

# APT TO TEACH (PART 2)

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The Lord teaches several important principles to enable us to become proper teachers of the scriptures. There are certain things that we must do *prior* to teaching that are part of the necessary preparation. But as in all things, the right kind of preparation comes from God. Proverbs 16:1 says, *“The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord.”*

## **Diligent study**

Before we try to teach others God’s word, we must first study and understand the word.

Proverbs 15:28 says, “The heart of the righteous studieth to answer: but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things.” Second Timothy 2:15 says, *“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”* A good example of this being put into practice is Ezra, the priest whom God used to teach His word to the Israelites who had returned from the Babylonian captivity. Ezra 7:10 informs us how Ezra had prepared to be a good and righteous teacher: *“For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.”* Before Ezra did anything else, he had “prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord.” We see the necessity of this again as Paul warned Timothy about those who were “desiring to be teachers of the law” but, unlike Ezra, these would-be teachers were “understanding neither what they say nor whereof they affirm” (1 Tim 1:7). We cannot possibly teach God’s word properly without first knowing it and understanding it properly. “We know that the law is good if a man use it lawfully” (1 Tim 1:8). There are many who corrupt God’s word (2 Cor 2:17) or handle it deceitfully (2 Cor 4:2). But we must use knowledge aright (Prov 15:2), rightly dividing the word of truth, or we will be ashamed before God (2 Tim 2:15).

## **Without hypocrisy**

Next, before we begin teaching others, we must do what God’s word says. Ezra had prepared his heart to seek God’s law “and to do it.” This point is also emphasized in 1 Timothy 1:5, as we are told that the end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned. This reminds us to do what God says

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before trying to teach others. Romans 2:17-23 says, “Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. *Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonorest thou God?*” We are warned about those who have “swerved” and “turned aside” from obeying the word (1 Tim 1:6), yet these same ones “desire to be teachers of the law” (1 Tim 1:7). To be a “vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work” (2 Tim 2:21), we must “depart from iniquity” (2 Tim 2:19), purge ourselves, flee from lust, and “follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (2 Tim 2:21-22).

### **Teach truth, oppose error**

Finally, when we are teaching God’s word, we must teach sound doctrine. Ezra taught in Israel “statutes and judgments.” He taught the pure word of God. Timothy was also charged to teach the commandments of God (1 Tim 1:5; 2 Tim 4:1-2) and the law of God (1 Tim 1:8ff). We must teach only God’s word (Jer 23:14-31; 1 Cor 2:4-13; 1 Tim 6:3-5; 1 Pet 4:11), and all of God’s word (Acts 20:20,26-27; John 16:13). Along with teaching truth, when we are teaching God’s word, we also must oppose false doctrine. Like Jeremiah, we must build and plant, but also tear down and root out (Jer 1:10; see also Eccl 3:3). While we teach the whole counsel of God, which is sound doctrine, we cannot allow any other doctrine to corrupt it. Timothy was left in Ephesus to “charge some that they teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies” (1 Tim 1:3). May we all, as followers of Christ, prepare ourselves with all diligence to teach God’s truth to others, according to our Master’s will!