

Called to Teach

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The Situation

I doubt that anyone will disagree with me when I state that our society today in America is biblically illiterate. Specifically, I would define "biblically illiterate" as the following:

- <u>Unfamiliar with the structure of the Bible</u>. Most people could not explain why the Bible is split between Old and New Testaments. They cannot name the books of the Bible. That the books are grouped into certain categories is unknown to them. And, sadly, many people cannot even locate a verse of Scripture.
- <u>Unfamiliar with the content of the Bible</u>. Noah and Moses and Jesus are favorite stories, but
 are known only in the terms and generalities of childhood tales. The Psalms are at best
 pleasant poetry. The sermons of Jesus draw a blank. The Pauline and General Epistles are
 much too difficult to read and really aren't practical. The books of the Prophets are totally
 useless.
- <u>Unfamiliar with the purpose of the Bible</u>. The Bible is certainly not science, and even its history is suspect. At most it's a moral code, but even then, the vast majority of people haven't read it to know what moral code it contains they quote the Golden Rule and think that's all Jesus ever said.
- <u>Unfamiliar with the theology of the Bible</u>. Words such as sin, salvation, sanctification, grace, justification, and redemption are archaisms completely out-of-touch with modern-day America. The concept that there are doctrines of God, man, Christ, and the Trinity is unheard of.
- <u>Unfamiliar with the truth of the Bible</u>. In a world of moral relativism and moral decay, the
 statement that there is absolute truth, revealed by the one True God, would be considered
 ridiculous, narrow-minded, and old-fashioned.

It is one thing, however, to state that our society is biblically illiterate. That is almost to be expected; after all, that is the "world" that we are in, but not of.

What would you say, though, if I were to assert that the Church in America is also biblically illiterate? And by "the Church" I mean the true Church: the children of God, saved and redeemed by the blood; not everyone who happens to inhabit a pew on a given Sunday morning.

Look back on our definition of "biblically illiterate." *Unfamiliar with the structure of the Bible*. Can most Christians talk knowledgeably about the reason for the Old and New Testaments? Find their way quickly around to locate a given text? Talk about the various types of books found in the Testaments?

Unfamiliar with the content of the Bible. More is known about content, undoubtedly, than in society at large, but ask yourself: How many Christians can quote or locate verses that they need without hesitation? Or paraphrase passages or verses of Scripture – even well known ones such as the Beatitudes or I Corinthians 13? If asked what would define the Christian walk, could they provide a clear answer? Are people comfortable defending their faith? Proving a point from Scripture? Leading someone to Christ with nothing more than a Bible in hand?

Unfamiliar with the purpose of the Bible. The Church does fairly well here, recognizing and affirming that the purpose of the Bible is to tell the story of man's sin and God's plan of salvation and how to live a holy life, but still – do we really live it? Do our lives show the world the importance of the Sacred Writ?

Unfamiliar with the theology of the Bible. We do all right with short words like sin and grace, but longer terms such as sanctification and justification still get glazed looks from many Christians. Certainly, the words seem to be detached from everyday life. We are content to admit that doctrine is important, but we relegate it to pastors and seminary students.

Unfamiliar with the truth of the Bible. As Christians, we affirm that the Bible is the true and absolute standard of living, the only plan of salvation, and the answer to every question voiced by humankind. But if we don't know what it says, if we don't understand the doctrines, and if we can't tell people about it – then can we really say that that is what we believe?

The Explanation

Why is this the case? Why, in a culture where nearly everyone can read, has access to a Bible, and has a church on every corner, is there such biblical illiteracy? I believe the answer to this question is to be found springing from the society we are a part of.

First, there is a <u>diminished stress on education</u>. We see this in lowered national standards. Lowered expectations. Lowered requirements. We emphasize "feeling good" about yourself and therefore we accept mediocrity. Defining educational excellence and striving for it is old-fashioned and exclusionary.

Second, there is an <u>emphasis on "rights" over "responsibility</u>." The phrases are so common they are clichéd: "I deserve it." "It's my right." Whether or not we've "earned" it is irrelevant – because I want it, it's my "right."

