

CHRISTIANS AND SCHOOLING OPTIONS

INTRODUCTION

- The goal of this class is not to tell anyone what method of schooling is right for them and their family. That is something that the Lord has blessed us to be able to make that choice on our own.
 - Because we can make that choice on our own, we need to fill in our decision-making with as much Scripture as possible before making a choice.
 - As Christians, we should never make choices based on what the world is doing. For sure, there are times that our choice will align with the world's. But we should be thinking of things from a Biblical perspective and have different goals and priorities in mind.
- The issues that we want to talk about today are what (if any) guidelines the Bible has for us when it comes to the education of our children. Has God left educating our children up to chance or has He given us some instructions on how we can pursue this in a godly manner?
- Before we start, I want to make sure we are on the same page regarding some terminology.
 - We need to view the terms *education* or *training* as broader than simply reading, writing and other learned skills. In fact, what you will quickly realize, the Bible has little to nothing to say regarding your child's ability to read at a high level or be proficient in geometry.
 - In other words, God is not so much worried if your child is able to practice theoretical physics but rather what the condition of your heart in making decisions is and your child's heart overall.
 - The Lord desires us to walk worthy of the gospel and see that our kids do the same thing.
- My hope is that we can take off the cultural lens that has been placed on our eyes and replace it with a Biblical lens to which we can properly view God's standards and goals for our families and children.

BEFORE WE START:

- Some guidelines before we start. This is an emotionally driven subject that people automatically place all forms of schooling against one another. This way of thinking is firstly sinful and secondly not helpful.
 - Because someone educates their children one way does not mean they are opposed to other ways.
- If you make that assumption, you are in sin. **Proverbs 18:2** "A fool does not delight in understanding, but only in revealing his own mind."
- We also need to stop spreading lies and making broad false claims against forms of education that we do not think are right. This does nothing to help people within the church and the furtherance of the gospel.
- Children who go to public school are not being taught by Satan nor are they automatically going to hell.

- They are not being sent to Rome so that they become Romans when they grow up.¹
- Not all public-school teachers want your kids to conform to some social experiment.²
 - Many who teach are there because they love education and desire to see kids grow.
- Children who are homeschooled are not socially awkward later in life.
 - In fact, there are numerous studies which show that homeschooled kids are far better off socially.³
- Sending your kids to Christian schools does not keep them out of the world and set them up for failure when they get out of their bubble.
 - There are new studies that Christian schools are training kids to be Americans, not Christians.⁴
- **All of this to say, there are weird people no matter where you go!** Are there awkward kids in government schools...Christian schools...homeschooled...yes, yes and yes!
 - Are kids taught strange things and influenced in specific ideologies in all places...yes!
 - *We would do well to stop worrying about what everyone else is doing and focus on what the Word of God has for us to do.*
- In the case of schooling options. where the Bible gives us liberty, we need to be mature enough to allow others to have their own opinions and make decisions based upon their own conscience.
- We must not be lazy but search the Scriptures so that our conscience and decisions are based upon what the Bible has to say, not what we think is best.

WHAT IS THE PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO THEIR CHILDREN?

- Before we can get into the debate about what mode or type of education the Christian should choose, we need to find out what the Bible has to say about the education of our children.
 - Once again, the Bible says relatively nothing about the academic education of our children. Solomon does say in **Ecclesiastes 12:12-14** “But beyond this, my son, be warned: the writing of many books is endless, and excessive devotion to books is wearying to the body. The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person. For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.”
 - **Two things Solomon says:**
 - A warning to being devoted to many books as it brings weariness to the body.
 - An exhortation to know that it is only a fear of God and a devotion to keeping His commandments that brings any real value on this earth.
- Education is good, but it must be tethered to the Scriptures and God's glory.

