

# Biblical World View

## The Perils of Education

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Perhaps in no other area of life have Christians surrendered the culture more than in the area of education. We have even accepted the secular premise of what constitutes a "prestigious"

school by acknowledging that Harvard, Yale, and many other secular schools (whether they be elementary, middle, high school or any form of higher education) are the top-notch learning institutions.



This acknowledgement comes despite knowing that by their nature, such secular schools teach worldviews that are completely opposed to a Biblical perspective.

On one hand we understand truth only lies with God and His word, yet at times we seek after institutions for our children that undermine that truth and oppose the word of God on a regular basis. We fail to recognize that today's public and secular

schools are far different in values than the schools our parents and grandparents attended.

It is in this sense that current debates over public schools reflect a larger cultural and spiritual war that simmers beneath the surface. For too long Christians have surrendered the moral high ground of God's

Biblical standards in one area of life after another and education is no exception. We have done so under the misguided notion that our belief in Jesus Christ only

affects how we live our personal lives, rather than seeing it impacting all institutions and all of life.

We have largely lost the culture because we have accepted the lie that religion is only a matter of the heart, while non-religious subjects (such as almost all topics taught in school) are a matter of the intellect. Our Christianity has thus been neutered like a pet cat that society does not want replicated and spread to the culture at large.

Modern public education is a direct byproduct of this lie that Biblical truths only apply to the private "religious arena," and

should have no part in the rest of culture. Martin Luther addressed this very lie roughly 500 years ago when he stated: *"I am much afraid that schools will prove to be great gates of Hell unless they diligently labor in explaining the Holy Scriptures, engraving them in the hearts of youth. I advise no one to place his child where the Scriptures do not reign paramount. Every institution in which men are not increasingly occupied with the Word of God must become corrupt."* Noah Webster was more succinct. In his preface to his 1828 Dictionary he said: *"Education is useless without the Bible."* Thus,

Christians must know what the Bible says about education, learn what is being taught and make their own decision as to how best to have their children educated.

### Biblical Principles of Education

The foremost Biblical principle related to education concerns who has the primary responsibility for educating children.



While today's secular society claims it is the government that is responsible, the Bible makes clear it is the parents. Since God entrusted the lives of children to their parents, fathers and mothers have the duty to care for the souls in their family in the same way as a pastor cares for the souls in the local congregation. Proverbs 22:6 instructs parents to: *"Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it."* Ephesians 6:4 confirms that Old Testament wisdom by instructing fathers to raise up their children *"in the training and instruction of the Lord,"* since God is the ultimate source of all knowledge and understanding. Certainly parents can delegate their responsibility to others, as is done when parents send their children to private or public schools, but the **ultimate responsibility** lies with the parents, not government or society at large.

The second Biblical principle is that all education starts with a proper knowledge of God. Quite frankly, many Christians have ignored or forgotten this principle. In Psalm 111:10, it says, *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."* The 9:10 echoes that truth. Proverbs Interestingly, 2 Peter 1:5 actually provides a divine sequence that confirms this pattern for learning when it states, *"add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; . . ."* Thus, from a Biblical perspective, learning doesn't start

with facts; it starts with virtue! **Learning starts with a proper attitude based on a reverence or fear of the Lord.** Scripture says to add to your faith, virtue and only thereafter to add knowledge and the acquisition of facts. Scripture warns us that to learn facts without God is to become prideful and puffed up.

Wisdom, or true learning, does not begin without a proper focus and relationship with God. Yet many times we act as if the Psalms and Proverbs said, *"the fear of the Lord is the beginning*

*—The first and almost the only Book deserving of universal attention is the Bible. ||*

**— John Quincy Adams**

## The Perils of Education (cont)

*of only —religious knowledge.* It doesn't say that. **Every subject; every issue; every problem must be first addressed by what God has to say on the issue.** God created all of life. While we know that, we often act as if God has no answers for 90% of life's issues and thus a secular education devoid of God and His perspective is not a big deal. Sadly, that Biblical pattern is impossible to have in public schools today.

