

## John 7:14-18

Then, midway through the festival, Jesus went up to the Temple and began to teach. <sup>15</sup>The people were surprised when they heard him. “How does he know so much when he hasn’t been trained?” they asked.

<sup>16</sup>So Jesus told them, “My message is not my own; it comes from God who sent me. <sup>17</sup>Anyone who wants to do the will of God will know whether my teaching is from God or is merely my own. <sup>18</sup>Those who speak for themselves want glory only for themselves, but a person who seeks to honor the one who sent him speaks truth, not lies.”

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### Background

According to Deuteronomy 16:16, all Jewish males were required to go to Jerusalem for three major feasts, including the Feast of Tabernacles. Jews from across the Roman Empire and as far as Babylon gathered for this feast.

In verse 14, Jesus began teaching, likely in one of the colonnaded porches of the outer courts of the Temple, as was common for rabbis. The crowd listening to Jesus was diverse and divided (v12). Among them were the Jewish religious leaders, who were actively looking for Him (v11). They were amazed by His teaching and questioned how He had such deep knowledge without rabbinic training (v15).

In Jesus’ time, young teachers typically studied under prominent rabbis, like Paul did with Gamaliel. But in verse 16, Jesus declared, “*My message is not my own; it comes from God who sent me,*” meaning God Himself was His teacher.

### Teaching Points

#### 1. Obedience is a key to correct doctrine.

In verse 17, Jesus says that anyone who desires to do God's will can discern whether His teaching is from God. The key to understanding true doctrine is a heart ready to obey. The Jewish leaders rejected Jesus’ message because they refused to submit to God’s will. They clung to tradition rather than repentance and obedience. Likewise, correct interpretation of Scripture today requires approaching God’s Word without bias or resistance. Obedience—not personal preference or presupposition—is essential to discerning truth.

## **2. Humility is a key to integrity.**

Integrity is moral soundness and honesty, and it flows from humility. In verse 18, Jesus exemplifies this as the perfect Man. He didn't seek His own glory, but only that of His heavenly Father who sent Him.

Jesus also gives us a lasting biblical principle: humility is the key to integrity. If you want to be morally upright and have a strong Christian testimony, don't seek your own glory. Even the world values integrity, but for Christians, it begins with humility. When we seek God's glory over our own, it shapes true character and gives lasting power to our witness.

## **Application**

### **1. Speak for God whenever you have an audience.**

Jesus taught in the Temple whenever He had the opportunity. Likewise, we should speak for God whenever we have an audience, even if it's just one person. We should seize chances to share God's truth whenever people are willing to listen.

### **2. Let's watch out for the "god" of education.**

The Jewish leaders were amazed by Jesus' teaching but placed too much emphasis on formal education, questioning His qualifications since He hadn't studied under a rabbi. Similarly, we shouldn't assume that formal theological training is a requirement for understanding or teaching the Bible. Education is certainly valuable, but many effective Bible teachers have grown through personal study, using tools such as commentaries and online resources. We should be thankful for any education we receive but always submit our learning to God's Word and use it for His glory. Education must never become a "god" in our lives.