**More Like the Master**

In His Teaching: The Motives

Lesson 14

*“And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all”*

*(Luke 4:15)*

**Teaching God’s Word**

Why teach God’s word? Is our purpose in teaching self-serving, to benefit others, or both? It is important to look at one’s motives in teaching and ask, “Why am I teaching today?” Another important question to ask is, “What do I hope to accomplish today in my teaching?” One help in teaching is to start with a clear-cut and specific aim. Many teachers try to teach with no definite purpose in mind other than to present some material. We need to be like Jesus in his teaching aim and purpose.

Jesus had the right motive in teaching. What is motive? Motive is the inner drive, the impulse, or the intention that causes a person to do something or act in a certain way. Motive is an incentive or a goal to act. Jesus always had the right motive (reason, purpose) in mind as he taught people. What was Jesus’ teaching motive? It was not “to be seen of men” (he condemned others for doing this; Matthew 6:1,5,16; 23:5). Jesus was never ostentatious. He did not use “big words” to try and impress his students with his learning. He did not try to show how “educated” he was in the classroom. Neither did Jesus teach for some personal gain or recognition. Jesus never taught merely because he had to. Why then did Jesus teach? Jesus taught to help others be right with God (Matthew 9:36; Mark 10:21; Luke 19:10). This lesson will examine why Jesus taught others. We want to examine Jesus’ motive for teaching and how we can be “More Like the Master” in his teaching motive.

**Jesus: The Motives Behind the Teaching**

Jesus taught to fulfill his mission of teaching. Jesus had a mission from his Father to teach and he stayed focused on his mission of teaching the lost (John 4:34). Jesus demonstrated in several ways that he was focused on his teaching. He looked for future possibilities in his students like he did with the woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11) and with Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10). He spent individual time with his students and stressed the personal touch like he did with Nicodemus (John 3:1-21) and with Martha (Luke 10:41). He started where people were with his student’s interest and needs in mind like he did with the woman at the well (John 4:4-26) and with the lawyer (Luke 10:25-37). He stayed focused on the vital issues that his students needed like he did with the multitudes in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). He worked on the inner conscience and heart of his students like he did with the Pharisees (Matthew 9:4; 12:34; 15:8, 18-19). He drew out the best in his students and encouraged them to achieve greatness like he did with Peter (Luke 22:32; John 21:15-17). He focused on what is real and practical like he did with the multitudes by the seashore (Matthew 13). He did not neglect the positive like he did with the Pharisees: *“these ought you to have done…”* (Matthew 23:23). He encouraged his students to go out and practice what they had learned, saying things like “go,” “do,” “offer”, “watch,” “pray”, “give”, “preach,” “teach”, “feed,” etc. (Matthew 7:24; Luke 10:37).

Jesus taught to inform the ignorant. Jesus wanted mankind to be educated and informed in the divine truths of God’s word. Jesus came into the world *“to bear witness to the truth”* (John 18:37). He was God in the flesh (John 1:1, 14) and truth (John 14:6). He wanted the ignorant to understand the plain truths of God’s word. He wanted people to form the right ideals and principles of life. He taught truth so that others could be set free by it (John 8:32). He informed Nicodemus of the new birth (John 3:1-21). He informed the woman at the well of the living water (John 4:4-42). He informed his followers of true discipleship (Matthew 5-7) and what the kingdom of heaven is like (Matthew 13:1-53). He informed his followers of the true bread of life (John 6:22-71). He informed his disciples of the one, true church (Matthew 16:13-20). Jesus informed the temple crowds that he was the water of life (John 7), the light of the world (John 8-9), and the good shepherd (John 10). He informed his disciples how to pray (Luke 11:1-13). He informed the Pharisees about lawful putting away (Matthew 19:3-9). He informed his disciples about the coming kingdom and the fall of Jerusalem (Matthew 24:1-51; Mk. 13:1-37; Luke 17:20-37; 21:5-36). He informed his disciples of the coming Holy Spirit and their duties as disciples (John 14-16).