The third and final Biblical principle related to education is that without God, all learning is foolishness and vanity. First Corinthians 3:19 tells us: *—For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.* Likewise, Colossians 2:8 says we are not to let others take us by their philosophy and vain deceit. Romans 12:2 says we are not to be conformed to this world, yet when we send our children to public school, learning the philosophy and world view of non-believers without counter Biblical teaching at home, we do exactly that!

Exposing our children to a constant barrage of secularism before they have had a chance to build a strong spiritual and Biblical foundation is a recipe for ship-wrecked faith and compromise. It virtually assures that our children will be conformed to this world in contrast to the warning God gives us in Romans 12:2, unless we take active steps to combat that result.

### So What Should Christians Do?

For Christian families in the midst of the secular education conflict, there are no easy answers. Nor are there any options without heavy sacrifices. For some Christian families who can afford to, albeit it requires a great sacrifice as well, one parent can choose to stay home and home school their children with the other parent assisting in the evenings and weekends. Homeschooling is a huge time commitment and normally requires the loss of one full-time bread winner. But this option also provides the most opportunity to shape and mold

your children's destiny completely consistent with your own faith and beliefs.



For other Christian families who have the financial resources, you can send your children to a local Christian private school that shares your values and will aid in teaching them a Biblical worldview that strengthens, rather than undermines their faith. Of course that requires diverting financial resources from other priorities to pay the higher cost of tuition.

Finally, for those Christian families who do not have the financial resources to even attempt the first two options, they likely have no choice but to leave their children in the public and secular school. For them, there is an opportunity for their children to be "salt and light" in the darkness.

However, these parents must also make sacrifices, be realistic about the dangers and help their children to be prepared.

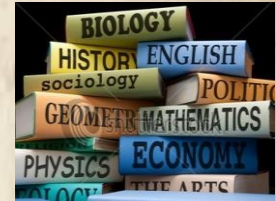
We must recognize this as spiritual warfare, and in warfare we do not send soldiers out to battle who are too young, inexperienced or untrained. We wouldn't dare send children out to fight a physical war for those very reasons, so we shouldn't send

them out to fight a spiritual war before they are ready if avoidable. It is that reason parents don't

allow their children to cross busy streets by themselves until they are mature enough to understand and respond properly to the dangers. Public school is wrought with secular philosophies that seek to destroy the spiritual foundations and faith of our children.

Therefore, the key for these parents is to **stay very involved** and aware of what the schools are teaching and supplement the lessons by discussing with their children what the Bible says on each subject. Parents need to

make sure they talk to their children about what they are being taught — not just "how was school today" but, subject by subject, ask what was taught. A parent could even read through all their children's text books at the beginning of each year in order to prepare themselves to counter what their children will be taught.



Then parents have the chance to undue any harm to their faith and remind their children what the Biblical truth is on that matter. This can be a rich and rewarding opportunity for parents to draw closer to their children and allow them to actively assist in building their children's faith to remain

strong in the midst of the assaults on that faith.

This article is not intended to be condemning of anyone who sends their child to public school but to help all parents understand what the secular schools are doing and provide ways of counter acting their influence and minimizing the dangers. But we must be aware that, as parents, we are ultimately responsible for our children's education and the condition of their souls while under our care. To do so we must seek the Lord for His creative options and alternatives that we might not have considered.

It is time we recognize that public schools and secular private schools inherently teach our children non-Biblical perspectives in non-Biblical ways. As such, we should stop viewing any secular school as "prestigious" when all they teach are vain philosophies separated from the ultimate source of truth. Every Christian parent, given their responsibility over the education of their children, should carefully seek God on this issue to prevent them from unknowingly subjecting their children to a spiritual warfare they probably are not ready for.

The Ten  
Commandments and  
the teachings of Jesus

Christ are not only  
basic but plenary.

William Holmes  
McGuffey authored  
The New England  
Primer and  
McGuffey's Eclectic  
Reader