

Distinctively Christian Curriculum: How does discipleship in education actually work?

MAIN POINTS

What does God actually want? What is God's objective for us as parents, for our children?

- God's goals for education are that we seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness first, then we do everything to the glory of God. We want our children to want to glorify God and we need to train them to do that. We also want our children to be men and women of faith. "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus." Acts 4:13

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The Four Pillars of Education: family discipleship, Biblical worldview, best books and best teachers, and worship in life application

- God's basics for the education of our children: have parental involvement, family discipleship, dad opening the word of God, sharing the word of God with the kids. These are absolutely essential. Fathers, teach God's Word to your children as you walk by the way, as you rise up, and as you lie down: "You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up," Deuteronomy 6:7. And bring your children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4).
- Biblical worldview is laying the right foundation for your children's education: fearing the Lord and keeping His commandments. Proverbs 1:7, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge." Ecclesiastes 12:13, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all."
- Biblical worldview has to do with the knowledge of God, the presence of God, the importance of God, the significance of God, the creator work of God, the providential hand of God in science and in history. Ultimately, it needs to yield the fear of reverence, the sense of the awesomeness of God in the minds of our children. This Biblical worldview needs to be weaved throughout our children's curriculum.
- The best book and the best teacher is the Word of God. Be sure our children know God's Word inside and out. First and foremost, we are to give children godly teachers, the best of all being the Bible. Students will be like the teacher(s) they study under and learn from. The great humanist thinkers teach their students to think humanistically. "Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to

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Christ,” Colossians 2:8. Include the great Christian authors of the day in your children’s education, i.e., John Calvin, Martin Luther, John Bunyan, etc.

- Education needs to yield something—it cannot just be knowing. It must involve doing. Reject any kind of view of education that involves knowledge without action. In true education and Biblical education, our children absolutely must respond to this knowledge by worshipping God. There must be life application as well as worship: “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves,” James 1:22. There should be life-application and worship as a result of every school lesson. Ultimately, education must be practical and have practical application. Otherwise, this leads to a knowledge that puffs up, instead of a love that edifies. So much of education is destructive because it is rooted in pride rather than in the fear of God that yields worship and true life application. Our approach to education is radically different from the secular classrooms.

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How does family discipleship, biblical worldview, best books, best teachers, worship and life application apply to the subject of literature?

- Family discipleship involves relationship and repetition. It requires the discipler getting to know his student and building a relationship with his student. Real life change and retention are results of a relationship. Repetition leads to retention. This is a model that involves going over the same lessons year in and year out—a model that Jesus set forth. It is not heavily organized or structured but it involves reading and working together. When it comes to literature and family discipleship, God wants moms and dads to disciple their children as they read out loud and apply these things to their own spiritual lives. Parents need to interact with these stories and then disciple their children along those lines. It’s actually about the content of these literature works that God can use to radically transform by His grace, the hearts and minds and lives of our children to raise them as Godly young men and women for His kingdom.
- Biblical worldview asks, “Does this author fear God? Is God important to this author, or is man important?”. The fundamentals, not just the superfluities, are important in considering what worldview is being conveyed in a book. Use literature that is written by the best teachers. Be cautious about reading books that speak of things being done in secret by those who are engaged in the unfruitful works of darkness. Use Philippians 4:8 as a test: “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things”. Consider the effect that a book has upon you or your children, the readers.
- Your children will become like their teachers. The student is impressed by the teacher, begins to think like the teacher, then follows the teacher’s example. Realize that Satan is a good writer, and he comes at it with cynicism and skeptical humor. If our children read this kind of material, they learn pride, cyni-

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cism, and skeptical humor that will be reflected in their own writing. Just because methodologically these are good writers, doesn't mean that they're moral, doesn't mean that they fear God, doesn't mean that they're to be emulated, doesn't mean that their style is to be emulated. Think carefully about this—this is a territory that determines life or death, heaven or hell for your children. Consider God's Word and the wisdom of the church fathers concerning how we should teach our children and what kind of literature of which to be aware.

