



## FOUR BENEFITS OF BEING TEACHABLE

TO: LEGISLATORS

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When one analyzes the OT wisdom literature of the Book of Proverbs, which is mainly about a father preparing his son to serve in public office, you will discover that the book contains a total of 915 passages pertaining mostly to pithy sayings that are intended to prepare Rehoboam, the author's son, to effectively serve as the future King.

Clearly, the applications for you as a Member of Congress are enormous!

Somewhat randomly organized and poetic, all of the sayings fall into 31 chapters. (King Solomon wrote all but the last two chapters).

In closely studying this fascinating book, the student of Scripture will discover that the 915 passages fall into three broad categories: A Public Servant's relationship to God, to self and to others. More specifically, six thematic, recurring categories repeat throughout the Book and those six categories comprise 90 different subjects – all pertaining to wisdom for officeholders! One of those subjects has to do with teachability, the subject of our study this week; I invite you to read on.

## WEEKLY MEMBERS BIBLE STUDY

WEDNESDAY MORNINGS 8:00 to 9:00 AM

Hot Breakfast Served • Capitol Family Room H324 • Spouses Welcome

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**PROVERBS: FOUR BENEFITS OF BEING TEACHABLE**

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**I. INTRODUCTION CONTINUED**

In addition to the three recurring themes of a public servant's relationship to God, Self and Others, the six broad, recurring themes in Proverbs are as follows:

1. Spiritual Wisdom
2. Personal Wisdom
3. Family Wisdom
4. Intellectual Wisdom
5. Marketplace Wisdom
6. Societal Wisdom

More specifically, as mentioned in the preamble, one can find approximately 90 recurring, varying topics under those six categories. Over the years, as a service to you, I have attempted to exhaustively outline each of those 90 subjects; all that Solomon says about personal teachability is one of those 90. It follows that the Book of Proverbs is a treasure chest of practical instruction! As a public servant you should take full advantage it, imbibing on a regular basis!

Herein God is instructing you regarding the critical need for an office holder to develop, maintain and exercise the character quality of being teachable. Sadly, for too many, pride (sometimes manifest in not wanting others to know how little of the Bible they know) thwarts their teachability in the form of not being available to be taught. So they distance themselves from the necessary Bible study environments where real spiritual growth can incubate and occur. Don't let your existing lack of Bible knowledge thwart your consistent, habitual priority of participation in Bible study opportunities in the Capitol. If you can come to grips with this and pull it off, there will be tremendous personal benefits to you over time. Determine to leave office more spiritually mature than when you entered!

**II. THE COMMAND TO BE TEACHABLE**

In the New Testament Book of James the Word of God instructs believers, "This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger." (1:19). The Greek word for **hear** *akouo* not only carries the idea of listening, but furthermore, "to heed and understand." These are the basic ingredients that define teachability. Similarly, in the Old Testament the Hebrew word for **hear** *shama* means "to comprehend, give earnest heed, and obey." What exactly is teachability? States Merriam-Webster: "teach is a general term for causing one to acquire knowledge or skill, usually with the imparting of necessary incidental information and the giving of incidental help and encouragement." In our society, it seems most are quick to speak, but not to learn – especially to learn that which is found in the passages of the Bible. What follows are insights from Scripture about the benefits of developing a biblically based teachability. Are you teachable – or does your pride dictate that you have to be the teacher? Something to think about....

**III. THE FOUR TEACHERS GOD DESIRES TO BE IN YOUR LIFE****A. YOUR PARENTS**

At a young age, while you remain under the roof of your parents, and later on, God desires that your parents remain one of your primary teaching sources. Remember, they know you best; they have the big picture of your past life and are therefore in a unique position to give you good advice. State the following Proverbs in this regard....

***1:8 Hear, my son, your father's instruction  
And do not forsake your mother's  
teaching.***

***4:1 Hear, O sons, the instruction of a  
father, and give attention that you may  
gain understanding,***



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**4:4-5** *Then he taught me and said to me, "Let your heart hold fast my words; Keep my commandments and live; Acquire wisdom! Acquire understanding! Do not forget nor turn away from the words of my mouth."*

**4:20** *My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings.*

Notice the Hebrew word for **incline** *natab*. It means "to bend, stretch or extend," indicating effort in regards to allowing oneself to be taught, in this case by one's father and mother.

