
1. All of a child's education should be Bible-centred and God-centred.

"Parents, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord." (Ephesians 6:4).

I'm saddened when Christian parents tell me of the frustration and stress their children experience in secular schools, but I also wonder if parents aren't doing exactly what Ephesians 6:4 says not to do: putting their children, day after day, in situations that 'exasperate' them, that 'provoke them to anger,' or to sorrow or frustration.

Training that is not 'of the Lord' will do that: the contrast in the verse ('do not exasperate ... instead bring them up in the training of the Lord') tells us we should expect 'exasperated' children from secular education.

If we give our children 'training and instruction' that excludes God's words 6 hours a day, 5 days a week for 12 formative years, can we honestly say we have continually brought up our children in instruction that is 'of the Lord'? We were convinced we could not.

Deuteronomy 6:6-7 speaks of God's commands: "Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."

2. Education should be positive and truthful.

Sometimes parents think that a secular environment will 'strengthen' their children by forcing them to stand up for their own beliefs. But God's Word does not endorse that viewpoint. It does not say, "Give a child twelve years of training in the way he should not go, and he will be made strong by it."

Instead, God tells us,

"Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." (Proverbs 22:6)

I know of no verse in scripture that tells me that secular training will 'strengthen' Christian children. It may callous them so they view sin as more 'normal'. It may harden them so

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"The main reason my wife Margaret and I sent our children to Christian Heritage Academy was a conviction that Scripture directs Christian parents to give their children a Bible-based education whenever they have opportunity to do so. I have listed here six Biblical principles which we found very persuasive.

they care more about the things of the world and less about God. It may desensitise them so they are more comfortable living in the midst of repeated sin against their Lord. But it will not strengthen them as Christian men and women: "Train a child in the way he should go."

3. Peer influence should be positive and Christ-like.

Parents sometimes think it helps or strengthens their children to spend much time with children who have different moral standards and goals for life. But God's Word disagrees and reminds us that children will tend to become more and more like their frequent companions:

"He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm." (Proverbs 13:20)

"Do not be deceived. Bad company ruins good morals." (1 Corinthians 15:33)

We've seen the results of good peer influence in our boys' lives. They've picked up from friends at our Christian Academy a deeper concern for prayer, for purity of speech, for missions, for kindness to others, for respect for authority, etc. And in general they're happier! They love their school. Their education is the kind God wants it to be - and even very young children sense that, although they can't explain it.

Every part of the day should be 'educational' from a Biblical perspective. Can we then exclude the most important learning times for 12 years of a child's life and say these should be 'secular,' empty of Biblical teachings?

Could Moses have said, "Talk of God's words all day long - except when your children are being educated"? No, I am convinced he could not.

4. Every teacher's pattern of life should be worthy of imitation.

Children are great imitators. A teacher they like will have tremendous impact not only on studies, but on attitudes toward all aspects of life. Jesus knew that, for He said, "Everyone when he is fully taught will be like his teacher." (Luke 6:40).

Parents, do you want your children to be like a teacher who is never able to apply principles from God's Word to the subject being taught, or the real life situation being faced? Or do you want your child to become like a teacher whose love for the Lord Jesus and His Word is the central focus of all life?

I realise that there are many excellent Christian teachers in public [state] schools. I am genuinely thankful for their valuable ministry and for their positive influence on students. But here I am talking about a different question than teaching in public schools. I am asking, "How does Scripture tell Christian parents to educate their children?" We seldom

realise how little freedom Christian teachers have to teach Biblical moral standards (such as the Ten Commandments) or even belief in God generally in the classroom.

5. Only God-centred education gives true wisdom.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." (Psalm 111:10)

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge." (Proverbs 9:10)

"In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Colossians 2:3)

This is the reason our secular educational systems have strayed from the truth. Isn't it foolish to think we can get a true perspective on God's creation from a system that begins by excluding His words?

society says it 'belongs' - at home and in church - in private, where it will not be noticed, and where it will have little effect on our politics, our laws, our corporations, our universities, our news media, or our nation's public conscience. If we keep Christianity out of the education of this generation we shall keep Christianity out of influencing society in the next generation, for secular education trains children to be secularised Christians.

Must we not rather train our children in Christian schools that they may become salty salt and brilliant lights to transform a society wandering in darkness?

I suspect that the verses discussed here may convince you (as they convinced us) that Scripture gives you strong reasons to put your children in a Christian school. I assure you, if you do so you will see God's blessing on your children and your whole family, and for all eternity you will not regret it."

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Here is the issue: do we really think the Bible works in the real world? That it gives crucial guidance in modern life? If not - if we quietly assume the Bible is mainly intended for use inside Sunday School classes, then secular education will be our natural choice. But if we do think the Bible guides us in all areas of life, then we'll give our children education that applies Scripture to every area of training for life.

6. Christian schooling is the best hope for transforming society.

Jesus tells us,

"You are the salt of the earth - you are the light of the world." (Matthew 5:13-14)

Society is to be influenced and guided by Christians! But why aren't we doing this more today?

I think the largest reason is our meek acceptance of secular education all the way from kindergarten to the university Ph.D. School is where we learn to think. It's where we learn how to work and relate to others and influence the world. But if that whole process excludes God's own viewpoint in Scripture for twelve years, our Christian witness grows accustomed to being mute, and it remains uneducated, never growing beyond the 'Sunday School' level. Our lamp is 'put under a bushel,' our salt loses its saltiness and is 'no longer good for anything' (Matthew 5:13,15).

Christian parents sometimes say they want their children to be 'salt and light' in secular school. But how much salt and light can untrained, silent Christians be?

If we keep our children in public schools they will be trained year after year to keep their Christianity just where our

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