

Week Three

DAY THREE: WHAT'S THE MATTER?

I am no scientist, but I got excited when I researched the different phases of matter—gas, liquid, and solid—and realized a beautiful spiritual metaphor for our day-to-day role as Christ-centered women. A superhero metaphor formed in my mind. For today's study, Gas and Liquid are the villains, and Solid, the heroine.

In the scientific world, the main difference in these three structures is the density of their particles. Liquid has a definite volume but an indefinite shape, changing to conform to its container. Gas expands to fill its container, having no definite volume or shape. If unconfined, gas will spread out indefinitely. Unlike liquid or gas, a solid has a definite shape and typically will not conform to any container.

WHAT KIND OF MATTER ARE YOU?

When you look figuratively at these three forms of matter, which one defines you in your current spiritual condition?

Are you a gas? A woman pursuing wisdom outside of Christ and His Word is a danger not only to herself, but also to those around her. Unconfined, her wandering, indefinite life dissipates and infects others with falsehoods.

Are you a liquid? A woman measuring her value against anything other than Christ will find herself descending to the lowest point. Her priorities will waver and her shapeless essence will conform to the demands that surround her.

Are you a solid? A woman continually filling her life with the Word of Truth will be firm and solid. She will neither dissipate nor conform to the world's designs. Unlike gas and liquid that change with the shifting molds of culture, her character will be definite and unwavering.

If you are a gas or a liquid, how can you become a solid? If you are a solid, how can you remain one?

TEACHABLE SPIRITS

The answer to these questions is simple: we need teachable spirits. This means being good listeners and eager learners. A woman possessing a teachable spirit understands she does not know everything and is willing to learn. She is solid but moldable!

When we submit our lives as clay in the Potter's hands, we position ourselves to be sculpted by the Master Himself. His Word shapes us. Let us not be stone, which is unmovable and unchangeable. Rather, let us be firm clay, holding the form our Maker shapes.

**But now, O LORD, You are our Father,
We are the clay, and You our potter;
And all of us are the work of Your hand. (Isaiah 64:8)**

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Because we possess the perfect Word of God, we have a tool that will shape us as we are willing to be disciplined by it. Careful reading and interpretation of Scripture includes analyzing what it is saying and drawing appropriate conclusions for our lives. Believing it is telling us something it is not telling us is as dangerous as never reading it at all!

How do you approach the Word of God? Do you lay aside your personal ambitions and agendas? Do you plead with the Holy Spirit to reveal truth to you?

It is wrong to apply our lives to the Word of God. It should be the other way around! The Word of God must be applied to our lives.

Are you willing to receive instruction from God's Word?

**Make me know Your ways, O LORD;
Teach me Your paths. (Psalm 25:4)**

Are you willing to be rebuked by those who demonstrate godly wisdom?

**It is better to listen to the rebuke of a wise man
Than for one to listen to the song of fools.
(Ecclesiastes 7:5)**

Are you a woman of understanding?

**A rebuke goes deeper into one who has understanding
Than a hundred blows into a fool. (Proverbs 17:10)**

LIFELONG LEARNERS

One with a teachable spirit humbly receives criticism and is willing to change. She is a lifelong learner who sports a red cape with the letter H for humility, another superhero quality!

Being humble lifelong learners is crucial for our spiritual growth. We can never reach the end of God or His Word. Our matter will be both solid and moldable if we will continually submit to the Potter of Truth and humbly acknowledge that it is by His grace that we possess any knowledge at all.

**Give instruction to a wise man and he will be
still wiser,
Teach a righteous man and he will increase
his learning. (Proverbs 9:9)**

Learning is a concept we see throughout Scripture. The Hebrew word for *teaching* is found over two hundred times in the Old Testament, and the Greek word for it is incorporated over ninety times in the New Testament.

