

The Necessity of Christian Education

Dark Sayings of Old

Psalm 78:1-8

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I. Thinking about the Future

II. Dark Sayings of Old

A. Give ear to My law (cf. Mt 13:34-35)

The psalmist summons all Israel to listen to what he has to say for the things that he says are like precious jewels mined from deep and dark caverns of the earth. In Matthew 13:34-35 these verses are said to be fulfilled in the teachings of our Lord Jesus who summons us to give heed to Him in the words of this psalm. He also reminds us that “our” children are “*their*” children, the children of the _____. We have a sacred obligation to train them and teach them because they aren’t *ours* but the fathers’ and, most importantly, God’s.

B. For God summons you so to do (cf. Dt 6:6-9)

The reason Asaph summons us to listen to him is because *God has ordered the world this way*. The current generation is to teach the next generation and that generation is to teach the following generation, and so on (vv. 5-6). This is not optional but a divine duty.

So what is the purpose of this instruction? The purpose of education, the psalmist tells us, is both *positive* and *negative*. *Positively*, this instruction is to teach our children to “*set their hope in God*” (7a) and “*keep His commandments*” (7c) – faith & works! *Negatively*, this instruction is to warn our children not to “*forget the works of God*” (7b) and not to be “*like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation... whose spirit was not faithful to God*” (8).

III. Principles for Education

A. The Educational Imperative (cf. Jude 3; 2 Tim 2:2)

Psalm 78, therefore, teaches us that the current generation has an obligation to value the truths of general and special revelation and to pass those truths on to the next generation.

B. Twin Obligations in Education

1. Obligations for the Current Generation (cf. Dt 11:18-21)

¹⁸ *“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ¹⁹ You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. ²⁰ And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, ²¹ that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers to give them, like the days of the heavens above the earth.*

a. Treasure the Word of God

The calling of the current generation is, first, to *treasure* the Word of God. We are to let it govern (1) our desires and _____ (18a), (2) our _____ (18b), and (3) our _____ (18c).

b. Teach the Word of God (cf. Eph 6:4)

Second, the calling of the current generation is to *teach the Word of God*. Notice vv. 19-21. *“You shall teach them to your children...”* We are to speak regularly of them together – inside and outside the home (19b) as well as in our recreation and in our labor (19c). God’s laws are to regulate our homes (*“doorposts of your house”*) and our communities (*“on your gates”*).

2. Obligations for the Next Generation

- a. Receive – listen! (cf. 78:1,3a)
- b. Respond – in faith! (cf. 78:7)
- c. Repeat – tell your kids! (cf. 78:6)

C. The Goal of Education

Sacred Scripture repudiates the idea that education is secular or value neutral. Education either serves the Lord of glory or it serves the gates of hell. There is no such thing as a morally neutral or religiously neutral education. The goal of education is to train our children to combine _____ and _____ in the service of the Living God. John Milton wrote in his essay *On Education*:

“The end then of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him, as we may the nearest by possessing our souls of true virtue, which being united to the heavenly grace of faith makes up the highest perfection.”

IV. Conclusion