

Education?

This lesson on what the Bible says about education is largely built upon the previous lesson on what the Bible says about work.

When Paul wished to deflate the pride of the Corinthians, he asked them, “What do you have that you did not receive?” (1 Corinthians 4:7). I would like to ask you a related question: what do you know about that you were not taught? Think about all the things you know and do, and consider how you were taught them in some way. Brushing your teeth, putting on clothes, using forks to eat, speaking English, adding numbers, saying ‘thank you,’ riding bikes—in all these things we received instruction. The Bible clearly teaches that mankind needs instruction, especially in spiritual matters, being acquainted with Scriptures in order to have wisdom for eternal life.

We have been commanded to glorify God in all that we do, and that includes school, a primary place of instruction. In order to see part of what the Bible has to say about education, let us turn once again to the cornerstone chapters of the Bible and look at Genesis 2:19-20. Remember the context of these verses; God has made mankind, both male and female, in his own image to rule over the rest of creation. **“Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him.”** While this passage does not directly address education, there are implications from what this passage says about the knowledge and authority of mankind that apply to education. When God parades the animals before Adam, the man begins to exercise his authority over the other creatures. He is granted the authority to give them their names, which he probably based off their appearance or behavior. As he observed and named them, the man gained knowledge that was essential to his dominion over them. Think about how this is played out in our lives today. We name our pets, which shows our mastery over them; they are *our* pets. If you want to tame and train an animal, you must learn a little bit about them beforehand in order to be effective.

This passage shows that knowledge is the first step of having dominion over the earth. We have to know certain things before we can work. Good cooking requires general knowledge of how long to cook things, how hot to cook them, how much to combine together for the desired effect, and so on. This is just an example of the many kinds of work that require a basic

knowledge of math, reading, and science in order to succeed in work. Even people who have not received a full education who are successful at their work have basic knowledge about math and science that they have learned through experience. In whatever task we undertake, knowledge comes first; and instruction usually precedes knowledge.

Another way to see how knowledge is the first step of having dominion over the earth is that knowledge itself is a way of grasping how things truly are in the world which God has made. Knowledge that gives birth to wisdom and skill is a quality that reflects God's own knowledge. God knows all things and has immeasurable wisdom; as those made after his likeness, we reflect God's knowledge with our own capacities for knowledge. Figuring out how things work in the creation is a way of having dominion over them. When we discover and comprehend things about the world, we have conquered the unknown, in a sense. The privilege of learning about our Father's world in subjects like chemistry, biology, physics, mathematics, and history is kin to Adam's privilege to know and name the animals.

Probably the most common expressed frustration with school is, "I am never going to use this!" While I do sympathetically understand this frustration, I would also like to challenge that opinion. Things have value beyond their usefulness. We are to enjoy many things for what they are, not just for what they do for us. We value music, decorations, games, sports, and family for what they *are* primarily, and only sometimes for their usefulness. We do not play monopoly because we can use that money for our own bank accounts. We ride bikes, make art, play video games, and see family in order to enjoy them for what they are. In fact, having a relationship with someone only to use them is very selfish. Knowing historical events, mathematical equations, or scientific laws is valuable because these things are the details of God's world. We should have a child-like curiosity in all the marvelous things that the Lord has made, not just the few things we are interested in. God is interested in all the things he has made and done. Having a curiosity to know the things about the world is a way to worship the beautiful Creator whose hand is behind all things.

However, this does not mean that we have to be interested in everything with the same degree of fervor. We do not have to like everything with the same amount of interest, but we should be respectful of every subject. Also, some things are more important to know than others. It is more important to know addition and subtraction than to know the order of the elements on the periodic table. While there are some things you learn in school that might not resurface in the

jobs you have in the future, you do not know the future, so do not be quick to presume what knowledge may or may not come in handy in your latter days. I, personally, wish I would have remembered more of what I was taught, even basic geometry. I did not think I would need that information, but knowing it now would really help me in some of the work I do tremendously. Knowledge opens wide the door of opportunity to do all sorts of work before God.

As it relates to your school, the truth is that not everything is as it is supposed to be. Sometimes you have bad teachers, bad assignments, bad classmates, and bad schools. Keep in mind that perseverance in doing what is right in the midst of adversity is a fine quality. Right now, part of your work that has been assigned to you by God is your schooling, in whatever form that is taking place. Remember last week's lesson about the dignity and vanity of work that God has given to the children of Adam and Eve. Do not be lazy in your work now, but work heartily unto the Lord in all that you do. Let all you do be worship unto him. I will admit, it is difficult to know how exactly to worship God in all we undertake. This requires the patient contemplation to know how to worship God in our work. Yet, this patient contemplation is very rewarding. One way to worship as we work is to be thankful.

While education is still our topic, I want to give a little advice about college. You do not have to go to college to be a successful person. You do not have to go to college to live a good life with which God is greatly pleased. However, many fields of work require additional education or experience beyond high school education. If you want to be a nurse, mechanic, or performer, you will need further instruction and training, which is often provided at a college or trade school. While I do not think college is necessary for everyone or that everyone is meant for college, I strongly believe in its value. As a college graduate who is currently working on his Master's at a seminary and teaches at Frontier, I recognize the benefits of higher education. I recommend college to you, even an Associate's degree at Frontier, depending on your situation.

This might not have been the lesson you were expecting or wanting. Nevertheless, I think it is very important that you consider how to honor God even in your schooling. Our Creator lays claims on us in every facet our lives, and that includes classes K-12. We have been bought with a price, so glorify Jesus in your body. **“In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths”** (Proverbs 3:6).