

Daily View

“But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today’” Hebrews 3:13

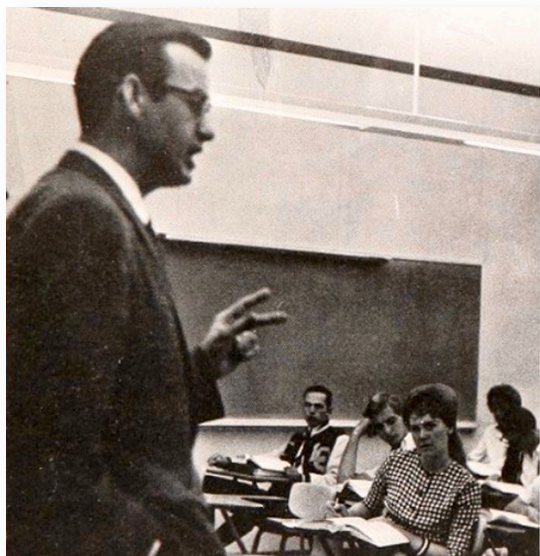
September 16, 2020

Teachers

Teachers play a critical role in our lives. If you know how to read and write, you owe that to a teacher.

We should rank our teachers based upon how well we learned the subject they taught, but that’s not the way kids judge things. When I reflect back on my experience as a student, I think of my teachers in 4 categories: influential, memorable, meh, and should’ve-been-doing-something-else. While it’s common to blame a teacher if you didn’t do well in a subject, it doesn’t necessarily work the other way. “My favorite teacher” is probably not the one who taught you to recite the alphabet or read. The reason is more personal.

My favorite teachers were the ones who had a sense of humor, or who went off topic and talked to us about life in general or who gave me some individual attention. So, I remember Mr. McInerney — *“never, ever, be bored!”* Or, my music teacher, Mrs. Tedesco, who embarrassed me by calling me



Mr. Wall, history teacher. One of my more memorable teachers. He frequently went “off-topic” and had a lot of “interesting” opinions.

“Davey” instead of my preferred “Dave.” It didn’t really bother me because I know she liked me.

Then there was Mr. Lucas, who chose me as captain of the flag football team, and Mr. Ross, the grandfatherly English teacher, and Mr. Wall, who had a lot of opinions, and Mr. Wolf, who was also one of the football coaches and, every Monday in World History, talked about Friday’s football game. I loved the class but I learned nothing about world history.

I also had teachers who didn’t fit my learning style and others whom I didn’t respect for some reason — like my Spanish teacher who thought he was Don Juan and looked at the girls in class that way. And there were teachers whose heart was not in it, often rolling the “dream machine” (the movie projector) two or three times a week instead of teaching. We called it the dream machine because the voice of the narrator was so soothing that it made us drowsy (I’m getting sleepy thinking about it).

Unfortunately, some of the not-so-great teachers taught subjects I was most interested in. For example, I was excited about journalism in my last two years of high school, since I was planning to major in journalism in college. But my teacher in those classes often showed travelogue movies instead of teaching journalism. But that was the exception. Truly incompetent teachers were uncommon. Most took their job seriously and did a good job, some exceptionally good.

I feel for teachers who are trying to navigate difficult circumstances these days. As a teacher of the Bible, I identify with them. It’s so much more difficult to teach remotely, even with adults. It’s doubly difficult with young people.

We zoomed our Sunday evening young peoples’ class for several weeks when we were under the stay-at-home order and, while it was well “attended,” the kids were more reticent about speaking up. Fortunately, we are able to meet outside now, and it’s much better. We are looking forward to getting the kids back up to our house, as it was pre-pandemic.

Teachers play a critical role in our lives, both in the secular world and in the church. As for the latter, James warns that not many should become teachers because they will incur a stricter judgment (James 3:1). But in the end, it’s the student’s responsibility to learn and he or she is the one who will pay the price for failure to apply the teaching they heard. Proverbs 5:11-14 describes the poor student and the consequences:*

...at the end of your life you groan,
when your flesh and body are consumed,
and you say, “How I hated discipline,
and my heart despised reproof!

I did not listen to the voice of my teachers
or incline my ear to my instructors.

I am at the brink of utter ruin
in the assembled congregation.”

Toward the end of your life, you look back at teachers and you’ll probably remember those who cared and you will definitely remember those who influenced you most, for better or worse.

*Proverbs 5 is a warning from a father to a son about adultery.

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