

NINE COMMUNICATION KEYS OF JESUS' & PAUL'S TEACHING MINISTRIES

Any serious work on great teachers in history will certainly address Jesus. Among founders and writers of religions, Paul is also a stock item. A thorough academic study reveals several distinctives of them, though not exclusive to them. The first time I heard the term "Master Teacher" it was in reference to Jesus and was from a secular source.

1. Jesus Christ used every opportunity to put His learners in touch with the central point He was teaching. He asked them questions, gave them assignments, and probed their minds to see what they remembered from the Old Testament teachings. Of course He gave them new information, but His primary teaching work was to get them to figure out how to put truths into their everyday living.

2. The Lord constantly affirmed the worth of each person. On His way to Jairus' house He stopped to heal a terribly sick woman. He scooped up the little people in His strong carpenter's hands. His rebuke to Mary and Martha after the funeral of their brother was gentle but firm. Another time He singled out a special friend after His resurrection and called her by name, "Mary!"

3. Paul was outstanding in his effort to call people by name. In almost all of his letters he refers to friends personally. He mentions over 70 people by name and usually cites something that he remembered about each of them. One of the habits which obviously endeared him to so many others was his intense desire to focus on each person as an individual.

4. When the Lord taught He aimed His sermons & lessons very carefully: i.e. rich young ruler, Judas, Zaccheus, Pharisees, Bartimaeus, Thomas.

5. Jesus quoted Scripture.

6. Jesus used a variety of methods in teaching. Try to recall how many different methods Jesus used to get His points across: questions, lectures, farming illustrations, stories, history lessons, quoting Scripture, parables, sermons, discourses, assignments for His disciples, challenges, object lessons, demonstrations, as well as answers to questions.

7. Jesus used repetition effectively. Think of the number of times the Lord Jesus taught the same lesson several times back to back. He reinforced kingdom truths with 8 parables in a row in Matthew 13. After the feeding of the 5,000, he reviewed the lesson of faith on the stormy lake. He told about the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost son in one sermon.

8. Customizing the lesson to the individual was one of the hallmarks of Jesus' teaching ministry. He often used stories, illustrations, and parables to do this. Can you see how differently He spoke to the Pharisee named Nicodemus than to the Pharisees who were trying to trap Him in His words? He was gentle with the woman at the well and the woman caught in adultery, but harsh with Peter when He said, "Get behind Me, Satan."

9. The most often used method of teaching which the Master used (*and this is the reason He was a master-teacher*) was to be WITH His disciples.

He let them watch and He showed them by example.

**"He chose them that He might be with them
and that He might send them forth to teach" (Mark 3:14).**

One of the greatest mistakes teachers and preachers and leaders make today is not allowing their followers to get too close. It is very easy to admire leaders who are distant, but true respect only comes when the "admirers" are given an opportunity to get close. Sometimes His followers got so close to Him that they failed to remember who He was; yet they learned the lesson well, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God" (Matthew 16:16).

Transparency is one of the qualities God demands in the lives of the leaders of His church. First Timothy mandates that elders are men who are "given to hospitality." This is quite different than entertaining. Hospitality, I believe, includes the ministry of opening our homes especially to unbelievers and new believers to give them exposure to homespun godliness.

It was Jesus and Paul, the teachers, which changed the world, not simply new theology.