Giving and receiving instruction is a part of the Christian life. Yet teachers are able to teach only after receiving instruction themselves, and students receive instruction from those who do not have all the answers! Humans are flawed in the giving and receiving of knowledge, but God's Word is complete in truth and without error. Therefore, let us be like the Bereans, who **"received the word with great eagerness,**

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examining the Scriptures daily” to ensure that their learning aligned with Scripture (Acts 17:11).

PITFALLS OF GAS AND LIQUID

Let us always remember, no matter how educated we become, that we do not possess all the answers. Spiritual arrogance or self-righteousness is harmful not only to us but also to those around us. If we succumb to believing we have arrived spiritually, our solid condition will quickly turn to gas or liquid, creating a toxic environment.

**Do you see a man wise in his own eyes?
There is more hope for a fool than for him.
(Proverbs 26:12)**

A person with a humble and teachable spirit is aware of the pitfalls of gas- or liquid-like thinking. Humility keeps our clay moldable. *Can you humbly receive criticism? How quick are you to admit wrong?* Our reaction to criticism and our willingness to apologize for wrongdoing reveal our spiritual condition.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Teaching and learning are important aspects of church body life. Believers benefit from relationships built on accountability and encouragement. Grant to those who are wise and loving and faithful to the Word the ability to speak into your life.

**The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life,
To turn aside from the snares of death.
(Proverbs 13:14)**

If you do not have this option in your current situation, begin praying earnestly for the Lord to supply someone to encourage you. When He answers, be teachable! Until this is available to you, remember you have the Word of God. You need nothing else!

Maybe you find yourself in the teacher role. It's a wonderful yet precarious position. Teachers are held to higher standards and will be judged for what they teach. James warns, “**Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment**” (James 3:1).

Are you a teachable teacher? Are you willing to ask those around you if you are teachable? Are you accountable to anyone?

The best teachers are learners and listeners. If you struggle to receive instruction, prayerfully consider if you should step away from teaching for a while. Perhaps you should take off a season to let the Holy Spirit do His refining work in your life.

Teachability is not overrated. The truth of the matter is that teachability is crucial for each and every believer's spiritual maturity. Humble hearts eager for truth and willing to change will experience

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continual growth and freedom. Teachability is what will make and keep us solid in Christ.

As a child, when asked what I wanted to be when I grew up, I'd answer "Wonder Woman." I was serious. I truly wanted to be a superhero. As an adult, I realize I will never jump over a lake in a single bound or stop criminals with my brute strength, but it is possible to be Solid, the heroine who moves graciously through life with humility and teachability.

Let's avoid the villainous roles of Gas and Liquid. Instead, may we strap on our superhero shield, that we may be solid in the truth that is ours in Christ Jesus.

Pondering Matters

Read through these biblical examples of teachable spirits. Do you see yourself in them?

Notice whom David says the Lord instructs, leads, and teaches.

**Good and upright is the LORD;
Therefore He instructs sinners in the way.
He leads the humble in justice,
And He teaches the humble His way.
All the paths of the LORD are lovingkindness and truth
To those who keep His covenant and His testimonies.
For Your name's sake, O LORD,
Pardon my iniquity, for it is great.
Who is the man who fears the LORD?
He will instruct him in the way he should choose.
(Psalm 25:8-12)**

David humbly cried out to the Lord for instruction and guidance.

**Teach me Your way, O LORD;
I will walk in Your truth;
Unite my heart to fear Your name. (Psalm 86:11)**

**Teach me to do Your will,
For You are my God;
Let Your good Spirit lead me on level ground.
(Psalm 143:10)**

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The Lord teaches and guides the humble. Job is a wonderful example.

**Teach me, and I will be silent;
And show me how I have erred. (Job 6:24)**

Moses wisely yearned for more wisdom.

**So teach us to number our days,
That we may present to You a heart of wisdom.
(Psalm 90:12)**

Spend some time in prayer. Ask your heavenly Father to reveal the moments when you haven't been teachable. Repent of your folly, submit to His wisdom, then be obedient to pursue a teachable spirit.

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