Third, there is a <u>lack of balance in our use of time</u>. Daytimers and PDAs have become our Bibles, traveling with us wherever we go, providing structure and order to our days, advising us of what we can and can't do. The thing they don't provide is balance, rest, prioritization, and peace. We have become multi-tasking people instead of single-focused persons.

Fourth, there is a "quick-fix" mentality. We live in a culture of sound-bites, immediate access, convenience technology, and instant gratification. We are unwilling to sweat and wait and work for what we want.

Think for a minute of how this cultural worldview plays itself out within the Church:

With our diminished stress on education, we are content with teaching the bare basics of the faith in our churches. We are so concerned that people will become "overwhelmed" or "frightened" by the harder truths of Scripture, or by an in-depth study of doctrine, that we don't present it to them. We keep them on a milk diet, and then wonder why they can't digest meat.

The cultural emphasis on "rights" means that we look at the benefits of Christianity ... answered prayer, spiritual gifts, leadership, etc. ... as our "rights" as children of God. The thought that the fullness of these things comes only through a life of obedience and daily discipline is unpalatable.

Our schedules show our lack of balance in our lives. How often do you have in your daily plan: "Quiet time." "Prayer time." "Weekend spiritual retreat." "Time for a long, quiet, unhurried walk – may take all afternoon." We have planned God right out of our lives. Instead of providing us more time to spend on our spiritual development, we have less, because we schedule the time we have down to the wire.

Finally, our quick-fix mentality has lost to us our entire Christian history of devotion, dedication, spiritual formation, solitude, labor, and suffering. We have no time to wait for what is good, and we don't have patience with pain. We will not tarry for wisdom, nor work for fulfillment. If maturity cannot be gained in five-minute easy-to-understand devotional readings, then it won't be gained at all.

Why are we biblically illiterate as the Church? The above points can be summarized neatly:

- We do not stress education.
- We do not stress responsibility.
- We do not stress balance.
- We do not stress perseverance.

Without these, biblical knowledge – and spiritual maturity – cannot be achieved.

The Expectation

Let's expand our discussion, therefore, to talk about spiritual maturity as a whole. Biblical knowledge is a primary foundation stone, but it is not the only requirement for spiritual development. One could be very knowledgeable of the Bible (and even, oddly enough, acknowledge its truth), but still live a life of willful sin and separation from God.

Spiritual maturity, or spiritual formation, involves several key areas.

First, <u>biblical knowledge</u>. As we started by talking about biblical illiteracy, let's first address what the Bible says about itself. No verse better sums up the reason we need to know Scripture than II Timothy 3:16: "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." Based upon that verse, we find our charge as Christians in II Timothy 2:15: "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth."

Second, godly character. In chapters such as Matthew 5-7, I Corinthians 13, and Romans 12, we find entire dissertations on the nature of a godly life. Yet Galatians 5:22-23 captures the whole: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."

Third, <u>sanctified mind</u>. As we work out our salvation, it touches all parts of us, and the mind is key. Colossians 3:2 states simply, "Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth." And Romans 12:2 exhorts us to "be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

Fourth, <u>spiritual discernment</u>. In I Thessalonians 5:21-22, we find these closing words: "Examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil." And again in Hebrews 5:14, we find spiritual maturity linked to discernment: "But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil."

Fifth, willing obedience. Jesus stated simply in John 14:15, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments."

Even these points could be summed up further: spiritual maturity is living a life characterized by *orthodoxy* and *orthopraxy*: right teaching and right living. Living out the truth of the Bible. It is no accident that Jesus was the incarnate Word of God. So must we be.

The Congregation

In order to reach our goal of spiritual maturity, we as the Church must take Christian education seriously.

Learning is not passive. We cannot be handed biblical knowledge and godly character on a silver platter. We have to work at it, and strive for it. Every individual in our church must be committed to learning, if personal and corporate spiritual maturity is to be attained.

