the education of American ministers.”<sup>46</sup> The *noose* of the *traditional scholastic, academic focus* was about to be *tightened* around the neck of every seminary and ministry training college of the early twentieth century that wanted to be recognized by their peers and eventually accredited.

“As the standards of the theological schools became less and less uniform, a number of academicians began to speak about the growing threat to the quality of theological education. In 1892, Charles Augustus Briggs, a Biblical scholar and subsequently the author of... *The History of the Study of Theology*, expressed his concern that the tendency of the theological seminaries and colleges to cater to denominational attitudes and values frequently worked at cross-purposes with intellectual

interests... Twenty years later, William Douglass Mackenzie, who was to become a leader in the movement toward cooperation among theological schools, called attention to the need for standards in theological education... "Additional critiques of American theological education appeared during the first quarter of the twentieth century. Of these, the most detailed and influential was a study by Robert L. Kelly, published in 1924 as *Theological Education in America*... Dr. Kelly intimated his hope that through standardization all institutions for the education and training of ministers would someday emulate the relatively few theological schools which were generally recognized for their academic excellence."<sup>47</sup> [underlines mine]

It was assumed that the "Bachelor of Divinity" degree for future pastors should represent a "standard of scholarship" not a standard of ministry effectiveness.<sup>48</sup> There was even open hostility in some of early ATS leaders to concerns for practical ministry training:

"Macgregor's [of Hartford Theological Seminary] second objection concerned the emphasis which was being placed on the practical, instead of on the intellectual, aims of theological education."<sup>49</sup>

The earliest standards of the ATS saw the scholarly achievement as the "essential" characteristic of an acceptable member of a seminary faculty. A doctoral level degree is still required by ATS standards (ATS standard number 6.1.1) for all seminary faculty of accredited seminaries, and this disqualifies seasoned ministry practitioners without doctoral level degrees from being regular faculty members of an accredited seminary:

"In addition to the necessary moral and religious qualifications, competence as a scholar and a teacher... should in all cases be considered the essential characteristics of an acceptable member of the faculty."<sup>50</sup>

## The New Testament Apostolic Pattern of Training Church Leaders

Apostolic teaching and training in the Early Church was brought to local church leaders, not the reverse. Local church leaders of the early church did not go to cloistered academies of theological training, as is the case with modern seminary education. They either received training and instruction from local church leaders, from apostolic teams traveling to their church, or from traveling with itinerant apostles and their apostolic teams (as Silas, Timothy, Priscilla and Aquila, Trophimus, Erastus, and others did: e.g., Acts 18:2, 5, 18; II Tim 4:20; many other passages could be cited).

In Acts 11, the Jerusalem church sent Barnabas to the new church-plant in Antioch to strengthen, encourage, teach, and train them along with Paul (Acts 11:22-26):

**Acts 11:22-26** "News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord. Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch."

Acts 13:1 shows that in addition to Paul and Barnabas there were more "prophets and teachers" who had been sent to Antioch, presumably to train leaders at the Antioch church:

**Acts 13:1-3** “In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.”

In Acts 14:21-23, Paul and Barnabas returned to the churches they had planted in Lystra, Iconium, and Pisidian Antioch, and they taught and strengthened the believers and appointed elders in each church:

**Acts 14:21-23** “Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. ‘We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God,’ they said. Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.”

Hebrews 6:1-2 lists elementary teachings taught to new believers in the Early Church: repentance from acts that lead to death, faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. These topics display a *balance* between *practical* and *theoretical* teaching.

In Acts 19:8-10, Paul sets forth an important pattern for ministry training and theological education. Paul *invited the Holy Spirit into the classroom*—he taught the Word of God and demonstrated the Holy Spirit’s power with healing and deliverance:

**Acts 14:1-10** “While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and

arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, ‘Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?’ They answered, ‘No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.’ So Paul asked, ‘Then what baptism did you receive?’ ‘John’s baptism,’ they replied. Paul said, ‘John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus.’ On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. There were about twelve men in all. Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord. God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.”

**Conclusion #1:** *God wants back in to the classroom and the training event where His leaders are being trained! The Holy Spirit wants to lead His people into all truth again. He has been pushed out of the seminary classroom long enough!!*

**Conclusion #2:** We must be *intentional* about producing church-planters, pastors, evangelists, healers, intercessors, prophets, apostles as well as teachers. We must be *vision-driven* in our curricula and programs—any course that does not contribute directly to producing the leaders mentioned above must be abandoned.

Seminaries are producing scholar/theologians. The church must be producing *leaders* who will plant churches and bring in the Harvest!

### Personal Application

- 1) If you have had experience studying or teaching in a seminary, Bible college, or ministry training school, write down the most challenging aspects and the aspects you appreciated the most. Write these out and share them with someone you pray or fellowship with.
- 2) Think of your own educational experience in public or private schools, homeschooling, colleges, or universities. Based on what you read in this chapter, what would you change if you had it do over again? What do sense the Lord would have you change? Write these out and share them with someone you pray or fellowship with.
- 3) Describe ways you may have seen the Holy Spirit squeezed out of your educational experience. Write these out and share them with someone you pray or fellowship with.
- 4) Describe ways you may have seen your heart and your head separated in your educational experience. Write these out and share them with someone you pray or fellowship with.
- 5) Pray, "Lord, what do you want to speak to me concerning false teachers and false prophets?" Record what He says and share it with someone you pray or fellowship with.

### Group Application

- 1) Invite group members to share the answers to the questions above, as they feel free to do so.
- 2) Have the group break into pairs and pray for the most significant issues raised for each person in reading this chapter and answering the questions above.

