

Christian Education

In Paul's letter to the Ephesians it is written: "It was he [Christ] who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers..." (4: 11). Yes, God has provided the church with everything and everyone she needs. But how did these leaders come to be? It is true, of course, that God himself calls and ordains his children to various ministries, but such grand positions are not learned all at once. People must have teachers. Pastors must have teachers. Teachers must have teachers. Everyone that knows anything, everyone that excels in what he does has had teachers; and these teachers, in turn, were once learners. So then, what is the best way to learn? Surely, the church should learn differently than the world, more deeply than the world. This difference in qualitative learning is only possible through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit desires to be an intimate part and the very origin of our teaching and learning process. To such shall we devote this discussion.

First, let us consider the office of teacher. The Holy Spirit must be allowed to marinate the teacher on a regular basis. The teacher is a giver. He gives of his time, his intellect, and his personality. All too often, however, the teacher is giving from a deficit. He has become the dry-heaver-teacher! A teacher cannot give what he doesn't have. A teacher can't have what he hasn't received. And a teacher must receive from the Holy Spirit. When he does, all that hear him will recognize a freshness to his teaching. As the Holy Spirit gave his life-restoring power to the crucified Christ, he will also maintain a vitality to the teacher's craft. The teacher must also have a high caliber of ethics wrought by the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit. What good is it for one to teach the fruit of the Holy Spirit and yet exhibit none of it? Therefore, it is clear that the teacher must be a complete person to be used for the maximum benefit for the kingdom of God. Such completeness is the overriding mission of the Holy Spirit to the teacher.

The student of the Bible should also be intimately acquainted with the Holy Spirit. While not in a position of obvious leadership or widespread influence, the manner in which knowledge is received and what is done with that knowledge is of the utmost importance. The Holy Spirit, being God, understands the human mind. He is able to enhance learning over and above natural limits. This is clear from our Lord's comment to the disciples, "...the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you" (John 14: 26). "Everything"—that's quite the recall standard! Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit is able to accomplish such feats. The Holy Spirit also aids the student in attitude. Humility is a crucial ingredient to the learning process. Without it little new learning can occur. And, if it's not *new* learning—it's not learning at all. A student that devotes himself to the Holy Spirit will find the Holy Spirit devoted to him. It is only then that the blend of aptitude and humility can bring to fruition a doctrinally sound, Christ-centered, kingdom building, champion of God!

The blessed third Person of the Trinity is our constant helpmate and guide. Yet, how little we understand his functions in the process of teaching and learning. We, the church, have the greatest power in all the universe at our side, nay, living in our very being. The Holy Spirit is a teacher. Oh, that we would be teachable! If we become so, powerful disciples of Christ would we be. Let it be Lord.