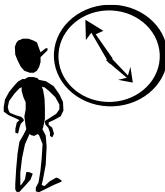


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Time of Assembly



Sunday:

Bible Study 9:00 a.m.
Worship 10:00 a.m.
(Or every other week)

Bible Study 4:00 p.m.
Worship 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 p. m.

Who Will Teach Our Children?

By Jefferson David Tant

It is patently obvious that babies are born uneducated. They are not born with the ability to do math, read, or do science projects. And along with this is a lack of knowledge about God and His will for us. They do know when they are hungry or in pain, but not much else.

So, what do we do to educate our children so they can learn how to get along in the world? We teach them! We send them to school to learn how to read and write, how to do math, and how to make sense of things around us in the world. This is universal, and at least for twelve years, our children are sent to school five days a week, for seven or so hours a day through nine months of the year. We all agree as to the absolute importance of this education.

But how much attention do we pay to an even greater education? And what am I referring to? I am referring to spiritual education - learning about God and his plan for us. I am sure that most, if not all of my readers will agree that spiritual education is vital for our children. And how do we go about making sure our children get this education? I don't know what transpires in other nations, but in the US Christian parents usually make sure they take their children to the Sunday Bible classes and worship services, and then to Wednesday night Bible classes. Thus from the Bible classes and sermons, they get at least four hours of instruction each week.

Now, think about it. Secular education -- 35 hours a week, and Bible education -- 4 hours a week. Does that make sense? And some wonder why we lose so many of our youth to the world.

Obviously, there is not enough time in the day for our children to go to school for 6 hours and then have a Bible study for 6 hours in addition to other daily activities. But some things can be done daily to remind us and our children that we

have been called to be children of God. The Bible gives us some examples for how to accomplish the goal of spiritually educated children,

"Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates" (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)

Obviously, these words constitute a daily reminder of who God is and of our relationship with Him. Do you ever ask your children what they learned in their Bible class, or what did they think of the sermon they heard during the worship hour?

Then note Psalm 78:4-7: *"We will not conceal them from their children, But tell to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, And His strength and His wondrous works that He has done. For He established a testimony in Jacob And appointed a law in Israel, Which He commanded our fathers That they should teach them to their children, That the generation to come might know, even the children yet to be born, That they may arise and tell them to their children, That they should put their confidence in God And not forget the works of God, But keep His commandments."*

The New Testament has some passages that deal with the spiritual education of our children. One such passage is Ephesians 6:4: *"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."* Fathers, do you "bring them up" by taking them to church on Sunday? Did Jewish fathers teach their sons by just taking them to the synagogue on Saturday? Obviously not. Proverbs 22:6 has good advice: *"Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it."*

Question: Would we expect our children to do well and thrive in the world with only two or three hours of education a week? Obviously not.

OK, so we have considered the instructions given to fathers. What about mothers? Consider what Paul wrote to Timothy in II Timothy 3:14-15: *"You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."*

And just who was it that taught these things to young Timothy? We know that Paul had a part in training this young man, but there were two others. *"For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well"* (II Timothy 1:5). We know that Timothy's father was not a Christian, but his mother and grandmother made sure that this

young man was well taught.

I know life is busy with many distractions, in fact, many more than in my youth. We didn't have a TV in my younger years, and of course, there was no internet and all that comes with it. Today there are myriads of distractions, and all the more reason for parents to be diligent in the spiritual education of our children. They are facing more challenges than in previous generations, and some educational programs are teaching the young students about choosing alternate lifestyles, about why there is no God and church-going is really of no benefit. All the more reason for parents, and churches, to be working to establish a firm foundation for our children's faith.

Parents must be diligent in building a foundation for their children's faith. "*Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*" (Hebrews 11:1) "assurance" is from the Greek "*hupostasis*" which is "a setting under (support)," as we might consider a house's foundation. The King James Version uses the word "substance." We know that a building without a foundation is going to collapse. Studies show that a large number of denominational students lose their faith while in college. They have little foundation, and there are professors who have stated that their aim is to destroy the faith of the ignoramuses who come into their classrooms.

Parents, can you make time for a short Bible study or devotion at breakfast before they leave for school? That worked well for us and included some neighborhood teens, who were then baptized. Or what about an evening devotional and discussion before bed-time? Don't wait until Saturday night and ask "Do you have your Sunday school lesson done? No TV until you do your lesson." So they do a hasty scan through the class lesson before turning on the TV.