**23:22** *Listen to your father who begot you, and do not despise your mother when she is old.*

Explicitly, of great importance inferred by the above passage is that children should *never* stop learning from their parents. But as it relates to the formative years, while one is in the parental home, Solomon states two specific reasons for keeping close ties to the teaching of one's parents. He underscores:

1. Parents must teach on sexual sin

Good parents teach, and hopefully you were teachable, and taught by yours, regarding the temptations and consequences of sexual immorality. The instruction regarding, patterning, and the blessings that result from past, present and future sexual purity are best taught, caught and inculcated through God's conduit of the institution of the family.

Here is why teachability in this area is so important, and why the Holy Spirit led Solomon to underscore this relative to public leaders – whose position of power is akin to a sexual aphrodisiac that serves to create heightened temptations: When a child goes through puberty, the private inculcated chambers of sexual drive – what will erotically stimulate the child in adulthood – gel for life. If sexual purity is not

instilled properly prior to puberty via parental modeling and careful, explicit instruction, the child will very likely fall to the temptation of aberrant stimuli.

**IF WAYWARD STIMULATION(S) BECOME HABITUAL AT A YOUNG AGE, THEY TYPICALLY CRYSTALLIZE DURING PUBERTY AND REMAIN THE INGRAINED STIMULANT OF CHOICE FOR THE REMAINDER OF HIS OR HER LIFE.**

Such adolescent patterning is difficult to change later in life. It follows that teaching regarding sexual purity at an early age is critically important to proper childhood development. The following Proverbs speak to this very thing:

**5:7** *Now then, my sons, listen to me and do not depart from the words of my mouth.*

**7:24** *Now therefore, my sons, listen to me, and pay attention to the words of my mouth.*

Chapter five of Proverbs is about adultery and chapter seven's command is in the context of prostitution. Illustrated by both passages, Solomon desires to protect his son and channel his future sexual energies in a God-honoring way. The following verses serve to vividly underscore this:

**5:15** *Drink water from your own cistern and fresh water from your own well*

**5:18-20** *Let your fountain be blessed and rejoice in the wife of your youth.... Be exhilarated always with her love. For why should you, my son be exhilarated with an adulteress?*

**7:25** *Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways. Do not stray into her paths*

The Hebrew word for **exhilarated** can also be translated "ravished" or "intoxicated" and speaks to



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*properly or improperly channeled erotic responsiveness*, i.e. what turns someone on. Solomon's point is that such should be keyed to and unlocked only in the marriage bed (cf. Heb. 13:4). The OT book of The Song of Solomon is included by God in the canon of Scripture with the intent to illustrate the wonderful blessings associated with proper sexual responsiveness: Therein recorded are the magnificent, fulfilling results for those who have properly channeled their sexual drive. The point of the book? How wise it is to do just that! Look at what will result for you!

Given the clarity of these passages, it is no surprise that research indicates homosexual proclivities are not genetic; they are formed in adolescence and puberty when a child of either sex fails to properly bond with their father for whatever reason(s). In a quest to fulfill that void of fatherly love, and in lack of his instruction, the child becomes tempted by seemingly alternative, artificial forms of fulfillment, which then catalyze during puberty. It is axiomatic: the weakening of the institutions of both marriage and family in a given culture will simultaneously and proportionately give birth to a rise in homosexuality and lesbianism. Sadly that is occurring here in America.<sup>1</sup>

### 2. Parents must teach on self-discipline

The second proverbial reason to listen to the instruction of your parents has to do with developing and maintaining personal discipline. Again personal discipline is best taught in the home.

**13:1 *A wise son accepts his father's discipline, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke.***

**Discipline** *musar* means "chastening, correction or punishment." Rather than from another institution later in life where it comes at a much higher price, especially if one is in the public eye, discipline is best taught and formed via the father in the home.

Summarily, the first of four teachers God desires in your life are parents.

### B. THE WORD OF GOD

The second teacher God desires to be in your life is His Word. One of the main tenets of the Reformation is an emphasis on the believer's personal access and reliance on God's direct revelation to him via His Holy Writ, the Bible.

