

Teaching in the Home and in the Church

By Mark Hatfield

1. God has always delivered His word to His people so that it could be received, understood and applied while being taught to others.
2. Specifically, God used the home as the place where His word was first revealed. Each household that was committed to following the Lord became His people and were considered a part of a holy nation for His own possession. The people of God would come together collectively and proclaim the ordinances and commands of God.
3. This method isn't much different today. While we have a new law that we follow under Christ, God shows us that the teaching of His word begins in the home and then the members of those households that will give themselves to following the Lord are added to the number of the saved (part of His body, the church).
4. It is in this collective or congregational setting where we share our faith with one another and build one another up by speaking the truth in love (Eph. 4:15-16).
5. While the home and the church both have responsibilities in teaching we must understand what those responsibilities are so that we are able to teach effectively, the word of God.

I. Teaching in the Home

A. Where teaching begins.

1. From the beginning of time when God revealed His word to Adam and his wife Eve in the very first home and on through the rest of the Bible, teaching begins in the home.
2. In Genesis 18:19 we read *"For I have chosen him, so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him."*
3. In Deuteronomy 4:8-10 it is written, *"...what great nation is there that has statutes and judgments as righteous as this whole law which I am setting before you today? Only give heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently, so that you do not forget the things which your eyes have seen and they do not depart from your heart all the days of your life; but make them known to your sons and your grandsons. {Remember} the day you stood before the LORD your God at Horeb, when the LORD said to me, 'Assemble the people to Me, that I may let them hear My words so they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children.'"*
4. It is clear that God wanted the people who were under His law to heed and herald his words to their family members.

5. To emphasize the point, listen to *Deut 5:29* "Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever!"
6. In *Deut 6:6-15* we learn practical ways to apply the teaching of God's word "These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."
 - a. "On your heart" - memory
 - b. "Teach them diligently" - make a schedule
 - c. "Talk of them" - have a devotional study period regularly
 - d. "On your hand (or) forehead" - Keep the word on you
 - e. "On your doorposts (or) gates" - Decorate with the word

B. We need teachers in the home (fathers and mothers)

1. The New Testament spells out God's plan for teaching in the home with words that cannot be misunderstood. Paul wrote in *Ephesians 6:4*, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."
 - a. This passage doesn't say that churches are to bring up the children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord
 - b. This passage doesn't say that some "Christian" school is to bring up the children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.
 - c. This passage doesn't say that preachers are to bring up the children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.
 - d. It says "Fathers". Plain and simple.
 - e. While I am convinced that many people have bought into the philosophy that "it takes a village" to raise a child, just make sure that Bible study and spiritual devotion starts in your little hut.
 - f. In *Proverbs 22:6*, the Bible says, "Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it." This requires effort from parents to teach.
2. Since children are told to obey their "parents" in the 3 verses preceding *Ephesians 6:4*, we can infer that mothers are to teach as well. In some instances there are no spiritual leaders (father) in the picture.
 - a. We read about Timothy knowing the Scriptures from his youth (*II Timothy 3:14-15*).
 - b. We learn that Timothy's father was a Greek (*Acts 16:1*)
 - c. We come to understand that it was Timothy's mother and grandmother that had taught him the truth (*II Tim. 1:5*)

- d. In most cases, mothers will have the most influence on the children as they keep the home and spend most of the day with their family (At least this is how God intends for things to be).
- e. Young people need to listen to the book of wisdom as it tells us the following:
 - *Prov. 1:8 "Hear, my son, your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching"*
 - *Prov. 6:20-23 "My son, observe the commandment of your father and do not forsake the teaching of your mother; Bind them continually on your heart; Tie them around your neck. When you walk about, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you; and when you awake, they will talk to you. For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light; and reproofs for discipline are the way of life"*
 - *Prov. 23:22-26 "Listen to your father who begot you, and do not despise your mother when she is old. Buy truth, and do not sell {it} {get} wisdom and instruction and understanding. The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice, and he who sires a wise son will be glad in him. Let your father and your mother be glad, and let her rejoice who gave birth to you. Give me your heart, my son, and let your eyes delight in my ways."*
3. Those words were written by a man whose father told him in *1 Chron. 28:9*, "As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever.
4. *1 Chr 28:20* continues to show us this teaching when we read, "Then David said to his son Solomon, 'Be strong and courageous, and act; do not fear nor be dismayed, for the LORD God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you nor forsake you until all the work for the service of the house of the LORD is finished.'"
5. Then we see Him praying for his son in *1 Chr 29:18-19*, "O LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, our fathers, preserve this forever in the intentions of the heart of Your people, and direct their heart to You; and give to my son Solomon a perfect heart to keep Your commandments, your testimonies and your statutes, and to do {them} all, and to build the temple, for which I have made provision."

