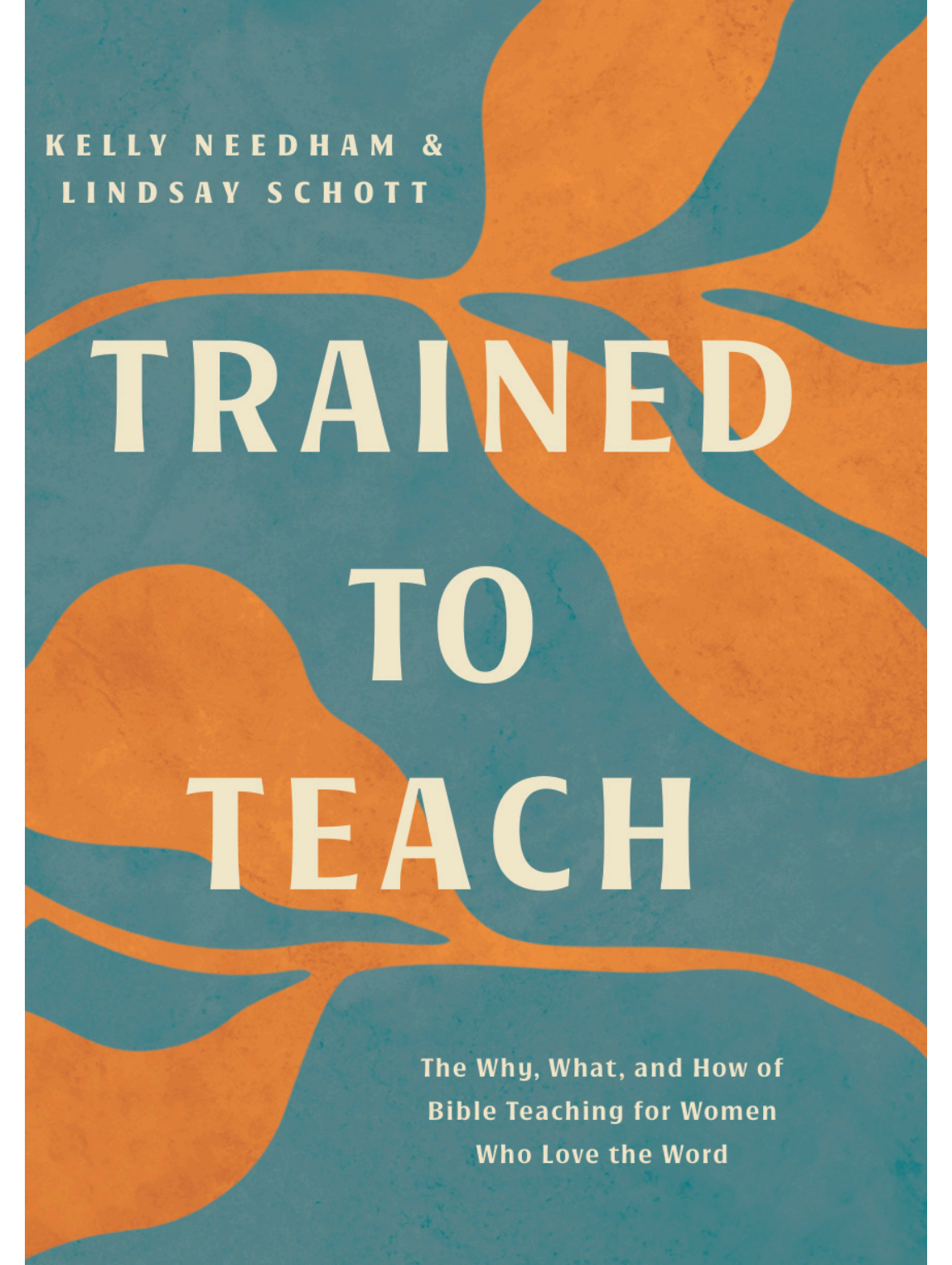




KELLY NEEDHAM &
LINDSAY SCHOTT

TRAINED TO TEACH

The Why, What, and How of
Bible Teaching for Women
Who Love the Word

“Teaching the Bible requires a strange mix of fear and fearlessness. We must be sober-minded and reverent about the task, and we must simultaneously strive to step into the work with confidence and joy. Kelly and Lindsay know these two poles firsthand, and they offer the aspiring teacher time-tested tools, practical wisdom born of local church experience, and just the right recipe of carefulness and courage. This is a book I wish someone had handed me thirty years ago when I began fumbling my way forward with teaching the most important book of all. I pray it spurs a generation of women to teach the Bible, and to teach it well.”

