

CHRISTIAN
VS.
SECULAR
EDUCATION

“Does it really matter for your child?”

*Excerpts from the Bible and the
writings of Ellen G. White*

The Biblical Foundation for Christian Education

(From the English Standard Version of the Bible)

"For I have chosen him (Abraham), 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 to Abraham what he has promised him." Genesis 18:19

"Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. **Make them known to your children** and your children's children - how on the day that you stood before the Lord your God at Horeb, the Lord said to me, "Gather the people to me, that I may let them hear my words, so that they may learn to fear me all the days that they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children so." Deuteronomy 4:9

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord 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. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall **teach them diligently** to your children, 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 lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates." Deuteronomy 6:7

"You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall **teach them to your children**, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers to give them, as long as the heavens are above the earth." Deuteronomy 11:19-21

"We will not hide them from the children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done. He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, **so that they should set their hope in God** and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments." Psalm 78:4-6

"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and **instruction of the Lord.**" Ephesians 6:4

Why the "Schools of the Prophets" were formed

"Fathers and mothers in Israel became indifferent to their obligation to God, indifferent to their obligation to their children. Through unfaithfulness in the home, and idolatrous influences without, many of the Hebrew youth received an education differing widely from that which God had planned for them. They learned the ways of the heathen. To meet this growing evil, God provided other agencies as an aid to parents in the work of education. **These schools were intended to serve as a barrier against the**

wide-spreading corruption, to provide for the mental and spiritual welfare of the youth, and to promote the prosperity of the nation." (Ellen G. White, *Education*, p. 45, 46)

Why Seventh-day Adventist schools were formed

"One reason why it was necessary to establish institutions of our own was the fact that parents were not able to counteract the influence of the teaching their children were receiving in the secular schools, and the error there taught was leading the youth into false paths. No stronger influence could be brought to bear upon the minds of youth and the children than that of those who are educating them in principles of science. For this reason it was evident that schools must be established in which our children should be instructed in the way of truth. . . . All through the world there was so great a neglect of home training that the children found at the public schools, for the most part, were degraded in morals and filled with evil habits." (Ellen G. White, *Fundamentals of Education*, pp. 285, 286)

"There is an education that is essentially secular. Its aim is success in the world, the satisfaction of selfish ambition. To secure this education many students spend time and money in crowding their minds with unnecessary knowledge. The world accounts them learned; but God is not in their thoughts. They eat of the tree of secular knowledge, which nourishes and strengthens pride. In their hearts they become disobedient and separated from God; and their entrusted gifts are placed on the enemy's side. Much of the education at the present time is of this character. The world may regard it as highly desirable; but it increases the peril of the student." (Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Parents*, p. 64)

"There is another kind of education that is very different. Its fundamental principle, as stated by the greatest Teacher the world has ever known, is, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." Its aim is not selfish; it is to honor God, and to serve him in the world. The word of God is studied; a vital connection with God is maintained, and the better feelings and traits of character are brought in exercise. This kind of education produces results as lasting as eternity. For "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," and better than all other knowledge is an understanding of his word." (Ellen G. White, *Special Testimonies on Education*, pp. 47, 48)

"If morality and religion are to live in a school, it must be through a knowledge of God's Word. Our school was established not merely to teach the sciences, but for the purpose of giving instruction in the great principles of God's Word, and in the practical duties of everyday life. This is the education so much needed at the present time. Education not only affects to a great degree the life of the students in this world, but its influence extends to eternity." (Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 25.)

"From the teachers in the public schools they receive ideas that are opposed to the truth. But further than this, they receive a wrong education by associating with children who have no training; who are left to obtain a street education. Satan uses these children to educate children who are more carefully brought up. Before Sabbath-keeping parents know what evil is being done, the lessons of immoral behavior are learned, the souls of their children are corrupted." (Ellen G. White, *Home and Church School Manual*, p. 11)

"Do our children receive from the teachers in the secular schools ideas that are in harmony with the Word of God? Is sin presented as an offense against God? Is obedience to all the commandments of God taught as the beginning of all wisdom? We send our children to the Sabbath school that they may be

instructed in regard to the truth, and then as they go to the day school, lessons containing falsehood are given them to learn. These things confuse the mind, and should not be; for if the young receive ideas that pervert the truth, how will the influence of this education be counteracted?" (Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance*, p. 305)

Who Should Teach the Children?

"Educators of youth **should be Christians** who are themselves under the discipline of God." (Ellen G. White, *Home and Church School Manual*, p. 32)

"The question which should decide whether they (teachers) are qualified for their work should be, have they, with all their acquisition of knowledge, **searched the Bible**, and dug beneath the surface for truth as for hidden treasures?" (Ellen G. White, *Church Schools*, p. 19)

"God wants the teachers in our schools to be efficient. Let none feel that having an earnestness in religious matters is all that is essential in order to become educators. **While they need no less of piety, they also need a thorough knowledge of the sciences.** This will enable them to educate the youth, and lead them to the fountain of living water." (Ellen G. White, *Christian Education*, p. 51.)

