

For Teachers

In my 35 years of education experience, I observed that in some contexts, by setting the bar too high, by accelerating academics too fast, by an inelastic focus on discipleship, and by plunging too deep into well of worldview analysis, albeit goals first-rate in their context, can (1) generate either an ungodly arrogance in the attainment of knowledge or (2) remove the joy and delight of learning in a child, or both. This is not what we want to pass on to the next generation.

James Nickel

Learning is the accumulation of facts and information But learning alone is not enough, and learning alone can make a man simply a learned fool. And a learned fool is simply a more dangerous man than a simple, ignorant fool. Learning must be linked with wisdom. Some of the wisest men I have known had relatively little schooling and book-learning, but this did not prevent them from being wise. The wise man will always seek to expand the range of his learning, because wisdom does not despise learning, although learning often despises wisdom Learning in its place is good, but it must be linked with wisdom or it becomes dangerous. Without faith in God, learned men become arrogant and act as little gods. Without the humility of faith, learned men despise all those who lack their learning and assume that their collection of information has given them a natural passport to power.

Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Bread Upon the Waters: Columns from the California Farmer* (1969), pp. 67-68

Learning is like rowing upstream; not to advance is to drop back.

Old Chinese Proverb

I have never let my schooling interfere with my education.

Mark Twain (1835-1910)

The four laws of learning are explanation, demonstration, imitation, and repetition.

John R. Wooden

One of the painful signs of years of dumbed-down education is how many people are unable to make a coherent argument. They can vent their emotions, question other people's motives, make bold assertions, repeat slogans— anything except reason.

Thomas Sowell, *Random Thoughts* (www.jewishworldreview.com), 5 September 2007

In a democracy, we have always had to worry about the ignorance of the uneducated. Today we have to worry about the ignorance of people with college degrees.

Thomas Sowell, *Random Thoughts* (www.jewishworldreview.com), 2 May 2006

Someone once said that the most important knowledge is knowledge of our own ignorance. Our schools are depriving millions of students of that kind of knowledge by promoting “self-esteem” and encouraging them to have opinions on things of which they are grossly ignorant, if not misinformed.

Thomas Sowell, *Random Thoughts* (www.jewishworldreview.com), 30 November 2005

Education in our day is humanistic; therefore, at its best it is technical and factual, not Christian. The modern era began with an exaltation of mathematics, a legitimate area of study but hardly a discipline to condition all others. In school we are taught that two plus two equals four, which is true enough, but very few answers in life are as easy or as abstract. In high school geometry, I heard some students express a desire that all life and thought could be reduced, like geometry, to a handful of axioms and propositions. Over the generations, men like Spinoza have tried to do just that. But two plus two equals four is an abstraction and a technical answer. Most of man's problems are neither technical nor abstractions; they are moral and personal.

Rousas J. Rushdoony, *In His Service: The Christian Calling to Charity*, pp. 115-116

The definition of Biblical Christian education is encapsulated in Proverbs 1:7, “The fear of the Lord is

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the beginning [foundation] of knowledge ..." (cf. Proverbs 9:10, Job 28:28, Psalm 111:10). Right knowledge and right wisdom must begin from the right base: the right fear of the right object.

James Nickel

Education without wisdom is disastrous. Knowledge without common sense catastrophic.

James Nickel

To equip young people for the work of service in the kingdom of God, we must know the reality of seeing all of life in terms of the providential hand of God. We must order all aspects of our life with the values of eternity in view. We must develop our life and faith to reflect of the light of Jesus to a world in the grip of darkness. Our scholarship must serve God's purposes in this world.

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The key to Biblical Christian education is the Biblical Christian educator, one who is mature and forward-looking, a thinker, a theologian, a master of presuppositions, flexible, always growing and creative, parental (not just professional), skilled in apprenticeship, dynamic, motivated, and passionate about God, life, and the harmonious wonders of God's wise and good creation.

James Nickel

I so appreciate having "extra" daughters ... they are my students, past and present.

