
Christian Education



The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding” (*Proverbs 9:10, NKJV*).

Think about the above text. It entails, really, two closely related concepts: “fear,” as in awe, as in marveling at the glory and power of God; and “knowledge,” as in learning truth about the character of God. Hence, wisdom, knowledge, and understanding are rooted in God Himself. This makes perfect sense. After all, God is the Source of all existence, the One alone who created and sustains all existence (*John 1:1–3; Col. 1:16, 17*). Whatever we learn, whatever we know about—quarks, caterpillars, supernovas, angels, demons, “principalities and powers in heavenly places” (*Eph. 3:10*), everything—they exist only because of God. Hence, all true knowledge and wisdom and understanding ultimately have their source in the Lord Himself.

Scripture is clear: “God is love” (*1 John 4:8*), which explains this quote from Ellen G. White: “Love, the basis of creation and of redemption, is the basis of true education. This is made plain in the law that God has given as the guide of life. The first and great commandment is, ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind.’ Luke 10:27. To love Him, the infinite, the omniscient One, with the whole strength, and mind, and heart, means the highest development of every power. It means that in the whole being—the body, the mind, as well as the soul—the image of God is to be restored.”—*Education*, p. 16.

Because the Lord is the source of all true knowledge, all true education, all Christian education should direct our minds toward Him and toward His own revelation about Himself. Through nature, through the Written Word, through the revelation of Christ in that Written Word, we have been given all that we need, and then some, to come to a saving relationship with our Lord and, indeed, to love Him with all our heart and soul. Even nature, so defiled by thousands of years of sin, still speaks, even powerfully, of the goodness and character of God when studied from the perspective given us in Scripture. But the Written Word, the Scriptures, is the perfect standard of truth, the greatest revelation we have of who God is and what He has done and is doing for humanity. Scripture, and its message of Creation and Redemption, must be central to all Christian education.

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The apostle John said that Jesus Christ is the “Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (*John 1:9*). In other words, just as only through Jesus does every human being have life, through Jesus every human being receives some rays of divine light, some understanding of transcendent truth and goodness.

Yet, we’re all in a struggle, the great controversy, in which the enemy of souls works diligently to block us from receiving this knowledge. Thus, whatever else Christian education entails, it must obviously seek to help students better understand the light that God offers us from heaven.

Otherwise, what? As Jesus said, “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (*Mark 8:36*). What good is a great education in science, literature, economics, or engineering if, in the end, you face the second death in the lake of fire? The answer is obvious, isn’t it?

Thus, the topic for our lesson this quarter. What does it mean to have a “Christian education,” and how can we as a church, in one way or another, find a way so that all our members are able to get such an education?

This Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide has been written by various presidents of Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities in North America.

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A 36-year-old woman describes how evil spirits interrupted Bible studies three times. A 70-year-old former witch doctor says he couldn't heal his own illness. A 14-year-old girl remembers dodging stone idols thrown by her grandfather. What do they have in common? They are united by mission in the Southern Asia Division, which will receive this quarter's Thirteen Sabbath Offering.

Read more in the youth and adult Mission magazine (bit.ly/adultmission) and the Children's Mission magazine (bit.ly/childrensmisson).

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