JEN WILKIN, Author and Bible Teacher

“The desire to teach Scripture should be met with the desire to handle it well. *Trained to Teach* helps women do just that by combining faithful study, thoughtful communication, and attention to the heart of the teacher. Kelly and Lindsay have given women a practical resource that will strengthen both their confidence and their care for God’s word.”

JACKIE HILL PERRY, Bestselling Author and Speaker

“*Trained to Teach* speaks to every consideration—from calling, motives, and insecurities to the nuts and bolts of actually preparing and delivering a faithful message. Encouraging, practical, and deeply grounded in a desire to serve God rather than build a platform, this is the kind of resource that helps women move forward with both humility and confidence.”

EMILY A. JENSEN, Bible Teacher and Coauthor of *Gospel Mom*
and *Risen Motherhood*

“An incredible resource for any aspiring (or experienced!) Bible teacher. Rigorous and thorough, it takes you from the basics of exegesis, through careful application, to crafting a clear, simple, and faithful talk. Kelly and Lindsay combine serious pedagogy with remarkable creativity. I laughed, cried, and learned loads along the way.”

LINDA ALLCOCK, Author of *Deeper Still*

“Reading this book felt like listening to my seminary bestie recap her biblical hermeneutics class—clear, accessible, and full of practical wisdom. I will be giving copies to my Bible-teaching buddies and women’s ministry friends!”

HUNTER BELESS, Author of *Read It, See It, Say It, Sing It!* and Coauthor of
Titus: Displaying the Gospel of Grace

“Kelly and Lindsay provide excellent practical wisdom for new and veteran Bible teachers, but they also address the internal questions and wrestlings every teacher faces. I will be giving this book to every woman on our teaching team!”

CHRISTINE HOOVER, Women’s Ministry Associate at The Austin Stone
Northwest, Bible Teacher, and Author of *More than Enough*

“This book is jam-packed with tried and tested wisdom, as Lindsay and Kelly draw from a wealth of experience and write with candor and confidence. I love how they carefully and winsomely walk their readers into the place of being able to teach God’s word. I can’t wait to put this book into the hands of many women in my church and wider circles.”

FELICITY CARSWELL, Bible Teacher and Cohost of the
Two Sisters and a Cup of Tea podcast

“As a women’s ministry director, I have trained many women to teach over the years, and this is the resource I have been waiting for. In the past I’ve pieced together various chapters, articles, and videos, but this book has everything I need in one book for a teacher-training cohort. As women Bible teachers, it’s crucial that we reproduce ourselves and raise up more women to do what we do—this is THE resource for that mission.”

JEN OSHMAN, Author, Speaker, and Women’s Ministry Leader

“*Trained to Teach* is a resource that I will return to again and again. The wisdom and experience Kelly and Lindsay generously share in these pages will help any teacher grow in their ability to mine God’s word, shape content, and deliver it with faith. This is the book I’ve been waiting for, and I’m excited to share it with friends, no matter whether they are taking their first tentative steps in teaching or have years of experience behind them.”

RACHEL WILSON, Coauthor of *The Life We Never Expected*

“To my pastor friends: you can trust Kelly and Lindsay. I’ve had the privilege of watching these ideas develop long before they became a book. I’ve watched this material help women in our church handle the Scriptures carefully and teach them clearly.”

RODNEY HOBBS, Lead Pastor, Stonegate Church

“What a brilliant resource! Whether you’re confident in sharing the Bible with others or feel like it’s beyond you, this book will encourage and equip you. Kelly and Lindsay have years of experience in teaching God’s word, and they share their wisdom in a way that’s honest, engaging, and accessible.”

EMMA SCRIVENER, Author of *A New Name*

KELLY NEEDHAM &
LINDSAY SCHOTT

TRAINED TO TEACH

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Trained to Teach:
The Why, What, and How of Bible Teaching for Women Who Love the Word

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This book is dedicated to you, dear reader.

We wrote you the book we always needed but never had.

May you never go without a resource ever again.

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Introduction

Kelly

On August 30, 2019, Lindsay and I hosted our first women's Bible teaching lab. On that Friday evening, we gathered in our church office with a handful of women who wanted to grow in their ability to teach God's word faithfully. The possibility of a ministry called Teach Equip wasn't in our minds. We had no clue that this moment would lead to years of coaching Bible teachers at our church, across the United States, and eventually around the world. We simply had an earnest desire to serve the women in our local church.

Like those women in our church office, you're probably interested in this book because you want to teach the Bible faithfully. Maybe you're actually terrified of that desire, so no one even knows you're reading this book. Or maybe your desire to teach feels like a fire in your bones with no outlet for all your passion. Maybe you're already teaching, but you feel like you don't know what you're doing. Maybe someone else said you'd be a great Bible teacher, but you aren't sure if they're right or where to start. Wherever you find yourself, Lindsay and I are here to cheer you on! We've been coaching women Bible teachers for years, so if you're experiencing it, we've probably gone through it ourselves or helped someone who has. This book is a resource to help you right where you are as a Bible teacher.

