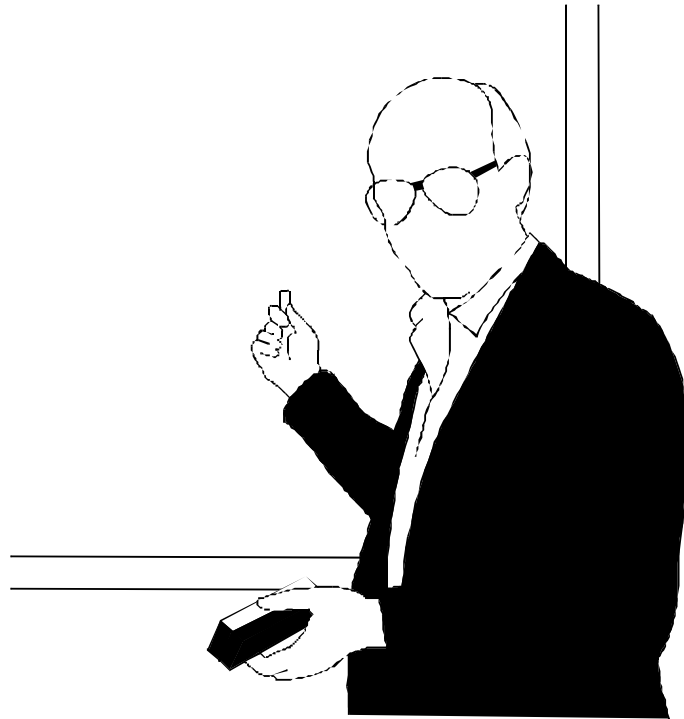


# Being an Effective Bible Class Teacher



Gene Taylor

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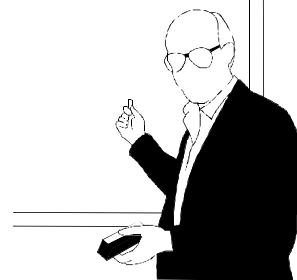
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# A Good Teacher

*“My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we will receive a stricter judgment.” (James 3:1)*



## Introduction

1. One of the greatest needs in most churches is more and better teachers.
  - a. Not only on a personal level but also in the classroom.
  - b. Every Christian should, in some manner, be endeavoring to teach others (Matt. 28:20; Heb. 5:12).
    - 1) Ability + opportunity = Responsibility (2 Cor. 8:12).
    - 2) Greater opportunity should be given to those who have greater ability.
2. Every Christian who is not a teacher should determine to become one.
  - a. The one who is already a teacher should strive to become a better teacher.
  - b. While we can have a lot of help, primarily we must make ourselves into better teachers for **good teachers do not just “happen,” they are made.**
3. The teacher is the key to the success of any Bible class.
  - a. Even more important than having modern facilities and aids.
  - b. There may be many extenuating circumstances but the ultimate success or failure of every class lies with the teacher.
4. The purpose of this study is to help more Christians to resolve to become better, more effective teachers of the word of God.

## I. A Good Teacher Is a Christian

- A. By “Christian,” we do not just mean someone who has been baptized.
  1. He who would teach should be all that the word “Christian” embodies.
  2. He should be a constant follower of Jesus (1 Pet. 2:21; Col. 3:17).
- B. The life of a good Bible teacher is to be wholly dedicated to serving God.
  1. His speech, dress, habits and entire deportment should be above reproach (1 Thess. 5:22).
  2. This does not mean that such a one will never do wrong but when he does he will, with genuine repentance, correct his ways (1 John 1:7).
- C. He will, if possible, attend all the assemblies of the church (Heb. 10:24-25).
  1. One who is not faithful himself cannot be expected to teach faithfulness to others (Rom. 2:21).
  2. Quite often one's example has greater impact than what he teaches in the classroom.
- D. He prays.
  1. He realizes the need for divine help (John 15:5; John 5:14,15).
  2. He makes prayer a regular part of his daily life (1 Thess. 5:17).

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- E. He studies and meditates on the word of God (2 Timothy 2:15).
    - 1. He endeavors to increase his knowledge of the Bible then strives to practice the things he learns.
    - 2. If not, students, no matter what age, will detect his hypocrisy.

