



ON THE ACADEMIC EDUCATION OF OUR CHILDREN



matt violassi

Foreword

I believe - having children - and raising them correctly - is one of the most costly, time & energy-consuming, ***and painful things someone can do.***

Just trying to keep them alive from conception on - is mind-boggling . . . All the sicknesses, diseases, and medical conditions that they can have (that we will have to war and fight against) can be incredibly shocking. The dangerous fevers that won't come down (these can bring permanent damage), the agonizing ear aches (that can bring permanent hearing loss or even death), the teething, the cholic, the flus, the viruses, the inexplicable reactions or allergies, the broken stuff, the nightmares . . . all the mysterious health stuff . . . Incredible.

I remember several times the horror of having to save toddlers and youths from choking to death - not knowing if I could dislodge the item or get the piece of food out . . . Baby-proofing the house so they won't accidentally drink something poisonous, or stab or cut themselves with something sharp or jam something into their ear (or someone else's), or having to pad sharp wall corners or a coffee table so they won't crack their heads open (seen it) when they fall, or fall down some stairs or drown in a bucket of water or toilet, or having something bite them or eat them . . . The list goes on . . .

Disaster and trauma is always so close, really. . . for all of us.

Providing for them: Food. Clothes. The Roof. Larger Car Needed. Medical Costs. Schooling. Fun Activities . . .

Protection: From themselves. From others. From Evil Spiritual Forces. From Life's many Dangers.

Education: Life Skills Teaching & Training (everything they need to know for life). Academic Teaching & Training.

An absolutely incredible and daunting task.

Then the real possibility - that they probably will decide at different times in their lives - or forever - to reject your values and priorities and teachings . . . ***They reject you, really.*** One of the most heart-aching and heart-wounding experiences there can be . . . That they don't become the "Good Friend" of yours that you hoped they would be. They just don't understand what you did for them . . . the pain, the toil, the sacrifices.

I believe, raising children correctly - will take absolute commitment, grit, determination, diligence, time, energy, money, patience. . . and love. . .

More than we ever dreamed.

On the Academic Education of our Children

The buck stops with the parents – ultimately *THE DAD*. The fathers are the heads of the households, and for the most part, God holds the man responsible for everything that goes on in the family household – including the educating of his children. Men, please don't try to put this task and responsibility on the wife. If things go bad, please don't blame the wife – like Adam did in the Garden of Eden. If you are sending your children to a public or private school – please don't blame the school, the teachers, or the government. It is the father's ultimate responsibility. The buck stops with the man. The man of the house, for the most part, needs to answer for the rearing of his children – including the *academic* education.

Once parents – especially the Dad, understand and grasp the huge responsibility of raising a child *well* (and he decides to accept the responsibility of it), his life will probably change dramatically. Just alone - in the educating of children *spiritually*, God directs,

“You shall teach them [His commands] 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.” - Duet: 6:7



When I first read this, I thought, *"This is teaching them all the time!"* . . . Sitting at meals, sitting on the couch, while driving in the car, walking in the park, walking anywhere, teaching them when they rise up, teaching them at night when they go to bed, etc.! How is this done? And also, how is it done so it is real and LIFE and not some weird dry, dead, religious thing? God will teach us and lead us in this. An overall excellent additional attitude is – be teaching them everything – all the time – in everything they need for life (appropriately for the time, obviously).

Operating in this excellent motivation (of preparing a child for life) - not only excites the parent – but excites children and youth. A child or youth can just *feel and sense* how their parents or teachers love and care about them - and for their present and future success in life - when the parent or teacher keeps reinforcing that everything they are teaching them – is to help them in life! . . . From how be a good Christian – to how to work and *how* to work a job, how to do basic cooking, how to wash and fold their own clothes, make a bed, clean a room, personal hygiene, how to study, how to shop, how to do finances, helping with home chores, how to treat other people, courting & dating skills, how to do basic home repairs, etc.

The *academic* part of child-rearing-education is just one aspect of their education. **The parent ultimately needs to perceive *what their child needs for life*, and educate them in it (not the government), or find the right people to do it if they can't.**

I was somewhat thrust into homeschooling out of necessity of daily making sure my 5 sons were mastering their daily schoolwork – and not getting behind or lost. I later was God-drafted into a brief 5-year tour of professional teaching (albeit middle school) after first being the co-educator of these sons while at home - helping my wife for several hours before going to work every day and when I came home at night.

Many if not most teachers generally seem to be very remiss in returning graded work and tests back to the parent in timely ways – if at all. How are parents supposed to truly monitor and intervene? I found myself needing to “re-teach” my sons the workload and volume that they might not be grasping. Academic subject matter builds upon itself – day upon day. Any of the corrected papers *I did receive* were usually from multiple days prior – not that timely if I was going to try to intervene and help them catch-up. I could already be behind 2-5 days in a learning gap as the curriculum marched on day by day. I was always trying to fill the holes and trying to get them “caught up” for the next day’s work.

Like in most textbooks and educational curriculums, it was hard to figure out exactly what the teacher’s actual method of instruction is/was (new ways of doing math for example, or what a grammatical phrase is now called) before I could re-teach it. No wonder parents get discouraged trying to help and intervene with their child who is struggling academically – we just don’t know *what is going on academically*. I am not even talking yet about classroom and playground rules, order, and sanity. After too many nights of frustration, hard feelings – and sometimes tears – I decided the next year it was just smarter (and cheaper) to teach them ourselves. After all, that is what I was having to do every night! So, we began to explore homeschooling.

