

Warning Against the Empty Longing to Be Teachers

by Clement of Rome

Clement of Rome warns against the dangers of false teaching and encourages believers to use their spiritual gifts for the edification of others with humility and love.

Scripture: Proverbs 15:1, Proverbs 18:21, Matthew 15:14, 1 Corinthians 2:13, Ephesians 4:29, Colossians 4:6, James 3:1, 1 Peter 4:10

Topics: "False Teaching", "Church Leadership"

Description

Clement of Rome warns against idle gossip, false teachings, and the dangers of those who claim to be teachers but lack understanding of the truth. He emphasizes the importance of speaking words of God with grace and wisdom, and the need to control the tongue to avoid strife and anger. Clement urges believers to fear the judgment that awaits false teachers who lead others astray with deceptive words and false doctrines, contrasting them with those who serve others with the gifts received from God for the edification of the Church.

Transcript

Such are the ways of all those who do not work, but go hunting for tales, and think to themselves that this is profitable and right. For such persons are like those idle and prating widows who go wandering about among houses with their prating, and hunt for idle tales, and carry them from house to house with much exaggeration, without fear of God. And besides all this, barefaced men as they are, under pretence of teaching, they set forth a variety of doctrines.

And would that they taught the doctrines of truth! But it is this which is so disquieting, that they understand not what they mean, and assert that which is not true: because they wish to be teachers, and to display themselves as skilful in speaking; because they traffic in iniquity in the name of Christ-- which it is not right for the servants of God to do. And they hearken not to that which the Scripture has said: Let not many be teachers among you, my brethren, and be not all of you prophets. For he who does not transgress in word is a perfect man, able to keep down and subjugate his whole body. And, If a man speak, let him speak in the words of God. And, If there is in you understanding, give an answer to your brother but if not, put your hand on your mouth. For, at one time it is proper to keep silence, and at another you to speak.

And again it says When a man speaks in season, it is honourable to him. And again it says: Let your speech be seasoned with grace. For it is required of a man to know how to give an answer to every one in season. For he that utters whatsoever comes to his mouth, that man produces strife; and he that utters a superfluity of words increases vexation; and he that is hasty with his lips falls into evil. For because of the unruliness of the tongue comes anger; but the perfect man keeps watch over his tongue, and loves his soul's life. For these are they who by good words and fair speeches lead astray the hearts of the simple, and, while offering them blessings, lead them astray. Let us, therefore, fear the judgement which awaits teachers. For a severe judgment will those teachers receive who teach, but do not, and those who take upon them the name of Christ falsely, and say:

We teach the truth, and yet go wandering about idly, and exalt themselves, and make their boast in the mind of the flesh. These, moreover, are like the blind man who leads the blind man, and they both fall into the ditch. And they will receive judgment, because in their talkativeness and their frivolous teaching they teach natural wisdom and the frivolous error of the plausible words of the wisdom of men, according to the will of the prince of the dominion of the air, and of the spirit which works in those men who will not obey, according to the training of this world, and not according to the doctrine of Christ. But if you have received the word of knowledge, or the word of instruction, or of prophecy, blessed be God, who helps every man without grudging-- that God who gives to every man and does not upbraid him.

With the gift, therefore, which you have received from our Lord, serve your spiritual brethren, the prophets who know that the words which you speak are those of our Lord; and declare the gift which you have received in the Church for the edification of the brethren in Christ (for good and excellent are those things which help the men of God), if so be that they are truly

with you.

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