Friendship Forms

Lindsay and I have very different Bible-teaching journeys. We faced different obstacles and fought different temptations in the process. But as we kept the conversation open—confessing, praying, and encouraging each other—we realized that though our respective journeys were unique, the work God was doing in us was the same.

It all started when I moved to a new city, and Lindsay graciously responded to an email I sent to a few women, asking if they'd be my friend. (True story!) It didn't take long to realize we had a lot in common. We were both in our early twenties and had been married for a few years. We also both struggled to get pregnant—infertility and miscarriage dotting our stories with longing and loss. We had been mentored by the same couple (which is how we met in the first place). And we were both self-professed Bible nerds.

We had an appetite for deep dives into the Scriptures. We were reading commentaries and doing word studies. We swapped fun facts from our research and shared our favorite passages from the minor prophets, a section of God's word that we both adored. We loved studying the Bible and sharing what we learned.

Lindsay's high-school youth pastor had told her that she was gifted to teach, and she was taking that calling seriously. She wasn't fearful of the stage and was eager to use her gift for the glory of God. With earnestness and courage, she kept an eye out for opportunities to teach as she privately developed her skills.

I wasn't so confident. I avoided attention and didn't love being in the spotlight. My love for teaching the Bible grew in small groups and one-on-ones. My youth leader noticed and asked me to teach at a girls' retreat during my senior year of high school. As happened to Lindsay, others affirmed that I was gifted to teach, and I wanted to take that calling seriously.

But then I married a man with a growing public ministry, which God used to expose my deep-seated pride. My sin wreaked havoc in my marriage. By God's grace, about a year after our wedding, I repented and humbled myself before God and my husband. But that unexpected battle with pride left me feeling like a failure. I was so grossed out by what I had seen in my heart that I swore off all stages, platforms, and public ministry. I felt much safer exercising my teaching gift in the smaller, hidden spaces of living rooms and coffee shops.

This is where Lindsay and I were at on our journeys when we first sat down for coffee. I wanted to teach in small, private spaces, and Lindsay wanted to teach in whatever space God might give, private or public.

Tensions Rise

For several years, not much changed. We kept studying our Bibles and sharing what we learned with each other. We were faithful with the small occasions we had to share God's word with others. So, it caught us both off guard when I was asked to speak at my church's largest women's ministry event of the year.

I remember informing my husband that I was going to turn it down. "I'm the most prideful person that I know," I told him. "How could I do anything on a stage?" Jimmy reminded me that if my reason for saying no wasn't about God's glory or the good of someone else, then it wasn't a good no. So, I took the stage that Christmas with much fear and trembling.

Just two months later, a national ministry reached out to ask me to write for their blog. After that, I began to get asked by churches to teach and speak. Out of the blue, I got invited to private writers' conferences and received podcast interview invitations.

These public-ministry moments terrified me. I wanted to honor Jesus, but each platform and microphone stirred up the waters in

my heart, surfacing all sorts of mixed motives. I hated it. I wanted to stay in the privacy of my home, serving behind the scenes. I felt a deep desire to say no to it all—until I talked to Lindsay.

As my inbox flooded with invitations, doors were being shut in her face. Unlike me, she was actively praying for and seeking opportunities to teach. But at every turn, she received a no. If she did manage to schedule a teaching opportunity, it was canceled due to uncontrollable circumstances like hurricanes or sickness. (You can't make this stuff up!) As Lindsay longed for invitations, they showed up in my inbox. It was painful.

Friendship stings when one person is always pregnant with hope and the other is miscarrying dreams and desires. I knew I was living her dream, so I hated telling her about the next crazy opportunity that had landed in my lap. But I also valued our friendship too much to keep it from her. It would have felt dishonest. Plus, I needed her help as I wrote and prepared messages.

Meanwhile, Lindsay was battling envy of my circumstances and confusion about God's purposes. What was he doing? Why was he opening doors for someone who didn't even want them or feel qualified? She was ready and willing! She struggled with thoughts like *What does Kelly have that I don't?* She wondered if she just wasn't smart enough, humble enough, or skilled enough. She could have kept that struggle from me, fearing that it would make me feel uncomfortable or discouraged. But it would have felt dishonest. We always talked about Bible teaching—the highs and the lows.

As our paths diverged, we forged a commitment to stay honest with each other, even when it hurt. To cheer one another on, even if it stung. To keep Jesus and his word as the most important thing. To commit ourselves to the other person's good and encourage them to be faithful to what God had set in front of them. Little did we know what God was really preparing us for.