## **II. A Good Teacher Really Wants to Teach**

- A. Some only teach because a class is thrust upon them.
  - 1. No one else would take it so they have to.
  - 2. To do something well, one must want to do it.
- B. A good teacher not only wants to teach but loves to teach.
  - 1. He is full of knowledge of God's will and cannot keep from sharing it with others.
  - 2. He is "on fire" with a zeal for God (Jer. 20:7-9).
    - a. If properly handled, that enthusiasm will positively affect his students.
    - b. A good teacher will instill in his students a burning desire for greater knowledge of and greater appreciation for God's truth.

## **III. A Good Teacher Is Able to Teach**

- A. Enthusiasm alone makes for a poor teacher.
  - 1. One must have some native ability upon which to draw.
  - 2. Not everyone can teach a Bible class (1 Cor. 12:29).
  - 3. All members do not have the same function (Rom. 12:3-8).
- B. If a person really wants to teach, though, he will diligently try to increase his ability.
- C. Since teaching is basically the impartation of knowledge, a good teacher is able to convey thoughts to his students in words they can understand (2 Tim. 2:2).

## **IV. A Good Teacher Teaches the Truth**

- A. He knows the truth.
  - 1. He has not only a general knowledge of the Bible but also a specific knowledge of what the Bible teaches on the particular subject he is attempting to teach to his class.
  - 2. One cannot know the truth without diligently studying it (2 Tim. 2:15).
- B. His emphasis in class is on the Bible not on opinion, secular teachings, etc. In reference to the Bible, he will:
  - 1. Hold it before the class.
  - 2. Exalt it as the authoritative word of God.
  - 3. Emphasize its principles not his own opinions or the traditions of men.
  - 4. Teach it without apology or compromise (1 Thess. 2:2, 4).

## **V. A Good Teacher Works**

- A. Teaching is not an easy task. In order to be successful, one must:
  - 1. Work long and hard.
  - 2. Study diligently (1 Tim. 4:13; 2 Tim. 2:15).
- B. A good teacher will:
  - 1. Do more than go over the lesson in a workbook.
  - 2. Study all that the Bible says on the subject he is preparing to teach.

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3. Use helps (Commentaries, concordances, word studies, dictionaries, etc.).
  4. Study related subjects.
  5. Look up and study the meaning of words.
- C. No teacher should ask his class to learn something he is not willing to learn.

#### **VI. A Good Teacher Will Sacrifice**

- A. If one is going to do a good job of teaching, he must sacrifice such things as time, money, recreation, etc.
- B. Consider the sacrifice of time.
  1. Well-prepared and well-presented lessons take time.
  2. A good teacher needs time not only for study but also for meditation and prayer.

#### **VII. A Good Teacher Is Dependable**

- A. Otherwise good teachers sometimes hinder their efforts by absenteeism.
  1. Some are habitually late.
  2. Some fail to get substitutes when they will be away.
  3. Some will agree to teach a class then be gone more than they are present.
- B. 1 Corinthians 15:58 is a must description of the good teacher.

#### **VIII. A Good Teacher Is Able to Get Along with Others**

- A. He loves others as himself and regards others before self (Phil. 2:3,4).
- B. It is very difficult to properly teach those you do not like or love.

#### **IX. A Good Teacher Is Emotionally Stable**

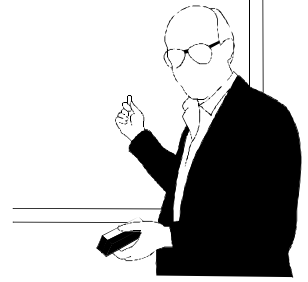
- A. He will demand and receive the respect of all his students.
- B. To do the above he:
  1. Must be confident and firm, yet courteous, kind and considerate.
  2. Should be calm, patient, self-controlled and not soon angry.
  3. Ought to be happy and cheerful not pessimistic, grouchy or arrogant.
- C. No over-bearing, self-willed, quick-tempered or otherwise emotionally unstable person should be allowed to teach a class.

#### **Conclusion**

1. Are you a teacher? If so, are you a good one?
2. All of us could be better teachers and Christians if we apply this lesson to self.

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# Becoming a Better Teacher



*“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” (2 Tim. 2:15)*

## **I. Some Wrong Viewpoints about Improvement**

- A. “I am good enough” or “I am so good that I cannot be improved.”
  - 1. Can a person feel this way about the Christian life in general? Since teaching the Bible is a part of that life, we should be able to improve.
  - 2. All of us make mistakes. None of us are perfect teachers.
- B. “I can never do any teaching. I am not good enough.”
  - 1. It is true that our talents may vary.
  - 2. Different age groups fit our abilities and open opportunities to us.
  - 3. Compare the type of people the Lord selected for His work.
  - 4. Your talent may be just different, not inferior.

