

EDUCATION

1. God designed human beings for lifelong learning.

- a. “The brain wants to learn. It craves learning, growth, new thinking. It cries out to be used.”¹
- b. Education will be an important aspect of the new creation.
- c. We will never stop learning.
- d. “God gave you a brain. Use it!”

2. The purposes of education are: (1) to pursue truth, goodness, and beauty; and (2) to develop wisdom and virtue.

- a. See *Truth*.
- b. See *Goodness*.
- c. See *Beauty*.
- d. See *Wisdom*.
- e. See *Virtue*.
- f. The primary purpose of education is not to get a job or have a career.
- g. Education prepares children to become fully-functioning adults.
- h. Godly educators see their jobs as setting their students up for success.
- i. The goal is to equip students with the abilities to continue their studies independently.²
- j. As parents, we don’t know what our children will do with their lives. It’s their choice. It is impossible to prepare students for the specifics of their future. Our job is only to set them up for success. We must try our best to equip them with skills that will serve the broadest of purposes so that they are confident and competent generally. As they become adults, they will need to take over the responsibility for educating themselves specifically. So we must help them develop a core of common knowledge and critical skills. When they are grown, they must continue to learn on their own.³

3. Successful educators adhere to an accurate, biblical understanding of human nature.

- a. All children are creatures made in the image of God.
- b. All children have free will and are personally responsible before God.
 - (1) Children are not automatons, machines, or robots.
 - (2) Contra B.F. Skinner, children are not machines to be manipulated.
- c. Children intuitively know God exists and have a God-given conscience.
 - (1) Contra John Locke, children are not blank slates.
- d. Each child has a unique, God-given personality and temperament (i.e., Myers-Briggs).
- e. Each child has unique, God-given abilities, gifts, and talents.
- f. Children are born as fallen creatures. They default toward pride and selfishness.
 - (1) Contra Jean-Jacques Rousseau, children are not all good.
- g. Children are neither all good nor all bad.

¹ L. Bortins, *The Core*, 44.

² L. Bortins, *The Core*, 18.

³ L. Bortins, *The Core*, 214.

- (1) Total depravity means all aspects of human beings are corrupted because of sin, not that human beings are as bad as they possibly could be.
- (2) Contra extreme pessimists, children are not all bad.
- (3) Non-Christian children thrive when they abide by the laws of divine establishment.
- h. Each child has sin nature trends and areas of weakness that he or she must deal with.
- i. At the age of God-consciousness, children must make a decision for or against Jesus.
- j. The free will decisions children make impact forever the trajectory of their lives.
- k. All children are immature and lack the capacity to make wise decisions for themselves and others.
- l. Children need the age-appropriate guidance of mature adults.
 - (1) Contra “Unschooling,” children need guidance.
 - (a) Pure “Unschooling” is an abdication of a parent’s responsibility.
 - (2) Education must be both teacher-directed and student-focused.

4. Family-centered education is the gold standard.

- a. “Family is the basic building block for success for human beings the world over. It is the unit design to enable us to love, share, learn, grow, practice, and prosper in a secure place.”⁴
- b. “The joy of learning begins in the home, with the entire world as our classroom.”⁵
- c. Students need time to bond with their mentors and discover and appreciate the wisdom of their teachers.
- d. A student need to watch his teacher struggling with learning, to copy his perseverance and character, and to see him continue his studies as a lifelong pursuit.⁶
- e. “Children are designed to be nurtured, taught, and loved by two adults within a supportive community for an extended period of time. Instead, we put children in a situation where they are consistently molded to depend on their peers. Children are taught to value the other students more than their teachers, for at least their classmates follow them on the age-graded conveyor belt from class to class, year after year, whereas teachers come and go.”⁷
- f. No one cares more about a child than his or her own parents. God wired us that way.
 - (1) **Ge 22:2** 2 [God] said, Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you [Abraham].
 - (2) **Jn 3:16** 16 God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

5. Classical education is the gold standard.

- a. Something “classic” stands the test of time and sets the standard for excellence.⁸

⁴ L. Bortins, *The Core*, xiii.

⁵ L. Bortins, *The Core*, 14.

⁶ L. Bortins, *The Core*, 16.

⁷ L. Bortins, *The Core*, 17.

⁸ L. Bortins, *The Core*, xiii.

