

# 7 TYPES OF PEOPLE THAT MAKE THEMSELVES UNTEACHABLE

The unteachable man is sentenced to being taught only by experience. The tragedy is he reaches nothing further than his own pain.

— *Criss Jami* —

## Introduction

1. The eyes of millions of people have been blinded by Satan, the god of this age (2 Corinthians 4:4), and he has the whole world under his sway (1 John 5:19). These are people that are dead in trespasses and sins, and that walk according to the ways of this world in accordance with the prince of the power of the air (Satan) (Ephesians 2:1-2). Over 150,000 people die every day<sup>1</sup> and the majority (Matthew 7:13-14) go immediately to Hades where they suffer torment (Luke 16:19-31).
  - a. Someone might cry out, “Why doesn’t God do something to warn people, to save people from the horrors of eternal torment?!” He has! (i) He sent His only begotten Son to save people from their sins (John 3:16; Matthew 1:21; 1 John 4:14), and (ii) Jesus commissioned His disciples to “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is immersed will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:15-16). The onus is on every generation of Christians to preach the gospel to the world. It is the gospel that is God’s power to save (Romans 1:16).
  - b. Some might cry out, “What are **you** doing to warn people, to save people from the horrors of eternal torment?!” What can **you** do? Congregations can send out preachers (Acts 13:1-3) and support preachers in the field (Philippians 4:15-16), and individuals can support preachers (Galatians 6:6<sup>2</sup>) and teach their neighbors (Acts 8:1-4; cp. Hebrews 5:12).
2. Teaching is a grave responsibility (James 3:1) and we must ensure that we are qualified to teach (1 Timothy 1:5-7), and that we preach the gospel (Galatians 1:8-9; Acts 20:27) and the gospel only (1 Peter 4:11). But there are some people that are not interested in hearing the truth and **others that make themselves unteachable**; when we come across such people we must shake the dust off our feet and move on (Matthew 7:6; Luke 9:5; e.g., Acts 18:5-6; 19:8-9).
3. What I’d like to do in this lesson is to identify seven types of people that make themselves unteachable.
  - a. Once we identify someone as unteachable we should back off! This is what Paul did (Acts 18:5-6; 19:8-9). To persist in trying to teach such people will simply result in an argument (or worse!). We must learn not to cast our pearls before swine (Matthew 7:6).
  - b. Now when we talk about people making themselves unteachable – some make themselves permanently unteachable and others just unteachable in regards to certain subjects.
4. A hope and prayer that I have is that those that do make themselves unteachable might recognise themselves when they read through this lesson and then make the necessary changes to make themselves teachable.

“For Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved [Joel 2:32]. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things [Isaiah 52:7]!” (Romans 10:13-15).

<sup>1</sup> [www.hebrew4christians.com/About\\_HFC/Death\\_Rate/death\\_rate.html](http://www.hebrew4christians.com/About_HFC/Death_Rate/death_rate.html)

<sup>2</sup> “This verse is a command to individuals to contribute toward the support of the preacher and to visit the poor in the community. The individual support of the preacher is one of the most neglected commandments in the New Testament, and the same old and worn excuses are rolled out to justify its neglect. Churches ought to support preachers and teachers but individuals are also under the same obligation. Many are ignorant of this obligation and suppose that it is only the responsibility of the church to support preachers. Yet even those aware of this obligation will excuse themselves: ‘Preachers are paid too much as it is,’ ‘I already put money into the church treasury and he gets paid out of that,’ ‘Jesus said, Freely you have received, freely give, so teachers shouldn’t expect money from anyone,’ and, ‘I have a family to support!’ How easily we are able to make void the word of God by our reasoning” (David Collins).

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1. The proud man (1 Timothy 6:3-5).
2. The religious man (Matthew 23:27-28).
3. The theater going man (2 Timothy 4:3-4).
4. The worldly man (1 Corinthians 2:14).
5. The foolish man (Proverbs 18:2).
6. The emotional man (Proverbs 29:11; Acts 19:23-34).
7. The willfully ignorant man (1 Timothy 1:5-7).

