

All Men Are My Teachers

by Jack Hyles

This sermon emphasizes the importance of learning from others, particularly older men in ministry, and recognizing the value of their wisdom and experience.

Scripture: Proverbs 13:20, Proverbs 15:22, Proverbs 27:17, Ecclesiastes 4:13, 1 Timothy 4:12

Topics: "Mentorship", "Humility"

Description

Jack Hyles shares a powerful testimony of how the wisdom and encouragement of Dr. Gustave Norling, John R. Rice, and other influential figures in his life shaped his ministry. Through the guidance of these mentors, Hyles learned the importance of humility, continuous learning, and seeking wisdom from older, experienced individuals. His encounters with these men led to pivotal moments, such as receiving invitations to preach at significant conferences and sharing the pulpit with renowned preachers like R. G. Lee.

Transcript

It all started in the bedroom of a little house between Marshall, Texas and Shreveport, Louisiana, in the bedroom of a very sick man. A man who was an invalid, 90 years of age, who served throughout his lifetime as a missionary to the country of Norway. His name was Gustave Norling. Every Friday afternoon, as a young preacher, while pasturing a little country church I would go to the bedroom of Dr. Gustave Norling. I would go see this retired missionary, and sit beside his bed and ask him questions. Dr. Norling was a strong Premillennialist and the college I attended was an amillennialist college. Dr. Norling was not very popular at the college and I was even less popular.

I went out one day and I told him, "I have got some good news for you, Dr. Norling." He said, "What's that, Brother Hyles?" I said to him, "I'm quitting college." I thought that he would be pleased because he was not any more enchanted with East Texas Bible College than I was. Dr. Norling raised himself up just as far as he could on his arms and said, "Mr. Hyles, don't you do that." I said, "Well, why? There is not a single professor in that college who has any fire. Why should I go to that college?" He said these words to me that changed my life: "Brother Hyles, there is not one single well-rounded Christian man teaching in that college. But," he said, "Every man who teaches there knows at least one thing that you don't know. Now go find out what that one thing is from all the men, and maybe you can be the well-rounded Christian that I want you to be." He looked at me, pointed his little bony finger in my face and said, "Now you go back to college, son," and "son" went back and graduated from college!

I sat down when I got back to my little office and wrote these words down which became one of the mottos of my ministry: "Every man knows something that I do not know. I must probe until I find it; hence, all men are my teachers."

The next day I walked into class at East Texas Baptist College. It was a Bible class taught by Dean Smith. I stumbled. I slipped on a piece of paper. I looked down and the paper on which I slipped was called The Sword of the Lord. I had never heard of it before. I picked it up and I saw the picture of Billy Sunday on the front. There was a sermon there by Billy Sunday, and I sat there in Bible class and read that sermon. It was the most inspirational class I had ever attended at East Texas Bible College! I got acquainted that day with a man named John R. Rice. Oh, I had heard his name just a tiny bit here and there, but I didn't know who he was or what he did. I didn't know that he had a paper. I subscribed to The Sword of the Lord. We got a bunch of little renegade preacher boys at East Texas Baptist College and formed a John Rice Club. It was not the most popular club in the college. We got together and we heard that they were going to have a Sword of the Lord Conference in Siloam Springs, Arkansas, which was just about a four or five-hour drive from where I was, maybe less. So we started saving our money. Only one of us saved enough money to go. His name was Wendell Whitehead. The rest of us didn't get to go. Wendell Whitehead went to Siloam Springs. He heard Dr. Bob Jones, Sr. He heard Dr. John Rice, Dr. Bill Rice, Dr. R. G. Lee, and others. He came back, and we all wanted to shake his hand because he shook the hands of these men. I said, "Let me shake your hand, the one that touched John Rice." I never thought that I would see John Rice. I never thought I would see Bob Jones, Sr. I just wanted someday to sit in an audience and be able to hear them. I thought that all hope was gone.

In the process of time, we moved to Garland, Texas, and I took a little church with about 44 people. We had a family in the church named Manchek. One day the Mancheks came to me and said, "Brother Hyles, we would like to have you and Mrs. Hyles over to eat dinner with us one night next week." I said, "I am not sure that we can come." She said, "Well, I have a cousin named Fairy Sheppard who works for a man named John R. Rice. Maybe you have heard of him?" "Heard of him? He is my hero! I have never seen him, nor met him." She said, "He is in revival meeting this week at Galilean Baptist Church in Dallas. Now, we have asked him to come eat. We would like you and Mrs. Hyles to join us for a meal." I said, "Let me check my schedule and see if I am booked!" A few evenings later, we sat in the home of the Mancheks. Right across the table from me was John R. Rice.

It wasn't long after that, that I got a letter from Dr. Rice in Wheaton, Illinois, where The Sword of the Lord was located at that time. It said, "My Dear Brother, I would like you to preach at the conference at Great Lakes Louise, Georgia, near Toccoa Falls." He said, "Dr. R. B. Riley will be on the program along with Dr. Bill Rice, Dr. Bob Jones, Sr. and others. I would like you to preach." I thought that I got somebody else's letter! I called The Sword of the Lord and said to Viola Walden, the secretary, "I got somebody else's letter that he is inviting to preach." She said, "No, Brother Hyles, that is your invitation. Dr. Rice wants you to preach."

Not long after that, I sat on the platform hearing Dr. R. G. Lee preach "Payday Someday," and then they introduced me. I looked at my outline. There was never an outline that looked as anemic as mine did. A B-12 shot would not have given it life. The title of my great message after "Payday Someday" was called "The Autopsy of a Dead Church," one of the great manuscripts of all time as I shared the pulpit with R. G. Lee.

The next day at noon we sat around the table and there were many of these men about whom I'm telling you. I sat there at the table and I thought of Gustave Norling, who said, "Don't quit, Brother Hyles." He said, "You learn." He said, "By all means, you learn from older men. Brother Hyles, you are a young man. At your church, have older men come to preach for you, because there is something an older man can give that you cannot give to your people. There is something he can give to you that you can get nowhere else. They might not be as spectacular. They are not going to be as dynamic as younger men, but you have older men preach in your church."

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