

The Education of Image-Bearing Children – 2 Cor 10:3-5

Introduction - As we continue to witness the meltdown of sexual morals and the cultural inability to recognize basic biological differences between a man and a woman, it is important to understand where this is all coming from. Several generations of compromise, led by an impotent western church, has brought us to this cultural ruin. One of the distinctives of this local body has been to repent of one of those compromises and commit ourselves to obeying the Lord in providing a distinctly Christian education (*paideia*) for our children. Methodologies and opportunities abound and have continued to develop for us, but one thing remains: Caesar may not have our children for our children bear the image of God.

Taking Every Thought Captive – This passage has many points of application. With regard to the enculturation and instruction of our children, it means that we attack false claims of truth, goodness and beauty along with presuppositions regarding our existence, loyalties, and destiny by means of submitting everything to the lordship of Jesus Christ.

A Telos to our Education – While our weapons are not carnal, that is not to say that they are not expected to have very carnal, earthy, cultural implications. God's plan for redeemed man is to press out the kingdom of God into all areas of the world He has redeemed. This means we are *contra mundum*, we stand against the unbelieving world. Christ's kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36) but it has come to this world. We are called to pull down the strongholds of an unbelieving culture. God calls us to cast down everything that sets itself against Him and to bring everything to the obedience of Christ – down to every last thought. “*Every fact has been thought before – by God – and is interpreted by Him. Solid education, therefore, is the process of learning how to think God's thoughts after Him*” – Douglas Wilson.

Ideas Have Consequences – We live in a culture that constantly says on the one hand, “your worldview or religion does not matter when it comes to most subjects of education,” while on the other hand demanding that you accept that worldview as the basis for receiving a secular-darwinist education. This is the myth (and lie) of neutrality. And at that point we have sold the farm. There is no longer any intrinsic value upon a person, personhood, gender, family, church or any other institution unless the secular government says, “let there be...” What happens when the evolutionists teach us that we are the result of random, meaningless actions and some law called “survival of the fittest?” We are no longer created *imago dei*, we are now created in the image of goo plus billions and billions of years. There is no value placed upon the most vulnerable and so 60 million children are slaughtered in the wealthiest country the world has ever seen and Iceland is celebrating that it may have eliminated Down syndrome in their country. Bible studies are banned but condoms are free; they tell us we can't teach abstinence and point to generations of free sex, no-definition-marriages and no-fault divorce as proof that we can't control ourselves. We teach them to laugh at honor, as C.S. Lewis says, and then are shocked to find traitors in our midst. And the flesh loves to hear this teaching, it tickles itching ears (2 Tim 4:3-4). But the “itch” doesn't go away and so now we can't tell the difference between boys and girls, or rather, we are not allowed to tell the difference. No *imago dei* = no male/female + no intrinsic value + no transcendent law = violent chaos.

Christian Education in Order to Be Truly Human – “*And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord*” (Eph 6:4). Here is the explicit command to not give your children to that violent chaos, that wrath. The word “training” is *paideia* and is the entire disciplined enculturation of a person including his ultimate loyalties. The word “admonition” is *nouthesia* and incorporates the exhortation of the mind to think about things according to God's Word. The goal of Christian education is quite the antithesis of secular education. Our responsibility is to carefully guide the next generation, our children, into maturity by illuminating God's Triune character through His works of truth, goodness, and beauty across the ages. We are not training children to do tasks; we are educating them to be a man or a woman with the kind of character equipped for every good work (Eph 2:10), prepared in the art of living in the wisdom of God (Prov 8). It is appropriate for us to expect that we are training leaders, all of our children. They are called to join us as we contend with the enemies at the gate (Psalm 127), they are to join us as the “salt of the earth” and “the light of the world” (Matt 5) discipling the nations as Christ commanded (Matt 28). This affects why we teach self-control to kindergartners, vocabulary lists and grammar diagrams to 3rd graders, logic and algebra to middle schoolers, Bible knowledge, theology, history, and literature to all, rhetoric and the rest of the liberal arts to high schoolers and beyond.

Rebuilding the Ruins (Gal 6:9) – Many children have now grown up as we have begun this rebuilding exercise, and they must take up this task and carry on. Standing on our shoulders, they often see how much of a wreck has been made of the idea of education and how imperfectly we have begun the work. Well done and good for you. We have to learn how to rebuild because we have lost the knowledge of how to do so. Cultural illiteracy flourishes among Christians and so we must be patient and humble. The devastation in the greater Houston area today is nothing compared to the cultural ruins of post-Christian America. But we have begun and God has been kind to open many eyes and leadership in this movement is growing and maturing. The Spirit is blowing and we live in a time of tremendous opportunity. Let us not grow weary in doing good. School is in session – let's go.