¹ <https://kidsinministry.org/our-kids-coming-home-as-romans/>

² <https://news4sanantonio.com/news/trouble-shooters/parents-angered-by-segregation-experiment-at-local-elementary-school>

³ <https://responsiblehomeschooling.org/research/summaries/homeschooling-socialization/>

⁴ <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2021/february-web-only/are-christian-schools-training-christians-or-americans.html>

- The Bible speaks to everything we need to know for this life (**2 Peter 1:3**) so we need to be sure that we are searching the Scriptures to find out.
 - This is not something that we can just leave up to chance as we live in a world where everyone is vying for control of our child's hearts.
- We know that the Lord has ordained three structures and given them each a limited authority...the government (**Rom. 13:1-2**), the church (**Matt. 16:18; Acts 20:28**) and the family (**Eph. 5:22-25**).
- We have discussed the authority of the government, the authority of the church and now we want to discuss the authority and responsibility of the family.
 - We are going to look at this authority specifically within the scope of education.
- Remember that regardless of the mode of education that you choose, these are standard commands that parents have regarding their responsibility of training their child.
 - These are not something that God says you can pass off to other people. These commands are specifically for parents. God gives us the scope of what we are to teach and how we are to teach it.
 - This will look differently in each household, but the main point is that it *should be going on in each household*. These are the non-negotiable commands that we must follow from the Lord.
- **Deuteronomy 11:19-20** “You shall therefore impress these words of mine on your heart and on your soul; and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall teach them to your sons, talking of them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road and when you lie down and when you rise up.”
 - As parents, **you** are chiefly responsible for *impressing God's Word on your heart and soul*. This is a two-fold purpose...for your own sanctification and for the teaching of your family.
 - How do you do this? It is through your normal daily Bible reading and coming to church on a regular basis. Having fellowship with other believers and serving your neighbors.
 - As parents, you have to be careful of what you are taking in because whatever comes in will inevitably come out.
 - That is the purpose of this first clause in this verse. You have to make sure that your own spiritual life is growing and flourishing, or the results are going to be detrimental to your family.
 - Your children are going to see how you value your relationship with the Lord and/or the world, and they are going to base their relationship with God and the world in a similar fashion.
 - **Why do you are about your own spiritual health?** You are to teach the things of God to your kids.
 - If you are not learned in the Scriptures, you are not going to be able to teach or be the example for your kids and family.
 - This does not mean that you need a degree in Bible or that you should take hours every day teaching them.

- This is simply taking time out of every day (even if just 5 minutes) and reading the Bible with your kids and taking them through the Scriptures.
 - Once again, this will look different in different families, but is it a priority to do.
- **When are you to do this?** The verse says...talking of them when you sit in the house, when you walk on the road, when you lie down and when you rise up.
 - In other words, your life is to be all about what God has done, what He is doing and what He expects from His creation.
 - Moses is emphasizing a lifestyle of teaching and learning which is to be normal and natural within the family unit.
 - Once again, this is going to look different in different families, but the principle is still the same. The life of the family is to be centered around God and His Word. It is to be the focal point of all of life that you are living.
 - As you make decisions for the family, are you demonstrating your reliance on the Lord? Do you show your kids that honoring God is a non-negotiable or is it a principle that sits in a dark corner when you really want to do something that is questionable?
 - As we live out a life which glorifies God before our kids, we are training them by our actions to orient themselves with what is most important in our own lives.
- **Matthew 6:21** "...for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." If our lives, as parents, is centered around Christ as our treasure, we are leaving a legacy for our children to do the same.
- Before even getting into formal education, we need to ask ourselves if this is being taken care of in our own homes. **Is the life of our family is centered around God's Word and are we actively talking about it?** Are we displaying to our kids a robust faith and dependance upon God?
 - This is the responsibility of the parents to the children. As the parents take care of their own spiritual health, the kids are going to be taken care of as well.
 - If the parents are neglectful of their own spiritual well-being, the children are going to be a reflection of that as well.
 - The important caveat here is that our kids are not saved by our devotion to the Lord, but our kids will clearly see our devotion to something as they are growing up.
- *It will not matter what method or mode of education you prefer, if this is not being taken care of, the fundamental foundation is being neglected.* Your children are not going to have a Biblical worldview and are going to view this life through another lens.
 - In order for our children to live a life which honors and glorifies God, they must be able to think through this world with a Biblical framework. (1 Cor 2:14–16)

