

## Three Basic Principles

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by Bill Crews

Let me emphasize three basic principles:

1. If we are unwilling to practice anything that we have already learned from the will of Christ, further learning will be of no benefit to us and further understanding is hindered by our improper attitude. Jesus said, *"If any man **willeth** to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself"* (**John 7:17**). He also said, *"Take heed therefore **how** ye hear; for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he thinketh he hath"* (**Luke 8:18**). The New Testament also says, *"But be ye **doers** of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves"* (**James 2:22**). In private studies, in church Bible classes, and in assemblies and gospel meetings we are wasting our time in trying to teach individuals who are unwilling to obey truth they already know. We need to focus on finding people with good and honest hearts (**Luke 8:15**).
2. If we, while professing to be saved from sin, are unwilling to put forth any effort to teach those who are yet lost in sin, there is good reason to question our own conversion and spiritual condition. We read in **Hebrews 5:12**, *"For when by reason of the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that some one teach you the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food."* **2 Timothy 2:2** says, *"And the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful **men**"* (the generic word for "**men**," males and females) *who shall be able to teach others also."* We are saved to save others; God's plan for teaching the lost is by making teachers of each one of the saved. In the first century, when there were often circumstantial miracles that accompanied the conversion of the lost, those who were already saved taught the lost, never the Father, or the Son, or the Holy Spirit, or an angel. Check the conversion of the Ethiopian nobleman in **Acts 8**, the conversion of Saul in **Acts 9**, the conversion of the Gentiles gathered in the house of Cornelius in **Acts 10**, and the conversion of the ones at Philippi in **Acts 16**.
3. A church that is not concerned about the preaching of the gospel of Christ in other localities and countries will not be properly concerned about the lost in its own "back yard," and any church that emphasizes the backing and support of preaching elsewhere will also do more of such work in its own "back yard." *"And ye became imitators of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit; so that ye became an example to all that believe in Macedonia and in Achaia. For from you hath sounded forth the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith to God-ward is gone forth"* (**1 Thessalonians 1:6-8**).

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