First, we must have a <u>desire to learn</u>. Without a passion for learning, the best teaching in the world will be stale, dry, and boring. We must love knowledge and wisdom and growth for its own sake and God's sake ... completely apart from whomever happens to be teaching, or whether they are "interesting" or not. If we only want to learn from a certain person or set of people, we cannot say that we love learning. People come and go in our lives. Learning is eternal.

Second, we must <u>expect to learn</u>. If we come to church or to a class with a blasé attitude, we will get exactly that out of it. If we come expecting to learn, we will be searching for understanding, for new insights, for truths we were not aware of, and for how to apply the lessons to our lives.

Third, we must <u>make time to learn</u>. Learning cannot be an afterthought, or treated with a "I'll see if I can squeeze it in" attitude. Otherwise, we will treat it casually, or be looking at our watch rather than focusing on the topic.

Fourth, we must <u>put forth effort to learn</u>. Pay attention. Listen purposefully. Take notes. Do extra study. Apply the truths learned.

Fifth, we must become self-motivated to learn. If we rely solely on external stimuli for our spiritual maturity, we will not grow as God intends. We must seek after wisdom and knowledge of our own will, wherever it lies. Books, tapes, videos, teachers, counselors, mentors, friends ... we must search out every opportunity for growth and seize it with both hands.

Put simply, learning is an active verb. If we are to mature in Christ, we must be completely committed to pursuing wisdom and knowledge and godly character – every hour of our lives.

The Vocation

There is a need for Christian education. A deep need – for only through Christian education will we as a Church achieve spiritual maturity. That is why God has called some in the Church as teachers.

We see teaching mentioned in all three of the major lists of spiritual gifts found in the New Testament: in Romans 12:7, I Corinthians 12:28, and Ephesians 4:11. But what is this thing called the spiritual gift of teaching?

Before we touch on the specific answer to that question, there is something that needs to be said: the spiritual gift of teaching, like every spiritual gift, is not given for the individual who holds the gift, *per se*. The parable of the hidden talent comes to mind – we were not given what we have to hide it, bury it, or keep it for ourselves. I Corinthians 12:7 states the purpose of the spiritual gifts clearly: "But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit *for the common good*."

We are teachers not because we like to hear ourselves talk, or because we like to study. We are teachers because we have been given something to give. The gift has a definite purpose attached to it, and a goal we are trying to accomplish.

It is by looking at that purpose and goal that we will answer the question of "What is the spiritual gift of teaching?"

The Intention

We could talk about the gift of teaching in terms of skill sets, personality types, and rhetorical styles – but we won't. Not here.

Instead, using a slightly different approach, let's discuss the gift of teaching in terms of what it is meant to accomplish in the Body of Christ. Ephesians 4:11-13 expands on I Corinthians 12:7 as to the purpose of the spiritual gifts as a whole. We will look at these verses, however, from the specific perspective of the gift of teaching:

He gave some as ... teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-13)

The first thing that is noted is that teachers are to equip the saints for the work of service. The teacher equips the saints for the work of service by helping them to gain a firm foundation in the faith – in the Word of God, in relationship with God, and in the practice of a life lived for God.

- Christians cannot serve effectively if they do not know the standard of the Word of God.
- Christians cannot serve effectively if they are out of communion with God.
- Christians cannot serve effectively if they do not practice the spiritual disciplines of the Christian faith.

The teacher is positioned to instruct, encourage, and reprove people in all of these areas.

Second, the teacher is to <u>build up of the body of Christ</u>. Teachers are called to be examples in the church, building up the body by demonstrating the life of Christ in their own life. James 3:1 issues a warning that refers to this responsibility: "Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment." A teacher is a type of leader, and therefore must challenge, stimulate, and encourage others to excellence through the example of his or her own life.

