

A People Who Live In Light of Eternity

“Educating with an Eternal Perspective”

Introductory Thoughts for the Teacher:

The great desire of God’s heart for HIS people throughout the ages has been for them to be a holy expression of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ in the midst of the pagan cultures that they have been set. Every community needs a holy, separated, Christ-loving and Christ-honoring church. More than anything else, America needs true Bible-believing Baptist churches in each and every one of its small towns, as well as its large metropolitan areas.

In days of rapid changes, much for the watering down of biblical Christianity, and days of moral corruption God is still looking for that holy remnant, a people who are consecrated and committed to the cause of Christ; a people who are consumed with the person and purpose of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Once great Bible-believing churches have begun to drift from the foundations and the faith of their fathers, and have bought into the fads and fashions of the day. Regrettably, the changes have not been for the good, they have not been for the glory of God; they have not been that which would be pleasing to God, but they are appealing to the carnal nature of a so-called, watered-down Christianity that reigns in America during this *“Laodicean Church Age.”*

- We need to be a *grateful people* who are willing to stand upon the great foundation that was laid by the saints of old.
- We need to be a *godly people* who are willing grab hold of the baton that has been passed on through the ages.
- We need to *guardians of the trust* that has been passed onto us by our Baptist forefathers.

It is this third point guardians of the trust, which should inspire us to pass down to the next generation that the biblical principles which have been passed down to us. This is Christian education!

As a church that has a multi-generational vision (Psalm 78:1-11; Jude 3-4) we must be committed to this matter of a Christian education which is distinctly biblical and Baptist in nature!

A Look Back at the Past:

The date was October 1879 and the place was Danville, Virginia. It was before a congregation of Pastors and elders . The preacher was R.L. Dabney a great theologian in his own right, as well as champion for the Southern cause of State’s Rights. The subject based on Malachi 4:6 was *Parental Responsibility!*

After setting forth the scriptural mandate for parents to train up their children in the way that they should go, particularly in this matter of education, as Dabney was bringing his message to conclusion in attempt to help them see this awesome responsibility, Dabney spoke these following words:

*Seeing the parental relation is what the scriptures describe it, and seeing that Satan has perverted it since the fall. ... **The education of children for God is the most important business done on earth.** It is the one business for which the earth exists. To it all politics, all war, all literature, all money-making, ought to be subordinated; every parent especially ought to feel, every hour of the day, that next to making his own calling and election sure, this is the end for which he is kept alive by God – this is his task on earth.*

***On the right training of the generation now arising turns not only the individual's salvation now in it, and not only the religious hope of the age which is approaching, but the fate of all future generations in a large degree.** Train up him, who is now but a boy for Christ, and you not only sanctify that soul, but you set on foot the best earthly agencies to redeem the whole broadening stream of all human beings which shall proceed from that boy down to the time where men cease to marry and are given in marriage. Until then the work of education is never ending.*

Dabney clearly understand the biblical mandate of training up the next generation. This was Dabney's great burden! He understood clearly the great mandate that we, as God's people, had to train up the next generation for God! Dabney understood that it was the great privilege and responsibility for one generation to pass on to the next generation the faith of their fathers!

TIPS FOR TEACHERS

Just a reminder: These lessons will all need to be "tailored-made" for your individual classes. While the same *biblical truth* can be taught to an elementary age child that is taught to a teenager the manner in which it is taught can and should be vastly different. For the child—and in some cases the teen—a listing of principles will be a bit more difficult to retain than a story (preferably biblical). For those of you who teach adults and teens giving a handout with fill-in-the-blanks will help greatly. For those of you teaching children, stories and visual aids are essential.

THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF A GOOD SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON IS THIS: That the teacher has become consumed with the truth that he/she is teaching. George Whitefield, when asked why so many people came to hear him preach replied, "I just set myself on fire and people come to watch me burn." It has been said, "What consumes you, controls you." As teachers we must prayerfully get hold of these truths!

KEY SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

For all of us who are teaching it would be to our benefit, as well as the benefit of those who we are teaching if we would put to memory and meditate upon the following scriptures while we are teaching this series of lessons: Deuteronomy 6:4-7; Psalm 1:1-3; Psalm 78:1-11; Proverbs 22:6; Jeremiah 6:16-17; Colossians 3:1-4; Ephesians 6:4!

AIM OR PURPOSE

Over the next four weeks, as a church, we will be teaching during the Sunday school hour the importance of a Christian education. There are two primary reasons for this special emphasis at this time of the year:

- The overriding purpose of these lessons is to teach our people who are new and to remind those who have been a part of this church for years that God desires a people who are called out of the world, and unto Christ; a people who live in light of eternity.
- The secondary purpose behind these lessons is to, once again be reminded that as a church and as families, we have the wonderful privilege and awesome responsibility to train up the next generation for the Lord.

Points to Ponder as You Prepare:

Our salvation in Christ includes *justification* (a past fact) which took place in a moment at the time of our salvation, *sanctification* (a present reality) which is a long process, and *glorification* (a future promise). When we talk about a Christian education we are talking about the *sanctification* process. Where God uses the home, the church, peers, and in these days of compulsory education, the school to sanctify us or to “grow us.”

1 Peter 2:2-3 (KJV), 2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: 3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

2 Peter 3:18 (KJV) , 18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

Christian education is a process-that actually takes a life time- which is conforming us into the image of Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:28-30 (KJV), ²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. ³⁰ Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

We need to be a people who live in light of eternity, a people who are heavenly-minded; a people who are contending “for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3), a people who will “be strong in the Lord” and “stand against the wiles of the devil” (Ephesians 6:11, 12) that have so pervaded and permeated the day in which we live!

One aspect of becoming and remaining—for generations to come—an eternally-minded people who are “living in light of eternity,” is to be certain the next generation is trained up in “the way that they should go” (Proverbs 22:6). In other words, we need to educate our children biblically, not culturally. Our Baptist children need to receive a biblical education that emphasizes not only biblical truth, but our great heritage as a Baptist people.

According to a study, released a few years ago, “born-again” parents are more likely to put an emphasis on seeing their children get a “good education” than to see them enter adulthood as followers of Christ. According to this survey:

- Four out of 10 (39%) parents listed getting a good education as the critical outcome for their children.
- Twenty four percent or parents felt that helping their child feel loved was the most critical outcome.
- Fourteen percent of parents felt that helping the child feel “affirmed and encouraged
- Thirteen percent of parents felt that have a firm spiritual foundation was the most critical outcome.
- Only four percent of the parents felt that helping a child have the appropriate moral values was the critical outcome.

It would appear to me that these folks, like so many good Christian parents today, have no understanding of God’ s purpose for our children and for the “education” process!