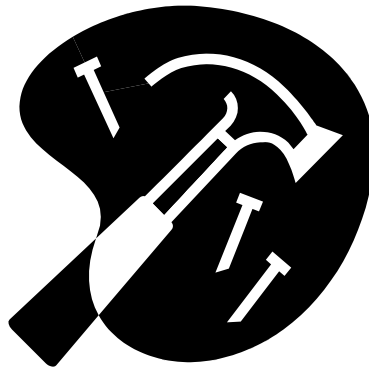


# The Teacher and the Well Driven Nail



“Not only was the Teacher wise, but also he imparted knowledge to the people. He pondered and searched out and set in order many proverbs. The Teacher searched to find just the right words, and what he wrote was upright and true. The words of the wise are like goads, their collected sayings like firmly embedded nails—given by one Shepherd”  
(Ecclesiastes 12:9-11, NIV).

## Objectives

At the conclusion of this lesson the participant will be able to accomplish the following:

1. Explain Ecclesiastes 12:9-11 in light of teaching.
2. Identify the five learning outcomes we aim for in instruction that takes a student from “I remember” to “I adopt.”
3. Reveal teaching strategies or approaches that can be utilized to deepen the likelihood of a student adopting instruction into their lives.

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4. Identify the three stages that take a student from “I do not get it!” to “I get it!”
5. List the four levels of culture.
6. Determine ways to affect worldview; the deepest level of culture.
7. Explain four areas highlighted in 1 Timothy 3:16 and how teachers endeavor to impact a minimum of one of these areas while teaching.

## Introduction

What would you teach if you knew it were your last lesson? In this session we look at the teacher’s last words. In Ecclesiastes, Solomon looks back on his life, searching for true meaning, and desperately seeking for a way to spare future generations by accenting his own experiences. He looked back in order to look forward. He then brings his reflective journey to a close in Ecclesiastes 12. He completes his appraisal of life from birth to death or from the cradle to the grave with the triumphant conclusion: “Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man” (Ecclesiastes 12:13). It is the teacher’s last words and the conclusion of the whole matter.

How is this fear of God and knowledge of His commandments cultivated? It is through the work of extraordinary teachers and preachers. An assortment of translations of Ecclesiastes 12:9-11 brings amazing clarity to educational principles. The wise teacher’s words and teaching strategies should be like:

- “Prodding goads, and firmly fixed [in the mind] like nails” (AMP).
- This is rendered “as wise men are like goads...like well-driven nails” (NASB).
- They “prod us to live well.”
- They’re like “nails hammered home, holding life together” (MSG).
- They were able to unveil “the plain truth.”
- The prodding teacher is “painful and helpful” (NLT).
- He teaches “the people knowledge, weighing, studying, and arranging...with great care” (ESV). His words “are like the stick a farmer uses to make animals move....and they are like nails that fasten things together” (CEV).
- “They have been driven in firmly” (NCV).

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- They “move people to take action. Their collected sayings really nail things down” (NIRV).

A wise teacher gets two results:

1. He serves as a “goad” spurring people into action, motivating them to do something. Teaching is change.
2. He also utilizes strategies that provide a “well-driven nail” so that students will remember. It is firmly embedded, and driven deep into their hearts, minds, and spirits. The Wise Teacher, Solomon, shouts, “Remember your Creator now” (Ecclesiastes 12:1). Teachers help us progress, not just remember. They move their students from:

Learning Outcome	Student’s Testimony	Teaching Strategies
Recall	I remember	Identify major points, principles, or precepts of the subject matter. Aim at life change. Teach clearly.
Approval	I like	Teach in an interesting, passionate, motivating manner. Utilize different teaching styles and strategies. Not all students learn in the same way.
Speculation	I think	Incorporate critical thinking to cause students to analyze and evaluate teaching with the Word of God. Cause students to think beyond standard responses. Investigate and discover for himself or herself.
Application	I try	Make it clear what is expected from God’s Word. Provide various activities to capitalize on personal discovery and application. Give students the

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		opportunity to gradually grow. Not all students grow at the same rate.
Adoption	I adopt	Reinforce teaching and build upon it to deepen understanding and adoption. Notice, reaffirm, and applaud life change.

This progression, from recall to adoption or life transformation, is adapted from the taxonomy of learning outcomes, from the author’s personal notes, and originally credited to Norman Steineker and M. Robert Bell.

Why is there such a difference between what people proclaim and what they practice? It is likely because people are able to speak with their mouths things that they do not practice with their hearts. Additionally, it could be that we do not consciously assess and review the connection or correlation between what is proclaimed and what is practiced.

