

Evangelism and Witnessing Lesson 12 2Q 2012

Evaluating Witnessing and Evangelism

Read Memory Text: “To one who listens, valid criticism is like a gold earring or other gold jewelry.” (Prov 25:12 NLT)

Thoughts?

Does this mean that valid criticism should be discarded like gold jewelry? Or, is it saying that gold jewelry is something consider precious, that should be applied and worn, that can enhance us, and like such jewelry we should apply and be enhanced by valid criticism?

What would make criticism valid?

- Truthfulness
- Accuracy
 - Can someone be accurate without being truthful? No.
 - Can someone be truthful without being accurate?
 - Can a person present, honestly, what they believe to be a criticism, but from their understanding and perspective, still be inaccurate?
 - What would this mean about hearing criticism of someone you trust and you know is being very honest and sincere?
 - Would it mean that you must still filter their criticism through your own, Holy Spirit enlightened, mind and come to your own conclusion?
- Pertinent
 - Can something be pertinent without being truthful and accurate? No, but...
 - Can criticism be truthful, and accurate, but not pertinent? Examples?
 - The youth’s that criticized Elisha for being bald, it was truthful, and accurate, but it wasn’t pertinent

- Applicable or usable
 - Can criticism be truthful, accurate, and pertinent, but not applicable or usable?
 - Criticize meeting facility, and the critique is truthful, accurate, pertinent, but not applicable because the cost of changing facilities are prohibitive.
- Hearable, meaning presented in a way it can be understood and accepted – so presented in love
 - Can criticism be truthful, accurate, pertinent, and applicable, but presented in such a way that it is misunderstood, offensive, or unacceptable?

Read second paragraph, “Sometimes large sums...” thoughts?

What constitutes “minimal results”? What standard are we using to evaluate our efforts? What measuring devices are appropriate? What are inappropriate?

- Converts?
- Donations?
- Letters/emails of support and appreciation?
- TV or radio ratings?
- Number of hits on the website?
 - Can one have success in all these areas without actually be working for God’s kingdom?
 - How many pro-sports teams, movie stars, music idols, and others succeed in all of these?
 - Does that mean such measures are without merit?
- Are there any other measures to consider in our evaluation?
- What about the quality of the message itself?
- What about the transforming impact it has on the lives of people?
 - Do people become less fearful?
 - Do they love others more?
 - Do they become kinder, gentler, more altruistic?

- What about, on an individual assessment basis, the motives of those doing the ministry?
- Other measures?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “Evaluation will take...”

Thoughts? Would you have chosen a different word than professionalism? “those who attend public meetings expect a high level of _____”?

- Honesty
- Integrity
- Sincerity
- Truth
- Christlikeness
- Something real, not something performed?
- Caring about the people being spoken to?

Do you think that if you heard the prophets or Apostles preach, would you have written that those presentations had a high level of professionalism?

I am not criticizing professionalism at all. I am a medical professional. We work very hard to do all of our work for the Lord to the highest standards, professionally. I think this is quite a good thing – I am only asking, is it number one?

Can you have professional presentations that don’t present the truth? Could a professional presentation mislead?

Wouldn’t the most important thing in a presentation be truthfulness, and Christlikeness, revealing the truth about God and His kingdom? And, of course, to the highest professional standards we are capable of, but I would not want any one of you here or online, who have come to know the truth of God’s kingdom, to wait for professional “training” or

some other “professional” opportunity to share this truth. If God opens an opportunity for you to speak, ask the Holy Spirit to enable you, prepare your best, and go share what you know about God!

Read second paragraph, “When God’s Word...” thoughts?

Is it important to evaluate our responses to God’s standards, directions and commands?

- But before we evaluate our responses to His standards would it be important to first evaluate God’s standards, directions and commands? Or should we just do what it says, “God said it, I do it, that settles it”?
 - What about the command to not cook a kid in its mother’s milk
 - Stone a child for cursing their parents
 - Women not being allowed to speak in church
 - Women being submissive to their husbands
 - Using the tithe to buy fermented wine to drink and rejoice before the Lord

Is it appropriate, to question and evaluate God’s instructions before acting upon them?

The next paragraph points out that Paul gave certain qualifications for deacons and elders, meaning that a certain evaluation was necessary. Why do you think Paul said that church leaders should not be given to “too much wine” rather than church leaders should not drink any wine? And then told Timothy that he should drink a little wine to help with his stomach?

Should we think about this instruction, or just accept it and have a periodic libation?

The last paragraph reminds us of our commission, instruction, to take the gospel to the entire world, should we ever stop and ask, “what message are we to be taking?”

If you were Satan, would you try to infect the gospel message with distortions so that people actually went into the world proclaiming a false gospel, thinking all the time they were taking the truth?

Has this actually happened?

How can we present the gospel in a modern world so that it becomes relevant to people today?

What barriers have you found in presenting the gospel?

