

## JUST A TEACHER?

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### COLOSSIANS 3:15-17

I sometime hear, “I’m just a teacher.” Just a teacher? S.S. teacher, school teacher, home school teacher—what you do and say as a teacher is absorbed by young and not so young minds. Those images will echo across time.

Teachers, the lessons you share, and the example of your lives, are affecting people yet unborn—people you will never see or know—people who are and will be the movers and builders and influencers of our nation.

The most important work and ministry in our nation today, even in our world, is by Christian teachers. The future always has the potential for good or bad. The pliant minds of tomorrow’s leaders are in your hands. They watch and listen and learn by your word and example.

Just a teacher? I beg to differ. Consider for a moment the potential of those whom you teach. Among the children, youth, and young adults are writers, future teachers, business leaders, and maybe even a president.

In your classrooms are those persons who will ultimately make decisions in our churches and our society. Just a teacher? I think not! Many of you teach older adults. Even they are absorbing, and themselves are teaching their children and grandchildren.

Just a teacher? I thank God that you are. I thank God for you—for your example of faithfulness—I thank God for what you have taught this past year, and for the wisdom you will share this year. Thank God for S.S teachers, and Christian teachers in the public school systems. Let’s not lose one fragile opportunity to touch lives for tomorrow.

Today, God’s Word has some gems for teachers and, in fact, for all of us. In Paul’s letter to the Colossians in a section where he talks about how Christians are to live, are these gems.

Col 3:15-17, “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs

with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

Three priorities every teacher (all of us) should strive for:

## 1. The peace of Christ

(v. 15) Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts

Here’s what the peace of Christ means to a believer.

### (1) Absence of conflict

We are at peace with God. The war between the believer and God is over. The treaty was paid for by the blood of Jesus Christ. But we don’t “let” His peace reign in us. Somehow we let the every day trials of life ruin our peace.

### (2) Assurance of security

The peace of God guards our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. When all seems to be falling in on us, we rest secure in the knowledge of Christ’s very presence with us. We belong to Him!

The Bible actually says, “Let the peace of Christ RULE in your hearts . . .” This is the only time this word is used in this way in the New Testament. Its literal meaning is “umpire.”

Fans of baseball know that the man in the black suit who stands behind the catcher rules on the plays and makes the calls. He remains unruffled no matter what happens.

Managers curse him and kick dirt on him. Fans boo and throw things at him, players yell at him, yet he remains unperturbed. This is the idea here. Let the peace of Christ rule your life.

## 2. The word of Christ

(v. 16) “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach . . .”

I’ve spent some time at Anasazi Indian ruins—Mesa Verde, Bandolier, Gila. In those beautiful rock canyons the Native Americans built their homes into the sides of the canyon walls.

It was there they had protection. There they had a great vantage point. The people lived in the cliff houses—they made their homes in the rocks. It obviously took time and effort. This is the meaning of the word “dwell” here.

The Word of God should take up residence in your heart. God's Word should be 'at home' there. Let the truths of Scripture permeate every aspect of your life. Let it govern every thought.

Let it guide every word and action and deed. God's Word dwells in us when we hear it, as we are this morning. It dwells in our hearts as we handle it, hide it within and hold it fast. To do this you've got to read it, study it and live it.

When you do this there will be two specific results that will happen in your teaching: First, you will be able to impart the positive truths of God's Word. (...as you teach...)

Second, you will be able to warn people of the consequences of their behavior. (...as you teach and admonish) Both of these—teaching and admonishing—come from the overflow of letting the Word of Christ dwell in you heart.

### 3. Do it all in the Name of the Lord Jesus

(v. 17) "...do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus"

If you have any motive for teaching other than doing it to point people to Jesus Christ, and to bring glory to Him, you are doing it for the wrong reasons. Paul says, "Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus..."

S.S. teacher: Six Purposes for Your Teaching Ministry

#### 1. To reach people

This seems like a no brainer. But we need encouragement, don't we? So I encourage you and your class to find people who are not in a Bible study and invite them to yours.

Identify people who need Christ as Savior. Help them feel accepted into your class. Lead them to salvation and to church membership.

#### 2. To teach people the Bible

This is where the rubber meets the road—your main responsibility is to dig out the eternal truths of the Bible and teach them. Your teaching should provide knowledge and understanding of biblical truths. Your teaching should apply biblical truth to our lives today. It should encourage spiritual growth, and identify gifts for service, and encouragement for individuals.

### 3. To care for people

Every Sunday School class is a little church in the big church, and the teacher is the pastor of that little church. It is there that relationships are fostered, and where you pray for one another.

Through the Sunday School class you and your members can express your faith through service, by enriching families, and by supporting the work of the big church and all of its ministries and relationships.

### 4. To witness to people

As a teacher you should have a genuine desire to reach people for Christ. In fact, this should be the foundation for your teaching ministry.

Pray for unbelievers—perhaps the spouses of your members or the parents of the children you teach. Build relationships, and every week, in some way, share the plan of salvation.

### 5. To fellowship with people

Sunday School classes should be fellowshiping machines. Does this mean a party every week. Of course not! It means that you do whatever it takes to develop caring, openness, trust, sharing, and the development of genuine warm relationships.

All of this is done in the context of good Bible learning. And it means drawing outsiders into and including them into your group. [Luaine in Portales]

### 6. To lead people to worship

One of the most important things we do as a church is to worship. Teachers, you must encourage your members in their individual and family worship, and to lead them to participate with the church family in corporate worship.

## Application:

Teacher, don't ever think you are "just a teacher." Whether you teach in preschool or senior adults, every child, every youth, and every adult has great potential to accept Christ, and to be a living witness for Christ as a result of your teaching ministry. What you do is the most important job in the world. Thank you for your commitment to serve our Savior as a teacher.