(By the way, I am not a home-schooling fanatic or sole advocate. I think parents should pray, consider, think, and then decide what to do year-by-year for each child. A classroom situation with excellent teachers, administrators, and educational materials - is probably the way it was overall meant-to-be, but there seems to be so much break-down that has been going-on nowadays.) I have seen many Christian parents send their children to pretty good private academic schools – but having to compromise with different denominational bad doctrine. No wonder our kids can be confused about being a Christian – They don't know which one to be! How sad!

In later years, after becoming a certified teacher, I had **ALL** daily work papers and tests *graded and sent home **EVERY NIGHT*** for the parents - to not only be able to monitor their child's *daily* progress – but for the parents to be able to intervene. (I believe I worked as hard as any \$250,000 /year corporate executive to accomplish this!) I worked every minute of spare classroom time, time between classes, and lunch times to accomplish this. This "Daily Update" also included what we did that day (so the teacher did not have to compile this for a sick or missing student), what exactly what was being sent home that day (so a student could not throw-out a failed test or D+ something), and pertinent Parent Reminders & News. This was all stapled to the students' corrected worksheets and tests. It had to be signed and returned to me the next morning. (One student's paid job was to gather these in the morning and make sure no one's was missing. Also, to check for parent signatures.)

There was never a reason or excuse for wondering why their son or daughter was failing or falling behind in any subject. Their signature testified they knew what was going on every day.

We tried to make parents understand that the child's education ultimately was the parents' responsibility. We were there to help the parent. Parents could now successfully intervene if they needed to or wanted to - every night with a nightly report of their child's progress.

Many people overall don't really understand how education and academic subjects "build upon" themselves progressively. A child who never really learned Math basics, like the multiplication tables by heart – will always be hindered in further math. Each day and each day's lesson, is absolutely important in a sense, because they build-upon previous lessons.

At the school I worked at – I always pushed for textbooks and curriculums that were written for the parents, too – for them to be able to learn the lesson – and teach the lesson themselves - if need be. Each lesson in Saxon Math, for example (at the time), taught and explained the

lesson for the teacher, the parent, or even the sharp student - to be able to read & comprehend each day's lesson, and do the exercises.

The parents were armed for intervention. We were there to help and serve parents in the education of their children. It is not the government's responsibility, it is not the school board's responsibility, it is not the teachers' responsibility – it is the parents' ultimate responsibility to love, train, and educate their children.

Not saying this going to be easy – but it will be worth it. Before teaching school professionally, I stayed at home 2 hours every morning to help my wife Barb with the homeschooling and/or them attending public & private schools. Every night after a hard day's work at a regular normal job, I made sure I played with them, spent quality time with each one of them, and went over each one's work/homework to ensure they were not getting lost or behind.

With all the subjects and classes and workload and grading and paperwork – taking on the weight of the responsibility of teaching our children – can feel overwhelming . . .

Comforting Note! I remember after going back to college to get my teacher certification, we students were searching (in an impassioned classroom discussion), on the best way to teach youth (especially in this new age of computers, go-at-your-own-pace academic software & curriculums, current classrooms flooded with children of different academic levels (for many reasons). Our professor said two profound things:

1. Teaching will always need some of the human element of one-on-one, personal impartation of ideas, facts, thinking, etc. This started from way-back, when two people were sitting together on a log interacting. (Can't and shouldn't depend on some machine or software to teach them.)
2. If you teach a person to read, and the person has a good heart – they can do almost anything and be almost anyone!

Case in point: Abraham Lincoln. President of the United States. He was rumored to practice math with a piece of charcoal on the back of a metal shovel.

“Abraham Lincoln was educated, as he said in his inimitable fashion, “by littles.” All his formal **schooling**—a week here, a month there--did not amount to one year, and mostly he educated himself by borrowing books and newspapers.”

Some parents send their children to Christian schools and private schools for “good” educations. Many of these schools strive for educational excellence with the goal of producing “A” students. **My goal was to produce students with Pure Hearts AND were A+ students academically.** What good and true value is producing A+ students with dirty hearts? What a waste! I have no interest in this. Society and Culture teach academic excellence is everything. It is not. Striving to produce Pure-Hearted students that Love & Serve God – *and* that get A’s – **now, that is worth fighting for!**

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Appendix A – Religious Education/God-Stuff

