

Qualities Needed for Helping Someone Learn and Obey the Gospel

Philippians 3:17

Introduction:

There are certain qualities that we ought to possess if we are going to be effective in helping others learn and obey the Gospel.

I. We need to be faithful Christians.

It is impossible to lead others on paths that we do not walk.

It is impossible to lead anyone closer to God than we are.

It is impossible to lead others in learning and obeying the gospel if we are unfaithful to the gospel.

The unfaithful will see our unfaithfulness before they see our faithfulness.

Where there should be faithfulness, unfaithfulness is an excessively brighter light.

Christ taught this principle of being a faithful Christian with an illustration He shared in the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 7:3-5 read, “Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ and behold, the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.”

Notice some things about this illustration.

The problem is the same, something is obscuring their vision.

The size of the problem is different, for one is a speck, and for the other, it is a log.

The need of the situation is the same, both need the obstruction removed.

The desired result is also the same, so both can see clearly.

Jesus is saying, take care of your faithfulness, then you will see clearly to help others with their faithfulness.

With the log or speck removed, we should be able to say what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 11:1, “Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.”

Paul was not placing himself between people and their following of Christ to obscure Christ.

If we look at another occasion on which Paul made this statement, we get help with what he means by it.

In Philippians 3:17, Paul wrote, “Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.”

Paul set himself up as an example.

One that must be judged by his walk, just as others.

We are to imitate others who walk according to the pattern we see in Christ.

We should model Christianity in speech, actions, and attitudes.

Jesus said, “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to

all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 5:13-16).

As salt, we are preserving the pattern of Christ.

As light, we are illuminating the pattern of Christ.

Our example before the world shows them the pattern we are learning and obeying.

II. We need to have a good heart.

To be effective in helping another person learn and obey the Gospel, we must have the right attitude and disposition.

Like Jesus, we must be submissive to God’s will.

Philippians 2:5-8 instruct us to “Have this attitude in [ourselves] which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

Even though Jesus is God, He did not cling to His rights as God.

He laid aside His privileges as God.

He took upon Himself the nature of a human servant.

He became humble by becoming obedient and dying on the cross.

The earthly ministry of Christ shows us the pattern for how to become humble and obedient and have a good heart.

We must have compassion for the lost.

Paul, the one who wants us to imitate him, was imitating the compassion of Christ in Romans 9:1-3.

He wrote, “I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh...”

Why did Paul “have great sorrow and unceasing grief in [his] heart”?

He was so burdened with Israel’s unbelief that he was willing to suffer eternal damnation if that would help them come to Christ.

One chapter later, in Romans 10:1 and 2, Paul wrote, “Brethren, my heart’s desire and my prayer to God for them (the House or nation of Israel) is for their salvation. For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. For not knowing about God’s righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.”

Paul prayed for Israel’s salvation.

They possessed zeal for God without knowledge.

They sought to establish their own righteousness by works of merit without faith.

Israel needed zeal for God based on the knowledge of righteousness being granted because of a person’s faith.

A good heart sees people with a zeal for God and helps them learn and obey the gospel.

III. We must be humble.

We must realize our own need for God's grace.

Jesus told a "parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: 'Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: "God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get." But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, "God, be merciful to me, the sinner!" I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Luke 18:9-14).

Being arrogant and self-centered are not marks of humbleness.

Being respectful and sorrowful, crying out to God for mercy is being humble.

1 John 1:8 tells us that "if we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us."

Verse 8 expresses a sinful attitude that is the source of sinful deeds.

Verse 10 references the result of a sinful deed in the past.

We cannot truthfully say that we have not sinned, therefore we cannot say that we have not had a sinful attitude.

If we say, "We have no sin" or "We have not sinned" in the past, "the truth is not in us...and His word is not in us."

The humble confess their sins because "His word is...in [them]" and "the truth is...in [them]."

By being humble God's word and the truth remain in us.

We must remember that our message is not original.

Our message is God's message.

1 Peter 4:11 "Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

The humble give all the glory to God, leading lost people to learn and obey the gospel.

IV. We must be careful.

Handling the Word with care takes diligence.

2 Timothy 2:15 directs Christians to "be diligent (zealous, eager) to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth."

An approved workman is careful.

We must be careful then to correctly teach the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

Galatians 1:8 and 9 warn that if anyone "should preach...a gospel [other than or more than]" the truth, "he is to be accursed!"

Paul was always faithful in declaring God's Word, so no one's condemnation could be blamed on him (Acts 20:25-27).

Paul insisted that Timothy "preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction" (2 Timothy 4:2).

We need to be careful in delivering the truth; we need to work hard to make phrases like, “The Bible says...” and “The Bible teaches...” a common part of our vocabulary.

Our carefulness in handling the word of truth will help people learn and obey the gospel.

V. We must be people of prayer.

We should pray that God will help us see the value in each soul.

When we can understand the value of each soul, we are better able to understand our discipleship and the cost that is to be paid.

“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul” (Matthew 16:26).

The profit of choosing the world over our soul is nothing.

There is nothing a man can give that is of equal value to his soul.

There was nothing that this world could offer of equal value for eternal life, so the Father gave His Son, and the Son gave His life.

“For God so loved the world (all the people), that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

We should pray that God will give us wisdom.

James 1:5 and 6 “But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind.”

When we need wisdom, we should trust God.

We need only to ask Him in faith and He will give it.

However, wisdom will not be given to a faithless person (vv. 6-8).

We should pray that the Lord will be with us.

He promised that He would be with us, “always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20).

Immanuel, God with us, came in Matthew 1:23 and assures us that He will always be with His disciple makers.

We must be people of prayer to help others learn and obey the gospel.

VI. We must stay focused on our role.

We are sowers of the seed and reapers of the harvest.

As John wrote in his gospel account, “Already he who reaps is receiving wages and is gathering fruit for life eternal; so that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. For in this case the saying is true, ‘One sows and another reaps’” (John 4:36 and 37).

Just as easily as we can become selfish and lose focus of our role, those we help can get a false view of us, looking to us rather than to Christ.

In 1 Corinthians 3:5-10, Paul pointed out that Christian leaders can only sow and water the spiritual seed because God alone causes the crop to grow.

Our role is to teach (Matthew 28:19 and 20) and persuade (2 Corinthians 5:11).

Our role is not to “produce results.”

The gospel “is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16).

We have fulfilled our responsibility when we teach it faithfully.

We must stay focused on our role when helping someone learn and obey the gospel.

Application:

Be a faithful Christian.

Have a good heart.

Be humble.

Be careful.

Be a person of prayer.

Stay focused on your role.

To borrow from Peter's words in 2 Peter 1:8, "If these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in" helping someone learn and obey the gospel.

Conclusion:

If you are looking for quality of life, "consider Jesus, the Apostle (the one sent on a mission to represent God) and High Priest of our confession" (Hebrews 3:1).

"He was faithful to Him who appointed Him" (v. 2).

He is the faithful Son over God's house (vv. 3 and 4).

We are the house "if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end" (v. 6).

If you are already a member of God's house, help someone else learn and obey the gospel.

If you are not a member of God's house but you are ready to obey the gospel, come believing that Jesus died for your sins, was buried and resurrected so that you could die to your sins, bury the old man of sin, and be raised to walk in newness of life.