- Our children having a Biblical worldview does not happen by accident. This must be intentionally done so that they can know how to interpret the data that come their way.
 - Why are so many of our youths accepting of so much immorality? They have been taught that people are *born gay* or that real love *allows someone to choose their gender*.
 - If we are not giving our children the tools they need to succeed as Godfearing men and women, they are going to be products of the world.
 - If we never teach our children why we follow the Bible, they are only going to know it as a set of dos and don'ts. We want them to know Christ, not just about Christ.
- **Proverbs 1:8** “Hear, my son, your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching...”
 - You have two imperative commands here from Solomon to his son. One is that he would listen to his father's instruction and the other is not to forsake his mother's teachings.
 - This implies two very important facts...his father is instructing him, and his mother is teaching him.
 - The word for instruction means to discipline or correct. This is the father's responsibility towards his children. To teach them through correction and warning. The father must be able to teach his children right from wrong.
 - Where there is no father, this responsibility falls upon the mother or perhaps other godly men in the child's life.
 - The point is that the child is going to be instructed in the ways of the Lord.
 - The word for the mother's teaching is direction and/or instruction. As the father is correcting the behavior of the child, the mother is giving him instruction and direction on how to live.
 - In most cases the mother is far more influential in the early stages of the child's life.
 - She is caring for the child, giving directions on how to properly live.
 - Not only do we see how important the family unit is, but we also see how involved God expects us to be in our children's lives.
 - Your child's correction and instruction are not to be left up to someone else, ***it is your responsibility to make sure this is not just being done***, but that it is done to a Biblical standard.
 - When we combine what we read in **Deuteronomy 11** and this, our way of life with our children is to be one of teaching, instructing, correcting, training, and warning.
 - Listen to what Paul tells Timothy in **2 Timothy 3:16-17** “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”
 - You can connect the dots here pretty easily. No matter if it is the OT or the NT, God expects us to use His Word as we are training our children. The reason being...so that they will be adequately equipped for every good work.

- In other words, you are setting your children up for success when you teach them from the Bible how they are to live in this life.
 - We should never expect positive results when we send our kids into the world, and they are ill-prepared. We must equip our children to handle what the world is going to throw at them.
- In the overall scheme of teaching our children, this does not take place for an extended period time. We do not have decades with our children to set this foundation and direction.
 - This takes place in the first few years of their lives and then they are making decisions on their own without the parent there.
 - We have a small window the Lord has blessed us with to be able to influence our children for the glory of God. We should not take this time for granted or lightly. As parents, we have a heavy responsibility regarding our children, but God has equipped for the task that He has commanded.
- Similar to **Deuteronomy 11** and **Proverbs 1:8**, Paul echoes this command in the family unit.
- **Ephesians 6:4** “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”
 - This is good NT parallel to **Proverbs 1:8**. Paul says the father is to bring the kids up in discipline and instruction *of the Lord*.
 - The word discipline means: “the whole training and education of children (which relates to the cultivation of mind and morals, and employs for this purpose now commands and admonitions, now reproof and punishment) It also includes the training and care of the body.”⁵
 - The word instruction means: “admonition or exhortation.”⁶
 - This is the same word used in **1 Corinthians 10:11** “Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.”
 - Using the above definition, how are you “cultivating the mind and morals of your children?”
- We should be using the Bible to instruct our children. Notice the addition on the end of the verse. There is a way that we are to instruct our children, it is *in the Lord*.
 - Our responsibility as parents (specifically here fathers) is to teach our children the ways of the Lord. We are essentially making disciples and following the command of Christ is **Matthew 28:19-20**.
 - **We teach** our children the value of hard work, not so they can make something of themselves but so that they can please the Lord.
 - **We teach** them to be men and women of character, not for the purpose of being liked and trusted by their peers, but so that they will please the Lord.

⁵ "G3809 - paideia - Strong's Greek Lexicon (nasb95)." <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3809/nasb95/mgnt/0-1/>.