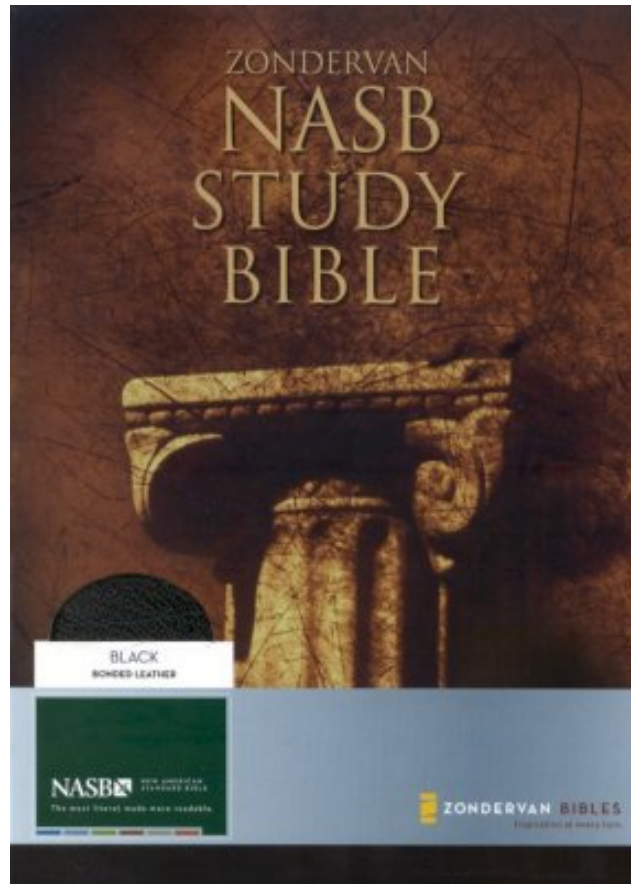
God First. Even as a homeschooling dad, our first academic class/subject was religious/spiritual – God-stuff. Sure, there was the learning of the different books of the Bible and their content – but our overriding goal is that each Child/Youth/Student had a real and personal relationship with God. This was the same for my years as a middle school teacher. God should be the priority and was the priority. Knowing God, Loving God, and Serving God - should all be our top priority as adults. It should be reflected in our day and our time - and reflected in our children's' school time and curriculums, in my opinion. (Different years we might send a son(s) to a Christian or a Public School. We believed this should be a year-by-year decision.)

I believe God likes it when we teach God-stuff as the first lesson of each school day. It speaks loud and clear - to God – and to the student - what our daily priorities are – and what theirs should be. Most importantly, it honors God.

Of course, we would usually start each day with group prayer, addressing Him firsthand. It is difficult to pass-on a real personal relationship with God, if we first don't have one ourselves.

Over the years, I did 3 basic items in this class time.

1. **Walk-through, read-through, the New Testament and Old Testament.** A little each day. It is been said that one of the best overall Bibles with a running commentary (on each page) is The Study Bible by Zondervan publishers. (Be sure to get it with Jesus's words in red ink). This Bible contains almost everything a parent or teacher could want or need to learn, in the Bible. The on-page commentary can answer many questions the reader might ask. It is great for teacher prep. In later years, when a student is reading the Bible on their own - good questions will erupt in them, and rather than dismissing a great question because no one is there to answer it – many questions can be answered right then and there using this Bible. I always tried to get parents to consider this Bible as a great Birthday or Christmas gift. Priceless, really! I recommend either the NASB or ESV or NKJ versions - said to be *the most accurate while maintaining readability.*



2. Time of teaching, understanding, and memorizing of some basic verses pertinent to the student, and their age, and verses they need for life. It is one thing to have “heard” a verse and be familiar with it. It is another thing to know what a verse means. A third step is to know it by heart – to be able to carry it inside of us for life. This is done primarily by rote memorization (I am not good at this, but I am getting better). The ultimate is to know the verse by heart, and be doing it. We can’t make a person believe a verse and do a verse or command found in the Bible – but we should at least bring them to the basic understanding, application, and memorization of Life Verses. The rest is up to them.

An example of a good “life” verse: Jesus said 2 verses basically make up the whole Bible. If all we knew were these 2 commands - and did them – we would be very successful in life in God’s eyes. I believe our kids, our youth, and our students - should know them by heart.



LOVE THE LORD
YOUR GOD

WITH ALL YOUR HEART
WITH ALL YOUR SOUL
WITH ALL YOUR MIND
WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH

The First and the Greatest Command

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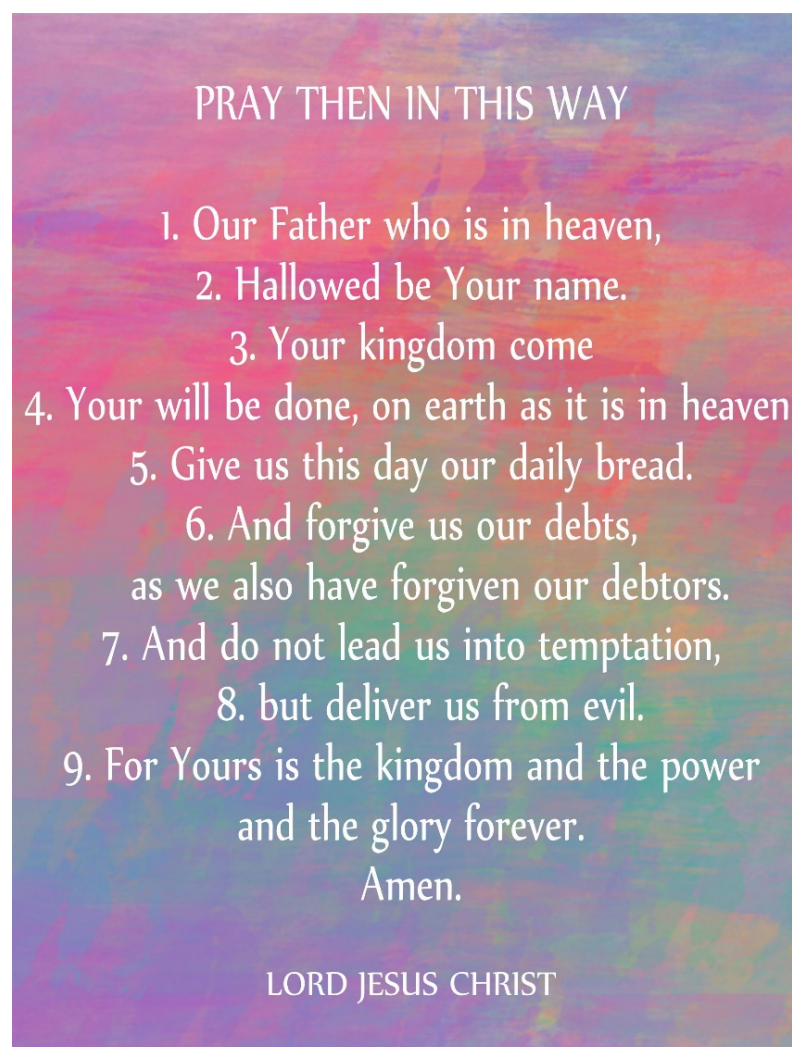
LOVE
YOUR
NEIGHBOR
AS
YOURSELF

