

As followers of Christ, we are called to integrity—not only in what we teach but in how we live. Never teach what you don't practice yourself. Do not urge others to fear God while your own heart is far from Him. Don't encourage others to pray if prayer is absent from your own life. Our lives must reflect the truths we proclaim, or our witness loses its power.

Teaching what we do not live leads to spiritual hypocrisy. This was the sin of the Pharisees, who placed burdens on others that they themselves refused to bear. Jesus strongly rebuked them:

Matthew 23:2-4 (NKJV)

The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.

Their lives were a contradiction: they had the knowledge of God's law, but their hearts were far from obedience (Isaiah 29:13; cf.

Matthew 15:8). They loved to be seen as righteous but failed to do what was truly right before God.

Paul warned against this same inconsistency:

Romans 2:21-24 (NKJV)

You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? You who say, 'Do not commit adultery,' do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law? For 'the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,' as it is written.

Here Paul draws from Isaiah 52:5 and Ezekiel 36:20, showing how Israel's failure to obey God's law caused His name to be mocked among the nations. When we preach what we don't practice, we misrepresent the holy character of God and become stumbling blocks to others (cf. 1 Peter 2:12).

In contrast, true servants of God live out the message before they proclaim it. Ezra is a clear example:

Ezra 7:10 (NKJV)

For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.

Ezra followed the right order: first, he sought the Lord's law; second, he obeyed it; and third, he taught it. This threefold pattern reflects God's design for all who would be His witnesses: seek, do, teach (cf. James 1:22 — "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.").

Even Jesus, our perfect example, lived what He taught. He said:

John 13:15 (NKJV)

For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.

The apostles followed this model, urging believers not only to proclaim Christ but to walk in Him (Colossians 2:6) and to set an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity (1 Timothy 4:12, ESV).

If we bypass personal obedience and rush into teaching, we risk becoming mere performers—preaching the Gospel for applause or gain rather than out of genuine love for God and His people (cf. 2 Corinthians 2:17). Our teaching must be rooted in a life transformed by Christ.

The Gospel is most powerful when preached first through our actions and then through our words. We cannot teach what we do not live without becoming hypocrites or self-seekers.

May the Lord Jesus grant us the grace to seek His truth, to live by it, and only then to teach it. Amen.

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