

Education Is *Not* Neutral—Why Christian Children Need Classical, Christian Schooling

Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart...

...be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Ephesians 4:17-18, 23-24 (ESV)

The life of the mind and the life of soul are inseparable. How one thinks determines how one lives.

In these passages in Ephesians Paul points out this inseparable connection. He commands—this must be the sense of ‘testifying in the Lord’—believers to put away the failed thinking of the unbelieving culture around them and to be careful to live and think in a manner that pleases God.

But this way of life he tells them to avoid does not come by accident, rather it flows from the darkened understanding that is itself an inevitable by-product of hard hearts, of souls that reject Christ. So living and thinking are intertwined, and cannot be divided. How you live reflects how you think and how you think changes how you live.

This is where classical, Christian education comes in: in order for our children to *live* in a way that pleases God—in true righteousness and holiness—they must also learn to think in a way that pleases God. If we don’t want their lives to be futile we must instruct them to think in ways that are not futile. This is something that classical and Christian education is uniquely designed to do. Our education is Christ-centered, that is, it acknowledges that Christ is Lord over all creation—all history, literature, science, math, everything that exists, is meant to serve and glorify him. Students educated from a classical perspective become adept at doing many things well, and are thus prepared for anything. Our classical curriculum and methods are meant to form the mind to think clearly, to train students to speak and write eloquently and persuasively, and to conform the soul to the truth of God.

The mission of Veritas is to cultivate wisdom, virtue, and godliness through providing an excellent classical, Christian education. Our unique academic program, which includes a thorough integration of history and literature, robust theological study, critical reading of the great books of Western civilization, is assisting families to develop, by the grace of God, thoughtful and faithful young people who seek to honor and love Christ with all their hearts and minds. We have seen remarkable academic results, but more important to us is the kind of people our students are becoming.

The 6+ hours a day, 170+ days a year, students spend in school have an impact on their minds and hearts. This should have a forming influence or it will have been a waste of time. Actually,

it *will* form, whether we like what is being formed or not. Education enculturates, that is, it is a process whereby ‘an individual learns the accepted norms and value emphases of an established culture through repetition’. The question is, what are those norms and values that are being learned? Are they the values and patterns of life that we want for our children? This training process can never be neutral. What is the culture you would like to be formed in your child? The school he or she attends will inevitably shape this.

School choices abound for parents—secular schools (public and private), home schooling, Christian schools, and classical and Christian schools. The chief question for parents should always be, in which of these places will my child be most guided in the ways of Christ? Where will he or she most likely be led to walk in ‘true righteousness and holiness’?

Martin Luther many centuries ago gave the answer: “Where the Holy Scriptures are not the rule, I should advise no one to send his child.”