

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

**2Timothy 2:15**

## Teaching with Care

**Doy Moyer**

### Store In My Heart

#### Colossians 3:16

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

We often hear this verse quoted in lessons about our worship in song, but we need to also give close attention to the first phrase. Paul calls for us to have an abundance of understanding in the Word of Christ. For the word of Christ to dwell richly within you, there must be much time spent reading and applying that word. The more time we spend with Christ in His word, the richer our lives will truly be.

We need to study and meditate on the message that has been preserved. Skimming the word in a quick daily reading will not make it a part of your life each day! Let it fill your mind and heart.

*“Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness” (James 3:1).*

For men and women who choose to teach in whatever capacity provided by the Lord, this passage can generate conflicting feelings. On the one hand, we know the Lord wants His people to teach. The gospel is to be preached (**Romans 10:14-17**). We are to teach our children, neighbors, and brothers and sisters. The word of God is to be passed on (cf. **Deuteronomy 6:4-9**). Saints are to be taught and trained to serve, truth is to be spoken in love, and we are to grow up so that we are not tossed about by every wind of doctrine (**Ephesians 4:11-16**). Teaching is a major part of serving the Lord. This is how edification occurs and it glorifies God.

On the other hand, we have warnings telling us that teachers will be judged more strictly, and this can be a little frightening because we don't want to lead anyone astray. We are told about the dangers of error and false teachers. Jesus warned His disciples, *“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves” (Matthew 7:15)*. Peter warned about those who *“secretly bring in destructive heresies” (2Peter 2:1)*. While these false teachers are not of the same stock as those who make some mistakes (as we all do), the admonitions should spur us on to self-evaluate and make sure that our teaching is sound with motives that are humble and pure. Too much is at stake to take on teaching with a careless attitude about what we say and how we say it.

Paul's concern about his own teaching is evident in many passages. For example, Paul asked the Colossian Christians to pray *“that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison — that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak” (Colossians 4:3-4)*. The prayer in this case was not about opening the minds and hearts of hearers; it



was about how the teachers went about their work. We need to pray for teachers to make what they teach clear, understandable, and appropriate with grace, seasoned with salt, “so that you may know how you ought to answer each person” (v. 6). This is godly wisdom.

“That I may make it clear” should resonate with all teachers. Clarity is vital. If we are vague, ambiguous, or equivocal in how we approach matters, we open many doors for misunderstanding and misinterpretation. Though there are times when ambiguity can be appropriate and purposeful, it can also serve error well if we are not careful. People sometimes take what we say in ways we did not intend, so we must then clarify what we mean. “That’s not what I meant” can become tedious, but we can head off much of that by striving to be clear in the first place and anticipating potential problems. Due to the abundance of doctrines and differences today, we may need to preface some of what we say with, “I’m not saying that, but rather this.” Even so, some will persist in taking what we say in directions we did not mean (they did with Jesus). We continue in prayers that we may “make it clear” while recognizing that hearers also bear responsibility in how they listen and what they do with it. Yet we do not want to be misunderstood. If this is a problem for us, we ought not to be teaching, as James warns.

Even Paul had his moments when he had to clarify misunderstandings about his teaching. Some misunderstood what he taught about grace, for example, as the epistle to the Romans shows. Yet Paul did not fail to clarify: “*What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?*” (Romans 6:1-2). I’ve seen where teachers say something to the effect that if we teach grace like Paul, then people will misunderstand. But we should see that if we teach it like Paul, we will also clarify and not be satisfied with the misunderstandings. Teach what should be taught and clarify where clarity is needed. This is the teacher’s life.

I realize there is a difference between the “official” teaching by servants chosen to teach specific groups or classes and the more “unofficial” style of teaching that occurs in the home or on the streets. “Not many of you should become teachers” sounds more official perhaps, but the warning should still cause us all to be very careful, check what we say or do, and seek to be clear with the message gifted to us by God and of which we are stewards. It’s not our word to do with whatever suits us; this is God’s word to which we are called in faithfulness.

## Contact Us

We want opportunities to speak with others about the Lord.

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## For Our Information

John Ragsdale has had a few difficult days during the last week.

Paula Laubach has a lung doctor appointment in mid July.

The Simpson family is out of town this week.

Sunday Evening - **Psalm 2**. Wednesday Evening - **James 2:18**

Keep one another in your prayers each day. Each of us has burdens & struggles that bring difficulty into our life. God will help if we call upon Him with faith.

We seek only to serve God according to His Will!

