

The Key to Growing and Changing in 2013 Acts 18:24-28

Introduction:

1. Living things grow! If you cut a branch off from a tree, what happens? It quits growing. If a puppy is not fed, what happens? It quits growing. If a flower is cut off from its bush, what happens? It quits growing.
2. Living things grow. If you know the Lord today, you are connected to an incredible, life-giving source – the Lord Jesus Christ. God’s plan is for the believer to grow and change. 2 Corinthians 5:17
3. No matter how long we have been saved or how much we know, we must keep growing spiritually in Christ. If not, we will begin to shrivel up on the vine.
4. There is a man in our text that was intelligent, gifted, eloquent, and had a very good grasp of God’s Word. His name was Apollos. vs. 24
5. Above and beyond all these wonderful attributes, he had a humble spirit which allowed him to manifest the **key** to growing and changing. What is that key? He had a teachable spirit. Proverbs 9:8-9
6. This is so incredibly important. Without a teachable spirit we will get locked into a certain growth point and never go past it. God desires to teach us new lessons each day. He desires to refine us and take us to new heights spiritually.
7. Therefore, **every believer must possess a teachable spirit**. Why is this so crucial? Let’s look at this text concerning this incredible man named Apollos and learn. A teachable spirit is so critical to our spiritual growth:

First, because no individual believer knows all spiritual truth

1. What do we know about this man Apollos? We know he was a Jew born in Alexandria, Egypt. We know that he was a man of faith. We know that he had traveled to Ephesus where Paul had just been. Paul must have left before Apollos arrived.
2. We also know that Apollos was extremely intelligent, especially in spiritual matters. We see this fact demonstrated through several different phrases in verses 24 and 25.
 - “...mighty in the Scriptures” , “instructed in the way of the Lord” ,
“taught diligently the things of the Lord”
3. This man had an incredible amount of knowledge concerning God’s truth. He was mighty in the Scriptures. But as we read on, we learn that his knowledge was incomplete. Look at the end of verse 25, “...knowing only the baptism of John.”
 - This is a reference to John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus Christ who came preaching that Israel should repent, for their Messiah and kingdom were at hand. Those who repented of their sins and believed John’s message would submit to John’s baptism. Baptism identified them with John’s Messianic message.

4. **With** the finished work of Christ on the cross and the revelation of the gospel of Christ to Paul, salvation was now being offered to every person in the world (Jew or Gentile) on an absolutely equal basis **through** the finished work of Christ on the cross.
 - The gift of eternal life would be offered to every person - not through John's baptism - but through faith alone in Jesus Christ. This was new to Apollos.
5. The doctrine of John's baptism was biblical, but it was not correct doctrine for the new dispensation that had been revealed. Apollos had great knowledge, but it was limited.
6. The Bible is a book of progressive revelation. This is why it must be rightly divided in light of Paul's doctrine for today. **Illustration:** Preaching animal sacrifices for forgiveness today.
7. There is so much to learn about God's Word and about the Christian life. No one individual knows everything. This is why we must have a teachable spirit.
8. Christ is such an example of humility in this area. Luke 2:52; Hebrews 5:8

Second, because others know truth that I do not know yet

1. Apollos was instructed in God's Word and in the way of the Lord to a certain point. What he knew, he knew well. But there was a problem. Notice verse 25, "...knowing **only** the baptism of John."
 - The word "**only**" implies that Apollos had a limited knowledge, and that there were areas of divine truth that he had not discovered or learned yet.
2. Aquila and Priscilla heard Apollos speak. He was a gifted orator, but they immediately realized that Apollos was lacking understanding regarding the present dispensation of grace, the new organism God was forming called the body of Christ, and the completeness of the cross-work of Christ.
3. Aquila and Priscilla knew these truths because they were blessed to have had firsthand discipleship from the apostle Paul. This godly couple knew truth that Apollos did not know. They had spiritual advantages that he had not had.
4. I'm sure that Apollos had believed in God and studied God's Word for a much longer time than this couple. It appears that Apollos was in full-time ministry, fervently preaching God's truth. Yet, others knew truth he had not learned yet.
5. How would Apollos respond when Aquila and Priscilla would take him aside and basically say, "What you are saying is biblical, but it is wrong doctrine for today."
6. Most people (especially of Apollos' stature) would not take this too well. This brings us to our last point. Why should we possess a teachable spirit?

Third, because God uses other people to teach me

1. When Aquila and Priscilla heard Apollos speak in the synagogue, it says that they "*took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.*" vs. 26

- The word “*expound*” means “to expose.” They literally revealed truth to Apollos that he had never been exposed to. Apollos knew Israel’s prophetic program extremely well, but he had no knowledge of the mystery revealed to Paul for this dispensation.
2. Can you imagine how humbling this must have been for Apollos? He thinks he is doing a dynamic and wonderful job for God, and the wind is taken right out of his sails. When instruction or rebuke comes from another person, it is not always pleasant.
 3. Apollos could have had the attitude, “Who are *you* to teach *me*? I have been preaching a long time. I have known God a lot longer than you!” It is at this point that we are going to learn what kind of man Apollos really is.
 4. Was he simply a gifted orator that loved to speak in front of people, or was he a man of godly character that desired truth in his inner man? Notice what we read after his conversation with Aquila and Priscilla. vs. 27-28
 5. Apollos would become one of the apostle Paul’s friends and coworkers. Apollos allowed God to teach him through the ministry of others. Proverbs 27:5-6

In Conclusion:

1. If we are to grow and change spiritually in 2013, it will take an Apollos-like spirit. We must possess a teachable spirit.
2. We must realize that light is not our enemy. When a person cares enough about us to shine some light on a blind spot in our lives, we need to rejoice in that.
3. Truth is sometimes painful, hurtful, and scary, but truth is always your friend. John 8:32
3. If truth is received, it is liberating, it will set you free. Lies may make you feel good temporarily, but they are deceptive, misleading, and cause you to make the same mistakes over and over again.
4. Lies keep us locked into destructive behavior and habits that don’t help us.
 - **Illustration:** I am walking into church with icing all over my face, and you say, “You look so nice pastor – never looked better!” That makes me feel good, but only temporarily. It is not helping me!
6. Instruction is our life-line. When you quit learning, you quit growing. Remember, living things grow and change. Let’s learn and grow in 2013!