

2 Timothy 3:14-17 *But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, 15 and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

Why is Christian Education so valuable?

1. Scripture is inspired
2. Scripture brings us salvation
3. Scripture trains us for life
4. Therefore, we should value it highly and remain with it

You don't see them much anymore. They have been declared too dangerous for playgrounds. But that's part of what made them fun. I'm talking about those little merry-go-rounds you used to see in every playground. Kids would push each other around and around seeing how fast they could get it going. If you stood in the middle of the merry-go-round, it was much easier to stay on. But if you were on the edge, you had to hold on tight because the force was much stronger. Riding a merry-go-round is much like life. At the center of life is God's Word. Stay close to that and you are much more secure. Getting away from God's Word, the forces of the world are much more powerful and you can easily lose your grip of faith. So, on this back to school Sunday, we want to see the importance of an education based on God's Word.

Paul wrote, *All Scripture is God-breathed*. Think about how God breathed life into the first man, Adam. Or think about a sailboat pushed across the water by the wind. The Apostle Peter said, "For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." (2 Peter 1:21) As the wind carries a sailboat across the water, the Holy Spirit carried people to write prophecy. *All Scripture is God-breathed*.

That can be said of nothing else. And that is one reason Christian education is so valuable. Christian education teaches the inspired Scripture. It is the foundation Jesus talked about in our gospel lesson. *"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.* If you are going to build a storage shed, you might just level the ground and put it right on the ground. It's just a shed. But if you were building a 20-story building, you would have to have a good foundation for that building. You dig down to bedrock, put in footings and make sure that the foundation is solid. The comparison to life is obvious. We are not building sheds. We are building lives. Our lives need the sure foundation of Jesus' inspired Word.

Many people paste the label "Christian" on their lives, but is it a foundation or just wallpaper? Wallpaper Christianity can sit in church on Sunday, attend a Lutheran school, and look really good to people, but give it a shove here and there, how solid is it? When you put a bit of stress on it, can you feel the walls begin to give a little? If the wind blows, does it start to shake? Storms in life will come. That's a given. Is our foundation sturdy enough for them? Are we ready to face the unexpected loss of a job? Are we ready for the doctor to say the word, "Cancer"? We are, if our foundation is built on God's Word. That's a reason why Christian education is so valuable. It gives us the foundation in God's inspired Word.

That Word brings us salvation. Paul said of Timothy, *From infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus*. The Bible is our lifeline. Unborn babies are intimately connected to their mother in the womb through the umbilical cord. They receive all the nutrients, oxygen, and everything they need to grow and survive from the mother but at the same time they have a completely separate body, different blood, different nervous system. Scripture is our umbilical cord to the Lord. We need that connection with him or we will not have life and salvation.

The Scriptures make you wise for salvation. Knowledge and wisdom are not the same thing. You may read a biology book to gain knowledge about how the human body works, but that does not mean you have the wisdom to apply that in surgery. Wisdom is applying knowledge in a truthful and practical way. Scripture does not just give us knowledge about what God has done; it gives us the wisdom to apply that to our lives. Scripture gives us the knowledge that Jesus died on the cross, but it also gives us the wisdom to believe that he did that for me, that he died for me and my sins.

Scripture gives us the knowledge of God's love for us in Christ and the wisdom to believe that through Christ we have eternal life. That's why Christian education is so valuable. It makes us wise for salvation in Jesus Christ.

It also makes us wise for life. *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.* Would you hunt bear with a BB gun? That would be crazy. You would use a proper weapon, maybe a 45-caliber rifle to hunt bear. And so, to fight the spiritual battles of life we need the right weapon. We need the spiritual weapon of Scripture.

Actually, Scripture is not just one weapon; it's an arsenal of weapons. First, it gives us teaching, that is, doctrine. It tells us the truths of our God. Truths like the triune nature of God, Jesus is both God and man, we are saved by faith alone in Jesus. Scripture gives us the truths of baptismal regeneration, the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper and the eternal life in heaven that awaits believers.

Then, Scripture is useful for rebuking. That means that Scripture tears us down. It strips all falsehood and sin from us like a gardener pruning a tree.

And Scripture is useful for correcting. A better translation of that word might be "restoring." After Scripture rebukes our sin with the law, it restores us with the gospel, leading us to the forgiveness we have in the cross of Christ.

Another weapon in the arsenal of Scripture is training in righteousness. This pictures an athlete getting into shape. Scripture is the personal trainer that helps us prepare for the battle of life. Christian education is valuable because it thoroughly equips us for daily life.

Therefore, we should value it highly and remain a student of Christian education our whole life. If you are an older adult, do you remember geometry? Algebra? English syntax? Why not? It's probably because we don't use those things anymore. We may have learned them in school, but if we don't make use of them, we forget it. It's the same with Scripture. Unless we use Scripture often, we will forget what it says and the foundation for our life will be washed away. We need to continue to be students of Christian education for life.

Years ago, I received a notification in the mail. It said, "Your Time subscription is running out." Of course, it was from a national news magazine, but I thought that it could taken a different way. Your time subscription is running out. Every one of us is facing a deadline when our time subscription will run out. What are you doing with that time? Will you be ready when your time runs out?

What legacy are you leaving? People debate the legacies of presidents and politicians, but each of us is leaving a legacy of some kind. What will you be remembered for? Diehard Packers fan? Hard working? Kind and generous? That's all fine, but are they eternally impactful? Are we leaving a legacy that truly prepares children for the world in which they live now and, more importantly, for eternal life?

We may not live in a country where Christians are tortured, but Christian faith is under attack especially among our teens and young adults. Go to a secular college campus for orientation day and see the different clubs and organizations that are vying for their attention: atheist society, humanist society and others. There is the encouragement to explore your sexuality, to question your gender, to rebel against authority. College professors target Christians, attempting to embarrass and belittle them until they break. The deception and danger are clearly present and is not only contained to college campuses. It spills over into all public education and is pumped into our homes through TVs, computers and phones. How will children be able to withstand all of this? (Adapted from Jonathan Kruschel)

That's why we value Christian education so highly. It gives us the foundation for life and for eternity. May we value Christian education as the greatest thing we can give our children. And may we stay close to God's Word as long as we ride the merry-go-round of life.