

How to Improve Your Forced-At-Home COVID-19 Schooling

One thing this COVID-19 scare has blessed us with is a fresh consciousness concerning the opportunity to replace government (and really all mass) ‘schooling’ with a stronger model. Even though there remains a sense that this too shall pass, there is also a worry that uh oh – what if this does not soon end? My gift is not prophecy so I will refrain from testing any prophetic inclinations here. It is still useful to note, however, that we are at a pointed place of learning now. After all, everybody has their kids at home so what do we do? Likely there is as much need for parents, as there is for their children, to learn. My message primarily targets Bible believing Christian parents but if you are not such you might, in any case, find this useful.

One observation we can make coming out of the gate is that the students sent home from their schools are predominantly trying to do ‘school’ at home. They are going on-line to download lessons and reading the same books they would have been reading if they had remained in school. This is not what Christian homeschoolers generally do and is *not* an experience of true homeschooling in any real sense. Christian homeschooling, as understood by those of us who have practiced it, uses stronger methods and also has biblical precepts driving it. Bringing mass schooling, and humanist indoctrinated philosophy home, does not create a Christian homeschool.

Christian homeschooling begins with biblical precepts at the foundation. The biblical model for home education is laid out in Deuteronomy 6:6-9:

*These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart.
You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.
You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead.
You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*

The cornerstone for Christian education is to talk of godly concepts “when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up” which pretty much means all the time. Teaching children well, and wisely, and Christianly is an entire life project. It is not something that can be accomplished by importing mass education and its apparatus into our homes. Opting out of the mass education model is an important first step in biblically-based homeschooling. Christian homeschooling involves individualized instruction founded on biblical principle and is geared toward the individual student. The student is not a mass model average. He or she is an individual, created in God’s image, in need of proper instruction.

We may also note that the most important instruction, that which supercedes all else, is defined by the Apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 1:5-7:

But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion, wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions.

Avoiding the problems of mass education then, is only the beginning of wisdom for parents. There are an abundance of instructors in schools teaching all kinds of law: popular immoral law, rainbow law, abortive law, transgender law, worship-of-central-government law and so on. They do this even though they, as Paul writes, “do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions.” Christians should be wary of putting themselves and their children under such teaching. We are warned to avoid the teaching of immoral law and to receive instruction that is “from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.” Beyond this we must also teach our children the correct application of God’s law and then use that knowledge, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to develop in them pure hearts, good consciences, and sincere faith. None of this will occur if our children are immersed in mass government (and typically even Christian) education.

Besides these issues we also need to understand that the current forced-at-home education does not address the ubiquitous problem throughout government and much Christian mass education which is the main but unstated message of these schools: the irrelevancy of God in all things. This lesson is assumed and taught by example in virtually every classroom. Bringing mass education curriculum home only exacerbates an already serious defect in the child’s learning. True Christian home education disentangles itself from that atheistic and worldly philosophy. It presses forward the crown rights of Jesus in all areas of thought and life. It views life through the lens of Christ’s kingdom work and applies the implications of that work in every area of study. The typical mass education model with its irrelevancy of God assumptions can never convince our children of these biblical values.

So, NO, the current doing of school at home is not the same as Christian homeschooling. But it is an important moment in our experience. God is giving us more than a nudge to take His instructions seriously and rearrange our lives more biblically, wisely, and obediently for His greater glory.

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