



DISCOVER

CLASSICAL CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

— *the* —
ESSENTIAL
GUIDE
— *for* —
PARENTS





Take the EDUCATION QUIZ

1. { Success in college and in the job market are the primary reasons I send my child to school.

{ If my child's education builds wisdom, the natural result will be success in life.

2. { Education should be entertaining so that children can enjoy their childhood.

{ Education is a joy unto itself for the student who is taught to love learning.

3. { Education trains children in the knowledge and skills that they will need.

{ Education teaches children the art of learning; it trains the mind in how to think well.

4. { Education at school can be value-neutral. We teach our family values at home.

{ All education teaches an inherent value system. Therefore, school should instill values consistent with your family's.

5. { Students need up-to-date training emphasizing technology and science to be prepared for the future.

{ Students need broad-based knowledge in the context of a Christian worldview to be prepared for an uncertain future.

WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?

Some of the greatest minds of the last 100 years have been warning us about the direction of American education. These represent but a few. Most were academics. All were best-selling authors. All were well-educated. All were deeply concerned about the future of our children and our culture.

Fathers and mothers have lost the idea that the highest aspiration they might have for their children is for them to be wise... Specialized competence and success are all that they can imagine.

~ **Allan Bloom**

The test and the use of man's education is that he finds pleasure in the exercise of his mind.

~ **Jacques Barzun**

Is not the great defect of our education today... that although we often succeed in teaching our pupils "subjects," we fail lamentably on the whole in teaching them how to think: they learn everything, except the art of learning.

~ **Dorothy Sayers**

Education without values, as useful as it is, seems rather to make man a more clever devil.

~ **C.S. Lewis**

We don't even know what skills may be needed in the years ahead... We must train our young people in the fundamental fields of knowledge, and equip them to understand and cope with change... We must give them the critical qualities of mind and durable qualities of character that will serve them in circumstances we cannot now even predict.

~ **John Gardner**



ONE INVESTMENT

A lifetime of benefit

ELOQUENCE

HONOR

RESOURCEFULNESS

DISCERNMENT

LEADERSHIP

A CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

“*Isolating the student from large sections of human knowledge is not the basis of a Christian education. Rather it is **giving him or her the framework for total truth,** rooted in the Creator’s existence and in the Bible’s teaching, so that in each step of the formal learning process the student will understand what is true and what is false and why it is true or false.*”

FRANCIS SCHAEFFER

Structure that rewards self-control and personal diligence

- Students thrive as they meet a higher standard in the classroom.
- Homework and project work emphasize self-reliance and a love of discovery and learning.
- A lifelong work ethic is encouraged at a young age.

Content and method that develop thinking, articulate students

- Time-tested methods that have been staples in Western culture and the Church since the second century.
- Socratic teaching, debate, subject integration, and written and oral defense all provide the mental exercise to cultivate powerful minds.
- Students see the big picture by studying history, philosophy, literature, art, theology, Latin, Greek, logic and rhetoric, math, and science.
- An emphasis on cultivating wisdom rather than just teaching facts and skills.

An environment that challenges students and creates a love of learning

- A tone of inspiration, fulfillment, joy, and respect are visible throughout.
- Students cultivate an interest in first principles and ultimate purposes.

THE DILEMMA

We face in today's schools

Manufacturing jobs are going overseas. The American workforce must now be prepared for “knowledge worker” jobs. But there’s a catch. Knowledge worker jobs will go overseas just as quickly unless Americans can excel in education.

As modern education trims “non-productive” subjects like the humanities in a rush to put more emphasis on practical subjects like STEM (science, tech, engineering, and math), it undermines the foundation of education AND students’ application of the math and science skills they do have. In the process, the modern approach creates technicians who cannot think, do not have common sense, and do not write or speak well.

We learn to think and relate to others through the process of education. By focusing on vocational

training, we fail to make either great doctors, great engineers, or great thinkers and citizens.

