

## Teaching Disciples

Retirement is a wonderful thing. Most of us are planning for it, paying for it, and looking forward to it, and we are blessed to live in a country where retirement can be a reality. What is unfortunate, however, is the practice of misapplying secular practices to Christianity. We should never retire from or tire of changing our lives to mimic the Master (Romans 12:1-2).

The teaching field is one example. The church frequently lacks good Bible class teachers, and acquiring them is oftentimes a desperate exercise in frustration. The lack of qualified teachers in the church is merely a symptom of a greater problem: we have failed as disciples. Jesus' followers were called *disciples*, yet many have lost touch with the meaning and spirit of what it is to be a disciple; they have retired! Christians are pupils or students constantly changing their lives to match their Master. As long as you are a disciple, you are a learner (Matthew 11:28-30). And, it is a fact that if you stop growing and changing today, you will stop teaching tomorrow; you see, you can't teach what you don't know (2 Timothy 2:2). If you are not learning, the well dries up quickly.

Many have never taught and have no plans to, having become so non-productive in the Lord's vineyard that they are, at best, a vegetable and maybe more akin to a weed. Then, having been a non-teaching Christian for many years, they say: "Well, you can't teach an old dog new tricks." This fails to appreciate the fact that we are not dogs, and these are not tricks to which we dedicate our life and eternity. Physical limitations may modify our abilities or stamina, but we should not allow them to bind our mind.

Then (my favorite group), there are the "X-teachers"; oh, how they love their past. Sure, they taught... once, but now they're *retired*. You never retire from discipleship! A disciple learns from the past but does not live in it (Philippians 3:13-14). The Lord is well aware of what you used to do; He asks, what are you *doing now*? Waxing eloquent about the glory days while the church dies a slow, agonizing death is an embarrassment. Friend, Christianity is the only profession in which one retires and dies at the same time.

God chose us, frail earthen vessels, as conduits for the water of life (2 Corinthians 4:7). We must be active in Bible teaching. In a sinful world, amidst a dearth of godly knowledge, we have a unique opportunity to spread life and light. When we fail in teaching, we fail as a disciple; and that failure is eternal.

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