

The Teacher or the "Teacher-Type"

by Dr. Jack Hyles

My pastor is not very interesting as a speaker. He is more the "teacher-type." This little statement was made to me by a lady with whom I was talking about the Lord's work. This statement is typical of many similar ones which I hear from coast to coast. If a person is uninteresting, he is the "teacher-type." If a speaker is boring, he must be a teacher. If a speaker is able to speak in terms that the hearer cannot understand, he is the "teacher-type." It seems that to many, teaching is the ability to confuse the hearer so that he will leave the room amazed at the brilliance of the teacher. It might be wise to examine just what teaching really is.

1. Teaching is the transfer of knowledge. To many, it is considered the displaying of knowledge. Teaching is not the taking out of one's knowledge and displaying it in the presence of the hearer. Teaching is the hearer leaving with knowledge with which the speaker entered. Unless the hearer leaves knowing what the speaker knew when he came, the teaching process has not taken place. This would indicate that many times the pupil fails to do so, at least partially, because the teacher has failed. Some speakers and professors appear to think that it would be plagiarism for the student to learn what the instructor knows. The teacher has failed when the student does not leave knowing what the teacher knew when he entered. Teaching, in a sense, is transferring profound truth into simplicity so that it in turn may be transferred into profound work.

2. Teaching is a transfer of personality. The pupil should not only learn what the teacher knows; he should also, in a sense, become what the teacher is. Teaching is not only the transferring of knowledge, it is the transferring of zeal, honesty, enthusiasm, optimism, generosity, and other traits that a good teacher possesses. This transfer of personality cannot be made if there is no teacher. This is one of the weaknesses of correspondence courses and similar forms of education. Most of us, as we think back over our childhood and youth, can remember far more of what our teachers were like than we can of what our teachers taught.

3. Teaching is the transfer of procedure. Not only should the pupil learn the facts and how to adorn them with the right personality, but he should learn propriety, procedure, neatness, and orderliness if he is to be taught properly. Such lessons can be learned from a neat room, a clean building, an orderly presentation, and proper organization and discipline.

4. Teaching is an incarnation of ideas. Most people cannot define such things as loyalty and patriotism. They can, however, point to someone who has these qualities.

It is easier to learn loyalty from a loyal person than from a lecture on loyalty. Hence, the right teacher would incorporate these ideals and others into his personality and character so that the pupil can emulate him and reach the desired end.

5. Teaching is the ability to inspire learning. Good teaching makes learning easy and, to some degree, fun. Again, this puts not only the burden of teaching on the teacher but also the burden of learning and places the responsibility of failure on the teacher's shoulders as well as the student's.

May the dear Lord deliver us from being the "teacher-type." May we be more concerned about making our pupils the "learning-type."