

A Letter to Teachers

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Dear Teachers,

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God — this is your true and proper worship.¹

You are called to be a teacher. You have the gifts to join this profession... but there will be days in which you feel that your service is sacrificial. When you are having those days, I hope and pray that you will see them as the blessing they are: the opportunity for you to serve the Lord of your life!

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Don't be afraid to go against the flow. There will be times when it will be easier to do things “the way they have always been done.” But if you are discerning God's will for your classroom — and for your whole life! — there will be times when it is clear that you must do things that are contrary to the culture around you. Be encouraged that you matter, and you make a difference!

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

While it is clear that you have gifts and dispositions to teach, remember that you (probably) don't have all the gifts. We are better as a team, because the Lord has given us a diverse set of talents and abilities. Use your gifts for the betterment of your students, your team, your school, your community, and the world!

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

There will be days in which your students seem out to get you. There will be days when you don't like your students, or at the very least, you won't like their behavior. You are called to love them anyway. Honor them. You never know what a difference you might make to a child. Always hope. Always persevere in patience. Pray without ceasing!

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

Let's be honest: you're going to be a good teacher, probably a GREAT teacher! Don't let that get to your

head. You can always (always!) get better. Learn from those around you. Get to know the supporting staff members in your school. The custodian and secretary and cooks are people also called to serve! They share in the work of serving the students.

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.

There will be days when your students — the sinful, broken people they are — will say horrible things and do horrible things to each other, or even to you. It will be hard to keep your emotions in check. Remember your office, teacher! Never punish out of anger. You must step in and discipline your students. But even more important, disciple your students.

On the contrary:

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;

if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.

In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

School can be a dark place for students, and even for teachers.

Be light in the darkness!

Remember: **you matter.**

You make a difference.

You are fulfilling your calling!

Be Jesus's hands and feet, and serve where you are called!²

Footnotes

1. The basis of this encouragement comes from Romans 12. [↩](#)
2. This letter was first shared as a blessing to the "Middle School Curriculum and Instruction" students at Dordt College. [↩](#)