**7 TYPES OF PEOPLE THAT MAKE THEMSELVES UNTEACHABLE**

**1. THE PROUD MAN (1 Timothy 6:3-5)**

a. Paul begins his first epistle to Timothy by exhorting him to “charge some that they teach no other doctrine, nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies...” (1 Timothy 1:3-4), and charging him to “wage the good warfare” (1 Timothy 1:18). This is followed by various instructions and teachings (1 Timothy 2:1-6:21).

b. It is in the final chapter that Paul instructs Timothy in regard to false teachers:

“If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself” (1 Timothy 6:3-5).

- 1) If anyone was to teach contrary to the apostle’s doctrine, which is the doctrine of Christ (1 Corinthians 14:37), then “He is proud, knowing nothing” (1 Timothy 6:4). This describes someone that has deceived himself into believing he is somebody (a “big shot”) and that his knowledge is superior to that of the apostles. Clarke comments: “He is blown up, or inflated with a vain opinion of his own knowledge; whereas his knowledge is foolishness, for he knows nothing.” He is blinded by his own pride.
  - 2) What is the appropriate response to such false teachers? Some might say, “Perhaps they just need to be taught the truth”. They already knew the truth! They just didn’t “consent to wholesome words” (1 Timothy 6:3). The only appropriate response is clearly stated: “From such withdraw yourself” (1 Timothy 6:5).
- c. Of course, it is not just preachers that can deceive themselves into believing they have superior knowledge or that they alone are the repository of all truth because everyone is susceptible to pride. Thus we come across people from every religious persuasion that make themselves unteachable because of their pride. How is such pride manifested?
- 1) Has a high opinion of himself and an overconfidence that he is walking in the truth and cannot possibly be wrong (cp. Romans 2:17-20). One lady said to me, “I can’t be wrong because everything I believe is taught in the scriptures”.
  - 2) Is willing to teach but not willing to be taught (cp. John 9:1-34). The inner thought is “I am already learned and spiritually mature and need not that anyone should teach me.”
  - 3) A refusal to answer simple questions (cp. Matthew 21:23-27). Two Mormons called and so I invited them in. I pointed out that the book of Mormon was an additional revelation to the scriptures or “more Bible”. I then showed them what Jude says: “Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 1:3). I then asked, “Surely, if the faith was once for all delivered to the saints, then we must reject any works claiming to be additional revelations?” They both remained silent and refused to answer.

- 4) Being evasive<sup>3</sup> (cp. **Matthew 23:16-22**). This is similar to point “3”, in that, they refuse to answer a question. They evade answering a question by asking a question of their own or by taking you to another passage.
- 5) Resorting to reviling<sup>4</sup> (cp. **John 9:28-24; Matthew 12:24-32**). I had a study with a lady that had been baptized, but not for the remission of sins. So I clearly outlined several aspects of baptism, including its purpose. Without warning, she erupted in anger – she accused me of twisting the scriptures, being a false teacher, and asked me to leave; all the while repeating the accusations. One interesting comment she made that revealed pride was involved was, “I’m twice your age... what do you think you can teach me about the Bible!”
- “A proud man will not receive instruction or be shown his error. You are advised to turn from him lest he revile and dishonor you before the assembly” (David Collins).
- d. Once a person is filled with pride, they make themselves unteachable. In many cases you can only expect some unpleasant reaction when you attempt to teach them or correct their error. Until such a person humbles himself (**Psalms 25:9; Proverbs 11:2**), we ought to heed the advice Paul gave to Timothy: “From such withdraw yourself” (**1 Timothy 6:5**). What about us, how do we respond when someone tries to teach us or point out an error?

