

Continuing Education

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As a general rule, parents are concerned with their child's education. They make sure they are progressing as they should. They make sure homework is done and correct. They help their children with reports and projects. They will hire tutors if the child is struggling in a certain subject.

But education doesn't stop with high school or even college. Practically all fields of work require a form of continuing education. For instance, physicians are required to attend classes and conferences to stay abreast of new advancements in medicine. Salesmen will have various training classes to attend regarding products or sales techniques. Even those not in the workforce recognize education is ongoing in various aspects of life. Without continuing education, you get left behind fairly quickly, regardless of your role.

What I find to be disheartening, however, is that numerous Christians do not see the need for or the benefits of a continuing education in the word of God. This manifests itself in different ways. Probably the one that disturbs me the most is when parents do not place the same (or more) emphasis on their children's Bible education as they do their secular education. Parents, it is crucial that your children be schooled in the things that have eternal consequences, much more so than in those things that are important for only a short while. While it may be important for your child to know Shakespeare's *Hamlet* for a test, if he doesn't know Matthew, Acts, Romans, etc. he won't pass the one test that matters.

This continuing education starts at home. Don't rely on the Bible classes on Sundays or Wednesdays to sufficiently provide them the education they need. That's not to say those classes aren't valuable, but it's *your* job as the parent to provide the continuing Bible education your children need, not the Bible class teachers (Deut. 6:6ff; Eph. 6:4). This includes at least 2 things: personal study at home with your children and making sure their Bible lessons are completed. It doesn't matter if they're in elementary school or high school; this is *continuing* education, and your responsibility doesn't stop as long as they live with you. Those of us who are or have been teachers unfortunately witness students on a regular basis who haven't done their lessons. The Bible and the lessons learned from its study are too important to let this happen.

As I said, though, this is *continuing* education. That means our learning doesn't stop once we become adults. We, too, must continue to "*grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*" (2 Peter 3:18). Have you ever found a book that is so engrossing you can't put it down? Many of you have become enamored with the *Twilight* series of books. Most of the younger people have read the *Harry Potter* series. While some people read the same books more than once, as a general rule, once you read a book, you're pretty much done with it. However, though you may have read every passage in the Bible, it is not a book that you are finished with once you have read it all. The doctrines and examples within it need constant study to be able to mine the riches of the truth found in the words of the Holy Spirit.

Notice what 2 Tim. 2:15 says: *“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”* The KJV says *“Study to show yourself approved to God...”* The Greek word translated “diligent” or “study” means to make haste, to be earnest, to exert one’s self. It takes effort to be able to present yourself approved to God. And Paul says we must rightly divide the word of truth to accomplish this task. This does not denote a casual reading of the Bible. This does not mean we read it every now and then. This demands in-depth study on a regular basis. How else can we rightly divide the word of truth, that is handle it properly or apply it correctly, if we’re not diligently studying it on a regular basis? This is the continuing education we need to be approved to God.

Not only do we need to continue our education in the word of God at home, but we can do so when we assemble with the saints on Sundays and Wednesdays. One of the purposes for coming together is to study together. We have two opportunities each week to participate in continuing education classes. But if you’re not here, you’re not receiving the benefits of those classes. Why would you want to miss the opportunity to study the Bible? It’s the word of God, the words of life.

No matter our position in life, continuing our education is important. But there is no education more important than what we receive from studying the Bible. On the Day of Judgment, how well we knew our ABCs and 123s won’t matter. How well we knew and followed God’s word will.