6. Many homes are not equipped to give an answer to spiritual questions. Often the church is relied upon to teach them. This just won't be effective. Here are the reasons:
 - a. There are only 4 hours that we spend in assemblies and Bible studies together each week out of 168 hours.
 - b. Only so many subjects or issues can be covered in 4 hours
 - c. This means that 164 hours remain for other teaching that could be accomplished in the home.
 - d. If there is no teaching in the home, then the world gets more of an opportunity to influence our families than we do as parents and Christians (school, friends, music etc.).
7. Listen to the advice found in *Deut 6:20-25* "*When your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What {do} the testimonies and the statutes and the judgments {mean} which the LORD our God commanded you?' then you shall say to your son, 'We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and the LORD brought us from Egypt with a mighty hand. Moreover, the LORD showed great and distressing signs and wonders before our eyes against Egypt, Pharaoh and all his household; He brought us out from there in order to bring us in, to give us the land which He had sworn to our fathers. So the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God for our good always and for our survival, as {it is} today. It will be righteousness for us if we are careful to observe all this commandment before the LORD our God, just as He commanded us.'*"
 - a. When was the last time you said something that powerful to your children regarding the God that we serve?
 - b. Look at it like this; the Israelites were delivered from slavery and they were glad to tell of their freedom but you and I were delivered from sin. Are you glad to tell others?
 - c. Shouldn't we have even a greater story to tell being under a better covenant law with better promises in Christ.
8. This is the day to make up your mind that from this day forward, "as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).
9. Let me challenge you to listen to the following text as if you were a part of Joshua's audience and then I want each household represented here to make a decision about what you are going to do.

Josh 24:14-25

14 "Now, therefore, fear the LORD and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD.

15 "If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods

which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

16 The people answered and said, "Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods;

17 for the LORD our God is He who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and who did these great signs in our sight and preserved us through all the way in which we went and among all the peoples through whose midst we passed.

18 "The LORD drove out from before us all the peoples, even the Amorites who lived in the land. We also will serve the LORD, for He is our God."

19 Then Joshua said to the people, "You will not be able to serve the LORD, for He is a holy God. He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgression or your sins.

20 "If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and consume you after He has done good to you."

21 The people said to Joshua, "No, but we will serve the LORD."

22 Joshua said to the people, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen for yourselves the LORD, to serve Him." And they said, "We are witnesses."

23 "Now therefore, put away the foreign gods which are in your midst, and incline your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel."

24 The people said to Joshua, "We will serve the LORD our God and we will obey His voice."

25 So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made for them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem.

10. We need spiritual leaders in the home that are not afraid to give God praise in front of their family members. Isaiah the prophet wrote: *"It is the living who give thanks to you, as I do today; a father tells his sons about your faithfulness. (Isaiah 38:19).*
11. I want to close this point with a quote from Psalm 71:17-18, which tells us how we can cherish the word from our youth to our old age, while being sure that all future generations know of God's ways. The text states, *"O God, you have taught me from my youth, and I still declare your wondrous deeds. And even when {I am} old and gray, O God, do not forsake me, until I declare your strength to {this} generation, your power to all who are to come."* Let this be our aim in life!!!

II. Teaching in the church

- A. Teaching in the church is a reinforcement of the teachings of God's word
1. While teaching in the home is the primary place where God's word is to be instilled in us, the church is also required to teach.
 2. The church is the pillar and support of the truth, where the truth of God's word is upheld and taught in love (I Tim. 3:15; Eph. 4:12-15).
 3. It is through this instruction that the body grows as a whole. As each family from the various households that make up a local church attend the assembly, they have an opportunity to be fed spiritually and grow thereby. When we fail to attend, we miss an opportunity to grow and a time to be an encouragement to others (Heb. 10:23-25).
- B. Everyone has an important role in teaching in the church
1. Elders and evangelists are to be able to preach and teach God's word (II Tim. 4:2; I Cor. 4:17; I Tim. 3:2). We are to commit the teaching of God's word to others so that they can teach (II Tim. 2:2)
 2. While women are excluded from teaching in the congregational arena so as to avoid usurping authority over men (I Tim. 2:12), the Bible teaches the older women to teach the younger women (Titus. 2:4).
 3. As members of the church we all are commissioned to reach and teach the lost (Matt. 28:18-20). There is work that we all can do when it comes to teaching in the Lord's church.
 4. Let us not be guilty of being unprepared to teach or in failing to fulfill our responsibilities in this area (Heb. 5:12-14).
 5. The early church was dedicated to the apostles teaching (Acts 2:42).

Conclusion

1. My prayer is that this lesson has encouraged you to be more dedicated to teaching in your home and in the local church that you attend.
2. In that teaching we ought to do our part to bring glory to God, while instructing others to do the same.
3. We have one final passage that will summarize all that we have said today. In Psalm 78:4-8 the psalmist said of God's words, "*We will not conceal them from their children, but tell to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wondrous works that He has done. For He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers that they should teach them to their children, that the generation to come might know, {even} the children {yet} to be born, {that} they may arise and tell {them} to their children, that they should put their confidence in God and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments, and not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation that did not prepare its heart and whose spirit was not faithful to God.*"
4. Let us be found faithful when the Lord calls his people home.