

10 - Education and Its Purpose

by Ben Torrey

Ben Torrey discusses the purpose of education from a biblical perspective, contrasting societal values with spiritual truths.

Duration: 6:52

Scripture: Deuteronomy 4:30, Psalm 78:1-7, Proverbs 1:7, Proverbs 9:10, Proverbs 22:6, Matthew 6:33, John 8:31-32

Topics: "Education"

Description

In this sermon, Ben Torrey discusses the topic of education and its significance in Korean society. He highlights the strong emphasis on education in Korea, which stems from the Confucian foundations of the culture. However, Torrey expresses concern that education has become almost like a god for many people, with status and connections being prioritized over real learning. He argues that this perspective is not aligned with a biblical perspective on education. Torrey references Psalm 78:1-7, which emphasizes the importance of passing on the praises of the Lord and His wondrous works to future generations.

Transcript

Good evening, this is Ben Torrey once again. I trust that you have been enjoying these weekly comments, my thoughts that I get to share with you. I enjoy sharing them.

This evening, I would like to talk about education. What it is, its purpose, and what our attitude as Christians toward it should be. Living in Korea as we do, we live in a society that places an extremely strong emphasis on education.

Education is considered one of the most important things, if not the most important thing in life. I believe the strength of this emphasis comes from a combination of factors. The fundamental underlying factor is, I believe, the strong Confucian foundations of Korean society and culture.

For centuries, to be a scholar was the highest level a person could attain. Being a scholar was more to be desired than riches. It was the epitome of society.

If you are able to take and then pass the national civil service exam, you are considered the most honored of people. This attitude toward scholarship and examinations still persists. The other major factor that we need to consider is Korea's history of struggle and change over the past 150 years or so.

This has been a time of enormous change. The class system that existed 100 years ago has been completely upended. People that came from families at the lowest level of society have risen to positions of great wealth and power, while others have fallen from places of great height.

Korea has seen a great struggle for identity. It has seen foreign occupation, independence movements, war, financial explosion, crisis, and recovery, all within a few generations. Through all this change and turmoil, education has been the constant factor that people have seen as providing a way through the confusion and on to the promises of stability, wealth, and honor that all desire.

It is education that has enabled Koreans to conquer the ignorance and poverty of the past. It is education that has enabled Koreans to spread throughout the world and become known for their industry, technology, and the amazing economic triumph of their home country. Education is seen as the means to wealth, security, and status in society.

Every parent wants their children to excel in education so that they may excel in life and bring honor to the family, not to mention wealth to care for them in their old age. Is this so wrong? Well, it depends. I fear that for most people in Korea these days, education has become almost a god.

It also seems that real learning may be less important than status and connections. It is more important to graduate from a better high school or university than it is to get a better education at a school that is not so well known. Along with the status that the better school brings are the connections to others who have been students there.

Connections are often more important than accomplishments for establishing oneself in society. To be honest, I can't say that this is a very biblical perspective. So what is the biblical perspective on education? Let's look at a passage from the Psalms.

Psalms 78, verses 1 through 7. Listen, O my people, to my instruction. Incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable.

I will utter dark sayings of old, which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not conceal them from their children, but tell to the generation to come the praises of the Lord and His strength and His wondrous works that He has done. For He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers that they should teach them to their children, that the generation to come might know, even the children yet to be born, that they may arise and tell them to their children, that they should put their confidence in God and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments.

It seems from this that what is important for us to pass on to our children is the praises of the Lord, His strength, and the wondrous works that He has done. In other words, knowledge about Him, His creation, His ways in the past with His people and with the world, language arts, science, history, and social studies. It is also important that we learn and keep His laws.

Listen to what Moses says in Deuteronomy 4.30, So you shall keep His statutes and His commandments, which I am giving you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, that you may live long on the land which the Lord your God is giving you for all time. Isn't this what we want? That it go well with us and our children after us? That they may have long lives wherever the Lord places them? We get this true security and blessings not necessarily from excelling in the world's eyes, but from excelling in our

knowledge of God. We also think of education as the training and development of a person in the knowledge of truth, and that which will give us freedom in our lives.

Jesus said, I am the way and the truth and the light. And He also said, If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. It is difficult to say that education, which is not firmly established on the One who is truth, the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, can be true education in the fullest sense of the word.

It certainly would not lead to a greater knowledge of God, His creation, His laws and His ways. I'd like to leave you with these thoughts and come back next week to discuss what all this means for our future. Until then, good night.

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