- b. Classical education proved successful for 2,500 years. Only recently has it been discarded.
- c. Classical education emphasizes both classical skills and classical content.⁹
 - (1) Classical education is about classical tools *and* classical content.¹⁰
- d. Classical education strives for truth, goodness, and beauty.
- e. Classical education is based upon the trivium: grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric.
 - (1) “[W]herever and whenever man has achieved high levels of literacy, the classical skills of grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric have been emphasized over job training or vocational studies.”¹¹
- f. The classical education model is appropriate for every field of endeavor.
 - (1) “[T]he classical model allows one to learn forever.”¹²
 - (2) With classical education, we develop the ability to learn anything.¹³
 - (3) “Practicing the trivium allows students to master the arts of grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric so they can apply these general skills to specific tasks for the rest of their lives.”¹⁴
- g. Classical education produces broad-minded, intelligent, well-rounded human beings equipped for lifelong learning.
 - (1) “The history and literature of dead ages emancipates us from immersion in the flood of our own hour.”¹⁵
 - (2) Classically-educated individuals are far less susceptible to group think and propaganda.
 - (3) “A classically trained student would have the skills needed to read [an] original text, ask and find answers to his or her own questions, and clearly present findings to an audience.”¹⁶
 - (4) Narrow education produces narrow-minded people. Broad education produces broad-minded people.
 - (5) Education can claim to be broad-minded when it is actually narrow-minded.
 - (a) The dogma of naturalism is a perfect example of narrow-mindedness.
- h. The classical model equips students to discover how our universe works.”¹⁷
 - (1) This is true both of the physical universe and human nature.
- i. The goal of classical education is wisdom and virtue.

⁹ L. Bortins, *The Core*, 3.

¹⁰ L. Bortins, *The Core*, 215.

¹¹ L. Bortins, *The Core*, 2.

¹² L. Bortins, *The Core*, 3.

¹³ L. Bortins, *The Core*, 15.

¹⁴ L. Bortins, *The Core*, 214.

¹⁵ R. Kirk, *Eliot and His Age*, quoted in L. Bortins, *The Core*, 63.

¹⁶ L. Bortins, *The Core*, 55.

¹⁷ L. Bortins, *The Core*, 14.

- (1) Classical education leads a child through knowledge and understanding to wisdom and virtue.¹⁸

6. For believers, education must always be in the context of the biblical worldview.

- a. See *The Biblical Worldview*.
- b. See *Epistemology*.

7. Tips for teachers:

- a. Resolve to be a lifelong learner yourself.
 - (1) Teachers who love to learn will impart a love of learning to their students.
 - (2) Homeschooling your child is a great way to “redo” your education.
- b. Keep educating yourself as an educator. Study pedagogy.
 - (1) Through inductive Bible study, develop a biblical theology of education.
 - (2) Read two books on pedagogy every year.
 - (3) In education, the quality of the teacher is paramount.
- c. Set specific academic goals for your students.¹⁹
- d. Consistently mentor your students over a long period of time.²⁰
- e. Plan each academic year, term, and week in advance.
 - (1) “Studies show that of the six hours students spend in school, less than one-third is spend on intentional academics. The rest is used up by shuffling from class to class and waiting for everyone to quiet down.”²¹
- f. Prioritize memory work.
 - (1) Make memory work the price for admission into your classroom.²²
- g. Over-practice basic skills.
 - (1) Focus on the fundamentals so they become second nature for your students.
 - (2) An over-practiced skill eventually becomes a delightful art to be shared.²³
- h. Use tests a lot. Testing is a quick way to evaluate students’ progress.
- i. Focus on reading and writing. Don’t overuse audio-visual or internet learning.
 - (1) “The medium is the message.”²⁴
- j. Have boys spend lots of time with their father, and girls with their mother.
 - (1) “The best way to train up a child to maturation is to have boys spend time with men and to have girls develop strong relationships with women, just as an apprentice spend time with a master.”²⁵

¹⁸ L. Bortins, *The Core*, 79.

¹⁹ L. Bortins, *The Core*, 15.

²⁰ L. Bortins, *The Core*, 15.

²¹ L. Bortins, *The Core*, 211.

²² L. Bortins, *The Core*, 210.

²³ L. Bortins, *The Core*, 56.

²⁴ Marshall McLuhan.

²⁵ L. Bortins, *The Core*, 85.

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Notes