Introduction

In our modern churches many are called teachers; that is, Sunday school teachers, but few, if any, are recognized as a true Five Fold Ministry Teacher although “teacher” is listed as one of the ministry gifts that were given by Jesus to His people when He ascended.

Ephesians 4:11 NASB

(11) And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers.

There are some who say that since “some” is not re-iterated in front of “teacher” that the phrase “pastors and teachers” refers to one group of individuals. However, I find their arguments lacking in substance and consider “pastors”; that is, shepherds, as one group and “teachers” as a separate group.

There are a number of other scriptures that refer to “teachers” as a distinct group: Acts 13:1; 1Corinthians 12:28; 1Corinthians 12:29; Hebrews 5:12; James 3:1. There is no justification to assume that “teacher” in Ephesians 4:11 is any different than “teacher” in these other verses.

Teachers

The meaning of “teacher” is essentially “interpreter of scripture”.

Teachers are third in the order of responsibility in the Church.

1 Corinthians 12:28 NASB

(28) And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.

These three, apostles, prophets, teachers, are all responsible for the ministry of the the Word of God and are typically mentioned in the plural. God's word is very important to Him and He doesn't entrust His Word to only one ministry or one interpretation but provides a plurality of the ministry of the word for
a balance in understanding. Notice, also, that His Word takes preeminence over miracles and healing.

These three ministries function together in this manner:

- An **apostle** has a special **task**: establishing and ordering churches;
- A **prophet** has a special **message**: a word individually received from God to be delivered at a specific time and place;
- A **teacher** expounds **God's Truth generally**, but has no special message individually received.

Teachers are frequently linked with one of the other primary ministries: II Timothy 1:11—an apostle and a teacher; Acts 13:1—prophets and teachers (compare Acts 15:32); Luke 20:1—Jesus was teaching and evangelizing.

**Two Levels of Teachers**

A teacher as represented by the five primary ministries would be to the whole body in all places making the teacher a mobile or traveling ministry. An example of this type of teacher is Apollos.

Acts 18:24–28 NASB

(24) Now a Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures.

(25) This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John;

(26) and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

(27) And when he wanted to go across to Achaia, the brethren encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him; and when he had arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace,

(28) for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

1 Corinthians 3:5–6 NASB

(5) What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one.

(6) I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.

Apollos watered what Paul had planted. The Achaia believers had come to Christ through supernatural grace. Thereafter, their faith needed to be established through understanding of the scriptures. This is achieved by systematic, public exposition of scripture.

An evangelistic ministry, many times, comes quickly after conversion; but, a teaching ministry takes
time to develop.

The second type of teaching ministry is at the local level: to the members of the local flock.

1 Timothy 5:17 NASB

(17) The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.

Titus 1:9 NASB

(9) holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

One of the requirements for an elder is that he be able to teach (I Timothy 3:2). This doesn't mean he has to be what we call a “pulpit personality”, but, rather that he be able to teach in a counseling manner with one on one application.

Two Categories of Teachers

Within the two types of teachers we also have two categories of teachers: originators (developers) and duplicators.

The originators develop revelatory scriptural understanding of doctrine and application. This is done in conjunction with apostles and prophets and is subject to judgment and correction by them.

The duplicators receive the teaching from others and duplicate it for those with whom they associate, usually the local assembly of God's people.

2 Timothy 2:2 NASB

(2) The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

Every ministry is responsible to reproduce that which God has given them.

Functioning as a Teacher

Normally, one who is called of God as a teacher will begin his ministry within his local assembly as a duplicator type of teacher. The teacher has received understanding from the Holy Spirit through teaching received from other teachers. He then begins to re-teach what he has learned from the Lord to others in his local flock. This is not primarily education, which is a soulish function; but, is primarily spiritual. The word has been digested. The word has become “flesh” in the teacher. This is a spiritual process not an intellectual exercise. This is an important distinction which is described succinctly by the writer of Hebrews when he was describing why the children of Israel failed in the wilderness through their unbelief.
Hebrews 4:2 NKJV

(2) For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.

The word that is translated as “mixed” is used in modern Greek to describe the action of saliva being mixed with food when it is chewed. We take in the Word made flesh, the Bread of Heaven, and chew it with faith to begin the process of digestion whereby the Word is received into us and becomes part of us; that is, made flesh in us. Only as this occurs in the teacher is the teacher able to minister the word with life.

It is not education that enables a teacher. It is not persuasive speech or human logic that empowers the word of God. The teacher cannot allow the listener to build his faith in the wisdom of men but must deliver the word in such a way that faith is built by the power of God.

1 Corinthians 2:4-5 NKJV

(4) And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,

(5) that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

A teacher does not speak of the wisdom of men but speaks of the hidden wisdom of God that is not known by the great men of this age. Therefore, motivational speakers, psychologists, pop culture personalities and what they have to day does not qualify you to teach God's principles.

1 Corinthians 2:7-8 NKJV

(7) But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory,

(8) which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

The hidden wisdom of God cannot be known through the intellectual process. The principles of God can only be known by revelation from the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 2:10 NKJV

(10) But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

One of the reasons that the Lord has given us the Holy Spirit is that we might know the things that have been given to us by God.

1 Corinthians 2:12-13 NKJV

(12) Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

(13) These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy
Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

The Spirit reveals to us what the Lord has given; but, He also teaches us how to speak of these things. We must have spiritual words taught by the Holy Spirit in order to teach the things of the Spirit. The reason for that necessity is simple.

1 Corinthians 2:14 NKJV

(14) But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

The natural man, the man who operates from his soul or from his mind, does not receive the things of the Spirit. They do not make sense to the natural mind because they are things that must be spiritually discerned.

A teacher who teaches from the mind by the intellectual process can never minister life but can only minister the letter of the law. A teacher who operates in this manner teaches from logic and man's understanding. They never communicate with spiritual words explaining spiritual truth as taught by the Spirit.

However, a teacher must “study to show themselves approved”. It is not the study of seminary but rather the school of the Holy Spirit. So, even as a teacher duplicates what he has been taught, the word is at work in his heart changing him and maturing him in the things of the Lord.

As the teacher learns to hear the Spirit more clearly and begins to experience more understanding of the deeper things of the Lord, he begins to move into the other class of teachers. He begins to become an originator of teaching instead of a duplicator. As this happens, the Lord will begin to link him with other originator teachers, prophets, and apostles for the furtherance of the word of the Lord. This will keep the teacher in balance as well as provide a tempering influence on the prophets and apostles.

We truly need five fold ministry teachers, especially in these days of so many false and ignorant words and doctrines coming forth from prominent personalities. The only antidote to a lie is the truth. Five fold teachers teach the truth and do so regardless of personal gain or loss.