The Second
Greatest Command

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In the classroom, we would usually “work” one verse per week – and be tested (usually written) at the end of the week. (Think about this – this is handling and knowing about 40 verses per school year.) I usually (additionally) asked the student on the test to tell me, in their own words, what the verse meant to them and how it applies to their life. Being able to speak the verse can be a step above just being able to write it down. During the week I would have the students practice the verse verbally to each other in pairs of friends (more comfortable and less intimidating doing this drill with someone they more trusted). It would be terrorizing for many students to have each one of them individually get-up in front of the class and recite the verse; I would never do that. Reciting verbally and in written form is a great goal.

Another example verse: They asked Jesus how to pray. The Lord’s Prayer was his answer. A skeleton of 8-9 topics that God would like us to get better-at dialoging to Him and with Him about. I believe it is so wise and good to make sure students know this verse by heart:



One fundamental verse, for example, that I put into my students and would remind over the years was the all-important verse commanding us to obey and honor our parents (with a promise!),

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise), ³ SO THAT IT MAY TURN OUT WELL FOR YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH.” Ephes. 6:1

The point is that we should carefully choose different verses that are not only needed for life, but pertain to each student for *that time* in life. I remember a pastor who seemed pretty proud of all the verses he had his little son memorize and be able to recite, but I could tell the boy had no understanding of most of them or how they applied to his life.

In one school classroom situation, we were having a problem with students lying to each other and to me. I really had to stop and work on teaching them how detestable this sin is to God and to each other. The command to not lie shows-up basically in the 10 Commandments – and all the way to Jesus defining lying as being one of Satan’s biggest character traits – Satan is the “*father* of all lies.” That was a very important and pertinent verse for the moment for the students - and for the rest of their lives. With God’s help, making them see the despicableness of this sin . . . a sin pretty easy to do and get away with.

Another example of a *life verse* and a *present-pertinent verse*: This verse can excite every Christian from student to adult – to encourage and motivate us to keep cracking-open that Bible. We all inevitably find ourselves going to read the Bible (because we are taught good Christians should often read the Bible) and asking the question “*Why am I doing this?*” - especially after the several bouts of Bible roulette seeming to be dry, dead, and boring - and maybe a waste of time. **Jesus says memorizing His Commands - understanding them - knowing them by heart - and doing them – tells Him loud and clear, “I LOVE YOU!” His definition of who loves Him.** We will be judged by this, in part, on Judgement Day. Did we love Him *by His definition*? We can please Him better every day and we will be better prepared to stand before His throne with confidence if we have lived a life of loving God – ***according to His definition:***