There is undoubtedly power in repetition. “Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe” (Philippians 3:1, NKJV). What I communicate effectively and do not communicate effectively is a matter of life or death; heaven or hell. However, the power in repetition is limited and handicapped.

Teaching cuts like a knife: “God means what he says. What he says goes. His powerful Word is sharp as a surgeon's scalpel, cutting through everything, whether doubt or defense, laying us open to listen and obey” (Hebrews 4:12, MSG).

Like Jaydie Johnson once said, “Truth that is not taught is lost!” Someone has said, “What ceases to be preached, ceases to be practiced.” Reaching and teaching are both crucial elements of our work. However, the ability to repeat or regurgitate, in itself, seldom signify life transformation. Teaching must go deeper in order to achieve and sustain maximum impact. Students put teaching into practice: "My people come to you, as they usually do, and sit before you to listen to your words, but they do not put them into practice" (Ezekiel 33:31, NIV).

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Teaching like a well-driven nail ensures that Isaiah’s prophecy of Isaiah comes to pass. “So shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it” (Isaiah 55:11, ESV).

Teaching God’s Word:

- Convicts (Acts 2:37)
- Challenges (Romans 11:13-14; 1 Timothy 4:16)
- Converts (Psalms 19:7)
- Changes (Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 5:17)

Teaching should be designed to never leave the hearers the same. “The teaching of your word gives light, so even the simple can understand. I pant with expectation, longing for your commands” (Psalms 119:130-131, NLT).

Raymond Woodward aptly said that teaching should be presented in such a way that listeners will:

1. Look at it.
2. Not forget it.
3. Do the Word of God.

He feels that teaching needs a sense of revelation with the Spirit at work. 1 Timothy 3:16 shows us that teaching and preaching is profitable for:

Doctrine	What to believe
Reproof	What not to believe
Correction	How not to behave
Instruction	How to behave

Anytime one teaches or preaches he/she should be trying to impact at least one of those areas. Many times Paul talked about what to believe (doctrine) or what not to believe (reproof) and then transitioned into how to behave (instruction). Many times throughout his writings he makes the switch between the two by simply using the word “therefore.”

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Memory is impacted by how deeply one processes information or teaching. In order to bring about life change and transformation teaching must be like a well-driven nail. We move our students from complaining “I do not get it!” to proclaiming, “I get it!” This requires passing through three stages and is another way of expressing the five components of life change just covered.

<b>Attention</b>	Get it!	Here we capture attention. The chief enemy of the communicator is boredom. Be unpredictable in your teaching approach and methods. Variety still is the spice of life.
<b>Comprehension</b>	Understand it!	Aim for understanding and students. This demands clarity in teaching. Teaching needs to be clear, concise, and correct in order to capitalize comprehension.
<b>Retention</b>	Keep it!	Here is where the student decides to keep it and to apply it. In order for this to happen the teaching must be memorable and multi-sensory (utilizing the five senses). Engage ears, eyes, hands, and not merely the brain. Bring the whole person into the learning process. Aim teaching at as many receptors or receivers as possible. The more senses that are stimulated the deeper the level of learning. Set a goal to

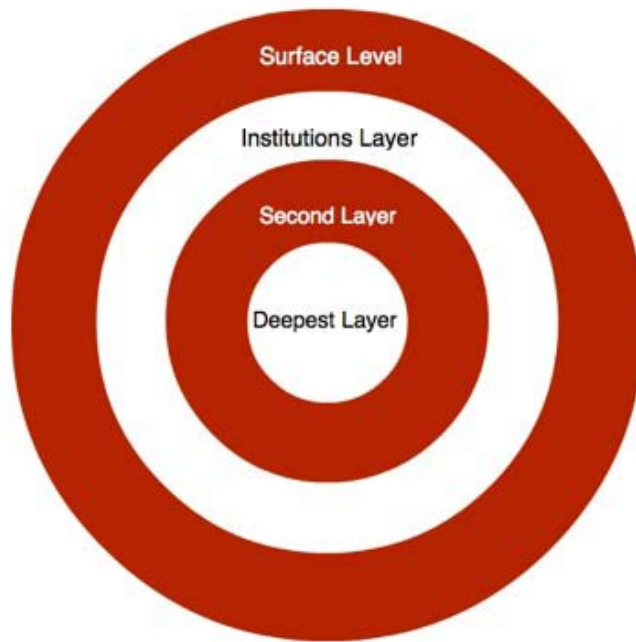
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		have an unforgettable effect on your students.
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“Apply your heart to what I teach, for it is pleasing when you keep them in your heart and have all of them ready on your lips” (Proverbs 22:17-18, NIV).

