

Evergreen Baptist Church Men's Ministry

Study Guide for Chapter 11 in *Hazards of Being a Man* “Unteachability”

For Tuesday, May 6, 2008, and Saturday, May 10, 2008
(Tuesday from 7:30-9:30 P.M.; Saturday from 8:00-10:00 A.M.)

The following questions are designed to help you prepare for the Men's Meeting, even if you do not have the book.

1. Pastor Miller starts the chapter with the story of his run in with “old sparky,” an antique welding machine that gave him quite a jolt. The unfortunate part of that shocking experience was that he didn't have to endure it. His brother had tried to tell him how to properly adjust the voltage but he thought he knew a better way. Such an example of an unteachable male is not a hard thing to find. What are some times when you have seen men get caught in this hazard? Why do you think that men are so susceptible to this flaw?

2. Proverbs is a book of instructions. It is especially directed to young men as Solomon is trying to impart wisdom to his son. Read Proverbs 1:20-33.
 - a. How accessible is wisdom? (verses 20-21) Why do so many men find it hard to gain wisdom?
 - b. What types of men do not want to listen to her? (verse 22) Why would each type of man mentioned here reject wisdom?
 - c. If we hear wisdom, what does it require us to do? (verse 23) Why is that such a hard thing to do? What happens to those men who react properly to wisdom's instructions?
 - d. What happens to those who refuse to be taught? (verses 24-32) Why do these things happen to them? How do most men react when these things start happening to them? Why do you think God allows these things to happen?
 - e. What is the root cause of the unteachable spirit of these men? (verses 24-25 & 29-30)
 - f. What is the result of being teachable? (verse 33) Why would these be the natural result of learning what God wants us to know?

3. King Rehoboam is used as an example of an unteachable man in 2nd Chronicles 10:1-19. What did he need to learn? Why did he refuse to learn? What were the results of his failure to listen to wise counsel? Others that Pastor Miller cited as those who would not learn included the Pharisees and, at times, the disciples. For another example, read 2nd Chronicles 36:11-21.

- a. Who were the unteachable ones?
 - b. What did God do to try to teach them?
 - c. Why did they not learn the lessons they needed?
 - d. What were the results of their refusal to listen?
4. What are your reactions to the following quotes from chapter 11? Do you agree or disagree with Pastor Miller's statements, and why or why not?
- a. "Rarely do men ask for advice, and when it comes unsolicited, they are allergic to it. For some, unsolicited advice equals bad advice. Wise men will humbly recognize, however, that we can learn from anyone and should be open to the notion that advice – solicited as well as unsolicited – is sometimes good."
 - b. "Men can be the last ones to admit ignorance. We would rather be on the giving end of advice than on the receiving end. That's because teachability requires humility, a quality most men lack."
 - c. "According to John Steinbeck, 'No one wants advice, only corroboration.' Many of those who come to me aren't looking for advice, counsel, or guidance. Instead, they are hoping I will endorse their desires. Most of them know the right thing to do, but they come to me to garner support to do otherwise."
 - d. "An occupational hazard of men is to ignore experience and refuse to consult others, especially those older than us. Unteachable people are shaped by their overconfidence. At times we are inflexible, stubborn, and obstinate. Often fueled by pride and self-righteousness, our hard hearts have been trained to resist instruction or correction. We feel threatened by anyone who would presume to teach us and are defensive against anything out of the ordinary."
 - e. "Unfortunately, we all know unteachable people. Moreover, each of us has been unteachable at one time or another, effectively resisting the work of the Spirit in our lives."
 - f. "According to Oletta Wald, 'A counselor knows that his questions can open doors; whereas his advice may close them.' We can respond to others' unteachable hearts with a question, a passage of Scripture, or a point of disagreement, all of which must be offered with gentleness."
 - g. "A never-ending battle rages between education and experience. Most older men value experience over education. Usually younger men (particularly those with advance degrees) value education over experience. Both must work to appreciate the other more, because education and experience are two great suppliers of wisdom."

