

Fast Facts for a Theology of Teaching

By: John D. Ferrer (2 March 2016)

- 1) **Teaching is one of the spiritual gifts, meaning it's a special endowment by the Holy Spirit for the benefit of the Church (see Romans 12:6–8; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:1–12)**
 - Teaching isn't strictly limited to spiritual gifting however.
 - People may have a learned ability for teaching, a natural talent for teaching, or they might just be teaching with no particular skill or talent for it.
 - One could have a God-given ability/talent/capacity for teaching, but which is not explicitly used in a clearly ministerial setting.
 - Scripture leaves all these options open.

- 2) **In, English, the notion of teaching means: "to cause to know" (Merriam-websters)**
 - Teaching may be associated with any number of methods, styles, or practices
 - But until he/she one has caused the pupil to know something, then he or she hasn't "taught."

- 3) **In ancient Hebrew culture, "teacher" (Rabbi) was an honorific term.**
 - Rabbis were biblical scholars who taught reading, writing, Bible, theology, and law. Hence Hebrews refer to Jesus, respectfully, as "Teacher" or "Good teacher," by calling him the Greek equivalent of "Rabbi" (Matt 19:16; Mark 10:17; Luke 18:18)
 - Since ancient Hebrew culture fused Scripture and civil law, a strong understanding of Scripture spelled expertise in social order, governance, and judicial procedure.
 - To call someone "Rabbi" was a term of honor like "Sir" or "Lord," but which literally translates as "teacher," indicating a superior intellect, a holy man, an educator.

- 4) **The Shema, Deuteronomy 6:4, locates the foundational doctrine of Judaism within a compact manual on teaching.**
 - *"⁴Hear, Oh Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord Is one."*
 - *"⁵Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might."*
 - A.K.A., "the law of love."
 - This command summarizes how to practice the whole of Jewish law
 - *"⁶And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart."*
 - These instructions are to be internalized. At minimum that means understand them.
 - But could also indicate meditate on the law and even love the law.
 - *"⁷You shall teach them diligently to your children..."*
 - Teaching is how the faith is passed on.
 - It's cross-generational, and it's an effort.
 - *"...and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise."*

- The "and" (Hb. *waw*) could be translated as, "that is"—these activities are *what* that diligent teaching looks like.
 - The complementary terms (in house/by the way, sit/walk, lying/rising) show these truths are for every time and everywhere.
- "8You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."
 - "Hand" indicates practice. "Between your eyes" indicates mind.
 - "Doorposts" and "gates" indicate home/household.

5) Teaching is central to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20)

- "18And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in^[b] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
 - Christ aims all his authority, in all the heavens and the earth, at this task: to make disciples.
 - Discipleship is signaled by baptism (believers baptism).
 - Includes "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit"—thus distinguishing this religion from Judaism or Roman religions.
 - Not converts, but disciples. That's like making trees, not new growth, not saplings, but followers-after-Christ.
- 20 *teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*"
 - Teaching is mentioned explicitly, then implied within the phrase "make disciples" and "observe all that I have commanded you."
 - This teaching is either *how* disciples are *first* made or it describes the next step once a person becomes a disciple.
 - Since Jesus is here commanding them to teach, and they are supposed to teach everything Jesus commanded, that means disciples of Christ must go teach people to teach people [to teach people, to teach people, etc.].
 - It's impossible to fulfill the great commission without teaching.

6) Teaching carries heightened responsibility (James 3:1)

- Teachers answer to God for how they've handled their students.
- We can incur more judgment in cases where we "should have known better"

7) According to 2 Timothy 3:16—"All Scripture is useful for teaching" as well as for teaching related functions "rebuking, correcting, and training."

- While some texts might get more attention than others, we have biblical reason to seek out and trust teachers who teach the *whole* council of Scripture.

8) Teaching often implies a certain authority relation between two parties: teacher (superior) and pupil (subordinate). Ex., "A student/disciple is not above his teacher" (Luke 6:20). But that's not the only way that teaching works.

- People can teach themselves.
- Or a teacher may learn something from a student.

- Or teaching may occur between two (or more) people with no particular authority relation between them.

9) Teaching is a foundational Gift for the establishment of the church (Ephesians 4:11)

10) Scripture has a *lot* more to say about teaching

- "Teach/es" or "teaching/s" appear in 210 places in the ESV.
- "Teacher/s" appears in 70 places in the ESV.
- The Greek has roughly 9 different terms that are translated as "teach" (in order of most commonly used: didasko, didache, didaskalia, heterodidaskaleo, didaktikos, logos, katecheo, lageo, laleo, and kalodidaskalos)
- The Hebrew has roughly 8 different terms that are translated as "teach" (in order of most commonly used: yrh, horah, yda, 'lp, anoki-lmd, snn, leqah, yd', ha lmd, lmd.

Bible Verses About Teaching

[From <https://www.openbible.info/topics/teachers>]

[Titus 2:7-8](#) ESV / 516 helpful votes

Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.

[Proverbs 22:6](#) ESV / 368 helpful votes

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.

[James 3:1-2](#) ESV / 331 helpful votes

Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body.

[Luke 6:40](#) ESV / 226 helpful votes

A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.

[1 Peter 4:10](#) ESV / 184 helpful votes

As each has received a gift [including the gift of teaching], use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace:

[Psalm 32:8](#) ESV / 149 helpful votes

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.

[Deuteronomy 32:2](#) ESV / 128 helpful votes

May my teaching drop as the rain, my speech distill as the dew, like gentle rain upon the tender grass, and like showers upon the herb.