### Footnotes

- <sup>1</sup> George M. Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 36.
- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.
- <sup>5</sup> S. E. Morison, *The Founding of Harvard College* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935), p. 45.
- <sup>6</sup> Bruce Shelley, "The Seminaries' Identity Crisis," *Christianity Today*, May 17, 1993, p. 43.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>8</sup> Glenn T. Miller, *Piety and Intellect: The Aims and Purposes of Ante-Bellum Theological Education* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1990), p. 26-27.
- <sup>9</sup> Shelley, *Christianity Today*, May 17, 1993, p. 42.
- <sup>10</sup> John Woodyard, Program Officer, *The M. J. Murdock Charitable Trust Review of Graduate Theological Education in the Pacific Northwest*, "Executive Report."
- <sup>11</sup> Dr. Kenneth Meyers in *The M. J. Murdock Charitable Trust Review of Graduate Theological Education in the Pacific Northwest*, p. 63.
- <sup>12</sup> E. Farley, "Why Seminaries Don't Change: A Reflection on Faculty Specialization," *The Christian Century*, Feb. 5-12, 1997, p. 133-143.
- <sup>13</sup> Marsden, *The Soul of the American University*, p. 55.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.
- <sup>18</sup> Miller, *Piety and Intellect*, p. 29.
- <sup>19</sup> *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), vol. 5, p. 441.
- <sup>20</sup> *The M. J. Murdock Charitable Trust Review of Graduate Theological Education in the Pacific Northwest*, p. 19.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.
- <sup>22</sup> Ronald C. White, *The Christian Century*, June 17 1998, p. 616f.
- <sup>23</sup> Marsden, *The Soul of the American University*, p. 40.
- <sup>24</sup> Miller, *Piety and Intellect*, p. 3.
- <sup>25</sup> *The M. J. Murdock Charitable Trust Review of Graduate Theological Education in the Pacific Northwest*, p. 19.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.
- <sup>27</sup> T. C. Morgan and T. S. Giles, "Re-engineering the Seminary," *Christianity Today*, Oct. 24, 1994, cover story.
- <sup>28</sup> *The M. J. Murdock Charitable Trust Review of Graduate Theological Education in the Pacific Northwest*, p. 7.
- <sup>29</sup> Clay Sterrett, *Myths of "the Ministry"* (Staunton, VA: CFC Literature, 1990), p. 18.

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<sup>30</sup> Alexander R. Hay, *The New Testament Order for Church and Missionary* (New Testament Missionary Union, 1947), p. 488.

<sup>31</sup> E. W. Johnson, "Extra-Biblical Ecclesiastical Systems," *Baptist Reformation Review* 7/2 (1978), p. 16.

<sup>32</sup> Robert W. Patterson, "Why Evangelicals Have the Biggest Seminaries, And Why They Are in Crisis," *Christianity Today*, Jan. 12, 1998, p. 50.

<sup>33</sup> *The M. J. Murdock Charitable Trust Review of Graduate Theological Education in the Pacific Northwest*, p. 7.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>36</sup> Morgan and Giles, "Re-engineering the Seminary," *Christianity Today*, Oct. 24, 1994, cover story.

<sup>37</sup> Miller, *Piety and Intellect*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>38</sup> Dr. Kenneth Meyer (President of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School) in *The M. J. Murdock Charitable Trust Review of Graduate Theological Education in the Pacific Northwest*, p. 62.

<sup>39</sup> John M. Woodyard, "A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seminary Faculty Model," in *The M. J. Murdock Charitable Trust Review of*

*Graduate Theological Education in the Pacific Northwest*, pp. 3, 7.

<sup>40</sup> E. Farley, "Why Seminaries Don't Change: A Reflection on Faculty Specialization," *The Christian Century*, Feb. 5-12, 1997, p. 133-143.

<sup>41</sup> *The M. J. Murdock Charitable Trust Review of Graduate Theological Education in the Pacific Northwest*, p. 49.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

<sup>43</sup> David B. Cable, "The Development of the Accrediting Function of the American Association of Theological Schools, 1918-1938" (Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Pittsburgh, 1970), p. 132.

<sup>44</sup> Cable, "The Development of the Accrediting Function of the American Association of Theological Schools," p. 132.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 9, 11.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 9, 11.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.



*Lamad* is the Hebrew word in the Old Testament translated to teach or to learn. Lamad integrates on the following elements.

***Lamad* — Real life, biblically-grounded, revelation-based learning**

- ▶ **Real Life** – birthed from real life issues and taught from real life successes
- ▶ **Biblically Grounded** – You see your life’s experiences in the light of Scripture
- ▶ **Revelation Based** – You interact with God in each and every learning experience

**Lamad Education incorporates the following experiences:**

1. The humble in heart seeking God (Mat. 5:8)
2. Receiving enlightenment from God (1 Jn. 2:8)
3. Growing in faith and love (Gal. 5:6)
4. Being transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit (1 Jn. 2:9)
5. Growing within the context of life and community (2 Cor. 13:1; Acts 15)

**Spiritual growth occurs:** as a humble heart seeks God, receives enlightenment from God, grows in faith, hope and love and experiences transformation by the power of the Holy Spirit while maintaining strong relationships with others in the body of Christ.

### Chapter Titles

**Written by Dr. Mark and Dr. Patti Virkler**

1. Revelation Knowledge versus Reasoned Knowledge
2. What is the Role of Theology and Doctrine?
3. Teaching as the Foundation of Doctrine and Theology

**Written by Dr. Gary Greig**

4. Teaching and Discipleship in the Old and New Testament
5. Characteristics of False Teachers and False Prophets
6. The History of Seminary Education and Theological Accreditation