## 2. THE RELIGIOUS MAN (**Matthew 23:27-28**)

- a. Jesus was able to see into the hearts of men (**Matthew 9:4; Luke 9:47**) and issued this woe against the scribes and Pharisees: “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness” (**Matthew 23:27-28**).
- 1) Why would one pretend to be righteous?
    - a) Power. Jesus said, “The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat” (**Matthew 23:2**). It was a position of authority and they enjoyed exercising that authority (**Matthew 23:3**).
    - b) Prestige. Jesus said, “They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi'” (**Matthew 23:6-7**). They loved the respect they procured from people.
    - c) Praise. John said of the rulers of the people, “They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God” (**John 12:43**). Though they were actually corrupt, they still loved the praise of people for appearing righteous (**Matthew 23:27-28**).
  - 2) A man that loves power, prestige, and the praise of men makes himself unteachable; learning the truth and correcting his errors are far from his thoughts. Thus, anyone that would dare to try and teach him the truth automatically becomes his enemy, because such a one threatens to rob him of his rewards (**John 11:47-48**).
  - 3) Regarding the Pharisees, Jesus advised His disciples to “Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch” (**Matthew 14:15**).
- b. There are those today – whether leaders or ordinary members of the church – that appear to be religious but whose hearts are far from God (**Ezekiel 33:31; cp. Mark 7:6**). Their motives for wanting to appear to be religious may be because they simply enjoy the power, prestige, and the praise of men, or it may be some other motive known only to themselves. They may be pleasant enough, and perhaps even teachable, but only in so far as you don’t teach anything that threatens to rob them of their reward – at which point they make themselves unteachable.

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<sup>3</sup> “Jesus had dealt with the subject of taking oaths in the Sermon on the Mount (**Matthew 5:33-37**). He had called His critics blind guides before too (**Matthew 15:14**). Here is a specific example of what Jesus condemned in the second woe (**Matthew 23:15**). By differentiating between what was binding in their oaths and what was not, the Pharisees and teachers of the law were encouraging evasive oaths that amounted to lying. Jesus’ point was that people should tell the truth. Jesus condemned His critics for mishandling the Scriptures that they claimed to defend and expound. **Matthew 23:20-22** provide the rationale for **Matthew 5:33-37**. Whenever a Jew took an oath he connected it in some way with God. All their oaths were therefore binding. Jesus disallowed all evasive oaths and viewed them as untruthful speech” (Dr. Thomas Constable).

<sup>4</sup> To speak against, assail, criticise, accuse; to speak angrily against “in their face”.

- 1) There are elders, deacons, and preachers today that desire to be religious, but from evil motives: power, prestige, praise, and money (1 Timothy 6:5). (i) Paul encountered gospel preachers that were preaching from selfish ambition (Philippians 1:15-16), (ii) Diotrephes loved pre-eminence and power (3 John 1:9-10). Here is a man that made himself unteachable and spoke evil against anyone that challenged him.
  - 2) There was a couple that attended every week, but they did not participate in the work of the church (i.e., they were uncommitted). One of the elders of the church spoke with them about this, and it turns out that they had two reasons for attending: (i) It was expected of them by their family, and, (ii) They had a passion for socialising (they attended services in order to invite people to their home). Despite their frank confession, they continued as they were. When the elder of the church sought to arrange a study with them to correct their attitude, the husband got angry and told him to keep his nose out of their business. This couple made themselves unteachable.
- c. Let each one examine his motives (Lamentations 3:40) and ask, “Why am I a Christian?”, “Why do I attend services? If we happen to be one of those people that are motivated to be religious from wrong motives, then, no doubt, we will resist those that attempt to challenge us. Such resistance makes us unteachable and it means we are not growing spiritually.

“There is one that dwells in the assembly whose heart is far from the Lord. His motives and purposes are hidden from the saints. He is like a well without water and a cursed tree that bears no fruit. You that are wise fear to approach him as you would fear to draw near a lioness protecting her cubs. For he dwells among you in fear, guarding his motives and purposes, and the naïve one that ventures to correct him will be torn to pieces” (David Collins).

### 3. THE THEATER GOING MAN (2 Timothy 4:3-4)

- a. There are those that will only attend services if there is something that appeals to the flesh and the carnal mind: games, quizzes, meals, dramas, contemporary music, and preaching that is both entertaining and motivating. In fact, in so many religious organizations, practically anything goes! Unfortunately, some churches of Christ have also employed such unscriptural, fleshly, worldly practices.
- b. Paul admonished Timothy to “Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. **Convince, rebuke, exhort**, with all longsuffering and teaching” (2 Timothy 4:2). The reason for this admonition is because “The time will come when **they will not endure sound doctrine**, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables” (2 Timothy 4:3-4). We are now living in a time when many do not endure sound doctrine, **they seek the kind of preaching that accords with their carnal desires; or such as palliates their evil propensities, and deals gently with their vices** (see Barnes). In other words, many seek to hear the kind of preaching that will entertain and stir their emotions; the kind of preaching that does not include convincing, rebuking, and exhorting.
- c. One that has his mind set on the things of this world (Philippians 3:18-19; Colossians 3:2) and loves the things of this world (1 John 2:15) makes himself unteachable; for he is carnally minded and he cannot please God (Romans 8:5-8).
  - 1) The brethren at Corinth had become worldly minded and Paul was unable to speak to them as spiritual people (1 Corinthians 3:1-3; cp. Hebrews 5:11).
  - 2) Paul says that the worldly person does not accept the teachings of the Spirit and is incapable of understanding them (1 Corinthians 2:14). Such a person is unteachable while they choose to remain carnally minded.
- d. Those that seek to be entertained and hear smooth words from the pulpit are worldly minded, and such make themselves unteachable. Such people will not hear rebuke or be exhorted because their minds are set on the things of this world.