⁶ "G3559 - nouthesia - Strong's Greek Lexicon (nasb95)." <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3559/nasb95/mgnt/0-1/>.

- We must firstly teach our children the gospel and then what the Lord expects from His children.
- The Bible assumes a very hands-on approach to parenting and family relationships.
- We cannot be disconnected from their daily lives, no matter how they are academically educated.
- Listen to what Joshua said to the men of Israel as they crossed the Jordan:
 - **Joshua 4:4-7** “So Joshua called the twelve men whom he had appointed from the sons of Israel, one man from each tribe; and Joshua said to them, ‘Cross again to the ark of the LORD your God into the middle of the Jordan, and each of you take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Israel. Let this be a sign among you, so that when your children ask later, saying, ‘What do these stones mean to you?’ then you shall say to them, ‘Because the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off.’ So, these stones shall become a memorial to the sons of Israel forever.”
- How often do we recount what the Lord has done for us and our family to our children? These are things that we should remember and tell our kids so that their faith will be strengthened.
- When your kids hear about how the Lord has come through in the past for you or for your family, they are going to be encouraged. Not only them, but your own heart as well.
- This is how a family can begin to cultivate hearts of gratitude, faith that is unshakeable and practice contentment. God has taken care of us in the past...so He is going to do it now.

2 THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING AN EDUCATIONAL MODEL

- **Proverbs 14:12 & 16:25** “There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.”
- We need to make sure that we are not just doing things that we decide are the best but that we are putting our due diligence into prayer and asking fellow believers for their input.

What is our own priority as a parent?

- We must stop using the language *this is what’s best for my child*. There is nowhere in the Bible that says we are to make decisions that are based upon what is best for our children.
- We should never do something because *that’s the way it has always been done*.
- What happens when we do this? What happens when we make decisions based on what has always been done or based upon what we think is best for the child? We are fallen in nature, completely tainted by sin. Therefore, our own reasoning skills are subject to the fall as well.
 - The decisions we make are going to be slanted towards our own thoughts and opinions.
 - Because of this, we need to stick to what God has said in His holy and perfect Word.
 - This means we are to make decisions about our child’s education based upon *what honors and glorifies God*...not what is best for the child or the parent.
- **1 Corinthians 10:31** “Whether then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

- For some reason, we tend to compartmentalize our lives and think that there are areas in which God does not want His glory to be front and center.
- It does not matter what decision you are making, if you are not putting God’s glory as your primary deciding factor, you are relying on your own wisdom and intelligence.
- When choosing a schooling option, it may be the same outcome...what is best for the child/parent may be what is most honoring and glorifying to God.
 - But if our primary motive is based upon our own comfort or the happiness of the children, then we are starting from a place of potential sin.
- There is not one way of schooling that is going to guarantee the salvation of your child. There is not one way of schooling that is going to guarantee they are “successful” in the world. There is not one way that is going to completely condemn them for their entire life.
- **Our reason for choosing any way of schooling our children is so that God would be glorified.** We must not compartmentalize our life into thinking that God does not care about some areas we choose.
- He is Lord over all areas of our lives and expects us to walk in such a way that reflects that fact. Our priorities, not just with schooling but with life in general, should be evident to the onlooking world that we desire to glorify God.

What are your idols in your own heart that motivate your choice?

- If we are not making choices that are based on and motivated by God’s glory, then we are doing it for something else. We have exchanged God’s glory for an idol that we have made.
- We have the freedom to choose whatever we desire for our children, but with that freedom comes responsibility. We must know our own hearts as we make these decisions.
 - We need God’s Word to diagnose our hearts and motives before we make these choices.
- What are some common idols that come into our hearts when we make these choices:
- **If our idol is comfort**, then our choice is going to be based on what is the easiest or brings the least amount of stress into the household.
 - You are going to find a way to make sure you and/or your family are the least inconvenienced.
- **If our idol is academic prowess**, then our choice is going to be all about the high level of learning that our children can receive.
 - You desire to have “smart” kids and think that setting them up for success in the world is the top priority for them.
- **If our idol is morality**, then our choice is going to be the one that keeps our children away from what the world calls right.
 - You think that if you keep your kids away from evil then they will grow up “good.”