Faithfulness Is the Goal

Lindsay, painfully aware of her own drought of opportunity, often reminded me that these invitations were from God. She knew from all her closed doors that God is sovereign over every teaching moment (or lack thereof). She challenged my hesitancy and encouraged me to take each invitation seriously and not despise what God was doing in my life.

I needed her perspective. It gave me the courage to be faithful in what was set before me. But she also needed my story. What she saw in my life convinced her that God was absolutely able to create teaching opportunities—and if he wasn't creating those opportunities for her, it was for a purpose, as painful as that was.

My opportunities and Lindsay's hiddenness both required faith. We needed to trust God with our undesired and uncomfortable circumstances. We each had a different race to run, set before us by our Lord (Hebrews 12:1-2). So, we chose to cheer each other on with faithfulness as the goal.

We walked with one another like this for years, fighting for faithfulness in our different seasons. And we continued to study our Bibles, read theology books, listen to sermons, and take classes. We talked through my writing and teaching commitments, brainstorming illustrations, application points, and new methods of organizing ideas. We also shared our struggles in mothering, marriage, and community. But most importantly, we each sat with God in prayer and enjoyed him privately. We often talked about how generous he is, reminding each other that the only thing we deserve is his judgment, but we get his abundant grace instead.

Then, in God's perfect timing, he pulled Lindsay out of her season of hiddenness to publicly use the teaching gift she'd been stewarding and cultivating privately. She was offered a leadership role in our women's ministry and planned a series of teachings

from the book of John. And instead of teaching all the sessions on her own (which she was entirely capable of and entitled to do), she asked me to join her. So, for the first time, we taught the Bible side by side.

The Power of Pastoral Invitation

Over the years that followed, we did a lot of team-teaching along with other gifted women in our church. We taught 2 Timothy, Ecclesiastes, and 1 and 2 Thessalonians. As we were being faithful with what was in front of us, our pastors started a conversation that would change everything.

On February 19, 2019, Jen Wilkin tweeted, “PSA Church Leaders: Your women won’t stop going to Bible Study if you decide not to offer it. They’ll just go where it’s offered, leaving you zero idea of what they’re learning, and all the accountability for it. By prioritizing and resourcing it, you serve them.” Our lead pastor, Rodney Hobbs, saw that tweet and decided to invite a few women to an upcoming elder meeting.

At the meeting, our pastor admitted that ten years into a church plant, he hadn’t thought much about women’s ministry. He asked us what we thought of Jen’s tweet and our women’s ministry. He wondered what the pastors and elders could do to increase the flourishing of the women at the church.

What?! If you’re reading this, you probably already know that this doesn’t happen very often, and it can feel even more unusual at a complementarian church. But it wasn’t just talk for our elders. They followed this conversation with action. They sent Lindsay and me to a workshop for Bible teachers. They encouraged us to begin implementing all the ideas we had shared in that meeting and asked how they could help. But what really changed everything was our first invitation to the teaching lab.

The teaching lab had been around for years. It was a monthly gathering that provided practice and feedback for developing teachers. At that time, one or two men would teach and then get coaching and feedback from elders and staff.

The first lab we watched was an incredible experience! The personalized coaching the men received was one hundred times better than the best books we had read. In the lab, their own particular strengths were identified and celebrated. Their unique weaknesses and struggles were addressed with compassion. They were taught the skills they needed and given suggestions for growth. And all this feedback came from men they knew and trusted—a life-changing experience for a teacher.

Then the unfathomable happened. Our pastor, Rodney, asked Lindsay and me to teach in that same lab! Of course, we were thrilled and terrified all at once. Nothing like teaching the Bible to your lead pastor and a few elders and getting feedback from them to get your blood flowing! But we wanted to grow, so we did it scared.

Both of us remember our first labs. The coaching we received was a precious gift from God. It shaped us as teachers, helped us find our voices, gave us confidence to keep going, and highlighted areas of our teaching that needed attention. Praise God for godly pastors and elders.

But investing in our teaching gift also benefited our church leaders. They got to see what was being taught in the women's ministry. It deepened their trust in us and created a path for healthy communication. We felt freer to reach out for theological guidance as we prepped messages, and the pastors felt freer to ask for our thoughts and opinions. Trust and teamwork developed. It was—and still is—a beautiful partnership.

A Teaching Program Is Born

Lindsay and I couldn't stop talking about how lab was a game-changer. We knew so many other women in our church who were gifted to teach but didn't have anywhere to practice. They needed a lab! But we knew they'd never deliver their first message in front of their lead pastor for feedback. They needed their own lab.