**2:2 *Make your ear attentive to wisdom, incline your heart to understanding;***

Similar to one inclining an ear to a father's teaching (4:20), Solomon likewise states that one need **incline** (again, to bend, stretch, extend) the **heart** *leb*, meaning "inner man" or "will," to understanding the wisdom of the Word of God.

**TEACHABILITY IS A LEARNED SKILL. ONE NEEDS TO DEVELOP A RESOLVE TO BE TAUGHT BY THE WORD. PUT AWAY PRIDE AND ALLOW HIS WORD TO INSTRUCT YOU.**

**18:15 *The mind of the prudent acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.***

Godly knowledge is the means by which the heart is programmed for obedience; and obedience is commensurate with spiritual maturity. In chapter eight of Proverbs, King Solomon personifies wisdom in his inspired writings:

**8:6-8 *Listen, for I will speak noble things; and the opening of my lips will reveal right things. For my mouth will utter truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips. All the utterances of my mouth are in righteousness; There is nothing crooked or perverted in them.***

One reason we should allow the Word to be our teacher is because it is a teacher that is always right!



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The fact that the Scriptures contain **nothing crooked or perverted** is the basis for what is known theologically as *scriptural infallibility*, which means, “that which is exempt from the possibility of error or mistake” (M-W). States the Psalmist (19:7-8) regarding the same:

***The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.***

In this powerful passage each of the four stanzas contains a synonym for the Word of God with a respective definition of what His Word will do!

**C. WISE COUNSELORS**

***19:20 Listen to counsel and accept discipline, that you may be wise the rest of your days.***

***12:15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man is he who listens to counsel.***

***22:17 Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise, and apply your mind to my knowledge;***

***25:12 Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold is a wise reprov-er to a listening ear.***

The picturesque language of this last Proverb illustrates the beauty of the words used by someone who corrects another via teaching. The Proverb right before 25:12 contextually underscores this same idea of a talented counselor: “Like apples of gold in settings of silver, is a word spoken in right circumstances.” Together, these passages denote the timing and tone necessary for effective one-on-one teaching.

**D. PASTOR-TEACHERS**

***15:31 He whose ear listens to the life-giving reproof will dwell among the wise.***

Notice the requirement for **dwelling** with **wise** people: a teachable spirit. **Wise** people often tire of proud, non-teachable folks; they’d rather spend their time with those whom they can influence. In addition to the **life-giving** reproof of a Parent, the Word and a Counselor is the Pastor-Teacher. Ephesians 4:11-12 states, “And He gave some...as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ.” God gives Pastors to His Church in order to teach and to build up. He does not expect His followers to be completely self-taught. The job of a Shepherd is further illustrated in the Pastoral Epistles. Notice what Paul tells Pastor Timothy to do in 2Timothy 4:2: “Preach the word, be ready in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.” Whereas the Pastor is to instruct and the believer to be taught, there are dire consequences to short circuiting this God-ordained economy for spiritual growth: Are you too prideful to be taught? Conversely, choose to place yourself under someone who is a bona fide Pastor-Teacher. The inverse consequences, are inferred in Proverbs:

***19:27 Cease listening, my son, to discipline, and you will stray from the words of knowledge.***

**DON'T ALLOW A FORMER BAD EXPERIENCE WITH A PASTOR TO RUIN THE PLACE IN YOUR HEART FOR A GOOD ONE IN THE FUTURE**

Do you allow your Parents, the Word, your Friends, and Pastors to speak into your life? Do you welcome it? Note one more thing on this....

***23:12 Apply your heart to discipline and your ears to words of knowledge.***



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The Hebrew word for **apply** means “bring it to pass,” indicating one’s need to willfully work on the character quality of teachability. Learn to be teachable! **Apply** your will to this **discipline!** Listen to the words of **knowledge** from these four aforementioned sources! Be teachable: Listen!

**23:19 Listen, my son, and be wise, and direct your heart in the way.**

### IV. FOUR BENEFITS OF BEING TEACHABLE

#### A. IT LEADS TO LEARNING

**1:5-6 A wise man will hear and increase in learning, and a man of understanding will acquire wise counsel, to understand a proverb and a figure, the words of the wise and their riddles.**

How can you learn if you won’t be taught? Such people are curmudgeons. Personally I find it fascinating to talk to someone who is always learning and boring to talk to those who aren’t.

