

Ready to Receive









“And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John”
(Acts 18:24-25).

Apollos preached what he knew and walked in the light he had received; yet his message and understanding were incomplete. Aquila and Priscilla found him serious about serving and obeying God, and they provided him with a complete understanding of truth. This was done in an attitude of love, not condemnation.

“Like many preachers what Apollos said was quite true. What he left out demonstrated his inadequate understanding of Christian truth.” (*Holman New Testament Commentary—Acts*; General Editor—Max Anders, Author—Kenneth O. Gangel)

“Apollos, a wonderful Bible teacher and preacher, had just arrived in Ephesus from Alexandria in Egypt. While he was in Egypt, someone had told him about John the Baptist and what John had said about Jesus, but that is all he knew. He had never heard the rest of the story! So he was preaching boldly and enthusiastically in the synagogue . . . Priscilla and Aquila were there and heard him—and it was a powerful sermon. Afterwards they met with him and explained . . .” (Acts 18:24-25, *LB*).

Characteristics of Apollos

-  An educated (learned) man. Academic knowledge is not enough.
-  Eloquent in speech.
-  Mighty in the Scripture. He was dynamic in his preaching. He was well acquainted with the Old Testament law and the prophets. Note that the New Testament never records any other preacher as “mighty in the Scriptures.”
-  Instructed in the way of the Lord.
-  Fervent in spirit. He had the zeal and desire to spread the truth. He was on fire for God. *The Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary* says, “He burned to impart to others the truth he had himself received.”
-  Taught diligently the things of the Lord. He was a hard worker.
-  Well versed in Scripture. However, his message and understanding was incomplete.
-  A bold man.

He needed the rest of the story.

“It is possible for a man to teach accurately what he knows; and it is possible that another, who possesses more information on the subject than the former, may teach him more accurately, or give him a larger portion of knowledge. Apollos knew the baptism of John . . . As far as he knew, he taught accurately. Aquila and Priscilla were acquainted with the whole doctrine of the Gospel . . . and in this they instructed Apollos.” (*Adam Clarke’s Commentary*, Electronic Database)

Apollos, mighty in the Scriptures, possessed a humble, teachable spirit and was not ashamed to receive instruction from an ordinary couple—even from a woman. With so many abilities, Apollos could have easily been proud, but he was willing to learn and better himself to become more effective in the ministry. Aquilla and Priscilla's explanation affected both his salvation and his ministry.

Pride, self-righteousness, and a “who are you to tell me” attitude keep many from accepting the truth, teaching, or correction. Apollos was humble, possessed a teachable spirit, and a “yes, this is what I’m looking for” attitude.

Being position-oriented keeps some people from advancing in the things of God. Apollos was more concerned about his standing with God, than his position with man.

Adam Clarke also said, “It is disgraceful to a man to be ignorant, when he may acquire wisdom; but it is no disgrace to acquire wisdom from the meanest person or thing.”

Apollos “was glad to receive instructions from them, to be shown by them his defects and mistakes . . . Apollos . . . did not rest in the knowledge he had attained, nor thought he understood Christianity as well as any man . . . but was willing to have it expounded to him more perfectly. Those that know much should covet to know more, and what they know to know it better, pressing forward towards perfection.” (*Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: New Modern Edition*, Electronic Database)










Truth requires a heart that is willing to receive. Apollos was both receptive and teachable. He was not intimidated or proud. Apollos could have concluded that he did not

need any more teaching. However, he had a teachable spirit.

Characteristics of Teachable People

“He was able to receive what Aquilla and Priscilla had to say. It is crucial to underline this strongly . . . Our religious listeners will be given a new perception of the fact that whatever they know or however faithful they have been, there always is more to learn. The sure sign of spiritual maturity is the undefensive willingness to grow . . . After swaying the crowd, the mighty Apollos was willing to listen to two tentmakers!” (Lloyd Ogilvie in *The Communicator's Commentary*)

Teachable people—

-  Are humble.
-  Are open for correction.
-  Add value to themselves and others.
-  Are success-oriented.
-  Are willing to improve.
-  Realize they are not perfect.
-  Recognize when something is missing (and will not be satisfied until they find it).
-  Look at what they have and where they are coming from. If what they have is true, and what is to be added is more truth, they do not throw away the foundation. They add to it.
-  Hunger and thirst after righteousness.

If you want to learn, you can learn from anybody. Apollos did not look at Aquilla and Priscilla as being below him in educational level. He saw truth and seized it gladly.

Study Questions

1. What was the problem with Apollos's message?

2. What did the things Apollos left out of his preaching demonstrate?

3. List five of Apollos's characteristics.

4. What did Adam Clarke say was disgraceful?

5. List five characteristics of teachable people.

6. What type of spirit did Apollos have when it came to learning?

7. What type of attitude did he possess?

8. What keeps some people from advancing in the things of God?