- **If our idol is the salvation of our children**, this should be our desire, but if it is our idol then the decisions you make will be based on that end goal.
 - You put all your effort into making sure your kids memorize Bible verses and only stay in church groups and never go out into the world with sinners.
- While these things may not be bad alone, when they are the underlying motives for why we make our decisions, we may be setting our kids up for failure at best and sinning at worst.
- Our hearts should be enraptured with the glory of God and a desire to please Him, not our idols.

PRACTICAL QUESTIONS TO BE INVOLVED IN YOUR CHILD’S EDUCATION

- As was previously stated, we do not want to simply choose something because it has always been done that way. Even if the “traditional” way is chosen, it should be done for the glory of God.
- Because we are not commanded in Scripture regarding the mode of academic education, we need to ask ourselves some questions before choosing what we are going to do.

What are my children learning?

- No matter what mode of education you choose, your children are still learning something from another person’s worldview or at least from their own personal opinion.
- **We should not put things in broad categories:**
 - Not all homeschooling curriculum is written from a Biblical perspective. Just because someone homeschoools does not mean they are a Christian. Many people homeschool because they simply do not want the government involved in their life.
 - There are patriotic homeschool curricula out there.⁷ They desire to make good Americans, not teach from a Biblical worldview.
 - Not all governmental or public-school teachers want your kids to learn CRT or become transgender.
 - This debate is happening in Michigan right now...*what to teach your kids*.
 - Not a lot of teachers are in favor of CRT or teaching from that viewpoint.
 - Not all Christian schools teach the Bible, have saved teachers, or even share the gospel with the kids.
 - We must not simply assume they have the Bible in mind when they are teaching.
- No matter where your children are leaning basic academics, you as a parent have a responsibility to not only teach them about the Lord (**Deut. 6; 11; Pro 1; Eph. 4**) but since you are their parent you also have the responsibility to know what is being taught to them.
- Before making any decisions about the education of your children, you should do research to find out what is being taught to them as truth and what the overall goal of any given curriculum is.

⁷ <https://www.thecurriculumchoice.com/the-patriotic-homeschool/>

Who is the authority that is teaching my child?

- Not only what they are being taught is important, but who is teaching them is vitally important.
- *God has given the authority over your children to you as the parent.* When you have someone else teach your children about anything, you are giving your endorsement of that person to your child.
 - Children are commanded to honor their mother and father. (**Ephesians 6:2**)
 - Children are certainly called to respect their elders and those who are charged with taking care of them...but they are to specifically honor their parents.
 - This word *honor* means to fix a value or to revere. In other words, there is a special relationship between a child and their parents that does not exist in your child's other relationships.
 - God has made it specifically for you and them; so make sure you know who is over your children.
- It is a good thing to get to know any of the teachers that your child may have so that you are familiar with what they believe and from what point of view they are going to be teaching.
- Between normal school hours and extracurricular activities, a child can spend 6-8 hours a day with other adults, learning from them.
 - This is not necessarily a bad thing, but if you do not know what these people are teaching your children, then you could be setting your children up for failure.
- Your goal should be to be as involved in your child's life as you can.

What do I need to correct or teach differently to my children?

- You will rarely (if ever) find a book or teaching that you fully, 100% agree with. There may be science books that teach evolution or history books that teach the thought of God is antiquated.
- You as a parent need to know the areas or gaps that need to be addressed in your child's education.
- This is not for any one mode of education, but wise parents know what their kids are being taught.
- We should never simply trust something because it comes from a certain source. We must always inspect what we expect.
- **Ephesians 5:15** "Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise..."

FINAL QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Are you fulfilling the commands to make sure your children are being taught in the Lord?
- Do you know what the Lord expects from you as a parent?
- Do you know the content of what your children are being taught?
- Is your first priority in choosing a mode of teaching the glory of God or other reasons?