

12 - the Process of Learning and Teaching

by Ben Torrey

Ben Torrey discusses the problems with traditional education and proposes a biblical model of learning and teaching that focuses on discovery, creativity, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 8:28

Scripture: Genesis 2:15, Genesis 2:19-20, Matthew 6:33, John 14:26, John 16:13, Revelation 2:17

Topics: "Education"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the flaws in the current education system and proposes a better approach based on biblical models. The current system idolizes good grades and schools, focuses on rote memorization, and separates students from their families. The speaker suggests that students should be taught how to discover truths for themselves and be given the tools and processes to learn continuously. Drawing from the teaching methods of Jesus, who spent time with His disciples, the speaker emphasizes the importance of intimate learning relationships and facilitating the process of discovery.

Transcript

Good evening, it's good to be back with you again. We have been talking about education the last couple of weeks. I would like to continue with that theme this evening.

I've spoken about attitudes towards education that end up making formal education, good schools and degrees into an idol and a system that I believe is abusive to young people, not least because of the way it separates students from their families and isolates them from those who can teach them the ways of God, while at the same time forcing them into long hours of study that is something less than ideally fruitful. That was a long sentence. Let me try again.

We have a system that idolizes good grades and good schools. It also focuses on rote memorization rather than teaching how to think creatively and productively. And it requires students to spend time in regular school, then long hours after school with tutors or tahaguans.

This is not even to mention the fact that it is a very expensive system that can drain a family of much of its resources. I think there is a better way. I would like to start tonight by talking about the process of learning and teaching, looking at biblical models.

Surely we can draw on these ideas for our education process. Sometimes it seems that students in this system are seen as little more than fact repositories. It's as if the teacher opens the top of the student's head, then pours in the facts.

Some heads hold the facts better, while others are full of holes that the facts leak right out of again. Wouldn't it be much better for students to be taught how to discover truths for themselves, to be given the tools and processes to learn all the time, whether they are formally in school or not? When the student is discovering things, learning the facts in the process of discovery, and in the context of meaningful exploration, they don't leak away. They fit in with other facts to form a solid foundation of new knowledge.

When God created Adam and Eve and put them in the Garden of Eden, He gave them the responsibility to take care of the Garden. Eden means delight. Can you imagine how much fun it was for them to work, to take care of this Garden of Delight, along with adding their own bit of creativity to this most beautiful of places where God had put them to live? Adam was told to give names to all the animals.

This was a process of discovery. A good name, the right name, comes from knowledge of the one being named. God promises us in Revelation 2.17 that each of us who overcomes the world and the enemy will be given a new name that only God and we will know.

This means that God will call us by what is so quintessentially unique to each of us that no one else will see it. Since He knows us better than even we know ourselves, He is the only one who can give us such a name. For Adam to name the animals meant that he had to know each one in a deep and special way.

How could he learn what he needed to know? Through a divinely guided process of discovery. What a joy that must have been! I say divinely guided because we need not be alone in this process of discovery. We see in John 16.13 that Jesus promises the Holy Spirit to guide us in our process of discovery.

Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth. If we think that this is important and right, then we need to look at at least two things. First, how do we facilitate the process of discovery and how do we enable the student to connect with this Holy Spirit that Jesus says will guide us into all truth.

Let's look at the model of Jesus Christ Himself. He taught primarily by spending time with a few people, His disciples. He spent time with them constantly showing them what He wanted them to learn.

He took ordinary events as opportunities, turning the disciples' struggles and efforts into teachable moments. He also put them in situations where they had to experiment and then learn from both their successes and their failures. He guided them on a process of discovery.

Of course, He is the Way, the Truth and the Light. No one can teach us as well as He can. That's why He promised to send the Holy Spirit to be with His disciples after He had ascended into Heaven.

We can still be in a learning process with Jesus through the Holy Spirit. In addition to the time spent with His disciples, Jesus also taught the multitudes. He did this through both demonstration and storytelling.

He caused those who asked Him questions to think through their own questions, their suppositions and their prejudices. He led them into discovering the answers for themselves or He led them to the point where His answer would not be forgotten or misunderstood. Surely we cannot improve on the techniques of the Master.

The challenge for us is to think through how to implement these techniques in a system of mass education. I would think that one of the most important points would be to set up the system so that teachers and students could have an intimate learning relationship, a relationship where the teacher cared deeply about the student and was personally interested in the person's future, where the teacher wanted to lead the student in a process of discovery. Another important point would be to establish a learning process that is integrated with life itself, with all the give and take of everyday living.

Rather than sit for hours in a classroom, what if the teacher and the students moved around their community as Jesus and His disciples did, learning from the people in the markets, from the sights and sounds of the city or the beauty of nature in the countryside? The classroom could be the place where everyone came back to towards the end of the day to discuss what they had seen and heard or where they could try things out, conduct experiments in a controlled environment. It would also be useful for showing things that the students wouldn't see locally but could be tied in with their own actual experience. Of course, if we look to the Holy Spirit to be our guide in this process of education, then we cannot divorce it from our faith.

The separation of public education from the most fundamental foundation of the One who is Truth and the most important assistance of the Holy Spirit is perhaps the single greatest flaw in this system. This would indicate that if we want our children to get the best possible education available to them, then we need to provide it through an alternative system, something for us to think about. I will leave you with those thoughts tonight.

Good night.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/24/SID24721.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ben-torrey/12-the-process-of-learning-and-teaching/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net