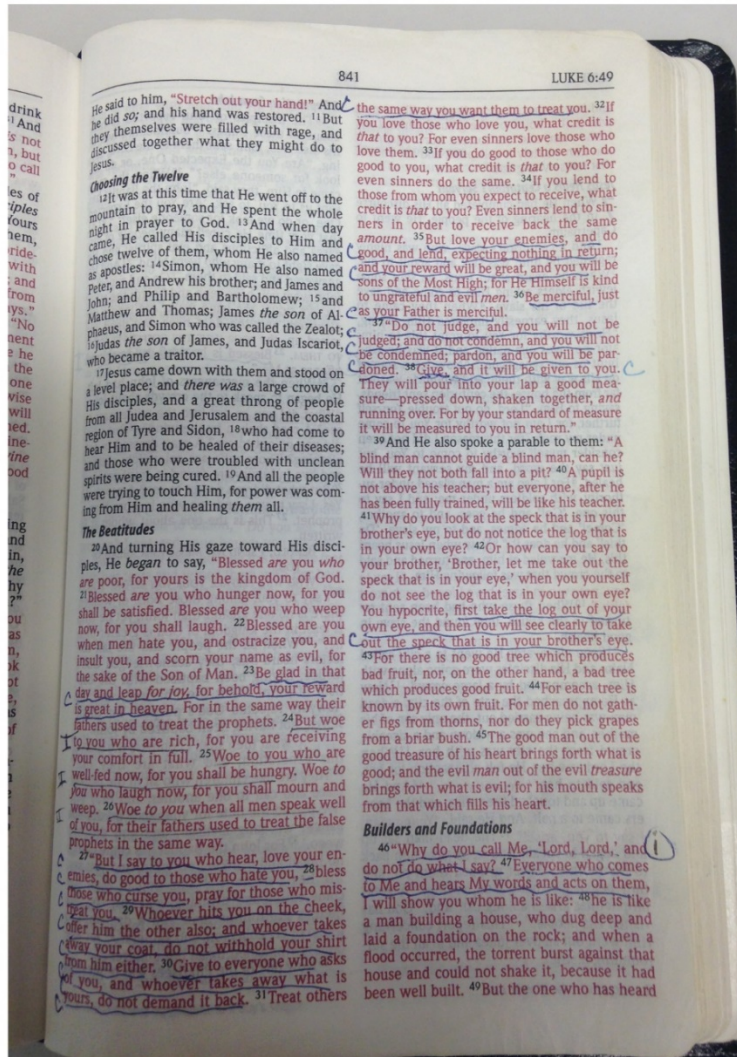


Whoever
has My commands
and keeps them
is the one
who loves
Me

Lord Jesus Christ
John 14:21

MattViolassi.com

Jesus defines who loves Him

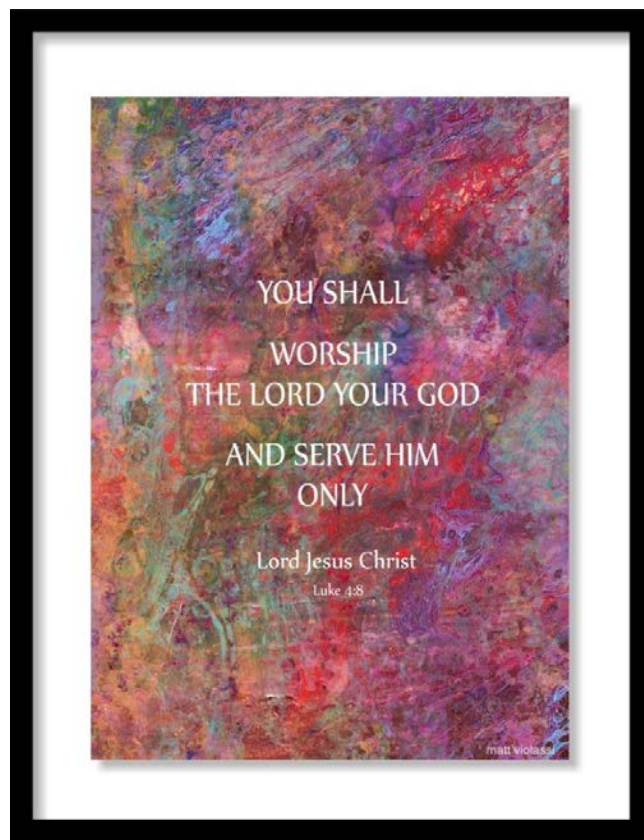


Easier to find His commands
 in a **red-letter** Bible
 Underline and mark "C" for Command
 Underline and mark "I" for implied Command

So, we can excite ourselves and our children, youth, and students about reading the Bible – by reminding ourselves it pleases God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit – to be finding, understanding, memorizing, and doing Jesus’s Commands. This tells Them clearly **“I LOVE YOU!”** We impart this concept to children and students – and they now have a life-long motivation and joy for reading the Bible. *This concept can also dispel the fear of dead*

and dry times of reading and studying the Bible. It also makes for a better Resurrection Day - and Judgement Day – which we should be warning others about and preparing others for!

Here is another great verse that can really cut-to our hearts – and separate us from being some a type of Christian we don't want to be (We can be “saved”, have given our life to God, have confessed and committed to making Him Lord and Savior of our life, be a church-goer, have “met” the Lord . . . and still find ourselves in a somewhat powerless and lifeless daily life.) I have found this verse can cut-through this and keep us better alive in God:



I think it is important to ask ourselves and our students, “Are we Serving God” today, and each day? I have found most Christians cannot confess that they are getting-up every day and “Serving God” - that each and every one of their days is mainly about “Serving God.” Students can understand this concept and easily commit to it and do it. We are only responsible for

what we know what is right to do. It is not too deep for even children, in my opinion. This verse cuts through to deep things in the heart – to our true motivations and heart actions. I believe this is an important verse to cover with our children, youth, and school students.

3. Teaching and Practicing having real, personal, private, God-times. . . . From everything from learning how to “Find” God – to reading and studying the Bible – to praying for others – to “Loving-on-God. I know this might be shocking to many – but I taught – and we practiced (especially in the formal school classroom environment) everything in the book “Train with God – Live with God”! Even 5th and 6th graders comprehended this and could do the things described in it!

One section of our daily Bible period was about this all-important activity. We learned about and practiced all the 7 tools and such on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays. Thursday’s class (Friday was school-wide chapel) was a 20-30 minute period where students **practiced their own personal, private, God-time**. I would dim the lights and put on some relaxing background acoustic music. Children/Youth/Students then practiced having their own private God-time. This was not graded. This was just between them and God, and if they wanted to cultivate their relationship with Him - they could. I just pushed back the gates of hell – carved-out a time for them to do it. Most people – even adults – are too weak to push back life for themselves to do this. The students could pray, read their Bible, work a verse, etc. – whatever they wanted relating to this subject - by themselves - at their own desk. They were given all the tools to do different spiritual things. (See for instance, Tool #1 “Good Things to Do in Our Private God-Times.”)