That first women's teaching lab ultimately became Teach Equip, a seven-month program that trains developing Bible teachers through classes, labs, and homework. It's designed to strengthen local churches by providing a curriculum to develop the budding teachers already in their congregations, while also creating partnerships between pastors and the women teaching the Bible in their local church.¹

Since that first gathering in August 2019, we've been training and coaching Bible teachers. And we might just love it as much as teaching the Bible ourselves! That's why we're here with you in the pages of this book. We're your coaches. Teaching will always be somewhat subjective. It's both art and science. There's a trusted study process we all must follow, but there are also individualized decisions to be made: how to organize, illustrate, and deliver a message. And that's one reason why Lindsay and I love coaching together: because we each teach the Bible differently. We don't want to make clones of ourselves but instead help other women find their own voice as a Bible teacher without compromising the faithful handling of God's word.

In this book, we're giving you time-tested tools and practices that have helped us and many others steward their gift of teaching. Our goal is to coach the whole you. Many good teaching books will focus entirely on study (study is important!) but say nothing about serving a listener or how to tend to your heart. Some books offer strategies for keeping people's attention but lack any perspective

on the power of the gospel. And some may focus on the heart but don't tackle the unique struggles a teacher faces. We care about your *head*—you must know the Bible, and we'll show you how. We care about your *hands*—how you deliver what you say to your audience to serve them. And we care about your *heart*—keeping your soul healthy so you can teach for as long as God allows you. We want to address all three areas. Are you ready to see what he has for you?

We believe Bible teaching is best done in community. So why don't you grab a friend or two and read this book together? Talk about it as you go! You can use the discussion questions at the back of the book to help foster healthy dialogue with the people who know you personally and share your love for God's word.

Okay, there's a lot of terrain to cover! Off we go, fellow Bible nerd!

One note: *We believe Scripture affirms that men and women are equal in worth and gifting but different in roles—differences rooted in creation and in what it means to be an image bearer. Because God himself is both unity and diversity, our different roles aren't a problem to solve. They're a gift to receive.*

As it relates to teaching, the Bible is clear that the role of pastor/elder is reserved for qualified men. This includes the authoritative preaching of God's word that binds the conscience of the church—the kind that typically happens on Sunday mornings. That role belongs to qualified male pastors.

But a church needs more than one preacher or an elder board to be healthy. Because the word of God should be central in every corner of church life, we need men and women who love the Bible and can faithfully teach it to others. Women teachers are not a backup plan—they're essential to the health of the church and are trusted partners and allies alongside its pastors.

We hold this position with conviction and joy, and are happy to explain our reasoning further. For more on this, visit teachequip.com/men-and-women.



The background is a solid teal color with a subtle, mottled texture. Large, stylized leaf shapes in a lighter shade of teal are positioned in the top right and bottom left corners, partially overlapping the main text area.

SECTION 1

Why Teach





1

You Can Do This, and I'm Not Just Saying That

FIVE REASONS YOU CAN TEACH

Lindsay

Imagine we're sitting together in your church lobby after the service on Sunday morning. You begin to share the internal struggle you have with teaching. I get a little glimmer in my eye because I know where this is going, and I love this conversation! Maybe it sounds something like this...

You: I really love talking to people about what I'm learning in the Bible, and it seems to help them too. I feel like I'm kind of good at teaching. But I feel weird even talking about it.

Me: That's amazing! It sounds like you might be gifted at teaching, if you love doing it and it seems to help people. What's keeping you from investing in that gift?

You: Oh, I don't know if I'm gifted to teach. And even if I am, there are so many great Bible teachers out there already. I won't ever be as good at it as they are.

I've had this conversation dozens of times with incredible women. Over and over again, women are hesitant to invest in their gift because they don't have a strong *why* for teaching. A strong *why*

helps you persevere when you're struggling with self-doubt or when teaching doesn't look like what you thought it would. You can step out of your comfort zone into God's calling when you remember these five reasons why you should teach.

TEACHING TIP

To find out if you're gifted to teach, take our free quiz at teachequip.com/ttt

Teach Because You Have What You Need

What does a Bible teacher look like to you? Maybe you feel like teaching the Bible requires a captivating gifting or “it” factor, and you're worried that you just don't have it. You see images of stages,

microphones, and conference line-ups. You imagine a talented, well-dressed person whose last message went viral online. A flash of a TED talk or the perfect podcast studio comes to mind. Maybe you think of a particular teacher who has impacted you.