**4:1 Hear, O sons, the instruction of a father, and give attention that you may gain understanding,**

One of the great benefits of being teachable is that you are always growing and changing as a person.

**YOU WILL BE THE SAME OR LESS, TEN YEARS FROM NOW EXCEPT FOR THE BOOKS YOU READ AND THE PEOPLE YOU MEET. CONSTANTLY LEARN FROM THEM!**

Do you ask questions? Are you habitually curious? One of the greatest joys of my life is to doggedly ask questions of others – **give attention** to them – and learn from them all that I can. You should do the same. In addition, to **give attention** by asking questions of others indicates you are interested in them and love them!

Some years ago I had dinner with the President of Salem Communications. Somehow he had heard that my father invented the first exterior pole lightweight mountaineering tents (which technology was used on the moon in the Apollo program). Mr. Atsinger riddled me with questions about flexible tent poles for over an hour (while dining with our wives I might add! 😊) in his seemingly unquenchable **inclination** to learn everything he could about tent poles! Although a very powerful individual, he is very teachable; Solomon would applaud Mr. Atsinger! Unleash today your curiosity and learn, learn, learn! Buck the dumbing-down trend so prevalent today in American culture!

#### B. IT LEADS TO LONG LIFE

**4:10 Hear, my son, and accept my sayings and the years of your life will be many.**

This principle from Exodus (20:12; the first of the Ten Commandments) is echoed in the New Testament book of Ephesians: “Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth” (6:2-3). Those who allow their parents to teach them will generally live longer lives than those who do not. This straightforward benefit of being teachable should prove highly motivational!

#### C. IT LEADS TO PURPOSE

**5:1-2 My son, give attention to my wisdom, incline your ear to my understanding; That you may observe discretion and your lips may reserve knowledge.**

The Hebrew meaning of *mezimmah*, which is translated above in 5:1-2 in the NASB into the English word **Discretion** is perhaps better translated as “purpose, intent, and plans.” Reread the passage with that idea in mind. If the four things previously mentioned are teachers in your life, then you will **observe** in your life purpose, intent and plans that are bigger than yourself! (Who



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needs to attend motivational seminars when you have the Word of God!)

**AS YOU LOSE YOUR LIFE IN THE PURSUIT OF GOD'S ATTRIBUTES AND ARE INCREASINGLY INTENT ON HIS PURPOSES YOU WILL LIVE AN ABUNDANT LIFE**

In John 10:10 Jesus said, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." Be teachable and you will live a life filled abundance and purpose!

D. IT LEADS TO BLESSINGS

**8:32 Now therefore, O sons, listen to me, for blessed are they who keep my ways.**

**22:17-18 Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise, and apply your mind to my knowledge; for it will be pleasant if you keep them within you, that they may be ready on your lips.**

How blessed and **pleasant** are the teachable! Who would you rather hang with: a proud know-it-all, or a teachable person? How should you then live?

V. SUMMARY

If one will not allow the Word of God to instruct him or her, (cf. Mt. 17:5) then nothing else will persuade them toward salvation in Christ, not even miracles. Note this in 16:31: "But he said to him, 'If they do not *listen* to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.'" Romans 1:16 echoes this, indicating the supremacy of the Word of God in teaching another the way to Heaven. Paul states, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

Whereas unbelievers reject the authority of the Word of God in their lives, true believers embrace the Word: In 1John 4:6, the Apostle John, who wrote four books in the NT states, "We are from

God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error." Teachability then, as it relates to the Scriptures, is a telltale sign of someone who is truly saved. If you have difficulty submitting to the authority of the Word of God, then you should question if you are truly saved. Believers are teachable because the indwelling Holy Spirit is intent on revealing His truth to their hearts.

**20:12 The hearing ear and the seeing eye, the LORD has made both of them.**

As beneficial and obvious as your sight is, so should be your ability to hear and learn from God. Teachability is normative for the truly regenerate individual.

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<sup>1</sup> Parks, Ph.D., Jason *Overcoming Male Homosexual Problems* (Salt Lake City, Century Publications, 1998)