

Is the church in America teachable?

INTRODUCTION:

- From the time of conception, you are trying to tell your mom that you know better than she does. She eats something you don't like, you make her feel sick to her stomach. You don't like the way she's sitting, you step on her bladder until she moves.
- Little kids: Why do I have to wash my hands? Why do I need to wear shoes in the snow? Why do I have to brush my teeth? Why can't I walk on the roof? Why can't I eat candy for breakfast?
- Teenagers & Young Adults: are even told by the likes of Netflix that they know more than their neanderthal parents
- Well into adulthood you think you know best: Overly confident in your sleep-training methodologies, discipline philosophy, and parenting style... when you have no kids.
- I think in your late 20s or early 30s you hit a crossroads. Will I realize that I am not as bright as I thought I was or will I keep on believing that I am awesome?
- Teachability is a very important trait in life and Proverbs has strong things to say about the topic. There are literally dozens of verses that we could turn to in the book of Proverbs but I have selected just a handful from Proverbs chapter 15 to instruct us
- We want to wrestle with: Am I teachable? If not, why? What is the risk of not being teachable? What do I gain if I am? How can I grow in this attribute?
- And from there, what are we learning from the Spirit in 2020? I see everyone clamoring to go back to normal, but what have you learned? What is God trying to teach his church? Are we teachable as his people? Have we learned anything from this year?

PROVERBS ON BEING TEACHABLE:

A fool despises his father's instruction, but whoever heeds reproof is prudent. (Proverbs 15:5)

- Let's define some words:
 - Reproof = expression of blame or disapproval
 - Ex: You shouldn't have punched your brother. That was wrong.
 - Prudent = acting with or showing care and thought for the future.
 - Ex: It was prudent, a wise decision, to apologize for what you did wrong and ask forgiveness rather than punching me.
 - Despise = feel contempt for something or repugnance
 - Repugnance means to make a face like a pug b/c you are so upset
- So what is he saying? When someone corrects me, do I receive it? Do I get defensive? Do I try to justify my action? What is my immediate response?
- The fool doesn't like it when people tell him that he is in the wrong. He actually despises it because it's a direct blow to his ego since he thinks he is right
- The prudent one, however, knows how to turn his critics into coaches b/c he wants to grow and mature. He realizes that even poorly delivered or uninvited feedback might have a nugget of truth to receive.
- **To not be teachable is to be a fool. It shows a complete disregard for the future.**
 - As churches in America, are we fools or are we wise?

- As I look around at the churches in the USA, I feel like we have a complete disregard for the future and instead are looking to the past (return to it)
- Is that teachable? Are we learning anything?

There is severe discipline for him who forsakes the way; whoever hates reproof will die. (Proverbs 15:10)

- **The cost of a lack of teachability is high.**

- *Proverbs 14:12, There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.*
- Kids, a good parent disciplines you when you walk off the path that they have set
 - What I mean by that is that your family has rules and expectations
 - When those rules are broken, there are consequences
 - Ex: If you sneak out at night out your bedroom window, your parents will be less apt to trust you. They will probably ground you.
 - Relational consequences, real world consequences
 - When you forsake the path of obedience, you reap consequences
- If you hate being corrected, if you don't know how to apologize, if you don't know how to repent well, then you will - most likely - live a miserable life where you think you know the best path all the time.
- Costing death seems intense, but just think about Pharaoh. He kept hardening his heart until God hardened it for him.
- When we ignore correction from the small to the big, we reap consequence, from small to big
- Back to churches in USA: There is a way that seems right, but it might result in the death of your organization or institution. If we don't learn from 2020 b/c we are too stubborn to be instructed, then we will suffer severe discipline and maybe even death
 - What is God trying to say to us in 2020? What is he saying to our churches?

A scoffer does not like to be reproofed; he will not go to the wise. (Proverbs 15:12)

- Wisdom is defined as the application of knowledge
 - Someone who is financially wise knows how to apply what they have learned about money to make more money
- Wisdom is needed in every area of life if you are to have a skillful life
- Do you want to be wise? Do you want to have sage wisdom and counsel from trusted people so that you can stand on their shoulders rather than learning the hard way?
- Someone who doesn't like to be corrected will never ask for advice
- Instead, b/c they are defensive, they will lash out with scoffing and ridicule like a fool
- **If you aren't teachable, you will never learn to be wise because you won't ask anyone for advice, and when someone offers it you will make fun of them instead of listening to them.**
- There is a story in 1 Kings of Solomon's successor, his son. He wants people to respect him, to follow him as they did his father, but he's not teachable.
 - Instead of listening to the wise counselors of the kingdom, he asks his idiot friends. It costs him the kingdom

- For the last however many years, the global south has learned about Christianity from the global north (us). Now, we are beginning to experience in SMALL ways suffering and pressure THEY have experienced for a very long time
 - Will we go to the wise - those who have the application of knowledge as to how to thrive in those environments? Or will we insist that we are still the teacher and that we know what is best?
 - What is the Spirit saying to the Church in America in 2020?

