

also demonstrated that they had become calloused because of yielding to the leaven of false doctrine that had permeated the ranks. They questioned Paul's integrity and sincerity causing him to exclaim: "*O foolish Galatians! Who hath bewitched you that you should not obey the truth?*" (Gal. 3:1) Yes, the Lord's people (you and me) can also allow an attitude of unteachability to insidiously creep into our lives. Sin and pride are the twin culprits in all these cases—they were then and they are now.

But not all the examples in the Bible are so dismal. Apollos, a man cited as being eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures, instructed in the way of the Lord and fervent in spirit was humble enough to be taught the way of God more perfectly by Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 16). His is a brilliant example of the type of attitude that should characterize us all. The two on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24 also in a unique way evinced a teachable spirit. After having been joined by the Lord, "*their eyes withholden so that they did not know Him*", they incredulously asked this "stranger": "*...have you not known the things which happened there [in Jerusalem] in these days?*" (v. 18) as if their knowledge was greater than His. Subsequently, beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded to them in all Scriptures the things concerning Himself (v. 27). Not long

afterwards their eyes were opened admitting their hearts had burned within them while these things took place. They were ready to listen to what the Lord had to say to them even though they thought they were "on top" of things. How we need an attitude like this! And look at Peter. He had to be taught again by the Apostle Paul that justification was by faith and not by works. Paul admitted that he had to withstand him to the face (Gal. 2:11) in the presence of fellow believers because of Peter's hypocrisy. Apparently, Peter had forgotten the vision of the white sheet (Acts 10). The true greatness of Peter's character and teachable attitude shines through however when we hear him refer sometime later in his second epistle to the "beloved Paul" (2 Peter 3:15). These examples from God's Word serve to remind us of the great men and women used of the Lord whose lives evidenced a teachable spirit. When we make a deliberate commitment in this direction, we will enlarge our capacity for understanding and appreciating the things of Christ. As Psalm 25:9 reminds us "*The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach his way.*" May the Lord help each one of us to effect this quality in our lives so that we can "*grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*" (2 Peter 3:18).

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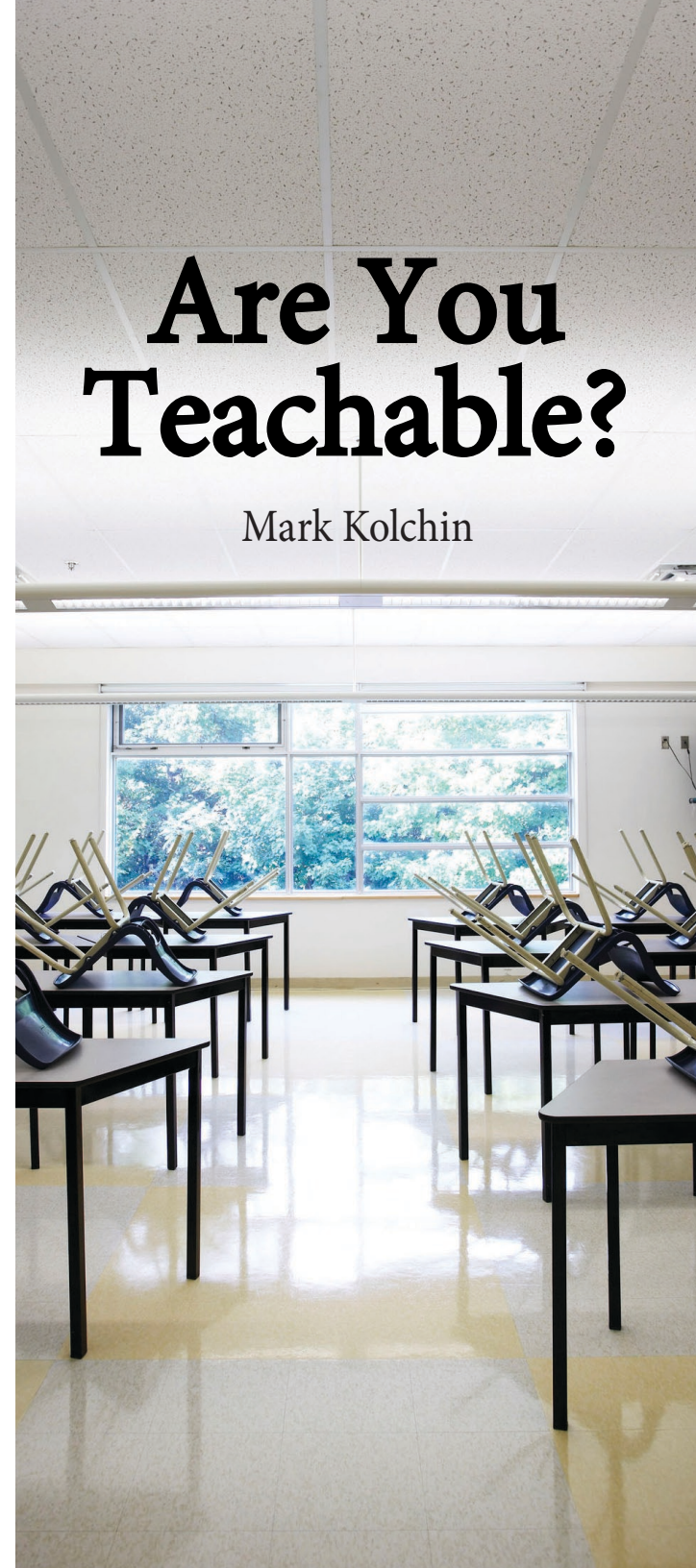
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Are You Teachable?

