

APT TO TEACH (PART 1)

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In Mark 16:15, one of the accounts of what is often referred to as “The Great Commission,” the Lord commanded his disciples, “*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*”

This is a command that is given to all Christians for as long as this world stands, and it includes both conversion of the lost and edification of the saved (Matt 28:18-20). The command is a reflection of two important facts: 1) It is God’s will to use His children to teach His word (see also Eph 3:9-11; 2 Cor 4:6-7); and 2) the need for the teaching of God’s word is ongoing and urgent (Matt 9:36-38; Luke 10:1-2; John 4:35; 2 Cor 6:2). Therefore, the Lord instructs us in what we must do to be prepared to be one of these “laborers” in the harvest, a proper teacher of His word.

All of God’s servants should be able to teach

The prophet Moses identified the crucial need for able teachers in his time. Numbers 11:26-29 says, “But there remained two of the men in the camp, the name of the one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad: and the spirit rested upon them; and they were of them that were written, but went not out unto the tabernacle: and they prophesied in the camp. And there ran a young man, and told Moses, and said, Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the camp. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Moses, one of his young men, answered and said, My lord Moses, forbid them. And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? *would God that all the Lord’s people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!*” In the New Testament, 2 Timothy 2:24-26 states: “*And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.*” Notice that the ability to teach is a “must,” which is applied to God’s servants generally, which therefore includes all Christians! And 1 Peter 3:15 instructs the

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same audience (i.e. all Christians) to “*be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.*” The scriptures do not demand that every Christian serve in the role of a Bible teacher or preacher in a public setting. Both 2 Timothy 2:24-26 and 1 Peter 3:15 do imply the need for every Christian at least to be able to teach an unbeliever what is necessary to lead them to repentance. We are all “commissioned” to be able to properly teach God’s commandments to others on some level.

Ability to teach precedes the actual teaching

Yes, for all Christians to be ready and able to teach the word of God is the goal. Yet the reality is that not all Christians have properly prepared themselves for this vital work. Hebrews 5:10-14 acknowledges this reality and rebukes Christians who “*ought to be teachers,*” but instead are in further need of being taught. It is our responsibility and duty to God to grow spiritually and gain skill in the word of righteousness and have our senses exercised to discern both good and evil. But to attempt to teach God’s word when not properly prepared and without the required skill in his word would be a grave error. James 3:1-2 warns those who are not ready and able to teach to refrain from doing so: “*My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.* For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.” Ecclesiastes 5:3 says that “a fool’s voice is known by multitude of words.” Proverbs 10:19 says, “In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise.” James 1:19 says, “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.” Therefore, it is vital to learn what we must do to be properly prepared to be used by our Master in the work of teaching his commandments to others.