

INSTRUCTION IS BETTER THAN EXPERIENCE!

SERMONETTE by Robert Schmid

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My message this afternoon is entitled:

INSTRUCTION IS BETTER THAN EXPERIENCE!

I like for all of you to write it down, and by ALL I mean everybody who is able to write. So, children put down your coloring books and toys for a moment, get a piece of paper and pencil and write down: **INSTRUCTION IS BETTER THAN EXPERIENCE!**

Parents please help your children write it down and spell it correctly. The younger you are the more you can benefit from this principle that **INSTRUCTION IS BETTER THAN EXPERIENCE!**

Now be careful, for I am not saying that there is no value in EXPERIENCE, there is. What I am saying is that instruction is **BETTER** than experience.

First of all let me give you the dictionary definitions of the words "INSTRUCTION" and "EXPERIENCE".

Webster's says that the meaning of the word INSTRUCT or INSTRUCTION is: "to give knowledge or information," "to impart knowledge in a systematic manner," "to give an order precisely and clearly," "INSTRUCTION is a direction calling for compliance." "INSTRUCTION gives us knowledge and wisdom."

In contrast, the word EXPERIENCE means: "direct participation in events," "something that is personally encountered, undergone or lived through." "When you are experienced, you are made skillful or wise through participation in a particular activity." "When you experiment you gain experience by doing."

Alright, that is the dictionary definition.

Now, let me give you a couple of examples to further explain the meaning of the words "INSTRUCTION" and "EXPERIENCE."

Picture in your mind the following: 5 year old Johnny comes home from school. Mom gives him his cookie and milk and asks him to do his homework. Then Johnny wants to go out and play and Mom gives him the following INSTRUCTIONS; She says: When you play outside, do not run into the street without first *stopping*, and *looking*, to make sure no cars are coming. Johnny acknowledges the INSTRUCTION and goes out to play. In the course of playing ball, the ball jumps out into the street, as all balls do, Johnny goes after the ball, comes to the curb and remembers the INSTRUCTION from his Mom – *Stop! Look!* and he safely retrieves the ball from the street. After a wonderful time playing with his friends, Johnny goes home has a great dinner with his family, gets to play with Daddy and by 9:00 pm he is safely and happily tucked into bed.

Alright, that was an example using INSTRUCTIONS.

Now let me give you an example where EXPERIENCE is the teacher.

On the other side of town lives another 5 year old, we'll call him Eddy. Eddy comes home from school, has his cookie and milk, does his homework and wants to go outside to play. His Mom gives him the following INSTRUCTIONS. She says: When you play outside, do not run into the street without first *stopping* and *looking* to make sure no cars are coming. Eddy acknowledges the INSTRUCTION and goes out to play. The ball bounces into the street, as all balls do, Eddy goes after the ball, he comes to the curb, but he forgot his mother's INSTRUCTION and runs after the ball *without stopping* and *without looking* and gets hit by a car. Well, that evening Eddy finds himself in the hospital with several broken bones and pain and hurts all over his body, not to speak of the pain and hurt it is causing his family.

Can you see the difference between INSTRUCTION and EXPERIENCE?

Johnny retrieved the ball *using* his Mom's INSTRUCTION and thereby did it safely.

Eddy retrieved the ball, *ignoring* his Mom's INSTRUCTION and thereby ended up in the hospital.

The obvious conclusion: *Following* INSTRUCTION is better than *learning* by EXPERIENCE.

Eddy will probably never run into a street again without first stopping and looking, but he paid a high price, in fact he could have lost his life as many Eddy's and Johnny's and little girls do every day. I hope that every one of you, and especially you young people understand now why learning by INSTRUCTION is better than learning by EXPERIENCE.

Now please turn to Gen. 2 verse 16. Here we have the creation of man, and the Creator's very first INSTRUCTION to the man Adam: "*And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, You may freely eat of every tree in the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.*"

Here God gives a very clear and precise INSTRUCTION:

If you eat of that particular tree you will die.

Just like Eddy's Mom gave him very clear INSTRUCTIONS.

But unfortunately Adam was like Eddy, or, I should rather say Eddy was like Adam. Adam did not believe and follow his Creator's INSTRUCTION and has found himself in the hospital, so to speak, ever since. You can read about that in chapter 3 of Genesis.

Now what about you and I today. Do we recognize that INSTRUCTION is better than EXPERIENCE?

As we know, all of mankind followed Adam learning and living by EXPERIENCE rather than by INSTRUCTION.

But does it have to be that way?

Remember, earlier we said that INSTRUCTION gives you knowledge and wisdom. Let's look in Proverbs 1 what God through Solomon, King of Israel, has to say. Prov. 1:7-8

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction. Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and reject not your mother's teaching."

Here God makes it very plain that we are fools, if we ignore INSTRUCTION.

Now let's continue reading with verse 20 of Proverbs 1. Here we find a warning against the neglect of WISDOM, against the neglect of following INSTRUCTIONS.

vs. 20 *Wisdom cries aloud in the street, in the markets she raises her voice;*

vs. 21 *on the top of the walls she cries out, at the entrance of the city gates she speaks:*

vs. 22 *How long o simple ones will you love being simple?*

(Lest there be any misunderstanding, let me give you the definition of "simple". A "simple" person is one "lacking in knowledge or expertise". "It means to be a fool" "A simpleton is a person lacking in common sense". In other words, wisdom is asking "how long will you love being foolish?")

vs. 22 *How long will scoffers delight in their scoffing and fools hate knowledge*

(the word scoffing means to be contemptuous and make a mockery of God's INSTRUCTIONS).

vs. 23 *Give heed to my reproof; behold I will pour out my thoughts to you; I will make my word known to you.*

vs. 24 *Because I have called and you refused to listen, have stretched out my hand and no one heeded,*

vs. 25 *and you have ignored all my counsel and would have none of my reproof,*

vs. 26 *I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when panic strikes you,*

vs. 27 *when panic strikes you like a storm, and your calamity comes like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you.*

vs. 28 *Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently, but will not find me.* (Now please understand, this is not God speaking. Wisdom is speaking, and wisdom is saying that if we do not heed INSTRUCTION, we will reap the inevitable consequences).

vs. 29 *Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord,*

vs. 30 *would have none of my counsel, and despised all my reproof,*

vs. 31 *therefore they shall eat the fruit of their way and be sated with their own devises.*

vs. 32 *For the simple* (those who do not remember, or do not heed INSTRUCTION) *are killed by their turning away, and the complacency of fools destroys them;*

vs. 33 *but he who listens to me will dwell secure* (remember little Johnny who listened to his mothers INSTRUCTIONS and was securely tucked into his bed) *he who listens to me will dwell secure and will be at ease, without dread of evil.*

God throughout the Bible pleads with us to accept his INSTRUCTIONS. In Ex.15:26 He says: *“If you will diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, and give heed to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases upon you which I put upon the Egyptians; for I am the Lord your healer.”*

In 1 Cor. 10:11 God says that everything in this book was written down for our INSTRUCTION. Why? Because God is a loving Father who doesn't want you and me to get hurt. Jesus Christ, who is our example, followed all of His Fathers INSTRUCTIONS, making it possible for you and me to have eternal life.

In the beginning I asked you to write down that “INSTRUCTION is better than EXPERIENCE”. Now please write down the following scriptures:
Num.4:15 and compare it to 2 Sam.6:6-7 also
Num.20:7-8 and compare them to verses 10-13

For your home bible study and especially you families with children, I would like to encourage you to read and talk about these and other examples in your Bible, and in your daily life, were God and wisdom shows us that INSTRUCTION is indeed better than EXPERIENCE.