But those images don't tell the whole story. Much of what we see from teachers online or speakers at conferences is just a small moment in their whole experience of teaching. We usually see them after they've been practicing for years, have honed their craft, and have received good (and tough) feedback. We tend to compare where we are now—even if we're just starting out on our journey—with who they are after years of experience. We also don't see their everyday struggles, like how they may (or may not) repent regularly, juggle painful relationships, or deal with their anxiety. We're just seeing the outside of their teaching (speaking skills, study, communication, etc.) and assuming the inside (relationship with God and others) is just as polished.

In 1 Samuel 16, the prophet Samuel visits the family of Jesse on a mission to anoint God's chosen, future king. Samuel takes

one look at Eliab (who was probably the oldest and maybe the biggest son) and assumes that Eliab must be the one! But God corrects Samuel:



But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.” 1 Samuel 16:7

God isn’t evaluating you based on your communication, charisma, confidence, or clothing (or even your ability to string together an alliteration). He’s considering you from the inside out. The heart is the fountain from which all our words flow (Matthew 12:34), so your life with God is the fountain from which your teaching flows.

Sometimes we focus on the outside features of Bible teaching. We’re mostly concerned about how our words sound, whether we leave a good impression, or whether we seem like we should even be there. But God focuses on inside things. He cares about our daily dependence on him, our love for him, and our love for others.

If you have an active relationship with Jesus—one characterized by conviction, repentance, and honest prayers like “Help me, I’m a mess!” ... If you are growing in believing how lovely Jesus is, depending on him, and thirsting for righteousness... If you really want people to grow in knowing Jesus too... then you have what you need.

The most essential ingredient for teaching is a transformed life. Let your relationship with your Savior fuel your Bible teaching, and God will do more than you can ask or imagine.

Teach Because Your Church Needs You

Who is a teacher you admire? Is it someone at your church? Someone you listen to online? I can promise you this: no matter who they are, you'll never be them. Wow, I bet that doesn't feel encouraging. But it is. Hang with me.

It's true: I am not as good at teaching the Bible as Jen Wilkin is. But that's because I'm not her. And I'm not Jackie Hill Perry, Nancy Guthrie, Christine Caine, Jennie Allen, or even Kelly Needham. I'd make a very poor version of any one of them... but I am a fantastic Lindsay Schott. You will never be them because God made you to be you. **God's goal for us in teaching isn't to make us like each other; it's to make us more like his Son.** If I focus on being like someone else, I will be distracted from what God would like to do with me, as I am, where I am. You and I live where we live and go to church where we go to church because God put us there. He has given us to our local church body and that body to us.

The people in your church probably don't know that Bible teacher, not personally. But they do know you. They see your life week in and week out. They know your story, and you probably know many of their stories. You can speak insightfully into their lives because of that knowledge. And your life has a special kind of impact—the impact of being known by the people around you and knowing them in return.

Great Bible teaching isn't about talent or platform; it's about being a transformed presence. Maybe that sounds a bit metaphysical or like Christianese. What I mean is that powerful Bible teaching happens when we show up in person (presence) and live out the truth we're teaching (transformed). When you see the value of your transformed presence, you realize that your impact comes from being personally transformed by God rather than being a talented, captivating communicator.

Paul understood the power of his transformed presence as he wrote to the Thessalonians, “we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves” (1 Thessalonians 2:8). Paul offered more than just memorable words; he gave his very self. The most powerful teaching happens when a teacher’s message is connected to their lives. The greatest impact will always happen when listeners don’t just hear the message; they see it lived.

We often wrongly assume that impact = fame + talent. **The gospel moves forward at the pace of relationship, not platform.** While famous speakers and authors do influence us, the truth is that you don’t know them and they don’t know you. But there is a community of people that you know and who know you, and you can have a massive impact there. God made you, you. As you embrace teaching, be that transformed presence in your local body because it is powerful.

I’ve seen this firsthand. In December of 2023, I finished reading a book on prayer that renewed my faith in the God who hears and responds. The author’s reflections blew on the embers of my soul and ignited a fresh and fervent desire to pray.

Around that same time, one of my dearest friends taught at my church’s women’s Christmas event. Michelle isn’t an author or professional speaker. She’s a nurse practitioner, a mother of two, and a passionate prayer warrior. She opened with a story about three concerning spots on her latest mammogram. She shared with us about how she waited several terrifying weeks for the biopsy and CAT scan results. In those weeks, she dedicated herself to prayer and invited others to join her.

As she spoke, I remembered living that story with Michelle, crying over her on the floor along with several of our friends as we pleaded for healing. Dozens of women prayed for her during that time, in living rooms and through texts. We were all holding our breath

waiting for the results. I will never forget the text announcing, “Scans are clear, no cancer!” First, I bawled, and then we had a party. As she recounted these events to the women of our church, I cried again at God’s goodness in answering our prayers.