- h. “In relation to asking for directions, there are four types of men. The first type of man actively seeks out directions before the journey begins. These are people humble enough to acknowledge that they do not have all the answers. The second type of man will ask for directions just as soon as he realizes he needs help. He doesn’t waste time, and his efficiency overrides his pride. The third type of man waits until he is hopelessly lost to ask for directions. He exhausts every resource imaginable trying to do it alone before he finally has to admit his need for help. And he incurs humiliation more than humility when he’s forced to acknowledge that he’s been lost for hours or days. The final category of man is the one who never asks for directions. He would rather die than acknowledge [he was wrong].”
- i. “Since we all have room to grow, we need training from someone who has matured in several areas – his walk with the Lord, his marriage relationship, his parenting and grandparenting, his handling of career and finances, and his mentoring ability. If we really want to improve, opening our lives to others is worth the risk. And in turn, we must invest our selves in the lives of other men. If a man asks me to help him grow spiritually, I begin by asking an important question: ‘What area of your life is off-limits to me?’ If he identifies any area, it is the wrong answer, demonstrating unteachability.”
- j. “I’ve always been fascinated by the player-coach relationship. Many players are coached by inferior athletes. Even when an athlete reaches the top of his career or becomes the best in the world, he still goes to his coach for advice – a coach who couldn’t achieve the same level of performance in a hundred lifetimes of trying. They wanted to improve and so sought out help. Their coaches saw them at their very worst. They knew the athlete’s every weakness and embarrassment. And they were too focused on improving the athlete’s weaknesses to become impressed with his strengths. The athlete listened and adjusted, and he became the best in the world. What humility! What teachability!”
- k. “The greatest discovery a man can make is not that he lacks all of the answers, but that no one ever thought that he had them in the first place. Teachability is a heart issue. Hiding ignorance signifies insecurity. A truly secure man’s desire to grow will outweigh his desire to save face.”

5. A man in Scripture who demonstrated a teachable spirit is Apollos. His experience is recorded in Acts 18:24-28.

- a. How would you describe Apollos when he first enters the picture? What qualities did he display which could have made it seem like he would not have been very teachable?
- b. In what areas was Apollos deficient? Who felt that they needed to instruct Apollos? Where did they get their information (see 18:1-5 & 18-21)?

- c. How was it a demonstration of humility for Apollos to consent to being corrected by these two individuals?
- d. How did these two people demonstrate wisdom in the way that they dealt with Apollos?
- e. What was the result of Apollos' willingness to accept instruction?

6. The chapter concludes with five action steps from Pastor Miller on how to become teachable. Prayerfully consider how you can implement them in your life and evaluate how each one would assist you in avoiding the hazard of unteachability.

- a. *“Humble yourself.* The first step toward teachability is humility. You must swallow your pride and remove it as a barrier to growth. Proudful people have weaknesses, but they hide them behind their insecurities. And weaknesses can be addressed only if they are brought out of hiding.”
- b. *“Avoid overreacting or teasing when someone admits his or her ignorance.* Our tendency is to look down on others when we know more than they do. Resist the temptation to make yourself look smarter at another's expense.”
- c. *“Become a lifelong learner.* Seek wisdom and understanding by all means – nature, books, education, the old, and the young. In particular, find other men who demonstrate biblical wisdom and spend as much time with them as they will allow. Wisdom is contagious. By the same token, avoid foolish camaraderie during times of recreation and fun. Foolishness is contagious too.”
- d. *“Give advice sparingly.* [A]re you asking for advice more than giving it? You should be. Wise people do.”
- e. *“Confront unteachability.* After you've confronted unteachability in your own life, begin to address it in the lives of those you love. When you notice patterns of hard-heartedness in others...gently explore their heart by using questions that will surface their weaknesses and insecurities. Remember that you're not trying to hurt them but to help them.”

7. Pastor Miller assigns us the memory verse of Proverbs 13:20. “He who walks with wise *men* will be wise, But the companion of fools will be destroyed.” How would actually following Solomon's advice in this passage help you to avoid the hazard of unteachability?