## **II. Improvement as a Person Brings Improvement as a Teacher (Luke 2:52)**

- A. By advancing in favor with God.
  - 1. Every teacher must be a consecrated Christian.
  - 2. Some reasons for such consecration:
    - a. You are not teaching secular subjects. Your subject is from heaven.
    - b. You are teaching minds and souls. You are dealing in spiritual guidance.
    - c. You teach what you are. Your life must demonstrate positive faith and obedience.
    - d. The pupil sees your inner life. If your soul is empty you have nothing to share.
  - 3. Strength comes from daily prayer, study and meditation.
  - 4. You can do all things through Christ (Phil. 4:13).
- B. By advancing in favor with men.
  - 1. A comparison. Employers expect employees to:
    - a. Have the ability to do the job.
    - b. Be honest.
    - c. Get along with people.
      - 1) The pupil. You are not only to lead and direct but also to accompany your pupil in the learning process.
      - 2) The pupil’s parents (if applicable).
      - 3) Other teachers.
      - 4) The Lord.

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2. You should love people. Loving people will cause you to be:
    - a. Tolerant and tactful.
    - b. Able to handle difficult themes and situations.
    - c. Able to not take yourself too seriously. Laugh with them. Be humble.
- C. By advancing in stature.
1. This is a matter of personality—the kind of person you are and the image that you project to others.
  2. What is personality?
    - a. You may be irritable, impatient, argumentative, shy, conceited, aggressive, eccentric, etc.
    - b. Appearance makes a difference. Smile. Be happy.
    - c. Sincerity is a must.
    - d. Enthusiasm, spiritual passion, is needed.
- D. By Advancing in Wisdom.
1. Are you mentally alert or drifting? The growing teacher is constantly reading in order to nourish his expanding mind.
    - a. Know the pupil as well as the subject. Speak his language.
    - b. Time is short so you need to be sharp. Much must be taught in about 40 minutes.
    - c. You need wisdom as well as knowledge. They are different.
  2. Teaching the Bible is more important than teaching in public school.
    - a. The purpose is more important.
    - b. The source of material is more important.
    - c. The responsibility is greater.

### **III. Some Practical Ways to Improve Yourself and Your Teaching**

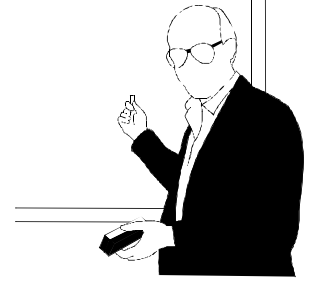
- A. Analyze yourself as you are and see that improvement can be made.
1. What you are is God's gift to you. What you can become is your gift to Him.
  2. Your reward is great. By becoming an effective teacher, you have great opportunities to:
    - a. Influence people for good.
    - b. Develop the art of getting along with people.
    - c. Learn the Bible.
    - d. Become self-confident.
    - e. Get down to the "grass roots" in training individuals as Christians.
    - f. Lay up treasure in heaven (Luke 12:21).
    - g. Be a molder of character.
  3. If we know ourselves as teachers, we know we need improvement.
- B. Improvement can come through encouragement from without or within.
1. Thinking of the importance of your work.
  2. Thinking of the challenge of your work—its unlimited possibilities.
  3. Thinking of the reward of your work—the joy when one you taught is won.
  4. Actual words of encouragement from others. Not flattery but in sincerity.

