

The Underrated Ingredient for Growth

Intro

Proverbs the book of wisdom *biblically speaking*: wisdom refers to skillful living; Wisdom, biblically speaking involves knowledge and understanding but in a sense it stands on the shoulders of knowledge and extends past the intellect of knowledge into the godly *application* of that knowledge.

But what if I told you that there is a characteristic that separates the wise from the foolish? The successful from the unsuccessful – practically speaking and spiritually speaking – would you be interested? Would you be interested knowing and applying perhaps the most underrated ingredient for success and growth in life?

This morning it is on my heart to lay before us that the underrated ingredient for growth in grace and wisdom, is the character ingredient of **teachability**.

I. What is teachability?

NOT – gullible naivety – blindly receiving any and everything. **Prov 14:15**

Teachability – Is the character quality of humility eagerly applied toward learning and spiritual growth.

- Teachability grows in the soil of a humble life and a humble heart.
- humility *applied* towards learning, towards growth, towards advice, towards correction, towards truth.

This is captured in **Psalms 119:33-40**

- A picture swelling with *desire* and *readiness* to apply and obey... when we talk about teachability we're not talking about someone who is technically able to learn cf Matt 5:6 hungering and thirsting for righteousness

So teachability grows out of humility.

Prov 22:4; Prov 29:23

II. What are the marks of a teachable life? (4 things to consider)

A teachable person:

1. Continues in wisdom as a life-long learner

Prov 4:1-6

Don't just seek wisdom but continue in it! Cf Ps 92 palms with sap *in old age being very green*

2. Listens to instruction and advice

Listening is a key feature of teachability. But not everyone who has ears can listen. If we're teachable we're willing to hear others out and willing to take long hard looks in

the mirror. When it comes to our personal lives or our doctrine, teachable people are *listeners*.

Acts 18 – Appollos

Prov 8:32-38 and the call to *listen*

You contrast that portrait with **Prov 18:2...** a fool sees no value in listening because of the extreme overestimation of his own mind, his own wisdom, and his own opinions.

A proverbs 18:2 kind of person is a very draining person. He or she tends to:

- correct others and always feels the need to weigh in on a matter,
- express his viewpoint
- make sure his or her experience or opinion is known.

Prov 12:15

What God is saying here is that, people demonstrate their maturity and humility by how well they respond to sound advice...

A good listener: refrains from jumping to quick judgments / wont presumptuously predicting what another person is going to say / gives full attention / won't tune out someone in order to prepare our own internal rebuttal / refrain from always telling people what they *should* feel or giving hasty advice.

If we are listeners, it will be a blessing and benefit in the LR **Prov 19:20...**

3. Accepts correction and reproof

These words in proverbs about receiving and rejecting correction through a brother, are absolutely staggering and filled with dramatic contrasts.

Prov 9:8-9; 12:1; 13:1, 13:18; 15:5, 15:12, 15:31-32; 17:10; 19:25; 25:12

Our response to correction – from a spouse, from a leader, from a brother or sister in the Lord our response *tells the truth about our spiritual state / maturity with crystal clear contrast.*

a. Two opposite responses in the moment of correction

It comes out in body language, tone, eyes rolling, huffing, complaining, justifying, yelling, sending angry emails and text messages, licking our wounds as spread the foulness of gossip or slander and retaliate...

On the humble side, there is a response of *accepting* correction (Prov 13:18) regarding reproof (Prov 15:31). It goes deep down into the heart and soul proverbs (17:10). This is the blessed response of teachability in the moment of correction. *Listening, regarding, considering, receiving.*

How do you respond in the moment of criticism or correction, or reproof? Do you bough up or bristle? Do you shut down conversation? Do you neglect or reject reproof by focusing on side issues like how it was delivered or how “so and so is worse than I am.”

b. Two opposite sets of LR consequences in the aftermath of correction

The reality is that neglecting warning and reproof has consequences in every realm of life; in fact both *accepting* and *rejecting* correction have consequences; These two responses bring forth opposite types of long run results down the line.

Prov 29:1; 9:1-9

c. Two opposite postures of heart towards correction (love and hate)

The unteachable fool *hates* correction and rebuke. (not an overstatement!)

Proverbs 9:8-9; 12:1

We all get food and “spiritual food” on our face and need other to help us see. Think how petty and arrogant and stupid it is for us to resent loving correction! That is the insanity of hating reproof

Prov 15:12

This is *evasiveness* of a scoffer at work; the strategic evasion of getting the input or insight from those family and friends unless they will not back up what he or she already wants to hear in the first place.

4. Responds to and applies the word of God

Oh how important this is for us here: we are a privileged church. We hear the word of God faithfully all the time. And we must learn to always respond – to always apply or take heed to God’s word.

Prov 13:13

Prov 16:20

Trusting in the lord is never divorced from heeding or paying careful thoughtful attention to his commands. *Am I the only one who struggles here?* Dutifully taking notes but failing to remember and apply the truth in its manifold applications in all of the daily grind of life.

III. How can I practically cultivate teachability in my own life?

- Continue reading and practicing proverbs until wisdom characterizes your life...
- Give verbal permission for others to speak into your life or correct issues they see in walk and character;

- Find a ways as a family / as an individual to talk about or respond to God's word preached, *every time*

Closing

To be teachable is to draw near to God – **James 4:8** He will draw near to us and give grace. Specifically God will give grace to those who believe in Christ. **Eph 1:7**

We must humble ourselves and become teachable before Jesus Christ In the school Christ, we are commanded and invited to know fellowship with God and forgiveness and eternal life. But to come to God, we must humble ourselves and come on His terms;

John 1:12 “as many as received Him, the them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name.”

- The message of eternal salvation for souls is receiving the grace of God as a gift through faith alone by believing in Christ. It is simple enough for a child to enter into his gates and yet requires the proud to become humble to become teachable...
- Come to Christ!