The book and Michelle’s teaching carried the same message: there’s a God who hears and responds, so pray! But Michelle’s message was more lasting and impactful because I had seen her live it. And the women in the room had too. As I walked through the church lobby after her teaching, I found a crowd of thirty women praying over a woman who had a biopsy scheduled for the next day. Michelle’s message was deeply significant for the women of our church.

God fashions living messages in people—*who* is speaking matters. My friend Michelle did a wonderful job of anchoring her message in the Scripture and making it clear, but it was uniquely powerful because of her life. It mattered because it came from *her*. She brought her transformed presence; she taught from knowing her community and being known.

The gift of teaching is for the local body. Your church needs *you*. And I hope that when you’re thinking of the gift of teaching, new images come to mind: women gathered on a living room floor with babies in tow; women like Michelle, who are not professionals but are being actively and powerfully used by God in their local church; a group of high-schoolers gathered together to talk about the Bible, with you answering their questions and challenging their assumptions. The gift of teaching is always first and foremost for your local church, so don’t aim to be an imitation of so-and-so; be a transformed you in the community God has given you.

Teach Because You Learn as You Go

One of the best jobs I ever had was as a photography editor. I had no experience when I started, and the main reason I took the

opportunity was the promise of on-the-job training. My boss was great and taught me about photography, editing software, workflows for clients, and even how to make photos look like paintings. I still use those skills today. The great thing about teaching the Bible is that you can also learn as you go. In fact, because no one knows everything about the Bible, you have to learn as you go.

To be crystal clear, teaching the Bible demands that you know the Bible. I wasn't allowed to make permanent edits on wedding photos until I could show I understood my employer's style and criteria. For now, you may feel like you just don't know enough yet. And you're probably right! The fact that you recognize how much you don't know shows a great deal of reverence for God's word. It means you're aware of what you lack and where you need to grow. The wise say, "I need wisdom." The arrogant say, "I already know enough." Perpetual students make great teachers.

So, yes, you do need to know more. But here's the encouragement: you can learn. There is always room to learn and grow. As the Bible says:



Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.

1 Timothy 4:14-16

Paul affirms that Timothy has a supernatural gift, given by God. But he also tells Timothy that he needs to work on that gift and grow in it. The gift of teaching isn't static—God doesn't see things like a talent

agent and say, “Well, kid, you either got it or you don’t.” The gift of teaching can improve over time, which means you can learn, you can fail (yikes!), you can change, and you can get better. But if you wait to teach until you know “enough” (whatever that is), you’ll never do it.

We’re from Texas, so we grew up listening to Mama Beth (Moore) teach. I attended her evening Bible study frequently. I’ll always remember the story of how she started her first Bible study: As an exercise instructor using Christian music, Beth’s passion was leg warmers and a good sweat. She never saw herself as a teacher of the Bible. But, after doing a small breakout on “Making Fitness Count for Christ” at a women’s retreat, another woman identified a teaching gift in her. Months later, a need arose in her local church for someone to do a women’s Bible study for married women in the young-adult ministry. Beth didn’t feel ready or totally sure she even wanted to do it, but she said yes. She studied and taught in unseen places and grew in knowledge and skill. She brought God’s word through her transformed presence to the people right in front of her, simply being faithful for years before gaining any public attention.

When you’re worried that you don’t know enough, it may reveal that you’re assuming all people need from you is great information. It might play out this way: You get asked to teach, and you’re immediately aware of what you *don’t* know. You could list a dozen teachers who are more studied and experienced. So, because they know more or could do it better, you back down and don’t teach. But teaching forces us to dig deeper and learn more about the Bible than we knew before.

There are things you do need to know, but you can learn them. This book will show you how.

Teach Because It's Not About You

Sometimes identifying a teaching gift feels prideful. If you hear a friend say that her gift is mercy or administration, nothing in that feels like they're self-exalting. But if you say that your gift is teaching, there's a weird, slimy feeling as if you're promoting yourself.

I have great news: you're the least significant part of the whole thing. The gift of teaching is from God. We can't boast in it because we receive it. The goal of Bible teaching is to help others see Jesus. When we teach, it's to serve others so that they can mature and grow in Christ. **Teaching is from God, for his glory, and exists to serve others. It's really not about you at all.**

That's why John the Baptist is our teaching hero. Thousands of Israelites came to John, listening and being baptized. When his ministry dwindled because people were leaving to follow Jesus, his disciples asked if he was upset.



John answered, "A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven. You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.' The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore, this joy of mine is now complete. He must increase, but I must decrease." John 3:27-30

John knew any influence he had was from God. It was his joy to point to Jesus and see others go to him. The bride—the people of God—didn't belong to him. They were for Christ, the groom. John's definition of success was the increase of Jesus and the decrease of himself: no platform seeking there.