What Should Be Taught in Schools?

"**The Word of God is to stand as the highest educating book in our world**, and is to be treated with reverential awe. It is our guidebook; we shall receive from it the truth. We need to present the Bible as the great lesson book, to place it in the hands of our children and youth, that they may know Christ, whom to know aright is life eternal." (Ellen G. White, *Special Testimonies on Education*, p. 233)

"Of all the books that have flooded the world, be they ever so valuable, **the Bible is the book of books**, and is most deserving of the closest study and attention." (Ellen G. White, *Christian Education*, p. 105.)

"While the Bible should hold the first place in the education of children and youth, the **book of nature** is next in importance." (Ellen G. White, *Special Testimonies on Education*, p. 59)

"A practical knowledge of the science of human life is necessary in order to glorify God in our bodies. It is therefore of the highest importance that among studies selected for childhood, **physiology** should occupy the first place." (Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Health*, p. 38)

"Children should be educated to **read, write, to understand figures, to keep their own accounts**, when very young. They may go forward, advancing step by step in this knowledge." (Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance*, p. 136)

"The education given in our schools is one-sided. Students should be given an education that will fit them for successful business life. **The common branches of education (reading, writing, mathematics, science) should be fully and thoroughly taught.**" (Ellen G. White, *Home and Church School Manual*, p. 29)

An Appeal to Parents

"Parents, guardians, place your children in training schools where the **influences are similar** to those of a rightly conducted home; schools in which the teachers will carry them forward from point to point, and in which **the spiritual atmosphere** is a savor of life unto life." (Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance*, p. 303)

"**In planning for the education of their children outside the home, parents should realize that it is no longer safe to send them to the secular school, and should endeavor to send them to schools where they will obtain an education based on a Scriptural foundation.** Upon every Christian parent there rests the solemn obligation of giving to his children an education that will lead them to gain a knowledge of the Lord and to become partakers of the divine nature through obedience to God's will and way." (Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance*, p. 304)

"**Notwithstanding this plain instruction** (in Deuteronomy 6:7) some of God's people permit their children to attend the secular schools, where they mingle with those who are corrupt in morals. **In these schools their children can neither study the Bible nor learn its principles. Christian parents, you must make provision for your children to be educated in Bible principles.**" (Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance*, p. 305)

Though we have come short of doing what we might have done for our youth and children in the past, let us now **repent and redeem the time**. The Lord says, "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land, but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword." (Ellen G. White, *Special Testimonies on Education*, 202)

An Appeal to the Church Family

"Let the church carry a burden for the lambs of the flock in its locality, and see **how many can be educated and trained to do service for God.**" (Ellen G. White, *Adventist Home*, p. 489)

"Shall members of the church give means to advance the cause of Christ among others, and then **let their own children carry on the work and service of Satan?** What the Lord Jesus expects in all believers is something besides being occupied and active; this activity should be trained in Christ's lines. God requires wholeness of service." (Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance*, p. 314)

"**The church is asleep and does not realize the magnitude of this matter of educating the children and youth.** . . . The church should take in the situation, and by their influence and means seek to bring about the much-desired end. Let a **fund be created** by generous contributions for the establishment of schools for the advancement of educational work." (Ellen G. White, *Special Testimonies on Education*, p. 200)

"If there are those who should have the benefit of the school, but who cannot pay full price for their tuition, **let the churches in our conferences show their liberality by helping them.** This is an important subject, and calls not for a narrow calculation, but for a thorough investigation." (Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance*, p. 314)

God Wants Every Child to be His Child

“God wants every child of tender age to be his child, to be adopted into his family. Young though they may be, the youth may be members of the household of faith, and have the most precious experience. They may have hearts that are tender and ready to receive lasting impressions. Their hearts may be drawn out in confidence and love for Jesus, that they may live for the Savior. Christ will make them little missionaries. The whole current of their thoughts may be changed, so that sin will not appear a thing to be enjoyed, but to be hated and shunned. **Children who are properly instructed will be witnesses for the truth...** We may bring hundreds and thousands of children to Christ if we will work for them. Let all who read these words be melted and subdued. **Let us in our educational work embrace far more of the children and youth than we have done, and there will be a whole army of missionaries** raised up to work for God. In the last days children’s voices will be heard proclaiming the message. As Christ in the temple solved the mysteries which priests and rulers had not discerned, so in the closing work of this earth children in their simplicity will speak words which will be an astonishment to men who now talk of “higher education.”” (Ellen G. White, *Home and Church School Manual*, p. 40)

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