Consider what God said about Abraham: "*For I have chosen him, so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him*" (Genesis 18:19).

It's a Heart Issue

By Dwight Bouvette

What is meant by this phrase "it's a heart issue?" I've been hearing this phrase a lot lately from Christians. Usually, it means the problem that someone has that needs to be changed or should change is stemming from the heart. The most common example I've heard is attendance or modesty or something to this nature. Let me first say that any problem or sin IS A HEART ISSUE. I've heard it said that certain heart issue problems don't belong in the pulpit. Dare I say, some of the reasons we have heart issues in our lives and in the church is because heart issue problems are not being taught on from the pulpit. Let's look at it this way. We teach from the pulpit weekly about how one needs to be baptized for the forgiven of their sins. If someone does not respond to the gospel call,

are they still in sin? Is their life still outside of Christ? Yes! Does their not obeying the gospel call make their problem a heart issue? Yes. All sin my friends are a heart issue. So, if not being baptized is a heart issue, why do we preach on it so much from the pulpit? Modesty, alcohol, attendance, lying I've been told are all heart issues. What I'm trying to say is, if baptism is a heart issue and it is preached and taught weekly, then why oh why do we not preach and teach on these things that condemn us to hell? We preach on what saves us all the time, we need to also preach and teach what sends us to a devil's hell just as equally as much. We are living in a society that tells us we need to be kind, and politically correct and not to hurt feelings or teach of love and acceptance (Gal. 4:16). Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth? When was the last time you talked to your friend, neighbor, or family member that is living in sin or not a Christian that you are concerned for their soul?

1 Corinthians 7:8-10 says: *"For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it. For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while. Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death."*

I want to believe it's because we care and love people enough that we tell them the truth, even if it hurts. I feel confident to say that if we say nothing, we don't care or have love for those individuals. To not preach or teach heart issues from the pulpit is going against what Paul told Timothy in 2 Tim. 4:1-4. *"I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables."*

Now I'm not saying that private teaching is not effective or is wrong. God forbid. What I believe the scriptures teach is a healthy balance of positive and negative preaching. In other words, yes, we preach on the love and kindness and grace and mercy of the Lord but also the severity of God. Romans 11:22 says, *"Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off."*

If we don't teach from the pulpit about things such as social drinking, modesty, attendance, lying, cursing, using the Lord's name in vain, etc. and spell it out in easy-to-understand terms with scripture to back it, we do ourselves and the church great harm. Many in the church believe if we preach on these issues, we will drive off the young. If we don't teach on these heart issues (sin) we may not lose our youth physically, but we

have a great probability to lose them spiritually. 2 Timothy 3:1-5 says, *“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!”*

Faith Is Reasonable

By Doy Moyer

Faith is reasonable because trust, which is the heart of biblical faith, is reasonable. Faith does not require that every question be resolved before it can proceed, for that would not be considered trust.

A child does not wait for parents to answer every question about difficult matters before trusting them. The child simply trusts that parents know what they are doing, and the child takes comfort in that. Yet how much greater is the wisdom, knowledge, and understanding of God? We act like we cannot show faith unless God first answers every difficulty to our satisfaction. This is not faith. It is, instead, an attempt to bring all of reality under our own finite reason, and that is itself unreasonable.

This does not mean that faith is naive or without evidence to back it up. Yet there is only so far we will go in understanding overarching reality and having the knowledge and wisdom to discern all matters of ultimate concern. If we cannot be humble enough to admit our own frailties, limitations of knowledge, and need for greater wisdom than we can offer, then our hubris will have destroyed us. Sometimes I fear it already has.

We all trust something or someone to provide a greater perspective on reality, moral authority, and wisdom. Choosing self or other people with the same limitations is self-defeating and unsustainable.

Even more self-defeating is relying on an ultimate nothing, for then we are trusting mindless, purposeless, accidental processes to give us a solid grounding for our own ability to think and reason. Yet how can that be considered reasonable? And what about denying that we have faith at all? That is unrealistic at best and dishonest at worst. We all place our trust in something.

In what, or in whom, do you place your trust? That's where your faith rests. Is it reasonable? That depends on whether what or whom you trust is truly in the position for which such trust is warranted.

*“Some trust in chariots and some in horses,
but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.
They collapse and fall,
but we rise and stand upright” (Psalms 20:7).*