

Spell It Out

Jesus used many similar stories and illustrations to teach the people as much as they could understand. In fact, in his public ministry he never taught without using parables; but afterward, when he was alone with his disciples, he explained everything to them.

Mark 4:33-34

The fine, the deep mid, the silly, the short square, the leg slip, the gully . . . If one is not familiar with these terms, he will find himself in the wrong place at the wrong time and will certainly lose the game of cricket for his team. Where would one learn the terminology for the game? It is readily available in the encyclopedia. But learning the terminology and actually playing the game are two different things entirely. Playing the positions well can only come from experience on the cricket field.

Jesus was a master at speaking in riddles for the public while at the same time teaching his disciples valuable lessons. He spoke with words that both taught and challenged. He taught those who could hear with faith and challenged those who were trying to trap him.

There were times, however, when even the disciples were unable to understand Jesus. Then Jesus would patiently explain everything to them in detail. Jesus knew that as the disciples gained experience in the mission field, their understanding of his parables would grow. Meanwhile, Jesus took the time to spell parables out for the disciples by defining terms or by retelling the stories more simply.

Sometimes it may seem that things would go faster if we just used shortcuts to get the task at hand over and done with. However, in the long run, spelling things out and bringing new people along can be more efficient than doing it all on our

own. Growing people into their positions takes patience and diligence. It requires commitment to the betterment of that other person. It requires the ability to see beyond the task at hand to the value of the person at hand.

Are we as patient as Jesus was with new Christians at church, or even new people at our workplace? The patience we show to our teammates can make the difference between a weak team and a strong, maturing, effective team.