

## Teaching and Training

Every parent and teacher should learn the distinction between the various words that are translated “teach” in the Bible. The word “didasko” has the basic meaning “to hold discourse with others in order to instruct them.” A good concordance such as *Young’s* or *Strong’s* should enable one to find the places where such a word is used. It has to do with explaining, expounding or enjoining others to observe or obey some precept or come to some conclusion about a matter.

On the other hand, “paideuo” has to do with training another, which involves not only imparting information to him, but also causing him to learn. This is why it is sometimes translated “chastise,” for it involves correction, even punishment, if necessary, in order to mold the character properly. The expression in Luke 23:16, “I will therefore chastise him, and release him,” gives some indication of this meaning.

The word “katacheo” is translated “teach” in various places and seems to differ only slightly from “didasko.” The primary difference is probably in the fact that “katacheo” points in the direction of teaching with words that charm and delight the listener, whereas “didasko” simply refers to the imparting of information, in whatever fashion it may be done.

However, “matheteuo,” which is translated “instruct” in Matthew 13:52 and “teach” in Matthew 28:19, involves something that no commentator of which I know deals within an adequate manner. Most persons seem to think that it means “make disciples or learners by telling them certain facts.” It does not! It does mean, “make disciples,” but contrary to what you may have heard from even learned men, a disciple is not merely “a learner.” **A disciple is one who has learned to be a disciplined follower.** If you read carefully Matthew 28:19-20, you will notice that it reads like this: “Go ye therefore, and make disciples [*mathateusate*] of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: teaching [*didaskontes*] them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” A disciple is made, according to the grammar of that text, not merely by telling him facts about Christ, but by causing him to become a disciplined follower of Christ. He becomes that disciplined follower by being baptized and being taught to observe all that Christ commanded.

To translate it more literally, it could be read, “As you go, make disciplined followers of those who hear you by baptizing [a participle phrase which indicates part of the process by which one is determined to be a follower of Christ] and by teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you.” If a person is not taught to observe all things authorized and commanded of Christ, then he is not a disciple, no matter what he may have been told or taught.

Solomon said in Proverbs 22:6, “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” The Masoretic Text says, “chanoth lannaar al pic darc,” which, loosely translated means, “Initiate (train, discipline) the child at the opening of his way.” That does not clarify much, but when I check every similar expression in the Old Testament, I am persuaded that the hint that Barnes gives points toward the proper meaning. Barnes says, “according to the tenor of his way, i.e. the path especially belonging to, specially fitted for the individual’s character. The proverb enjoins the closest possible study of each child’s temperament and the adaptation of ‘his way of life’ to it.”

The general truths that most commentators and preachers make about the values of training and disciplining a child in accordance with God’s Word (the way he should go) are good and proper. However, the other truth that I think Solomon is pointing out is that the training should conform to the “way of the child” – his nature, qualities, and gifts. A person fitted to be a musician, or a poet or artist should not be forced to learn to be proficient at football simply because his father was a famous quarterback, or to be a great lawyer because his father failed to be one! Do you imagine Beethoven would depart from the way he was trained, as he might have if he had been trained to be a jockey or a hockey player?

If this encourages you to continue your study with a more intensive examination of “mueo,” “prohibazo” and “sumbibazo,” which are translated into various forms of “instruct,” I shall be glad, for the length of this article forbids extensive examination here.

A quick summary may be in order. Our teaching should include: 1. The imparting of correct information. 2. The imparting of that information in such a charming or delightful or appealing way that it is easier to learn and remember the facts. 3. The practical application of the information so presented that the one being taught is able to practice it as a disciplined, trained follower. 4. The realization fully grasped by the learner that he cannot be a disciple of Christ by picking and choosing what commands he wants to obey, but he must abide by the authority of Christ in all things.

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