

Keeping Covenant With God in the Education of Our Children

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As a confession of our faith, testimony to the world, and instruction to all true believers, the elders of this church have determined to record here our heartfelt and Biblically based conviction that the Lord has appointed to parents the responsibility and final authority to secure, guide and control the education of their children, that they might be trained regarding this world and in all areas of life to think God's thoughts after Him and walk in all His ways.

Man was created, as God's likeness and for God's glory, to study, subdue and develop the world in which God placed him (Gen. 1:26-28). Naturally, from the very beginning, it was a task which belonged to parents to instill this perspective in their children and help them to pursue it.

Ethical rebellion against God has resulted in a curse on mankind (Gen. 3:17-19) which is experienced not only spiritually (Rom. 8:5-8; Eph. 2:1-4) but also intellectually (Rom. 1:21-22; 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 4:17-18), and which introduces an unavoidable antithesis between those antagonistic to God and those who belong to the promised Savior (Gen. 3:15).

The task of pursuing proper knowledge of the world and developing a God-glorifying culture therein thus encounters tremendous obstacles and distortions, making it imperative that parents educate their children within the perspective and power of God's revelation and grace. The redemption which Christ has secured for us not only spiritually saves us from the wrath to come, but also delivers us from intellectual futility and foolish reasoning in our methods and learning about the world in which we presently live.

Genuine knowledge of any subject whatsoever begins with reverence and submission to God (Prov. 1:7), particularly the fundamentals and philosophy which adhere to the Lord Jesus Christ rather than the fallen world or human traditions (Col. 2:8; 1 Tim. 6:20). It is the word of God which sets apart His people in the truth (John 17:17). Thus neutrality in education is not only impossible (Matt. 12:30), but immoral (Jas. 4:4). Accordingly, the aim of Christian parents must be to encourage their children to "bring every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5), "in whom are deposited all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:3). Only if they are first disciples of Christ will they know the truth and enjoy real freedom (John 8:31-32).

Therefore, from the very beginning of history, then especially with the introduction of man's rebellion against God, and as well in light of the fundamental nature of any genuine knowledge, it is a parental duty to train and educate their children, regardless of the subject matter, in the nurture of the Lord and the light of His revelation (Eph. 6:4; Prov. 5:1-2; Ps. 36:9; 119:105, 130).

The responsibility rehearsed here has been part of the confession of faith of God's people from the earliest days, indeed a primary application of the first and great commandment (Deut. 6:4-5; cf. Matt. 22:37-38). It constitutes a central element in what it means for those who are saved to keep covenant with God: "And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart, and you shall teach them diligently unto your children" - constantly and consistently, in every time and place, covering all the spheres of human thought, activity and living (Deut. 6:6-9). Note is taken that this responsibility has been assigned directly by God to parents, rather than any other institution of society.

Regardless, then, of whatever children learn - from math and science to history, social studies, literature and the arts - parents have a God-given duty to see to it that their children learn it, as much as is possible (given the resources and opportunities available to their parents), with the perspective and application of the Christian worldview as derived from God's revelation. It is and shall be the policy of this church by instruction, preaching and pastoral care to inculcate this educational responsibility in our parents, directing and helping them to walk in God's gracious covenant as faithful disciples of Christ.