“That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children who will not hear the law of Jehovah; who say to the seers, Do not see, and to the prophets, Do not prophesy to us right things; speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits” (Isaiah 30:9-10).

“One who is bent on fulfilling his selfish desires seeks out those that speak smooth words. He takes out his eyes that he may not see and stops his ears that he may not hear. He builds a high wall with no gates that truth may not knock or enter in. He walks in a delusion and is ignorant of the terrible end that awaits him” (David Collins).

#### 4. THE WORLDLY MAN (1 Corinthians 2:14)

- a. This is *similar* to the previous point, but now we are describing someone whose whole life is dominated by sin. In fact, one would no longer be able to identify them as spiritual or Christian! Paul describes the Corinthian brethren as “carnal” (1 Corinthians 3:1).
- b. What evidenced their carnality? Paul says, “For where there are **envy**, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?” (1 Corinthians 3:3). Now consider what James says in regards to envy: “For where **envy** and self-seeking exist, confusion and *every* evil thing are there” (James 3:16).
- c. Paul says, “The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God... nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:14). The “natural man” is the one that follows the promptings of his fleshly desires without resistance. He is a man that rejects the wisdom of God to walk in his own wisdom. His thus blinds himself and cannot understand the “things of the Spirit”. While one is in this state he is unteachable.

“A carnal man walks in his own ways and seeks only to fulfill his own desires. He cares not for instruction or correction and reviles those that presume to challenge his wicked ways. His heart is like the ground in a drought and like a fortified city. Therefore, pass by and go in your way for he cannot see and neither will he hear. He is unaware that fire and brimstone will fall upon his head at the appointed time” (David Collins).

#### 5. THE FOOLISH MAN (Proverbs 18:2)

- a. Seeking to instruct and correct a fool is a labor-of-love and, ultimately, in vain! Note some attitudes of a fool:
- 1) A fool doesn’t realize he is a fool (of course!) and believes he is right about everything (Proverbs 12:15; 28:26). Those that disagree with him are regarded with suspicion and thought of as unspiritual.
  - 2) A fool has no delight in understanding, but only in expressing his own opinions (Proverbs 18:2; 29:11). Understanding comes through a diligent study of the scriptures (Psalms 119:104; 1 Peter 2:1-2), but a fool has no desire to study (at least, not properly). But he does delight in expressing his own opinions (1. He tends to believe his opinions are scriptural truths, 2. The opinions he expresses are usually on difficult or controversial subjects<sup>5</sup>).
  - 3) A fool may claim to love instruction but his failure to study (properly) and learn from teachers proves that he actually despises instruction (Proverbs 15:5). Rather than feeding on instruction, which comes through teachers and personal study, he feeds on foolishness (Proverbs 15:14), which may come from out of his own heart (Mark 7:22) or from friends that are also fools.
  - 4) A fool cannot be corrected! You can rebuke him again and again until you are weary, but such will be ineffective (Proverbs 17:10; 27:22). In fact, he just keeps on repeating his folly (Proverbs 26:11). Try to correct a fool and he is likely to explode with anger (Proverbs 12:16) and revile and malign you to your face (Proverbs 29:11).
- b. While a fool remains a fool, he is unteachable. What is the appropriate response to a fool?
- 1) “**Do not speak in the hearing of a fool**, for he will despise the wisdom of your words” (Proverbs 23:9). The idea is that one is to cease striving to make a fool understand; do not attempt to impart anything to him. Remember, a fool has no delight in understanding (Proverbs 18:2).
  - 2) “**Go from the presence of a foolish man**, when you do not perceive in him the lips of knowledge” (Proverbs 14:7). Once you have identified a fool don’t waste your time trying to teach him – go from his presence; do not seek his company; do not socialize with him.
  - 3) “Understanding is a wellspring of life to those who have it, but **to give instruction and correction to fools is foolishness**” (Proverbs 16:22 AMP). A wise man himself proves to be foolish if he persists in trying to instruct and correct a fool.

