

Answers to Questions: Do Christians have to be Taught?

Question:

Based on 1 John 2:27, do Christians have to be taught by others or are we spiritually self-sufficient?

Why is this something I should be concerned with? Joseph's situation.

Answer:

1 John 2:18-27

Let's First Look at the Context

Context: Antichrists who deny that Jesus is the Christ, thereby denying the Father & Son

v19 – These antichrists came out of the assembly of Christians and by that demonstrated they were of a different type: they weren't truly Christian.

v20 – A sister passage to **v27** – unction (anointing) – you all know

Note that John is writing to the ones who stayed, not the ones who left.

v21-23 – No lie (denial of Jesus' true identity) comes from the truth. John is implying that this truth, this anointing is within them and therefore can't produce a lie.

v24 – What had they heard from the beginning? See **1 John 1:1-4** – they had been exposed to apostolic teaching and had the Old Testament. **Command: Let that abide in you which you heard...**

OT - John 5:39 - *“You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me;”*

NT - This foundation (**Eph 2:20**) is retained for us in God's Word. They were to abide in this.

v26 – Again, we are drawn back to the context of this passage: responding to & resisting the deceivers

v27 – Pay attention to what this says and what it does not say.

- You have this anointing and you have no need for anyone to teach you

The immediate context of this statement is about the true knowledge of Christ. They had no need for anyone to teach them who Jesus really is because they knew Him through the H.S.

This DOES NOT say that you have no need for anyone to teach you about anything.

- This anointing teaches (ongoing) you about all things, and is true and not a lie, and just as it has taught you (past tense), abide in Him.

This is a general statement about the function of the H.S. in the life of the believer. He is continually teaching us and there are things He has already taught us.

Command: Abide in Him. The insinuation is that there is a danger of going astray if we do not abide.

We need to unite the commands in the passage (**v24 & v27**): Abide in what you heard (the Word and sound teaching); Abide in Him. **These are not separate commands, but really the same thing. To abide in Him, we must abide in His truth and thereby be continually taught & matured by the H.S.**

v28-29 – John applies this concept to a slightly different situation

John admonishes young Christians to abide in Him in order to have confidence at His appearing.

He uses what they should have already been taught by the H.S. to take them to the next level of maturity.

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Let's Now See Whether This Fits with Other Scripture

1. Does the Holy Spirit bring us into the true knowledge of Jesus Christ?
Rom 8:9 – "...But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him."
Jer 31:31-34 – A day would come when people wouldn't say, know the Lord
John 6:44-45 – Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father come to Him
Matt 16:15-17 – Jesus affirms that Peter knows Him because it was revealed to Him by God
1 John 2:12-14 – John writes to little children (spiritual babes) because they know the Father
Knowing the truth about Christ (indeed, knowing Christ) is a gift of the Holy Spirit
Illus: Unitarian man who balked at my message – He did not know Christ, and therefore the message was foolishness to him.
2. Does the Holy Spirit continue to play a role in our ongoing spiritual growth in knowledge?
John 14:26 – The H.S. will teach you all things
John 16:12-15 – The disciples couldn't bear (weren't ready) for all Jesus had to teach them yet, but the H.S. would guide them into all truth (progressively as they matured).
1 Cor 2:6-16 – Spiritual wisdom imparted to people with the Spirit
v10 – The marvelous mystery of the gospel was revealed to us by the Spirit
v10-12 – Just as Jesus said, the Spirit would take from Him and disclose it to the disciples
v13-16 – Note that teaching is going on here (we will come to this more soon).
The Spirit is working on all sides: the material, the instructor, and the student. We have the capacity to learn the things of the Lord because we have the mind of Christ.
Psalms 19:7 – The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. **Not just making knowledgeable, but making them wise – appliers.**
The Holy Spirit "teaches" by empowering, enlightening, fully developing, applying, and convictionally-solidifying God-given truth in our life in a way that is transformational.
3. Are the Word of God and sound Biblical preaching and teaching necessary for being consistently and sufficiently taught by the Holy Spirit?
1 John 4:1-4 – John tells them to test the spirits by revealed truth
Illus: Check to see if the brick is squarely on the foundation before putting your weight on it
2 Peter 3:1-2 – Note how Peter stirs up their "holy" or sincere mind (the mind of Christ) – through a reminder of the Word of God.
Titus 1:5-9 – A primary purpose of ordaining elders was so that they would teach sound doctrine. **These were to be men who had been taught by the Spirit... transformed by truth.**
4. Is ongoing effort on our part required to continue to be taught by the Spirit?
Eph 4:17-24 – Paul
v20-21 – A reference to the H.S. teaching them of Jesus Christ
v22-24 – Paul speaks of the need to put off sin and be renewed in the spirit of your mind
1 Cor 3:1-4 – Paul desired to teach them more but their fleshly attitudes dulled their spiritual perception.
Illus: Love – **1 Thess 4:9; Matt 24:11-14** – You have been taught, but can grow cold.