

Educational Choice

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Private Christian colleges and secondary schools are an added expense and sometimes a huge added expense, even more than I can comfortably handle. So people ask and say to me, “Why make the sacrifice? Kids turn out fine going to public schools and secular colleges. Just trust God to take care of your kids.”

Our ultimate hope is clearly in God to take care of our kids, but we must seek to be faithful to his commands to train up our children as he has directed. Without Christian educators who are free to educate christianly, our children are not likely to receive the God-centered training they need.

Research done by George Barna indicates that only 10% of Americans actually hold a biblical worldview. Will the non-Christian schools turn this around? The Nehemiah Institute’s national survey revealed that 90% of Christian students leave high school either “at risk” or “easy prey” to conforming to humanistic, anti-Christian thinking. According to a study by Dr. Gary Railsback and Dr. Norm Geisler in 1981, 50% of students from Christian homes were denying their faith before graduating from college. Today it is 75%.

Dr. John Seel, headmaster of The Cambridge School of Dallas, makes this significant statement, “A Christian is free to *participate* in all types of educational institutions—Christian and secular, but he is not free to be *patterned* by those that do not make biblical truth central.” He later refers to Romans 12:2 as partial support for this principle. As a Christian parent I am responsible to nurture a Christian mind and imagination in my children. When God warns, “Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life” (Prov.4:23), his warning is first and foremost an educational warning. Clearly education is not morally or spiritually neutral. It is always perspectival—leading us either toward or away from God and his will. Should I then as a Christian parent allow my children’s minds to be shaped by secular educators? They are to be trained to destroy and demolish arguments and every speculation that sets itself up against the knowledge of God (2 Cor.10:5). They have to be brought to the maturity of being able on their own to “see to it that no one takes them captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ” (Col. 2:8). What non-Christian institution even with a Christian teacher or two is going to assist this parent in the Christian nurture and admonition of my children the way I need to be assisted?

If I choose to send my child to a secular institution then I force him to do “double-study” if he and I are to be faithful to Christ. He must both study from the secular perspective he is taught in order to make the grade, but then must also study through extra research and dialogue with believers to gain a Christian perspective. I am aware of very few high school or college age students or parents of these students who have the tools, spiritual motivation, discipline and perseverance to do this “double-study.” This is the reason for the statistics of children falling away from the faith. Education is dangerous. This is the rationale necessary to make a biblical educational choice. For more direction from God to study and apply relating to this consider the following scriptures: Ps.1:1-6; 11:3; 14:1; 144:11-12; Prov.1:8-9; 3:5-6; 9:10; 13:13, 20; 22:6; 2Cor.6:14-18; Heb.5:14; 1Tim.4:7-8; Col.2:3-8; Dt.6:1-7. We must not lean to our own understanding and let our opinions rule. Let us be directed by the word of our Lord alone.

Martin Luther, speaking in A.D. 1537 came to this conclusion, “*I am much afraid that schools will prove to be the gates of hell unless they diligently labor in explaining the Holy Scriptures, engraving them in the hearts of youth. I advise no one to place their child where the Scriptures do not reign paramount. Every institution in which men are not increasingly occupied with the word of God must become corrupt.*”