**“Fools do not know they are fools”**  
- Mike Murdock.

<sup>5</sup> Continually expressing one’s opinions on difficult or controversial topics is likely to stir up strife, but the fool interprets any disagreement with his opinions (which he regards as truth) as proof that he is spiritual and they unspiritual.

- c. While a person chooses to behave foolishly, they are unteachable and ought to be avoided, not only because they are unteachable, but because they are dangerous! They are dangerous because (i) a rebuke will provoke them to anger and they will revile and malign you to your face, (ii) they will slander your name to anyone that is foolish enough to hear them. Once a fool latches on to you, he will continually provoke you by raising controversial topics and making petty criticisms.

“A fool will wear you out with his many words, he will stir up strife with an array of controversial opinions, and he will seek to provoke you with petty criticisms. Yes, he seeks to ensnare you so he can say to himself, ‘I am truly wise and spiritually mature’. Be wise, my brother, do not let the fool ensnare you, do not answer him – turn from him!” (David Collins).

## 6. THE EMOTIONAL MAN (Proverbs 29:11; Acts 19:23-34)

- a. Of all the types of people that make themselves unteachable, the emotional person is the one I encounter more frequently than any other. These may be unbelievers, those that belong to one of the myriad of denominations, and even brethren. In my experience they are not emotional all the time, but become so when certain subjects are raised.
- 1) Of course, we all have emotions because that is the way God made us (Psalms 119:73). Indeed, we are made in His image (Genesis 1:26-27) and God Himself expresses emotion: love (Jeremiah 31:3), hate (Psalms 11:5), anger (Psalms 7:11), compassion (Genesis 19:16; Psalms 103:13), grief (Genesis 6:6), joy (Isaiah 62:5), etc.
  - 2) Emotions are good: love prompts us to help our enemies (Proverbs 25:21; Romans 12:20), compassion moves us to care for the needy (James 1:27; Luke 10:30-37), hatred causes us to turn away from sin (Psalms 97:10; Proverbs 8:13), and anger provokes us to correct injustices (cp. 2 Samuel 12:1-6).
  - 3) We cannot, however, allow our emotions to run riot... we must keep our emotions under control. Solomon says, “A fool vents all his feelings, but a wise man holds them back” (Proverbs 29:11). A Christian that is walking in the Spirit will exercise self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). Solomon says, “Whoever has no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down, without walls” (Proverbs 25:28).
- b. But some people refuse to control their emotions and some people employ them for deceitful purposes. In either case they can render a person unteachable. There are many examples we could consider, but I want to focus on a particular outburst of emotion that I often come across – I call it “**The Chant**”.
- 1) While Paul was in Ephesus “there arose a great commotion about the Way” (Acts 19:23). It began when Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana, called together those workers of similar occupation. He accused Paul of persuading many people to turn away from worshipping Diana, which, of course, affected their trade. Paul Himself wanted to address the crowd but the disciples prevented him. Therefore, they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward (Acts 19:24-33a). “He was either a Christian Jew or a spokesman for the Jewish community in Ephesus. Either way, the Jews’ motive for putting him forward was the same - to disassociate themselves from the Christians and avoid a massacre of the Jews” (MacArthur). Now when Alexander was just about to begin his defense the Jews found out he was Jewish – and they figured he was likely to preach against idolatry just as Paul had been doing – they “cried out for about two hours, ‘Great is Diana of the Ephesians!’” (Ephesians 19:33b-34). Note carefully: **they feared that he was about to preach against idolatry and so they reacted emotionally and chanted for two hours so they didn’t have to hear the truth.**
  - 2) People employ all kinds of emotions to avoid dealing with the realities of life and to block out things they don’t want to hear. Here, however, I just want to focus on the use of “The Chant”.
- c. The following are real life examples of people that have resorted to chanting to block out hearing the truth (note: I have changed the names of the actual people):
- 1) The discussion with Tom on the topic of musical instruments in worship was going well, and we both agreed that the use of such was unscriptural.
    - a) But then the conversation took a strange turn! I happened to refer to their use as sinful and he became very upset and said, “Just because a congregation does *something different* [referring to the use of musical instruments] doesn’t mean they’re sinning”. In his mind there was a distinction between “unscriptural” and “sinful” – unscriptural had become “something different”, not sin.