Jesus taught to deepen one’s convictions. Jesus wanted his audience not only to be informed of truth, but to genuinely believe that truth and have deep convictions about it. He wanted the faith of his followers to be founded and fortified. He would often ask questions of his followers to deepen their convictions. He asked the twelve, *“Who do you say that I am?”* (Matthew 16:15). Again, he asked them, *“Will you also go away?”* (John 6:67). He asked the Jews, *“What do you think of the Christ?”* (Matthew 22:42). He asked Peter, *“Do you love me?”* (John 21:15-17).

Jesus taught to expose sin and error. Jesus wanted mankind to be right with God, but that required teaching that would expose religious errors and attitude weaknesses. He exposed the Jewish leaders for their self-righteousness (Matthew 6), their tradition (Matthew 15), their teaching (Matthew 16), and their hypocrisy (Matthew 23; Luke 11:37-54). He exposed unbelievers for their lack of faith (Matthew 11:20-30). He exposed the Jews’ misuse of the temple (Mark 11:17). He exposed his disciples for their rivalry, contention, and selfish ambition (Matthew 20:20-28; Luke 22:24-30). He exposed the Jews’ rejection of himself (Matthew 21:33-46; 22:1-14).

Jesus taught to grow to maturity. Jesus wanted mankind to be challenged to change their thinking and their way of life and bring it into conformity with God’s will. He wanted his audience to grow in maturity and thinking. He wanted their character to be built up. He challenged his followers to be perfect as his heavenly Father (Matthew 5:48). He challenged his followers to count the cost (Luke 9:59-62; 14:25-35). He challenged his followers to love their neighbor (Mark 12:31) and love one another (John 13:34). He challenged them to love their enemies (Matthew 5:44). He challenged his disciples to have humility and forgiveness (Matthew 18:1-35).

Jesus taught to train others to teach. Jesus taught others (the twelve apostles in particular) in order to train them for the service of teaching. He called fishermen and made them fishers of men (Matthew 4:18-22). He showed them what to teach and how to teach it. He wanted his followers to be prepared to go out and teach the world (Matthew 10:1-42; 28:19-20). Jesus’ followers spent time with him in order to learn how to teach: *“He appointed twelve, to be with him, and to be sent out to preach”* (Mark 3:14).

Jesus taught to convert and save the lost. Jesus’ ultimate motive in teaching was to save mankind from their sins. Jesus said, *“I came that they may have life”* (John 10:10). Jesus came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). Jesus taught mankind to repent and come to God (Luke 13:3). He told Nicodemus that he must be born again (John 3:3-5). He told his followers to put God’s kingdom first (Matthew 6:33) and love God with their whole heart (Mark 12:30). He taught the lost the need to arise and go to the father (Luke 15:18).

**The Christian and Teaching Motives**

Just as there were teachers in the local church at Antioch (Acts 13:1; 15:35) and Corinth (1 Corinthians 12:28-29; 14:6,26), there needs to be good teachers in the Lord’s church today. Christians can certainly make good teachers, but each Christian needs to teach with the right motives. Do you volunteer to teach and if so, why? Do you teach because you have to or because you are made to? Do you teach only when called upon to do so? Do you teach to impress others or be seen of men? Do you teach to stay in control or “run the show”? Do you teach to compete with other teachers? What is your teaching motive? Our teaching motives need to match those of Jesus.

We need to teach to fulfill the mission of teaching. There is a great need today in the Lord’s church for qualified teachers (Ephesians 4:11). We need elders who can teach (1 Timothy 3:2; 5:17), preachers who can teach (2 Timothy 2:24), and members who can teach (Hebrews 5:12). The Lord’s church is a teaching body (1 Timothy 3:15) and Christians have been given a mission of teaching (2 Timothy 2:2).