Third, teachers are to help the Church attain to the unity of the faith. This is the double call to teach orthodoxy and orthopraxy – right teaching and right practice. In a world of moral relativism and countless philosophies, sects, cults, religions, and heresies, the guardianship of the truth lies in great part in the hands of the teachers. We are called to know the truth – and to teach it. Paul reminds Timothy that he is called to "entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also" the "things which you have heard from me" (II Timothy 2:2). He also commands Timothy to "retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me" (II Timothy 1:13), and to "be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need

to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15). Only through devotion to the truth and the teaching of it will the Church remain pure, undefiled, and unified before God and the world.

Fourth, we are called to guide people into the knowledge of the Son of God. This speaks of relationship. As teachers, we are not only to deal with information. Right teaching is not enough if it leaves out the crucial element of intimacy with God. We must live in and teach people how to grasp a vital, growing, personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Prayer, meditation, and worship must be characteristic of our lives – and we must engender that in others.

Fifth, we must help each individual in the church to mature. Spiritual maturity involves fulfillment, or completion. Being what we are called by God to be. Think of the words we normally associate with someone who is mature: responsible, thoughtful, wise, compassionate, understanding, reasonable, reliable, faithful. By our teaching and example, we can help those around us toward spiritual maturity.

Finally, we are called to build up the Body of Christ to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. It is Christ and Christ-likeness we aim for. Relationship with Christ and sanctification in Christ. In the final analysis, maturity is not measured by knowledge, or even by wisdom. It is not measured by the spiritual disciplines or by orthodox belief. All of these things are essential parts of the whole, and without them one cannot be mature in Christ, nor become like Christ – yet, somehow, we could have all those things and yet not be like Christ. The final element is love – what Paul called "the more excellent way." What John described the infinite, almighty God as. What Christ demonstrated for us on the cross.

We are called to love others – first, foremost, and always. Only if we love those whom we teach will we teach them well. Only through love do orthodoxy and orthopraxy make sense. Only through love can both encouragement and reproof be given and received safely. Only through love can we attain unity and holiness as a Church.

That is our gift. That is our calling. That is our purpose, our intention, and our goal.

He gave some as ... teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-13)

The Direction

We must remember that we are *called* as teachers. Each of us is called to ministry – whatever form that may take. We see the urgency of this calling in an admonition given by Paul at the end of Colossians: "*Take heed* to the ministry which you have received from the Lord, *that you may fulfill it*" (Colossians 4:17, italics mine).

We think that we volunteer for ministry. We don't. We are called by God and we respond ... with obedience, or disobedience. If we think of our ministry as a volunteer opportunity, we will treat it as such: seeing when and where it fits into my schedule, giving it the left-over ends of my energy, starting and stopping as whim strikes me.

A calling is different. My calling determines my schedule. My calling receives the best of my time and energy. And my calling is obedient to every command issued by my God.

Listen to some of the words Paul speaks to Timothy, a young man gifted in teaching:

"Fight the good fight, keeping faith and a good conscience." (I Timothy 1:18-19)

"Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness." (I Timothy 4:7)

"In speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe." (I Timothy 4:12)

"Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you ... take pains with these things, be absorbed in them, so that your progress may be evident to all. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things; for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you." (I Timothy 4:14-16)

"Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness." (I Timothy 6:11)

"Keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." (I Timothy 6:14)

"Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus." (II Timothy 1:13)

"Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you." (II Timothy 1:14)

"Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus." (II Timothy 2:3)

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

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

"Be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry." (II Timothy 4:5)

Fight. Discipline. Be absorbed. Pay attention. Persevere. Pursue. Guard. Suffer. Endure. Fulfill. These are not words spoken to a volunteer. They are words spoken to one who was called by God into a vital ministry. A divine calling. A divine mandate. A divine gift.

The Education

We have seen that we are called as teachers, and that God has a specific intention for that calling. We have seen what is to characterize our lives and our ministry. Now we must turn to what is involved in effective teaching – how do we fulfill our calling and our ministry?

While there are many forms of teaching, there are a few basic tenets that are applicable across the board. We will focus on these tenets as they apply to "formal" teaching (classroom, discussion, lecture, discipling relationships), but they are just as important in informal settings.