Mark Kolchin



The words of the Apostle Paul to Timothy are telling: “Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.” (1 Tim 4:12). Apparently, Paul had reason to believe that there might be some who due to their advanced years would be reluctant to be taught by someone younger in the faith. Anticipating this, he admonishes his son in the faith to be an example to believers in more than just words, but in qualities befitting a servant of the Lord. The snare of thinking that we are beyond the point of teachability—for whatever reason—is a trap that can easily snag any of us. Perhaps it is because we have known the Lord for many years that we bristle at the thought of being corrected by somebody else. Or maybe because we associate with a certain group that we feel we are beyond instruction in a particular matter. Or maybe it is just a matter of simply refusing to admit that we are wrong—a lack of biblical understanding (but an abundance of spiritual



pride!). For whatever reason, the excuses for not having an openness of heart and an attitude that is “easy to be entreated” (James 3:17) are difficult to justify in the light of Scripture—even though we may not be conscious of harboring these attitudes. The Bible is replete with examples of those who thought they were beyond teachability. The Pharisees scolded the man born blind who, after receiving his sight extolled



the One who had opened his eyes. His clarification testimony only served to infuriate the proud Pharisees. Incensed, they chided “Thou wast altogether born in sins, dost thou teach us?” (v. 34). They could not bear to think of someone less knowledgeable than they to be in the position of teaching them. Likewise, the nation of Israel as a whole demonstrated an attitude of unteachability. Three times they are accused of being “dull of hearing” with hearts and eyes closed to the Word of God. Isaiah was the first to utter these words during his ministry (Isa. 6). They were reiterated by the Lord Jesus to the nation during the time of His earthly sojourn (Matt.13) and cited again by the Holy Spirit at the close of Paul’s ministry as the root sin of Israel in his day. (Acts 28). Additionally, the Athenians in Acts 17 also evidenced an attitude of unteachability. After hearing a convincing argument for the Gospel by the Apostle Paul, their response indicated the condition of their hearts: “some mocked, while others said we will hear thee again of this matter.” v. 32. (So much for telling or hearing some new thing!) Fortunately, some did believe reminding us that God’s Word will not come back void. But the epitome of unteachable atti-

tude is vividly pictured by the scene in Acts 7 at the defense of Stephen just prior to his martyrdom. After a convicting message that struck at their consciences, it says they “cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears...” (v. 57). They were through with being taught what they didn’t want to hear anyway.

We are tempted to dismiss these examples of unteachable attitudes by unsaved men and women as not applicable to the Christian. Yet at its core is the attitude that the believer must also do battle with continually—the attitude of pride. As long as the “old man” is allowed some freedom, he will make every effort to revive and stir up trouble, thus the exhortation to “put off” this corrupt expression of our former self (Eph. 4:22). The Corinthians forgot this truth when being corrected by the Apostle Paul for their blatant carnality. They had become puffed up in their knowledge to the point that they resisted instruction from the very one who was directly responsible for their faith in Christ. Amazing! The Galatians