- b) Feeling somewhat bewildered and puzzled, I sought to highlight his error, but then he suddenly said, “Love is all that matters”. So now he introduced a new erroneous concept, which I challenged. But every time I opened my mouth he simply began chanting, “Love is all that matters, love is all that matters, love is all that matters...”. Teaching him now became impossible.
- 2) Jane told me that she was saved when she was fifteen years old: “When the preacher finished his sermon, he called on people to come forward and receive Jesus as Lord and Savior. I was one of those that went forward. I prayed for the forgiveness of my sins and asked the Lord to come into my heart. I have been a faithful Christian ever since”.
- a) The following week we began studying the great commission and then moved to Acts 2. The aim was to show that those who heard and believed the gospel were called upon to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. Jane agreed. We then looked at several other examples of conversion. Jane agreed that to become a Christian one must believe and be baptized.
- b) I pointed out that while she agreed on the way of salvation, she herself had not obeyed the gospel: “Jane, you believe on Jesus but have you been baptized for the remission of your sins?” It was at this point that she became visibly angry. I tried reasoning with her but then she began chanting, “As long as you believe in Jesus, as long as you believe in Jesus, as long as you believe in Jesus...”. She had now made any further study impossible.
- 3) I was discussing the subject of capital punishment with Lucy, which was going very well until I made a point that she was unable to answer. Rather than continuing in an intelligent discussion, she simply began chanting, “Killing people isn’t the answer, killing people isn’t the answer, killing people isn’t the answer...”. Further discussion became impossible.
- 4) There are those that make study impossible by combining bafflement and chanting. I was explaining a difficult concept to Brian and he suddenly went into “bafflement mode”. “This is just so... ugh, ugh... I, I... it’s just so... you know, you know. I’m just so confused... how, you know, you know...”. Whenever the subject was raised he would simply go into bafflement made and chant. It is impossible to teach someone while they are in such a state of mind.
- d. Those that love the truth will receive the whole counsel of God and be ready to examine every doctrine with an open mind (1 John 4:1; Acts 17:11). We cannot afford to let anything hinder us from learning and that includes our emotions. On many occasions I have witnessed those that have let their emotions get the better of them, so much so, that they have made themselves unteachable. We must learn to control our passions that we may not hinder ourselves from hearing the truth. Solomon offers this advice: “Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man do not go, lest you learn his ways and set a snare for your soul” (Proverbs 22:24-25). While these verses specifically concern an angry man, we might well apply them to anyone that is prone to outbursts of passion. “When you discern one that is given to outbursts of passion, you are advised to be wary of them because, being unpredictable, they may turn and bite you at any time. A wise man treats one given to outbursts of passion as he would a poisonous snake in the wilderness” (David Collins).

“I know a man that refused to control his passions, which eventually led to the breakdown of his marriage and left his relationship with his children in ruins. Further, he went from congregation to congregation, leaving behind him a trial of destruction – all due to his uncontrolled passions. Many have attempted to instruct and correct him, but they, too, have been torn to shreds by the lash of his tongue. Satan has blinded his eyes and his heart is as hard as a parched land in a drought. Do not attempt to reason with him or instruct him concerning his ways, for he will surely show forth his passion and revile you in a fit of anger” (David Collins, Commenting on Proverbs 25:28).

## 7. THE WILLFULLY IGNORANT MAN (1 Timothy 1:5-7)

- a. Paul reminds Timothy that the end or goal of preaching the truth and warning of error is to call people to true salvation in Christ, which produces a love for God from a purified heart (2 Timothy 2:22; 1 Peter 1:22), a cleansed conscience (Hebrews 9:22; 10:14), and genuine faith (Hebrews 10:22) (see MacArthur). But some had turned away from the truth and “turned aside to idle talk” (1 Timothy 1:6). Those that turn from the truth speak only foolishness. Further, these desired to be teachers but they understand neither what they say nor the things which they affirm (1 Timothy 1:7).