<u>Set goals</u>. This is probably the biggest omission for teachers. We know and want to communicate a lot of "stuff," but we haven't clearly defined our goal and purpose. Without a goal and purpose, our teaching wanders and we won't see the fulfillment the Lord intends in our ministries.

It may be helpful to choose a verse or passage, like the Ephesians 4 verses quoted earlier, to be a guide for your teaching. Then, as you prepare a lesson or a series of lessons, ask yourself questions to see if you are meeting your goals. From Ephesians 4, we might ask ourselves:

- How am I equipping people to serve through this lesson?
- How am I building up the body of Christ?
- How am I succeeding as an example of Christ-like character? How am I failing?
- What doctrines am I teaching on? How can I better communicate them?
- What practical application will my hearers draw from my lesson?
- What sin or error am I confronting?
- What spiritual disciplines am I promoting? Am I demonstrating them in my own life?
- How am I encouraging intimacy with God?
- How am I exhorting people to love?
- Is Christ the beginning, ending, and focus of my teaching?

Specific lessons and series of lessons will, of course, have additional specific goals particular to the topic at hand. These goals should be clearly delineated before teaching begins, and regular evaluations should take place to be certain that goals are being achieved.

<u>Put forth effort</u>. Give your preparation – and your delivery – the best of yourself. Don't expect fulfillment in ministry if you consistently "cobble something together" at the last minute, are rushing around the house to get out on time, and are tired when it's time to teach. You and your

hearers will get the most out of your teaching if you put forth solid, concentrated effort into preparation time, and are rested and enthusiastic when it's time to speak.

<u>Be orderly</u>. Build a lesson as you would build a house. Lay a foundation and develop your points thoroughly and completely to a conclusion. You want your hearers to walk away with several things: facts, understanding, and application.

<u>Avoid tangents</u>. Whether they come from you or from one of your hearers, nip tangents in the bud (unless there is a distinct reason and the Spirit's leading to follow them and expand on them). Lessons should be tight, allowing no room for wandering or drifting. You will not accomplish your goals unless you stay focused.

<u>Combine orthodoxy and orthopraxy</u>. Each lesson should contain both right teaching and instruction on right practice. Doctrine in a vacuum will not be remembered or be seen as applicable. Guidance on right practice will not become ingrained unless the reasons and doctrines behind it are understood. Instruction on the Word of God and the walk of God should go hand-in-hand whenever we teach.

<u>Make it practical</u>. Every lesson should be a "rubber-meets-the-road" lesson. If it's not practical, it won't be remembered. If it doesn't apply to life today, to *my* life today, then it's a waste of my time. Draw lessons from life today, and show how to apply lessons to life today.

<u>Be dynamic</u>. Whatever your teaching style, make it dynamic. Dynamic comes from the Greek word "dynamos," or power. Whether you lecture or lead discussions, whether you enjoy acting your lessons in front of a crowd or prefer quiet times in a circle, your teaching style should be power-filled through the Spirit. Be creative. Be compelling. Be challenging. Be excited. Be intense. However you speak, grab your hearers and hold them – only then will they hear what you're saying.

<u>Encourage interaction</u>. In almost all cases, people will learn more from a class that they participate in. Ask questions. Encourage responses and discussion. Be sure people are understanding what you're saying. Welcome input. Even a class that is predominantly lecture has room for learner participation. Frequently a question and answer time will serve to bring home the doctrines and lessons taught.

<u>Repeat and review</u>. You only remember a fraction of what you hear – so be sure your listeners hear what's most important many times. Review the key points of past lessons. Review points made earlier in a given lesson. Repeat truth until it becomes ingrained in your hearers.

<u>Handouts and homework</u>. Don't be afraid to ask your listeners to put forth effort on their own part. Give handouts with fill-in's and room for notes at each class – it encourages people to write

down key points, therefore aiding the learning process (the more senses you engage in learning, the better you will remember). Give homework. Ask people to read and think and prepare for the next class, or to follow up on the one just given. Remind your hearers that Christian education does not happen for one hour on a Sunday – it must be a part of daily life.