This is where C.S. Lewis said modern educators make their mistake. They presume that classical education is an unnecessary luxury. Why read Plato or Aquinas or Burke? Why learn Latin or Greek?

“We are not machines to be programmed—we are works to be made.”

Classical Christian education requires parents to look deeper into the foundation of education. Once you understand its value, you’ll wish you could go back to school!

ARE WE MEN OR MACHINES?

Post-Modern Answer

If we are bundles of cells that make up a complex organic machine, then our brains must be like a computer. Education would only require that we be programmed and filled with data. Thinking is merely electrochemical. Wisdom comes with knowledge and skills. Art is an illusion. Faith is a crutch.

Christian Answer

If we are creatures made in the image of God, then our minds must be cultivated to grow into their potential. To educate, we must read the great thinkers in history and evaluate their work in the light of God’s Word. The mind must be practiced in logic and reason. Art and music provide a unique insight into the mind of God.



CLARITY

In the
contrast



Most Modern Educators

DEMOCRATIC: Every student should attain the same level of achievement.

MULTICULTURAL: Critical of our Western cultural roots, strongly emphasizing imperialism, slavery, and historic Christianity as “what is wrong with America.”

NATURALISTIC: Emphasizes math and science at the expense of art, literature, and history.

SECULAR: Holds the “spiritual” as personal and separate from education. Avoids deeper philosophical issues.

VALUES-NEUTRAL: All moral positions are relative and hence all positions must be equally treated.

BROKEN INTO MANY SUBJECTS: By breaking knowledge into pieces, it can be more easily studied and thus understood.

TEACHES FACTS AND FUNCTIONAL SKILLS: Students primarily learn about subjects, particularly ones that help them “get good jobs.”

PROGRESSIVE: Always experimenting with new techniques and methods.

ENTERTAINMENT LEARNING: Entertain students to engage them in the learning process.

Classical Christian Educators

EXCELLENCE: Take each student to their highest possible potential.

WESTERN: Recognize the great contribution of Western culture to America and the world, including its triumphs and failures, while also recognizing the beauty in other cultures.

UNIVERSAL: Emphasize the humanities, arts, and sciences to bring a full perspective.

INTEGRATED: Education is necessarily tied to philosophy and religion in order to train thoughtful students.

IDEALISM: Standards of right and wrong exist in all subject areas. Students are taught to make judgments accordingly.

INTEGRATED SUBJECTS: Subjects should be taught in an integrated way so that students understand the whole as well as the parts.

TEACHES CRITICAL THINKING: Students learn to think beyond subject-matter. Content is not the goal—wisdom is.

TRADITIONAL: Hold to educational standards that have a clear record of success.

ENGAGE AND CHALLENGE: Students will meet a high standard and enjoy the sense of achievement.



JOHN DEWEY leads the Progressives as they remake American education to serve nationalistic rather than Christian purposes. American education rejects the Christian model of classical education.



C.S. LEWIS writes *The Abolition of Man* in which he establishes the fundamental failure in modern education. In his famous “men without chests” passage, Lewis accuses modern educators of stripping truth and humanity from education, resulting in the “abolition of man.”

Yesterday

1914
to
1930

1947

COLONIAL AMERICA produced some of the greatest thinkers, scientists, pastors, and leaders in the history of the West—and they were all classically educated. Today, only a handful of classically educated students graduate in the US. What changed? By the dawn of the 20th century, immigration and the industrial revolution had strained America’s educational system. Progressives saw an opportunity to redefine education in America and unify the country. By 1940, the redesign of American education was complete, and by the late 1950’s, the math and science emphasis had been added.

Ironically, classical Christian education accomplishes all of these goals better than what replaced it. It prepares imaginative students who think well, are disciplined, and are well-rounded. It prepares them for life.



DOROTHY SAYERS, classicist, author, and Christian, writes *The Lost Tools of Learning*, pointing out the dangerous shift away from “true education.” In this essay, she recalls the ancient foundation of education—the trivium—and explains why it is essential to education.