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- C. Improvement can come through self-supervision.
    - 1. Study yourself constantly. It is a long and gradual process.
    - 2. Try to develop your own spiritual life further.
    - 3. Learn to accept criticism from yourself and others. Face facts.
    - 4. Concentrate on weak points until they are mastered. Take advantage of every opportunity.
    - 5. Make a conscious effort to try out the techniques you learn. Many will come naturally (as public speakers learn) but other things must be worked on.
  - D. Improvement can come through intensified study.
    - 1. A “know-it-all” is out of place. There is much we do not know.
    - 2. The more you learn, the more you will want to learn.
    - 3. Develop good reading habits. Establish some sort of reading schedule for yourself.
  - E. Improvement can come through other people.
    - 1. Learn vicariously by seeing others at work (teacher observation).
    - 2. Do not mimic someone’s faults but imitate their good points.
    - 3. Ask someone in whom you have confidence to sit in on your classes. Ask for frank appraisals of your work.
  - F. The greatest improvement can come through imitating Christ—The Master Teacher.
    - 1. He knew His students and their needs.
    - 2. He was master of the subject He was teaching.
    - 3. He lived in accordance with the demands He made of others.
    - 4. He was physically fit and had a keen intellect and reasoning power. He had emotion, energy and personality.
    - 5. He had aims in His work that would better the learners physically, morally, aesthetically, intellectually, vocationally and spiritually.
  - G. Improvement comes from God through prayer.
    - 1. This is the source of strength and wisdom.
    - 2. It is part of the Christian’s warrior armor (Eph. 6:10).



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# Teaching in a Classroom Setting



## I. Teaching a Class in a Group Setting

- A. Make preparation. Read and study the lesson you plan to teach or the material you plan to discuss.
- B. Various approaches to instruction.
  1. Lecturing. The teacher presents the material without any response from the student.
    - a. The material must be both well prepared and well presented to hold attention.
    - b. This method has the advantages of preaching but the disadvantage of not allowing more than one person to exchange views.
  2. Audience participation.
    - a. The study is directed by one person who may, or may not, present some lecture material and then solicit comments from the class.
    - b. The class is allowed to participate as long as decency and order are maintained.
    - c. This method is widely used since it allows for a much wider range of material and views to be presented.
    - d. How to get participation (sometimes it is difficult to get).
      - 1) Know the material.
      - 2) Be enthusiastic.
      - 3) Ask specific questions that can be given a specific answer.
      - 4) Ask for comments and questions.
      - 5) Be willing to consider an opposing view and freely discuss those questions that pertain to the point of the study.
      - 6) If there are those who choose not to read or comment, try not to embarrass them.
      - 7) Respect the convictions of others.
- C. Teaching various age groups.
  1. Approach the study with the age group in mind.
    - a. Try to challenge the class.
    - b. Do not go so deep over their heads that they do not understand.
  2. Consider subjects that will be of interest to those in the class.
    - a. Certain topics are of greater interest to and have greater impact on particular age groups and not on others.
    - b. At the same time, always strive for balance—sound material on a variety of Scriptural subjects.

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3. If it is a general audience, try to avoid always catering to one particular age group.
  - D. Some methods of instruction all of which can be effective if the **teacher and students** study and cooperate together.
    1. **Verse by verse.** Directly out of the Bible text.
    2. **Topical studies.** A specific topic is studied either from an outline or study guide.
    3. **Outline and study series.** A lesson book or outline is followed on a particular book of the Bible.

## **II. Dealing with Problems and Controversy (I Cor. 14:40)**

- A. Do not be afraid to say you do not know the answer to a question any student might have.
  1. Offer to study it further and to answer it in a subsequent class.
  2. Such honesty builds respect in the students.
- B. Freely discuss any controversial matter that is Scriptural and timely.
  1. Be careful to not let the class get out of hand.
  2. Offer to meet outside the class setting, if necessary, to discuss it further.
  3. If you need help in handling a tough situation, do not be afraid to get help or turn the matter over to a more mature or experienced Christian.
- C. If things get altogether too far out of hand, it would be wise to just end the discussion and/or close the class until order is assured.

## **III. Aids to Teaching**

- A. The Bible. It would be wise to invest in a good study Bible and have a number of versions available to help you prepare.
- B. A good concordance. This will assist you in locating passages, words and additional material on your topic.
- C. Commentaries.
  1. Commentaries are not authorities and should not be used as such.
    - a. They are simply another man's views, convictions or opinions.
    - b. All commentaries are subject to error.
  2. **Do not** teach directly from them.
- D. Various helps as Bible dictionaries, surveys, maps, etc., can be useful in giving you background information so that your presentation will have greater depth.

## **IV. Some Practical Helps**

- A. **Study.** You cannot teach what you do not know and you cannot lead where you will not go.
- B. Speak plainly so that all in the class can participate and hear.
- C. Be friendly. Smile. Do not get angry when your position is challenged or someone disagrees with you.
- D. Give opportunity for someone to express views as well as yourself.
- E. Maintain order. One cannot learn much in a disorderly class.