We need to teach to inform. Christians need to take God’s word and teach it to others to inform them of the great truths of God’s word. Christians take the words that the Spirit teaches (1 Corinthians 2:13) and use only those words to inform others. Like Paul, Christians teach only the wisdom of God’s word (Colossians 1:28; 3:16). Paul was a teacher of truth (1 Timothy 2:7; 2 Timothy 1:11) and Christians should be the same today. Both the lost (Acts 4:2, 18; 5:21,25,28,42; 13:12) and the saved (Acts 2:42; 11:26; 18:11; 20:20) need to be informed of the truth of God’s word. The next generation also needs to be informed of the truth (2 Timothy 2:2; Titus 2:3-4). The same truth of God’s word needs to be taught in every church today (1 Corinthians 4:17). Remember, *“Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16).* Faithful Christians use only the scriptures to inform and instruct and they always stay within *“the teaching of Christ”* (2 John 9-11) while in the classroom.

We need to teach to deepen conviction. Christians, like Paul, need to teach with boldness (Acts 28:31) and they need to teach others to have deep convictions about what they believe. They need to ask their students, “Why do you believe what you believe?” The more a person is taught the truth of God’s word, the more grounded that person will be in the faith. Paul wrote: *“rooted and built up in him, and established in your faith, even as ye were taught…”* (Colossians 2:7).

We need to teach to expose. Christians, at times, have the unpleasant task of teaching in order to expose sin and error. Paul wrote to Timothy: *“As I exhorted thee to tarry at Ephesus, when I was going into Macedonia, that you might charge certain men not to teach a different doctrine”* (1 Timothy 1:3; see also 1 Timothy 6:3). Again, Paul wrote to Timothy: *“preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts”* (2 Timothy 4:2-3). Christians take God’s word and teach it to expose those who are teaching something contrary to God’s word. Paul wrote to Titus: “*holding to the faithful word which is according to the teaching, that he may be able to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers … whose mouths must be stopped; men who overthrow whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake”* (Titus 1:9,11). Christians teach truth so that members will not be *“carried away by divers and strange teachings”* (Hebrews 13:9), by false teachers (2 Peter 2:1), or by the teaching of error (Revelation 2:14, 15, 20, 24).

We need to teach to challenge and grow. Like Paul who challenged the Jews through his teaching (Acts 21:21, 28), Christians today take God’s word and challenge their students to grow and change. Timothy was to *“command and teach”* (1 Timothy 4:11) and *“teach and exhort”* (1 Timothy 6:2) so that his listeners would be motivated to change and grow.

We need to teach to train. Paul told Timothy that he was to take God’s word and pass it on to others who in turn would themselves teach others (2 Timothy 2:2). We need to teach others to teach. We need to have a good teacher training program in the local church. Local churches can train others to be teachers by (1) studying the subject of teaching in their classes and (2) by encouraging Bible class teachers to take someone “under their wing” and train them for teaching.

We need to teach to save. Paul told Timothy to take heed to his teaching so that he could save himself and those who hear him (1 Timothy 4:16). We teach in order to save others. Teaching saves (Romans 6:17).

**More Like the Master in His Teaching Motives**

Jesus was focused on doing his Father’s will, from beginning (Luke 2:49) to end (Luke 23:46). He took aim in his teaching and he had proper motives in teaching. If a Christian today is going to teach, he needs to put his all into his teaching (Romans 12:7) and he needs to have a proper aim and motive in teaching. He needs to teach like Jesus and for the same reasons (motives) that Jesus taught. Let us all be “More Like the Master” in our teaching motives.

**Questions**

1. What does “motive” mean and how does it relate to teaching God’s word?

2. What are some right and wrong motives that a person might have in teaching God’s word?

3. What are some of the motives behind Jesus’ teaching (seven are listed in the lesson)?

4. What are some proper motives for a Christian who desires to teach?

5. What can local churches do to develop new teachers?