My wife and I did this while homeschooling our kids and when they attended private or public schools. The house rule and practice was they were to give the first of their *DISPOSABLE TIME* each day (about 20 min) to privately go to a room with only a Bible and a notebook – and have a personal, private God-time. I never checked what they did in this time (I would inquire if they had any questions concerning it, but it was basically none of my business, for the most part), but I armed them with everything *they could do* – if they wanted to. We pushed-back the gates of hell so that this time was available to them. Otherwise, it probably would not happen.

I know this could be construed as some religious, man-made rule (which it was) – but I believe I trained them in the most important thing in life . . . **God is alive – He loves us – He desires relationship with us – WE CAN FIND HIM / MAKE CONTACT WITH HIM! – AND**

WE CAN GET HELP FROM HIM! (“Whoever Asks Receives”) . . . WHAT? How could we not be teaching and modeling this to our Children/Youth/Students?

I have a very easy-to-read and free downloadable flip-book for youths covering this subject, available at TrainForGod.com . . . “10-10 System”. So easy to spend just 10 minutes Praying to God, and 10 minutes Reading/Studying the Bible behind a closed-door – **especially red-letter commands of Jesus**. So easy for almost any Child/Youth/Student!

I know that anyone who would give Him even 20 minutes of the first of their time each - *absolutely thrills Him*. Why not train our kids in this?

Appendix B – Classroom/Home Law & Order

Teaching academics at home, especially several students at the same time, can be very difficult. A school environment at home tends to magnify existing family flaws, bad thinking, bad character, and bad behaviors – in the students AND the parents. An all-important aspect of any home environment is Law and Order. While teaching at a formal school and watching different schools, I have witnessed a number of teachers (some even quit in 1 or 2 years) who were unaware of the VITAL need of controlling their students' behavior and **ruling their classroom**. I suspect many fine teachers hate the profession because they are either ignorant of maintaining **full classroom control** (from interruptions: students talking, joking, interrupting, blurting things out whenever they wanted, passing notes, not paying attention, teasing, poking, throwing things, etc.) or their administrators will not provide them the necessary instructions to do so - and backing them up to be able enforce classroom control (allowing the classroom to truly be a fun and safe environment for learning). Here are 2 really good rules that allowed for Law and Order (and peace and joy) in our home and homeschool environment – and my classroom environments. These were posted on the walls in the classroom and strictly enforced.

Many times over the years people would approach my wife and I at restaurants and compliment us on how nice our 5 boys were and how well-behaved they were . . . This was because of God's help and God's wisdom. These 2 Main Rules *really helped* – actually, they were vital:

Rule 1: No Destructive Speech of any kind to or about other people allowed.

(No name-calling, no cutting-down, no making fun of others, no casual insults, teasing, bullying, slandering, unnecessary complaining, etc. allowed.)

Just say good things to others and about others.

Rule 2: Keep your hands, arms, legs, body, and objects to yourself!

(No *PHYSICALLY* Offending or Hurting Others. No hitting, punching, elbowing, poking, teasing, throwing objects, tripping, etc. others)

Just do good things to others.

These are great rules for the home. We had a ton of fun – **with Law and Order** at our home with our 5 boys. These 2 rules were vigorously enforced in our home. This made for a peaceful and fun home. Really, these are rules on how to be good and true friends and true family.

The teaching of these rules is one thing. Getting youths to understand them is another thing. **Enforcement of these rules for home & school classroom Law and Order is monumental!** I am talking about this because it is wrong for parents and teachers to allow themselves to be pushed to a point of blowing-up with anger on a youth because of their mounting frustration of having to give repeated verbal corrections for wrong and bad behaviors to students all day long. It is best to deal with the infractions - well before this point of volcano eruption - which frequently can be accompanied with damaging anger and possible destructive words and possibly unnecessary and wrong physical retribution. Being diligent to address every infraction can also save the parent and teacher from the accusation of being partial and unfair and unjust, "Why are you picking on me? - You let so-and-so and others do it all day, and you didn't say or do anything!"

Imagine a parent having to correct and recorrect one or several of their children for the same known infractions. Trying to reason using logic with anyone's sinful nature many times simply will not work. Assuming they will feel guilty and feel bad about doing something wrong - is many times just a fantasy! (Remember the teacher that quit after 1 or 2 years. **They thought children were angels, or children before The Fall of Man – not understanding they are sinners - that we are all born with sin natures.**)

Appealing to a person's conscience, many times, simply does not work
in changing people's behavior.

We need to have pre-determined CONSEQUENCES for the students - for each type and frequency of classroom rule infractions – and have the courage, will, and discipline to enforce these consequences – every time and at any time.

Children, Kids, Youths, and Students for the most part will follow authorities that are worthy of their trust. **But they usually are going to test us to see if we are worthy.** Truly loving and caring for them, not having an ounce of hypocrisy in our lives, being teachable ourselves - especially by them, have reasonable and fair and just rules, etc. will really help win their trust.

