

## MONDAY MANNA

2 March 2020

### TEACHABILITY: AN INVALUABLE VIRTUE

By Rick Boxx

Tom, a CEO friend of mine, had a promising executive on his leadership team that was struggling at work. It had become obvious this individual would need additional oversight until he could mature into fulfilling the potential everyone knew he possessed. One of the problems involved the junior executive's reluctance to release any control. He lacked a quality Tom considered critical for personal and professional growth: Teachability.

Despite having the intelligence and raw talent for one day becoming a valued member of the team, this fellow's resistance to instruction and correction would remain obstacles for advancement. Tom knew if the leader did not become more open to recommendations for change or improvement, most likely he would undermine any assistance and support sent his way.

Unwilling to give up on the young executive, Tom scheduled a face-to-face meeting with him to discuss the reality of the problem. He needed to prove that he was teachable, Tom explained, or it would be necessary to consider other options.

Fortunately, this leader humbled himself and accepted Tom's offer of additional direction. This resulted in rapid growth for the leader and more profitability for the organisation. It proved to be a win-win for him and the company, but if he had resisted change, everyone would have lost.

Repeatedly in the Scriptures we find emphasis on the importance of teachability. Here are some examples:

**Teachability leads to prosperity.** There is an old saying that "not one of us is as smart as all of us." We might believe we can succeed independently, without help, but doing so almost always leads to failure. Relying on the wisdom and insights of others, however, usually leads to success. *"Whoever gives heed to instruction prospers, and blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord"* (Proverbs 16:20). *"Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed"* (Proverbs 15:22).

**Teachability paves the way to wisdom.** A young man seeking a mentor, when asked why he wanted to be mentored, responded, "I want to learn from your mistakes." Showing discernment beyond his years, this individual had realised he did not need to make all of his own errors; he could also learn from the mistakes others had made. Wisdom is usually a product of experience, and experience is often gained through making mistakes and then making necessary corrections and changes. *"Listen to advice and accept instruction, and in the end you will be wise"* (Proverbs 19:20).

**Teachability pursues the best resources.** The world is filled with knowledge. There are hundreds, even thousands of books on virtually any topic. There is an endless supply of information through the media – TV, radio, newspapers and magazines. The Internet can serve as a library at your fingertips, a cornucopia of content about practically everything. But we only have limited time, so which resources we use can affect not only our teachability but also what we learn. Why not consult the Bible? Writing to his young disciple, the apostle Paul declared, *"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work"* (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Teachability is a quality we should all look for in those we select for leading areas of our business.

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### **Reflection/Discussion Questions**

Do you consider yourself teachable? Explain your answer.

From your observations, what are the consequences of not being teachable? Have you ever found yourself reporting to someone who seemed to lack teachability? What was that experience like?

What steps do you think a person can take to become more teachable? What role, if any, does personal humility play in being able to develop and maintain teachability?

A final suggestion in this "Monday Manna" is to turn to the Bible as an important teaching resource. Do you agree – especially when thinking in terms of today's marketplace? Why or why not?

*NOTE: If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages:*

Proverbs 12:15, 19:27, 20:18, 24:5-6, 27:17

Ephesians 2:10

Colossians 1:28