[Proverbs 1:1-33](#) ESV / 106 helpful votes

The proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel: To know wisdom and instruction, to understand words of insight, to receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness, justice, and equity; to give prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the youth— Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance, ...

[Romans 12:6-7](#) ESV / 88 helpful votes

Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching;

[2 Timothy 2:15](#) ESV / 75 helpful votes

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.

[1 Corinthians 15:58](#) ESV / 73 helpful votes

Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

[Romans 12:7](#) ESV / 71 helpful votes

If service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching;

[2 Timothy 3:16](#) ESV / 54 helpful votes

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,

[Matthew 5:19](#) ESV / 54 helpful votes

Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

[Ephesians 4:11-16](#) ESV / 46 helpful votes

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ...

[Matthew 28:20](#) ESV / 45 helpful votes

Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

[Luke 1:37](#) ESV / 43 helpful votes

For nothing will be impossible with God.”

[1 Timothy 1:7-8](#) ESV / 39 helpful votes

Desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions. Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully,

[James 1:5](#) ESV / 36 helpful votes

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

[John 3:2](#) ESV / 36 helpful votes

This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.”

[Romans 2:21](#) ESV / 31 helpful votes

You then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal?

[John 13:13](#) ESV / 31 helpful votes

You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am.

[Ecclesiastes 12:12-13](#) ESV / 28 helpful votes

My son, beware of anything beyond these. Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh. The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.

[Galatians 5:22-23](#) ESV / 26 helpful votes

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

[Nehemiah 8:8](#) ESV / 26 helpful votes

They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

[Matthew 20:26-28](#) ESV / 25 helpful votes

It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

[John 14:26](#) ESV / 24 helpful votes

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

[1 John 2:27](#) ESV / 23 helpful votes

But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him.

[Hebrews 5:12](#) ESV / 20 helpful votes

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food,

[Psalms 119:99](#) ESV / 20 helpful votes

I have more understanding than all my teachers, for your testimonies are my meditation.

[1 Corinthians 12:28](#) ESV / 19 helpful votes

And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues.

[Isaiah 50:4](#) ESV / 18 helpful votes

The Lord GOD has given me the tongue of those who are taught, that I may know how to sustain with a word him who is weary. Morning by morning he awakens; he awakens my ear to hear as those who are taught.

[2 Timothy 2:2](#) ESV / 16 helpful votes

And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

[Luke 1:1-80](#) ESV / 15 helpful votes

Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught. In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ...

[Isaiah 1:1-31](#) ESV / 15 helpful votes

The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the LORD has spoken: "Children have I reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against me. The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand." Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, children who deal corruptly! They have forsaken the LORD, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are utterly estranged. Why will you still be struck down? Why will you continue to rebel? The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. ...

[1 Timothy 4:12](#) ESV / 14 helpful votes

Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.

[John 3:1-36](#) ESV / 12 helpful votes

Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him." Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ...

[Proverbs 11:25](#) ESV / 12 helpful votes

Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered.

[Mark 12:14](#) ESV / 11 helpful votes

And they came and said to him, “Teacher, we know that you are true and do not care about anyone’s opinion. For you are not swayed by appearances, but truly teach the way of God. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? Should we pay them, or should we not?”

[James 4:1-17](#) ESV / 10 helpful votes

What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, “He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us”? ...

[Hebrews 6:1](#) ESV / 10 helpful votes

Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,

[Proverbs 31:28](#) ESV / 10 helpful votes

Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her:

[Galatians 6:6](#) ESV / 8 helpful votes

One who is taught the word must share all good things with the one who teaches.

[Proverbs 13:20](#) ESV / 8 helpful votes

Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.

[Deuteronomy 6:1-25](#) ESV / 8 helpful votes

“Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the rules that the LORD your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it, that you may fear the LORD your God, you and your son and your son’s son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long. Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey. “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ...

[Exodus 35:34](#) ESV / 8 helpful votes

And he has inspired him to teach, both him and Oholiab the son of Ahisamach of the tribe of Dan.

[Micah 6:16](#) ESV / 6 helpful votes

For you have kept the statutes of Omri, and all the works of the house of Ahab; and you have walked in their counsels, that I may make you a desolation, and your inhabitants a hissing; so you shall bear the scorn of my people.”

[Isaiah 30:20](#) ESV / 6 helpful votes

And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your Teacher will not hide himself anymore, but your eyes shall see your Teacher.

[Hebrews 12:14](#) ESV / 5 helpful votes

Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.

[Galatians 6:1](#) ESV / 5 helpful votes

Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.

[1 Corinthians 9:19-23](#) ESV / 5 helpful votes

For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.

[Romans 15:1](#) ESV / 5 helpful votes

We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

[Romans 1:14](#) ESV / 5 helpful votes

I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish.

[John 9:34](#) ESV / 5 helpful votes

They answered him, "You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?" And they cast him out.

[Psalms 23:1-2](#) ESV / 5 helpful votes

A Psalm of David. The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.

[2 Timothy 2:24](#) ESV / 4 helpful votes

And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil,

[Isaiah 8:1-22](#) ESV / 4 helpful votes **Helpful Not Helpful**

Then the LORD said to me, "Take a large tablet and write on it in common characters, 'Belonging to Maher-shalal-hash-baz.' And I will get reliable witnesses, Uriah the priest and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah, to attest for me." And I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and bore a son. Then the LORD said to me, "Call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz; for before the boy knows how to cry 'My father' or 'My mother,' the wealth of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria will be carried away before the king of Assyria." The LORD spoke to me again: ...

[Acts 20:27](#) ESV / 3 helpful votes

For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.

*List derived largely from: <https://www.openbible.info/topics/teachers>