But, if we are carrying ourselves as righteously as we know how – we also need to have a firm inner vow that we will meet them on the battlefield on any day, at any time, no matter how inconvenient (if they decide they want to be in authority and run things) and we will win. We will meet them on the battlefield on any day and at any time they decide they want to change the rules – and our rules will stand. Our rules will be enforced.

My dear wife Barbara knew that if things ever got crazy or were spinning out of her control at home with our 5 sons, I was a phone call away. I would take off work and come home to handle the situation if I got the call. The boys/youths knew this would not be good. All she had to do is threaten, "That's it - I'm calling Dad." The pleas would begin. The mutiny would be halted!

Imagine a teacher that is going to give each student one verbal correction with every infraction. (Now many teachers won't ever stop the class to make that verbal correction – they just choose to ignore stuff, and chaos starts to build.) Now, the teacher has to give every student One Free Pass – one free verbal correction per rule – to every one of the 20-30 students in the classroom. (If you give one student a free correction, you have to give everyone else a free pass correction, otherwise you would be guilty of being partial and unfair and unjust). That is a lot of classroom interruptions per day 25 students X 10 classes = 250 free classroom disruptions/interruptions.

Now double that with a teacher who allows **Two Free Passes** on rule enforcement without consequences. That is having to stop class and correct kids possibly hundreds of times a day. Feel the anger and frustration building. Now imagine them giving *3 Free Passes* to students. A classroom like this can easily turn into a circus! We are not even talking about the injustice being done (with all the interruptions) to the students who are really trying to learn and do their best! Not allowing any "Free Passes" helps teachers to not "Blow-Up" in anger on one student after they can't take it anymore. Now they can be accused of being biased, unfair, and unjust.

Classroom control is absolutely vital for parent/teacher sanity and for a safe, fun, educational environment - it is probably the biggest classroom hurdle and obstacle there is - and probably the most important parent/teacher skill there is!

Please don't think I was some hard-nosed, marine sergeant tyrant – or advocating that. I strove to make my classroom experience as fun as *it would be in heaven*. “**Your Kingdom come – on earth as it is in heaven.**” - as is seen in that Lord's Prayer. I tried to run our formal classroom school (and homeschool) as fun as I could imagine it would be done in heaven. I was known as the “recess king!” Besides an unusual morning recess break AND a lunch recess, if we finished our daily workload well and on time – we had a 3rd recess! I played with them and taught them all kinds of great outdoor games and how to be a true “sport” – always to try to congratulate an opposing team mate for a great play or great score – just like they would in heaven! Sometimes we would play and not keeping score – *just for the fun of the game* – just like they would in heaven! We had a blast!

During the school day, I had a 5-minute social break after every subject (about 10 subjects) for kids to talk and mingle and go to the rest room if need be. That is a lot of talk-time! (10 subjects X 5 minutes = 50 minutes!) That's a lot of social time! Kids are social beings and need that time. If we provide that time for them, they will be less urged to try to get it during class time. So, during class, there was absolutely no talking and screwing-around.

We worked hard, just as we should on an adult normal job! **Our adult jobs should be fun and a joy, though.** That's what they were meant to be. We students and I - treated our school day just like a real job. The kids got a real sense of this – they were practicing for real jobs and careers! We even had a money system with our own currency. They got a paycheck that could buy snacks, food, and stuff that they could eat at their desks, during the “work day” . . . even buy other students' unwanted toys on “Auction Day.” They learned how the real marketplace worked! They learned the results of diligence and hard work! They could had additional jobs if they wanted to earn bonus money. They were also paid bonus money for higher grades and productivity – just like on a real job! Students could also save and contribute money (classroom currency dollar bills) for extra field trips. And our school was near Worlds of Fun Theme Park! But they had to earn and pay for the extras! We had a blast!

By the way, I am a firm advocate of No Homework. What adult, after spending a hard day at work, wants to come home and do Home Work? No one. Why then, would we put

homework on a student? They just finished a hard day at the office, and you're going to make them go home and work some more? No way (unless they asked for it - by being lax during their school workday). In my class, almost every student could escape homework if they reasonably applied themselves during the school day. . . It was up to them. School should be fun. Going home should be fun.

Note on rigid classroom Law & Order: I ran my classroom with certain disciplines for certain bad behaviors. General infractions brought general disciplines (The Big 2 Rules and Classroom Disruption Rules). We had a couple of "practice days" or "dry runs" the first days of school.

If you misbehaved - you had to sit-out in recess and write (numerous times) why your infraction was wrong and how you would not do it again. This impacted their brains and their behavior. I think the student also forfeited their daily "Pay" for that day (Classroom currency/money system). If you tried blurting out a joke or a remark during class time without raising your hand - or threw something, or talked to someone, or passed a note - you got "written-up" with a Conduct Referral. The student was issued this "ticket." (If you caught yourself saying something to the class or to another student *and stopped mid-action* - no problem. There was mercy and grace.) Otherwise, the class came to a DEAD STOP. **Very Dramatic.** I had to stop teaching, sit down at my desk and write out a Conduct Referral with the date, explanation of why the student was receiving it, and have them sign it. The student could not enter class the next day without the Conduct Referral signed by the parent. I kept a copy to check them.