Dr. Marcum and Heartwise Ministries has teamed up with Come and Reason Ministries to present the gospel, the truth about God's kingdom of love to the world, by showing how Scripture and science harmonize, how God's methods heal, how medical science confirms Bible wisdom. This fall our first annual seminar, *Modern Medicine, Biblical Technology and The Brain* will endeavor to present the gospel in simple and practical terms that has relevance to people's lives today.

What ways have you found to be helpful?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "While there..."

THANK YOU to all of you who are part of this ministry! Those who come each week to class, those who listen online, those who share this message in your community, our prayer partners, those who donate, those who are writing study guides, those helping with all the technical responsibilities.

We are a team, working together, why? Because we have found something worth sharing. We have found God beautiful, trustworthy, reliable, and reasonable. We have come to know Jesus and seen some of what He came to reveal about His Father. And we have been changed, experienced greater peace,

and joy, and love, and want to share a healing message to set other minds free from lifelong fear and insecurity.

The lesson asks us to read Heb 10:24,25:

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. ²⁵ Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Thoughts?

Is it beneficial to meet together? What is the benefit?

- Love, acceptance, support, encouragement, friendship
 - To experience, after stumbling, after falling, after being caught in adultery and thrown down publicly, the grace of Christlike love and restoration!
- Growth in knowledge, learn new perspectives
 - To study together, to remove distortions, misunderstanding, to come to a clearer knowledge of God and His methods
- To pool our resources, energies, talents and skills to be more effective in reaching others

What interferes, stops, hinders, undermines, obstructs people from meeting together and helping each other?

- Fear and selfishness –
 - fear of getting hurt, rejected, embarrassed, gossiped about, laughed at, fear of not being loved,
 - anger, resentment, hurt over mistreatment or failure to be acknowledged, valued or appreciated
 - active expulsion, or rejection by others
- Lack of relevance to the daily life
- Believing church is primarily about saving you – rather than the truth that church is primarily about equipping

you and putting you to work to spread the healing message with others.

- When people believe church is primarily about their salvation then they conclude, “I don’t have to go to church to be saved.”
- Other obstacles?

How do we help each other grow spiritually?

WEDNESDAY

Read top Bible passage, “But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.’” (1Sam 16:7, NKJV)

Thoughts?

How do you apply this passage to your life?

First – to yourself?

- Do you judge yourself more by outward appearance or by the heart?
 - If you study in school, do your best, but get a “C” how do you judge yourself? A winner?
 - If you train diligently for a race and do your best but come in last place, how do you judge yourself?
 - If, as a parent, you did all you knew how to do for your children, your heart orientation was for their good, but they grew up and left the church and went into wild living – how do you judge yourself?
 - Are we at peace with ourselves, knowing that our heart motives are surrendered to God and seeking his will, or do we judge self as failing if events we can’t control don’t turn out the way we would like?
 - Are we judging by the heart or by the outward appearance?

Second, how do we apply this to others?

- Do we judge others by heart motive or by outward appearance?
- Dress?
- Day of week they worship upon?
- Eating at restaurants on Sabbath?
- Wearing jewelry?
- Or perhaps, following Christ, preaching the gospel, seeking to raise funds to help the poor and needy – you know, just like Judas did?
- Do we judge by outward appearance on the heart?

Read last paragraph, “How do we as sinners...” thoughts?

The lesson suggests the spiritual disciplines noted in the texts above:

- Mt 26:41 – watch and pray
- 1Thes 5:17 – pray continually
- Rom 8:6 – surrender mind to the Spirit
- Eph 6:17,18 – helmet of salvation and sword of spirit, the word of God
- 2Tim 2:15, 16 - know God’s word
- Ps 1:2 – delight in his law

Thoughts? Could someone watch, pray, study Bible, claim the helmet of salvation and a mind surrendered to the spirit, and promote God’s law and still be lost?

Did those who crucified Christ claim all of this?

And of course all of these are vital – but can you think of other evidences to evaluate?

- Do they love others?
- Are they tolerant of differences?

- Do they leave others free?
- Do they treat the fallen with grace, compassion and love?
- Do they gossip, or protect reputations?
- Seek to help people more than seeking to keep rules?
- What picture of God are they revealing?
- Do they live in harmony with God's testable laws?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "The very reason..." thoughts?

How are we doing? Let's step back a minute and take lessons from the Jewish nation in Scripture:

- What was their calling, mission?
 - To prepare the world for the first advent of the messiah
- What is the mission of the SDA church?
 - To prepare the world for the second advent of the messiah
- What did God give them to help in their mission?
 - Prophetic messages
 - Sabbath
 - Health message
 - Blessings of tithing and giving offerings
 - Sanctuary message
 - School system
- What did God give the SDA church to help in their mission?
 - Prophetic message
 - Sabbath
 - Health message
 - Blessings of tithing and offerings
 - Sanctuary message
 - School system
- How did the Jewish nation do?
- How are we doing?