The ear that listens to life-giving reproof will dwell among the wise (Proverbs 15:31).

● **If you do listen, you will gain life and wisdom.**

- In contrast to the scoffer who won't listen, a person who is willing to be taught (a listening ear) will seek out advice from the wise.
- She will dwell among wise people, eager to hear what they have to say
- She will invite critique, feedback, and coaching
- Why? Because she realizes that it reproof, correction, discipline is life-giving
- Kids, your parents aren't perfect, but they do desire good things for you.
 - They might not always know how to communicate it, but they want you to have a good life, to be productive members of society, to love the Lord, to have a good spouse, and so on and so forth
 - Even bad parents want their children to have a better life than they had
 - Kids: have a listening ear. Don't let your parent's correction go through a hole in your brain. Listen to their rebuke, even if it isn't perfectly communicated, because they do know more than you do as it comes to WISDOM
 - You might know more about the internet, but they have wisdom that you cannot begin to understand. Why? Wisdom only comes with time.
- This is why Jesus invites us to dwell with him in John 15. He wants us to grow wise, applying knowledge of the gospel and bearing fruit in our lives. He desires us, dies for us, to be spiritually successful
 - Have a listening ear to hear what God is saying

Whoever ignores instruction despises himself, but he who listens to reproof gains intelligence (Proverbs 15:32).

● **The reason you don't listen is because you hate yourself.**

- You may be tempted to not listen to anyone else because you think you know best, but the real reason for your stubbornness is self-hatred. In other words, you don't want what is good for yourself.
- Correction sometimes stinks in the moment, but if you know that criticism and reproof lead to progress and growth you learn to welcome it despite the pain
 - If you keep getting a math problem wrong, you need someone to show you how to do it properly. If you refuse to let someone show you, you will never learn
- If you ignore instruction, you do so to your own detriment. Only someone who hates himself would do that.

- Do we love the church of God or do we love our institutions? Do we love God's people or do we love Churchianity? If we love the Church we will do what is best for the Church even if it isn't what is most comfortable, enjoyable, etc.
 - Ex: Sacrificial giving is good for the forward movement of the gospel but it hurts. If I love God's kingdom, I will give. If I don't, I won't. Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also
- Do we love God's church or do we love our Christianity? Do you even know the difference? Will we be teachable to receive what the Spirit is saying in 2020?

The fear of the Lord is instruction in wisdom, and humility comes before honor (Proverbs 15:33).

- The root of a lack of teachability is a lack of humility.
- A lack of humility infers an excess of pride and arrogance.
- Someone who is proud won't fear the Lord.
- Someone who doesn't fear the Lord will never receive the wisdom of God.

SUMMARIZING: Not being teachable is a threat

- A threat to you...
 - The real threat to being unteachable is eternal. That might seem intense, but truly eternity is at risk.
 - Someone who refuses to acknowledge their sin will never acknowledge their need for a savior (You won't take a cure if you don't think you're sick; you won't put on a parachute if you don't think the plane is actually crashing)
 - Someone who refuses to be teachable won't bear fruit that God wants them to bear. Rather than listening to reproof, they will dig in their heels and do things their own way.
 - Someone who refuses to be instructed will be prayerless, joyless, and fruitless. Why? Because if you think you know all the answers then you won't ask God for help
 - If you don't ask God for help, you won't see success that has eternal value
 - If you don't run to Jesus in humility, you won't experience his joy
 - If you don't surrender to the Holy Spirit, you won't bear his fruit
- A threat to us
 - What is the Spirit saying to Revolve? What is the Spirit saying to the churches in America?
 - While we clamor about the good ol days are we missing what God is saying?
 - Are we so focused on looking behind us that we aren't prudently preparing for the future?
 - Do we really think that this ship is going to turn back around? I don't
 - Persecution will come. The church will lose its privileges. In 2, 10, 20 years, IDK
 - Will we be ready because we are learning TODAY? Or will we be ill-prepared b/c, like a fool we didn't prepare (Aesop's Fable of Ant and Grasshopper)?

WHAT DO WE DO?

James 4:6–10, [6] But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” [7] Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. [8] Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. [9] Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. [10] Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

- The warning: God opposes you if you refuse to be instructed
- The invitation: Submit. Humble. Draw near. Cry over your sin. He gives more grace

TABLE TALK:

- When someone corrects you, do you receive it? Do you get defensive? Do you try to justify your actions? What is your immediate response?
- What do you think the Spirit is trying to say to the churches in the USA?
- What does it look like for the people of God to prudently prepare for the future?
- Do you think the church in America is learning from this year or are they covering their ears in defiance? Why?