Researchers have identified that there are various layers of culture with over 3,500 ethnic groups worldwide. No two of them are identical. However, they do share some common elements. G. Linwood Barney in *The Gospel and Frontier Peoples* (ed. R. Pierce Beaver, Pasadena: William Carry, 1973, pages 48-55) identifies layers of culture.

Level		Comments
Surface Level	External	Observable behavior.
Practices Layer	Just below the surface	Marriage, education, and so forth. These are practices.
Values (Second) Layer	Internal	Derived from the first or deepest level; values.
Deepest Layer	Internal/Heart	Ideology, worldviews, and beliefs.



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You may ask, “What does this have to do with the well-driven nail or education?” The answer is quite simple. Most of our teachings do not drive the nail in well enough to impact the deepest layer of our students’ culture. The core of a person’s culture is where change needs to be made to truly transform lives. It is also at this level that it is most difficult for us, as educators, to identify and modify genuine thoughts or worldviews. It is much easier to concentrate on surface-level change and to leave things at that. David Hesselgrave in *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally* states, “Biblical Christianity, however, requires change at the deeper levels of values, beliefs, and worldview.” It is not enough to simply recall teachings, or temporarily make external, surface changes. Our teaching must transform hearts and change thinking patterns for eternity. We target the heart for from it comes all the issues of life (Proverbs 4:23). God’s Word has the capacity to deeply change the unbiblical aspects of culture, worldview, and behavior. On the surface level (actions) behavior is observable. But it is at the deep level worldview where values, assumptions, and allegiances are challenged and changed.

David W. Shenk in *God’s Call to Mission* talks about the “culture onion” and confirms, “Although the worldview culture core is most resistant to change, it is within that core that Jesus Christ seeks to make His home. Authentic change in a culture must happen at the worldview center. Change at any other layer of the culture is less significant.”

You may recall the following variation of Bloom’s Taxonomy of Learning used in one of our other *Advance Educators Series* lessons. It bears repeating here.

<b>KNOW (HEAD)</b>	What do you want students to understand?	Something I know or think.	Changed Mind	When the people heard this,
<b>BE (HEART)</b>	What do we want students to feel?	Something I feel, (experience or value).	Changed Heart	They were cut to the heart
<b>DO (HANDS)</b>	What do we want students to do?	Something I do (action, skills).	Changed Behavior	And said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37).

It isn’t enough to teach for understanding, impacting minds, and increasing head knowledge. That leads to recalling and repeating facts and figures. Theological teaching is for life change

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and also affects the heart. It is for life transformation. We aim to change the mind, heart, and behavior of each of our students.

## Conclusion

Training students and equipping them for ministry is a huge investment of time and, in many cases, of finances. For a course, a semester, or several years, a handful of godly instructors endeavor to pour truth and biblical principles from God’s Word into the minds and hearts of capable learners. Students represent our hope for the future. They carry truth to their generation and those to come. How disheartening when hope crashes and the stability of our work diminishes because a student we trained, graduated, and dispatched to the ripened harvest turns his back and heart from truth he was taught. What happened? Any number of things; many of which cannot be traced back to the Bible school or the instructional staff. Occasionally, the scenario can be avoided through deep instruction as a well-driven nail. This can be done through awareness that change must take place in the heart in order to sustain and maintain life transformation. Teaching must go beyond simple recall and surface conformity for the moment but affect the heart for a lifetime.

The decision to continue to walk in truth and obedience to God’s Word is in the hands and hearts of our students. Teaching like a well-driven nail is a decision we make. So, go to your instructional toolbox, grab a spiritual hammer and your best nails, and keep pounding away. Hardened hearts will fall away and be replaced with a heart for God and His kingdom.

Following the various approaches and strategies provided in the Advance Educators faculty development program will assist in motivating students and embedding God’s Word into the lives of students, like a well-driven nail.

## Review

1. How is the fear of God and knowledge of His commandments cultivated?

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2. From the various translations of Ecclesiastes 12:9-11 what can we learn about education or good teaching?

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3. According to this lesson, a wise teacher gets what two results?

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4. What are the five components that move students to life change?

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5. Why is there such a difference between what people proclaim and what they practice?

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6. What happens when the Word ceases to be preached in a local church?

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7. How is memory impacted?

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8. What is the difference between the surface level and the deepest level of culture?

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9. Why is it important to teach in such a way that affects the deepest level of culture?

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10. What layer of the culture onion or culture target is most resistant to change?

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11. How do we maximize retention in the classroom through our teaching?

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12. According to Raymond Woodward, in accordance with 1 Timothy 3:16, teaching should impact at least one of four areas. What are these four areas? Provide a brief synopsis of each.

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13. According to Raymond Woodward, teaching should be presented in such a way that listeners will do what three things.

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