- What was the problem with the Jewish nation? What got in the way? Here is how one Bible commentator put it:
 - **The law of Jehovah was burdened with needless exactions and traditions, and God was represented as severe, exacting, revengeful, and arbitrary.** He was pictured as one who could take pleasure in the sufferings of his creatures. The very attributes that belonged to the character of Satan, the evil one represented as belonging to the character of God. Jesus came to teach men of the Father, to correctly represent him before the fallen children of earth. Angels could not fully portray the character of God, but Christ, who was a living impersonation of God, could not fail to accomplish the work. The only way in which he could set and keep men right was to make himself visible and familiar to their eyes. {ST, January 20, 1890}
- Examples?
 - Sabbath burdened by human rules, Christ healed on Sabbath, but they wanted to stone him.
 - Failure to treat all men equal, Christ brought salvation to Jews and Gentiles.
 - Corban – rather than honoring parents
 - Willingness to pull an animal out of a ditch on Sabbath, but not help a human.
- Is there anything interfering with our mission to take the gospel to the world?
 - Is our problem similar? Is it over some misrepresentation of God’s law, which misrepresents him?
 - **The last great conflict between truth and error is but the final struggle of the long-standing controversy concerning the law of God.** Upon this battle we are now entering,—**a battle between the laws of men and the precepts of Jehovah,** between the religion of the Bible and the religion of fable and tradition. {GC88 582.2}

- What has happened to our church? We, like the Jews, have accepted the idea that God's law is imposed, rather than the truth that God's law is the law of love, the principle upon which life is built to operate.

TUESDAY

Bottom paragraph refers to Jesus critique of the Pharisees evangelism, that they made converts twice the sons of hell. What was it about their evangelism that did this? What were they doing that caused people to be more tied to Satan's kingdom? Did they teach...

- The wrong Sabbath?
- The wrong clean and unclean foods?
- Not to tithe?
- The wrong sanctuary?
- The wrong sacrifices to bring to sanctuary?
- Not to pray?
- In evolution?

What was it they taught that enslaved the mind deeper into Satan's kingdom?

That God would use his power to punish the Romans! In other words, that God uses power to force his way, inflict torment, torture, and death, that God punishes those who disagree with him. When we accept this view of God we become twice the son of hell.

Read top dark section, "Read the following..."

Thoughts? What does this mean to you?

- Fear – awe, admire, be amazed, humbled – Does God want us to be afraid he is seeking to harm us? In other words, does God want us to be terrified or afraid of him?

- Walk in all his ways – Why? What does it mean to walk in his ways? What are his ways? Aren't his ways the design parameters for life, so wouldn't it be like saying, breathe, or drink, or eat the foods God created for human nutrition, or love others?
- Love him – Why? From where does our love for God originate? Is it not in response to his love for us?
- Serve – Why? Because we are servants and the master commands, or because we are loving friends and eagerly volunteer to serve because we love and agree with him?
- Why does it say his statutes and commands are for our good? What happens if we disobey them? Will God be forced to punish or do we deviate from the law of life?

Middle of the page it says, “The texts say that God “requires” (or “asks”) these things of us. How are we to understand the meaning of this in the context of salvation by faith alone?”

Jesus achieved the remedy to sin, singly and alone, and there is nothing we can do to improve upon, create, or add to this remedy. However, we must actively participate in the application of this remedy to our lives. To experience God's healing it is a cooperative effort of the Holy Spirit applying to our lives what Christ achieved.

Can God save someone against their will?

Can a person save themselves without God?

It is a cooperative effort, that we must actively choose to participate in.

Here is how one of the founders of our church put it:

- **The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail.** The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. **Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who**

- would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer.** It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a **partaker of the divine nature.** Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church. {DA 671.2}
- While God was working in Daniel and his companions "to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13), they were working out their own salvation. Herein is revealed the outworking of the **divine principle of cooperation, without which no true success can be attained. Human effort avails nothing without divine power; and without human endeavor, divine effort is with many of no avail. To make God's grace our own, we must act our part.** His grace is given to work in us to will and to do, but never as a substitute for our effort. {LHU 193.4}
 - We are laborers together with God. This is the Lord's own wise arrangement. **The cooperation of the human will and endeavor with divine energy is the link that binds men up with one another and with God.** The apostle says, "We are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (1 Corinthians 3:9). **Man is to work with the facilities God has given him.** "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," He says. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12, 13).--MS 113, 1898. {2MCP 694.3}
 - **There are two grand forces at work in the salvation of the human soul. It requires the cooperation of man with the divine agencies--** divine influences, and a strong, living, working faith. **It is in this way only** that the human agent can become a laborer together with

God. **The Lord does not sanction in any one of us a blind, stupid credulity. He does not dishonor the human understanding**, but, far from this, He calls for the human will to be brought into connection with the divine will. **He calls for the ingenuity of the human mind, the tact, the skill, to be strenuously exercised in searching out the truth as it is in Jesus. . . . Ye are labourers together with God. {OHC 310.5}**

Thoughts?

FRIDAY

Read first two paragraphs, "Have you ever..."

I do not want our ministry to be a one man band, I want all of you to be active participants, because what we are doing is not about me, it is about God, His kingdom of love, and its power to heal and transform lives.

Read and discuss the three questions.