- Begin with God's Word first and then move to the Christian classics. Go over the redemptive story of Jesus from beginning to end, 5-20 times first. Around 12th grade, give your children some unbelieving classics, but only at the point that they are mature enough to understand faith, the apologists, world views, and discern ungodly world views that underlie the thinking of the writers of the classics.

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Recommended books/authors:

- John Bunyan
 - Patricia St. John
 - Heidi
 - Swiss Family Robinson
 - Robinson Crusoe
 - Augustine
 - Martin Luther
 - John Calvin
 - From literature, we must take away a perspective of reality, of ourselves, our human nature, our issue, and our problems, then seek redemption in Jesus and cry out for His salvation. Literature describes ourselves. Then in response we seek redemption in Christ and a life of living according to His commandments. Then we understand how to discern between right and wrong based on the Word, and we draw conclusions as we read literature. We apply Biblical perspective to these things.
- Christian histories
 - Eusebius on the history of the church
 - *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*
 - *Pilgrim's Progress*
 - *The Holy War*
 - *On the Incarnation* (Athanasius)
 - *A Kempis' Imitation of Christ*

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How does family discipleship, biblical worldview, best books, best teachers, worship and life application apply to the subject of history?

- Read the Word together as a family. This is the core curriculum. The books of Genesis, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John especially describe God's works in history.
- Dad, you are one of the core elements of the discipleship process in the home. Ephesians 6:4, Deuteronomy 6:7 and most of the book of Proverbs describes the father being at the core of family teaching.
- The core of history is what Jesus did and what God considers to be important. Our history is God's history and it is all His story. The Word includes the Biblical worldview of history: what is important to God. God is important in history—He is sovereign over it, He is working actively in it, He is working out His plans and purposes, and He has a goal that He is working in history. Don't ignore God to focus on what man has done and said in history. Recognize the providence and sovereignty of God in history.
- Ask these questions: "Is Jesus important in history? Did Jesus really come? Is He really the Son of God? Should He really be considered as preeminent in all things?". We are secular and back to admiring the kingdoms of men if we are not acknowledging Jesus, His kingdom, or His Church. What message are we communicating to our children when they are not seeing that Jesus is preeminent in all things? Convey that Jesus is much bigger than Caesar and any other earthly authority. Don't separate Jesus from the stories of Caesar--include Him in the same story!
- Biblical worldview is not just applying Biblical principles to the issue of civil rights but shifting our focus to what God considers important in history. World view determines importance and world view determines priority. We must teach our children that the preeminent issues in history is Jesus Christ and His Church. Our world view will ultimately determine how we teach history and the things that are important and significant in history.
- We need to present the optimistic, amazing work of the Kingdom of God and the Church of Jesus Christ through the centuries, that's taking the world for Jesus, that's preparing the world for Jesus. It's a history lesson that makes kids want to join this kingdom!
- Read history books by Christians (Eusebius and Bede).
- Give God the praise and the worship for the works that He's doing. Teach our children the mighty acts of God in history and give them an amazing expectation for what God is going to do in the future. Challenge your children to be like these men and women of faith in history—pass the baton of the Kingdom on to them.

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How does family discipleship, biblical worldview, best books, best teachers, worship and life application apply to the subject of science?

- Present science through the lens of “God is awesome!”. Show that it is God that has done these things—His fingerprints are on all these amazing creations. It is not just about being anti-evolution. We are pro-God, pro-Creator. We stand in awe of Him and sing in response of Who He is! We love God and we love His works all around us. Psalm 111:2, “The works of the Lord are great, studied by all who have pleasure in them”. We study God’s great works because we delight in them.
- Science should never be boring. It should be a wonder of the awesomeness of God. The purpose of studying science is two things: worship and dominion. Make a useful application (worship) and a life application (taking dominion) of science.

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