James Nickel

As a teacher, it still amazes me how, after all of these years, my life is intertwined with students and their respective families in so many blessed ways.

James Nickel

In most discussions of the problems of American public schools, the low intellectual quality of people who come out of our schools of education is the 800-pound gorilla that keeps getting ignored. Such teachers cannot give their students intellectual abilities that they themselves don't have.

Thomas Sowell

The goal of teaching is to get students interested in the game of learning, not the game of passing.

Mortimer J. Adler, *How to Read a Book*, p. 14

Students are a gift we give to a time we will not see.

Paraphrase of a quote by John Whitehead ... Dr. Phil Millage, Indiana Wesleyan University
Dr. Millage gives an addendum, "No one lived that truth more than Dr. Glenn R. Martin (1935-2004),"
past Professor of History and Social Sciences at Indiana Wesleyan University.

If you cannot explain a concept to a six-year-old, you don't fully understand it.

Albert Einstein, cited in Ron Aharoni, *Arithmetic for Parents*, p. 47

Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.

James 3:1 (ESV)

It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

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John 6:45 (ESV)

Come to me, all you toiling and burdened ones, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For it is good to bear my yoke, and my burden is light.”

Matthew 11:28-30 (Weymouth)

Abundance of knowledge does not teach men to be wise.

Heraclitus

There are teachers who impart information, facts, and/or skills ... they are not too hard to find. But, the teacher who imparts vision and inspiration ... that person is worth his or her weight in gold.

James Nickel

Both private and state schools act without rudder and direction. Today, the whirlwinds of their humanistic proclivities hasten the demise of learning.

William Blake, “Van Til’s Vision for Education”

There is much rhetoric today about quality of education, but the proposals only offer further examples of man’s vain attempt to legislate rather than to discover God’s order of education.

William Blake, “Van Til’s Vision for Education”

Christian polemic founded in “thus saith the Lord” propelled our Christian culture ahead in the past and is our only hope for the future! Education impregnated with the voice of God contributes to this advance. Such a vision moves men out of their status quo, and education becomes viewed as a significant vehicle to move people ahead. A reckoning of educational costs to fulfil this task proves itself worthwhile because the benefits clearly outweigh the costs.

William Blake, “Van Til’s Vision for Education”

It will then appear that Christian theism, which was at first rejected because of its supposed authoritarian character, is the only position which gives human reason a field for successful operation and a true method of true progress in knowledge.

Cornelius Van Til, *The Dilemma of Education*, p. 285

Whatever is in accord with Scripture is educative; whatever is not in accord with it is miseducative.

Cornelius Van Til, *The Dilemma of Education*, p. 33

Knowledge consists of knowing who God is, who man is, and what the external world is. All learning thus can generally be subsumed under these three categories ... There is ... no textbook more important in all the curriculum than the Bible. It is not merely a text alongside other texts, but it contains the interpretive principles to determine the content and structure of all texts. It is the Light of all lights. Christian education has frequently failed to situate the self-attesting Scriptures at the center of the curriculum. The Bible as the voice of God must be the central orientating principle around which all knowledge becomes knowledge and becomes knowable. When this is done the teacher makes God the final reference point in all predication. God becomes knowable; man becomes knowable and so does the world he lives in.

William Blake, “Van Til’s Vision for Education”

A teacher treats both universals [unity or general principles - JN] and particulars [details or facts = JN] at every turn in education. Van Til’s position affords a basis for developing the proper treatment of these in the classroom. The teacher accordingly will not emphasize universals at the expense of facts, nor facts at the expense of universals. Both will be viewed for their importance in God’s created order.

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A teacher who concentrates on facts at the expense of universals will likely concentrate on the regurgitation of these facts at the expense of understanding them. They will be quickly forgotten, not being tied to any universal organizing principles. On the other hand, stress on the universals will seem irrelevant to pupils.

William Blake, "Van Til's Vision for Education"