This city-wide Christian school where I worked, represented students from around 30 different local churches. It was racially mixed. It was doctrinally mixed. It was economically mixed. Sometimes there were cases of parents believing I was being mean, unfair, and/or impartial to their child when it came down to Conduct Referrals and disciplines. I needed some sort of proof against this.

Another classroom student's (paid) job was to daily document the Date, Student Name, and Type of Infraction of the "Conduct Referral" **in a binder**. This all took time. It was a classroom event that was uncomfortable for everyone.

If I had to "Go to Court" in the Principal's Office (to explain to him and an angry parent(s) as to why I was not picking on his child or being mean or unfair or biased), I merely opened the binder and showed them how every child has their own page, and how every infraction is always recorded and given a Conduct Referral. I also had a stack of every parent-signed Conduct Referral for the month, further proving the contents of what is in the binder. This

usually ended the meeting. The parent had to now deal with their child's behavior instead of trying to excuse it.

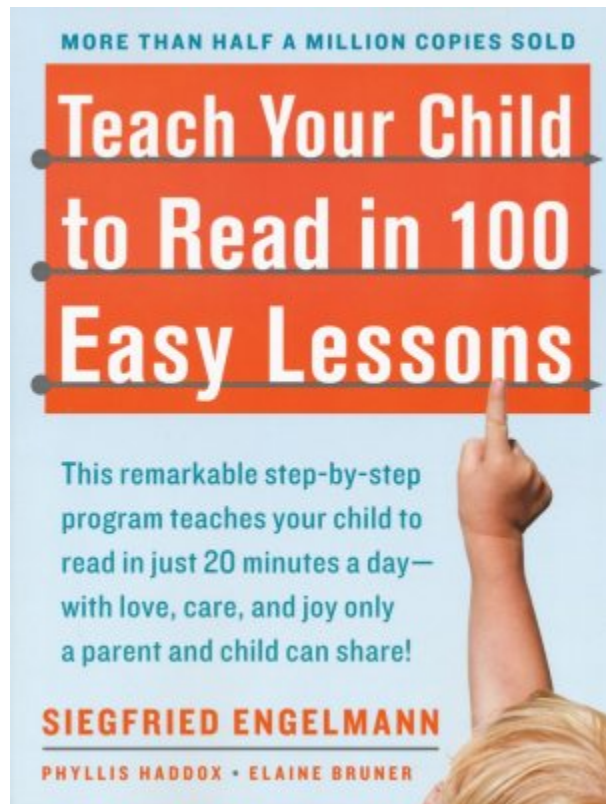
If a child had multiple conduct referrals in one week, they received a **Saturday** detention at the school (further discipline escalation). This really got the parents' attention - and usually *results*. Now a student's bad behavior resulted in helping wreck their parents' weekend! They weren't very happy about this (One of the teachers had to be there, though. Hassle for everybody.)

Every morning as the students came into the classroom, they had to put any previous day's Conduct Referrals (with parent signature) into a bin. Another student's paid job was to check if the pile in the bin matched my duplicate stack. They were to report to me if someone's signed Conduct Referral is missing. I had to deal with this right then, and possibly call the parent before that student could be in class. This rarely happened. I had to always go through the "signed" stack at the end of the day, looking for forgery (a student trying to sign their parents name). This happened. Not good.

This was extra work and hassle, but it helped insure we all could have safe, fun, and enjoyable school days!

Appendix C – Learning to Read

1. Reading. I personally taught all my sons at an early age to read using an earlier version of this book. (Over 1 million copies sold.) It makes learning to read easier and quicker by removing the confusion to the child of introducing the NAME of each alphabet letter at the same time as the SOUND each letter it is meant to represent. (Teaching both at the same time was commonly done.) This book teaches SOUND FIRST – with the child then slowly blending the sound of each letter as their finger moves from letter to letter. (The reading skill of *decoding*.) Learning the name of the letter is taught later.



After we learn to decode words, and words become familiar *visually* – we begin remembering the shape of words. This is reading "by sight." Sight-Reading takes-over as we become more experienced readers. Most reading in adults is done by sight-reading and decoding words (sounding them out) is done when we come-across unfamiliar words.

Some people/parents/teachers get tempted to discard the **hassle** of teaching the skill of decoding, and just teach students Sight-Reading – have them memorize every word individually. The problem is that we all are going to run into thousands of words we never memorized, or words with variations that we never learned! I believe this is a mistake to teach sole sight-reading. I know of an entire school system that experimented by solely teaching sight-reading, and it was a disaster!!

Appendix D – Quality Curriculums **With Parents in Mind**

There are tons of Christian Educational resources and curriculums out nowadays:
<https://cathyduffyreviews.com/homeschool-reviews-core-curricula>

I have used the following with great results; these have been excellent and respected over the years:

1. **Christian Spiritual:** Zondervan's Study Bible
2. **Math:** SAXON MATH - Grades 1-12
(Abeka Addition, Subtraction, Multiplication, and Division **2-sided flashcards**)
3. **Spelling:** Grades 1-6 ACSC SPELLING / Grades 7-12 ABEKA SPELLING
4. **Grammar / Language Arts:** EASY GRAMMAR, Wanda Phillips
5. **Vocabulary** – WORLDLY WISE, EPS Literacy and Intervention
6. **Writing** – EASY WRITING, Wanda Phillips