Teaching the Bible is an act of worship. When you invest in knowing the word of God, you're exalting God and his words as the most important. And when you labor to make your message easy to understand, memorable, and relevant, you're loving people well and serving them.

Again, the question isn't: will you use your gift to gain a following? The question is: will you be faithful to the ministry God has put right in front of you?

Teach Because It Will Humble You

The children's book *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* follows a chaotic course of events in which a mouse is given a cookie, then he wants milk, then he makes a mess, then he needs a handkerchief, then he needs something else, which snowballs into something else... you get the picture. Teaching can do this to us. We may think, *If I teach, I'll become prideful. If I get prideful, I'll ruin my life. I should just stop now before I ruin myself!* As if teaching is the cookie that will trigger your pride and make your whole life cascade into chaos. But God's not scared. He's an expert at dealing with pride in humans, and he knows how to use teaching to grow your humility.

Here's the reality: you already have a pride problem, whether you teach or not. There's only one way to be free from pride—and it's not avoiding teaching. It's running to Jesus in repentance and faith while humbly saying yes to what he sets before you.

In the introduction, Kelly wrote about our contrasting paths to teaching. While we shared a love for God's word and communicating it, we had different motives to wrestle through. Kelly was a glory-shunner. She thought she could kill pride by turning down opportunities to teach, but she was trusting in herself not to sin and actually being prideful in the process. Pride wasn't being defeated, just avoided. For her to be free from pride and grow in

humility, she needed to say yes to the opportunities God was putting in front of her and obey his calling with dependence on him, trusting that Jesus could handle any pride that would arise as she took to the stage.

I was a glory-seeker. I've always been the person who volunteered for anything that involved a microphone and who auditioned for the biggest role of the play. I'm comfortable being the center of attention. My holy desire to share God's words mingled with my desire to do something significant for Jesus... and to get recognized for it in the process. I longed to know that what I did mattered—that *I* mattered—and that people would love me. I assumed that it would include teaching from various stages to audiences of ever-increasing size. But the opposite happened.

I was never asked to teach. Even the stages I tried to build myself fell apart. For all my twenties and half of my thirties, God shepherded me with the word “no.” He graciously exposed my mixed motives. When a friend (usually Kelly) was asked to teach, envy would spring up, and I had to go to Jesus for heart surgery. I had to consider painful questions: *Was I glad the gospel was being taught, even if I wasn't the one to do it? Did I want people to be captivated with Jesus or to remember my name? Would I serve Jesus if it meant no one saw anything I did?* Ouch.

God constantly exposed my pride and responded with both deep love and firm rebuke. It changed me. I humbly began to say yes to the opportunities God was putting in front of me—small groups, kids' ministry, making coffee, or stacking chairs. And I learned to do it with the same joy and dependence as if I were asked to teach on a stage. I embraced Jesus' understanding of greatness in this season—being faithful with little in hidden places. I surrendered my teaching goals to God, trusting that if I was going to have a teaching platform, he'd be the one building it, not me. I learned to

rejoice when others got the chance to teach, because Jesus would be exalted, and that's what mattered.

The solution to pride isn't where and how you serve; it's Jesus. We need constant exposure to our humble, forgiving Savior. Take comfort, sister. He is more than able to shepherd you in humility and extinguish the enemy of pride. As the once-arrogant King Nebuchadnezzar said, "Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble" (Daniel 4:37).

Avoiding teaching doesn't make us humble; being dependent on Jesus does. Keep going; Jesus can handle whatever you've got going on inside you! So run to him, repent, and obey him. He can use your teaching journey to help you battle the enemy of pride.

You Should Teach Right Where You Are

At this point, you may be feeling, *I love all this! But there's no way this could happen at my church.* Maybe there are no regular rhythms of women studying the Bible together or no women's ministry at all. Or maybe the women of your church just love the packaged video Bible studies too much. Maybe your church is dealing with a crisis, leaving no time for leaders to worry about this. You may also doubt that your pastor would even have a conversation with you about this topic, much less affirm you in teaching. Don't be discouraged! There are still ways for you to invest in your local church as a developing Bible teacher.

Start by studying your Bible more intently and becoming a faithful disciple. Then maybe you can start a Bible study in your home, weekly studying the text and preparing discussion questions. Or you could teach in the children's ministry or help write the lessons. If you do have women's studies or events, talk to whoever plans them and see if they'd be open to a woman from within the church doing the Bible

teaching. Email one of your pastors to see if they'd have a conversation with you about how they envision equipping women and how you would like to help with that. The first step of stewarding a teaching gift doesn't involve a stage and a mic. The first step is choosing to offer what you have, in the place you are, to serve and care for those around you.