



## Teaching Teachers to Teach

Think back to your Sunday School days of long ago. For some of you it may be over 50 years, but I'm sure there is a Sunday School teacher you remember well (at least I hope so!).



--Which Sunday School teacher truly stands out above all the rest?

--Was it someone you knew already (perhaps a friend of the family) who was just filling in for a season, who maybe had an enjoyable (humorous/engaging) personality, dutifully read the lesson, but contributed little else to your personal life?

--Perhaps it was a person who was consistently well prepared for the lesson and also challenged you to learn and retain the material?

--Or was it a person who personally showed interest in your life and clearly lived out an example of godly character (inside and outside the classroom) besides just teaching you about the Christian faith?

If you remember such a person, I'm fairly certain it was a person from the last category because that teacher best typified Christ. That individual was not just a "good, well prepared teacher" but cared enough about you to provide an example of love, sacrifice and prayerful service. The relationship that teacher built with you is what truly lasted!

One of the mottos of Children's Ministry International that helps explain our mission is "Teaching Teachers to Teach about Christ." CMI can give you the best material in the world but if your heart, motivation, enthusiasm and commitment as a teacher is lacking much of your teaching will not stick. The student will not be challenged to live for Christ. Such a challenge is needed especially in the years ahead as this country becomes more and more hostile to godly teaching.

The Bible gives us a very good example of the greatest teacher who ever lived, Jesus Christ. As we study his example, we begin to see why teaching is a 'calling'. But before you say, "I guess I'm not called", remember we are all teachers to the people around us (especially our family members). We teach them as Christ taught his disciples by what we say and more importantly by how we act. Our responses to trials, other people, success and failures teach very important lessons that are not easily forgotten by the people who know us.

Think about Christ's greatest act, his sacrifice on the cross for our sins. No amount of lecture, study or knowledge could demonstrate or affect his disciples as much as this selfless act. Because of this act His disciples were better able to teach and evangelize. They were even enabled to give up their lives for the faith in which they believed. Is it any wonder this small group of disciples literally turned the Roman Empire upside down amidst great persecution?

As your students go out and challenge this dead and dying culture for Christ they must have as close a relationship with Him as the disciples did. But have they been effectively taught what that model is, where have they seen it acted out, day in and out? You, as his/her teacher may be one of the few examples of godliness the child has to mentor.

Susan Hunt in her excellent new book "**Heirs of the Covenant**" (Crossway Books, 1998) lays out a covenantal view of teaching and learning. She describes an excellent teacher as one having "a vision of their students confidently and boldly serving the Lord God." She goes on to say, "...**we** (as teachers) need to challenge our students to lives of servanthood, but **we** must not issue the challenge in a vacuum. **We** must be willing to make the investment, to give faithful instruction, to nurture, and then to sound a clarion call to obedience. But **we** must never talk of obedience apart from God's grace that enables **us** as teachers to obey. The King (Jesus) calls **us** to be with Him, and then He (Christ) sends **us** forth to do the good works He prepared in advance for **us** to do."

How can anyone be up to such a task? Obviously, it is not by our power that this will happen. It must be the work of the Holy Spirit, working through us. Some of the traits that a Godly teacher will have are found in Timothy the disciple of Paul (I and II Timothy). Susan Hunt summarizes these traits in her book as: (1) a living faith, (2) a diligent student of the Word of God, (3) example of godliness - watching our life and doctrine closely, persevering in our faith, (4) a grateful servant spirit, (5) a constant awareness of our own sinfulness and God's mercy, (6) a disciple maker, (7) a unity builder, and (8) a heart for evangelism. Possessing

these positive examples will help our students to be like us (as teachers) which will point them to Christ (Luke 6:40).

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