- b. If one is ignorant and has a desire for knowledge, he can study the word of God and begin to dispel that ignorance (**Psalms 25:4; 86:11**). For as light dispels darkness, so knowledge dispels ignorance. But what can be said of the person that *refuses* to study God's word? He is not only ignorant, he is *wilfully* ignorant. The consequences of wilful ignorance:
- 1) He no longer receives the word of God and so plunges himself deeper and deeper into ignorance (cp. **Hosea 4:6**).
  - 2) He spouts his own opinions. "Fools have no interest in understanding; they only want to air their own opinions" (**Proverbs 18:2**).
  - 3) He fails to grow spiritually (**1 Peter 2:1-2**).
  - 4) He leads others astray (**Isaiah 9:16; Proverbs 12:26**).
  - 5) He rants against ministers of the gospel (**3 John 1:10**).
  - 6) He may even desire to gather disciples and start his own religious organisation (cp. **Acts 20:30; 3 John 1:9-10**).
- c. As you can see, a person that chooses to be wilfully ignorant has no interest in the truth. In fact, he has turned aside from the truth (**1 Timothy 1:5-6**).
- 1) Such a person has made themselves unteachable. What should my response be to such a person? Solomon says, "Go from the presence of a foolish man, when you do not perceive in him the lips of knowledge" (**Proverbs 14:7**).
  - 2) It is because they have rejected the truth that "God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (**2 Thessalonians 2:11-12**).

## Conclusion

1. In this lesson we have examined seven types of people (there are probably more!) that make themselves unteachable: (i) The proud man (**1 Timothy 6:3-5**), (ii) The religious man (**Matthew 23:27-28**), (iii) The theater going man (**2 Timothy 4:3-4**), (iv) The worldly man (**1 Corinthians 2:14**), (v) The foolish man (**Proverbs 18:2**), (vi) The emotional man (**Proverbs 29:11; Acts 19:23-34**), and, (vii) The wilfully ignorant man (**1 Timothy 1:5-7**).
2. The design of this lesson is: (i) To help you identify those that are unteachable and, having done so, to turn away from them and seek those that are teachable. Every minute you waste on someone that is unteachable is a minute lost in teaching someone that is teachable and seeking the truth. (ii) To remove any feelings of guilt you may have in turning away from people. Once you discern that a person has made themselves unteachable, then you have a responsibility to shake the dust off your feet and move on (**Luke 9:5**). In fact, Jesus says, "Do not cast your pearls before swine" (**Matthew 7:6**). It's not your fault if someone makes themselves unteachable.
3. It might be that there is someone here today that makes themselves unteachable when certain topics arise or has made themselves permanently unteachable. The scriptural way to make yourself teachable is to (i) cast aside pride and clothe yourself with humility (**Psalms 51:17; 1 Peter 5:5**), (ii) stop seeking the praise of men and seek only the praise of God (**Romans 2:28-29; 2 Corinthians 5:9; Colossians 1:9-10; Hebrews 13:20-21; 1 John 3:21; cp. 1 Corinthians 4:5; 1 Peter 1:6-7**), (iii) instead of attending services to be entertained, go with the purpose of worshipping in spirit and truth (**John 4:24**), edifying the brethren (**1 Corinthians 14:26**), and to provoke one another unto love and good works (**Hebrews 10:24**), (iv) no longer be conformed to the world (**Romans 12:2a**); put off the carnal man and put on the new man (**Colossians 3:9-10**); let the Spirit of God renew your mind (**Romans 12:2b; Ephesians 4:20-24**), (v) as we said, a fool doesn't realize he is a fool; so pursue wisdom because wisdom will drive out foolishness (**Proverbs 1:1-7; 4:5, 7; 19:8**), (vi) learn to control your emotions (**Proverbs 29:11; Galatians 5:22-23; 2 Peter 1:5-6**), and, (vii) learn how to read (**Ephesians 3:1-4**), study (**1 Peter 2:1-3; 2 Timothy 3:14-17**), and meditate on the scriptures (**Psalms 119:15; Philippians 4:8**).