<u>Expect excellence</u>. People will rise to your expectations of them. Never patronize or act condescendingly toward people. Don't give shallow or fluff-filled lessons. Dig deep into the truth and your listeners will fall in love with the truth, too.

<u>Pray</u>. Pray for yourself and your hearers. Pray for your preparation time, your sanctification, and your delivery. Pray for their attentiveness, understanding, and commitment to walk with the Lord. Pray for discernment, insight, and wisdom. Your ministry will only succeed if it is bathed in and founded on prayer.

The Connection

Finally, remember that you are not – and must not be – alone. There are no "Lone Ranger" Christians. We need each other, and we must serve each other.

Additionally, remember that we must not seek glory for ourselves. Our goal is not to see if we can lead the most well-attended class, or to strive for human acclaim. Our goal is maturity in Christ: for ourselves, and for those who hear us. And a key component of that, is humility.

In order to counter these two deadly sins, it is very important for the teaching body in a church to act in unity and mutuality. This should take place in several ways:

- <u>Develop a balance of classes</u>. The teaching body should be organized so as to teach a balance
 of classes at all times, and over the course of time, that complement and build on each other;
 for instance, balancing a doctrine-focused class with a practice-focused class, balancing
 topical studies with biblical book studies, balancing lecture-style with discussion-style
 classes, balancing basic studies with in-depth studies.
- Mentor new teachers. New teachers should be intentionally and carefully mentored in their spiritual gift. All spiritual gifts require growth, education, and coaching teaching is no exception. Mentoring should take place with an experienced teacher, in a safe environment, within a purposefully established relationship that allows for constructive critique and optimum growth.
- Perform regular evaluations. It is imperative that each teacher evaluate him or herself on a regular basis with regard to personal holiness, and effective ministry. Again, it is important that that evaluation include an examination of whether or not they are meeting their established goals. Additionally, however, it is necessary that the teaching body as a whole evaluate itself with regard to their combined ministry to the church body, and whether or not as a whole they are upholding their calling and achieving their goals.
- <u>Choose topics with care</u>. Subject matter should be chosen very carefully, taking three main points into consideration: first, what is a teacher's area of expertise and passion; second, what are the expressed needs and desires of the church body; and third, what is the Spirit's leading.
- Provide diversity and opportunity. Encourage rotation among the teaching body so as to give all teachers opportunities to teach, and opportunities to rest. Such rotation also prevents "cliques" or "followings" from developing within the church body, and exposes the church to a variety of teaching styles, perspectives, insights, and subject matter.
- <u>Encourage discipleship</u>. While not everyone feels comfortable or called to teach in front of people, we are all called to discipleship. Training should take place in this area, but in essence, it is simple: encourage people to find someone they can learn from and someone they can help, and walk in those relationships. We all need to be learning from others, and

- passing on that which we learn. Such relationships will help make Christian education a way of life for the church.
- <u>Be accountable</u>. There should be clear leadership and accountability in the church among the teaching body. Such leadership will help balance classes, organize a teaching schedule, and oversee the corporate goals of the church.
- <u>Support each other</u>. Support one another as teachers. Learn from each other. Teach each other. Pray for each other. We all have strengths and weaknesses, and we all benefit as "iron sharpens iron" from working together in and exploring our spiritual gift.

The Conclusion

We are at war against biblical illiteracy. We must revive an emphasis in the Church on education, responsibility, balance, and perseverance. Only so will we, as a Church, achieve spiritual maturity.

Christian education can only happen when people want to learn and come expecting to learn. But likewise, Christian education can happen only when those called to teach acknowledge their gift and the purpose for which they have been called: to build up the body of Christ to maturity in Him. Such a calling touches every aspect of life, and requires effort, preparation, and commitment – individually, and as a teaching body in the church.

The bottom line?

Make every moment of your life count.

Communicate enthusiasm – and they will catch it. Show it's important – and they will learn it. Make it applicable – and they will apply it. Live it – and they will live it, too.