

The Philosophy of Christian Education

The word “philosophy” comes from two Greek words that mean “love of wisdom”. This word also carries with it the idea of “study of truth”, “logical concept”, “theory of knowledge”, “outlook and perspective”, or “way of thinking”. In living and searching for truth, each man develops a system of values and beliefs that guides his actions. This system is his “philosophy” of life. The study of Christian education cannot overlook the Why? And How? of this great concept. Every man needs the right philosophy of Christian education. Every man has a philosophy of Christian education, whether he realizes it or not. Your philosophy is how and why you think what you do about something. We all have our ways of thinking about life and even Christian education. The problem is that we often do not have the right philosophy, “way of thinking” about Christian education.

We must have a guide to the right philosophy of Christian education. The guide for the Christian in this area and in all other areas is the Bible. The Word of God must be our supreme guide. It not only contains God’s truth and will, it IS God’s truth and it IS His revealed will. The Bible makes it clear that Christian education is important and necessary. Note the following Scriptures:

Deu 6:4 -7 *Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.*

Prov 22:6 *Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*

Rom 8:28, 29 *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. 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.*

Eph 4:11 - 16 *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.*

2 Tim 3:14 - 17 *But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

It is, therefore, the purpose of Christian education to help train and equip young people to grow and mature physically, spiritually, etc. to be more and more conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the “way of thinking” we need about Christian education. This should be our

philosophy. We should want to “train up a child in the way he should go.” We should know, believe, and trust that the Holy Scriptures “are able make one wise unto salvation.” We must think this way about the subject or else we do not line up with the Word of God.

Our philosophy must go another step. We must think right about who this responsibility of educating children falls to. Deut. 6:1 - 12 makes it abundantly clear that the responsibility belongs to the parent. God’s command in these verses is that parents teach “them”, their children, the things God has taught in His Word. Christian education begins in the home. However, it does not end there. Parents are required to teach their children and are held responsible by God for the education they receive. Parents should use every scriptural tool at their disposal for this purpose.

The Christian school is to be a ministry of the local church that helps parents meet this great responsibility. While Christian education begins at home, it continues at the church through the Christian school. Consider:

Matthew 28:18 -20, “*And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*” (emphasis mine)

This command of our Lord is to the church. We are to teach those who are saved “all things” He has commanded. The only way this can be consistently done is through Christian education. The Latin phrase “*in loco parentis*” adequately describes the role of the church and Christian school. This phrase “*in loco parentis*” means “in the place of the parents”. That is what a Christian school ought to be. The Christian education system exists to help the parent with what God commanded them to do. It also exists to help the church do the same. This is the right way to think, the right philosophy of Christian education.

Christian education begins in the home, continues in the church, but does not stop there. Actually, it does not end until the individual leaves this earth to be in the presence of the Lord. Life itself is a part of education. Experience, trials, victories, etc. all go together to give an education to the Christian.

Let’s look at another important part. There is a difference between the public school idea (philosophy) of education, sometimes called *progressive education* and the Christian idea of education, sometimes called *traditional education*.

Traditional Education

A.A. Baker says, “The very mention of the phrase ‘traditional education’ causes some to immediately conjure up a vision of a one-room schoolhouse, long wooden benches, a wood burning stove, eight grades, one teacher, and an outdoor toilet.” By “traditional education” it is meant that education is given in the traditional way. It is presented in a traditional fashion. No modern gadgets, no fancy machines, no federal aid, no state aid, no elaborate facilities, etc. existed in the early classrooms of this nation. However, the education of that era was superior to the so called “progressive education” of today. What made the difference?

The key to the education of the traditional method was the teacher - a teacher who had an old-fashioned, authoritarian, traditional view of education. While she was teaching the first graders, she

knew what was going on in all the other grades as well; and you had better be down to business and doing your work or she would know the reason why!

Most simply think that this method was old-fashioned or “traditional”. It was. But it worked! The new methods of today do not produce the same effect on young people. It may seem old fashioned and not up to today’s standards, but, in reality, it is always up to date. Truth and morality are never outdated. What worked then will work now if applied correctly.