

Henricks, HowardTeaching to Change Lives

6. The Law of Activity

This chapter argues that teaching is not just telling. Real learning happens when the learner is actively and meaningfully involved. The goal of Christian education is not knowledge but changed lives and active obedience.

Key takeaways

- The Law of Activity: maximum learning comes from maximum involvement — but only if the activity is meaningful.
- Correct the old sayings: it's well-guided practice, properly evaluated experience, and learning by doing the RIGHT things.
- We remember ~10% of what we hear, ~50% of what we hear and see, and ~90% of what we hear, see, and do. Yet most Christian teaching is only hearing-oriented.
- Learn by doing the thing itself — you learn to witness by witnessing, not by reading books about it.
- The opposite of ignorance in the spiritual realm is not knowledge but obedience; to know and not do is not to know at all.

- Five marks of meaningful activity: (1) direction, not dictatorship — let learners take ownership; (2) function and application — don't teach more than can be used; (3) a planned purpose — no busywork or mere entertainment; (4) process as well as product — teach WHY, not just WHAT, so students can surpass you; (5) realistic problem-solving that meets learners' actual struggles.
- Learning is an ongoing process. Jesus taught by involving His disciples over time (the loaves, walking on water), not by cramming heads with facts.

Passages worth keeping

“The name of the game in Christian education is not knowledge — it's active obedience.”

States the chapter's central claim about the aim of teaching.

“I hear, and I forget. I see, and I remember. I do, and I understand.”

The proverb the chapter builds on — to which Hendricks adds that doing also changes you.

How it connects

The chapter reads Jesus as the model teacher: He formed disciples through involvement and repeated experience, so a watching world said they 'turned the world upside down.'

Scripture referenced

- **Romans 8:29** -- Believers predestined to be conformed to Christ's image — the change teaching aims at.
- **Titus 1:1** -- 'the truth that leads to godliness' — truth and life wedded together.
- **Luke 6:46** -- 'Why call me Lord and not do what I say?' — hearing must become doing.
- **Mark 8:14-21** -- The two feedings; disciples still 'did not understand' — learning as a process.
- **Matthew 14:28-31** -- Peter walking on water — learning through failure and dependence on Christ.