

WHY SHOULD WE CHOOSE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FOR OUR CHILDREN?

1. Can my child get a quality education at a Christian School?

It's true that, generally speaking, students at Christian schools out-perform their public school peers. Reliable statistics bear that out. But that doesn't mean every child in a Christian school will excel. The important thing for you as a parent to remember is that attending a Christian school in no way prohibits your children from getting a quality education. In many cases, it will enhance their experience, because in addition to solid academic training, they'll be continually reminded of the spiritual foundation upon which all intellectual pursuits are built. As the Apostle Paul writes, "in (Christ) are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3).

2. What is a Christian Education?

A Christian education is one in which the infallible truths of Scripture reign paramount. They form the foundation upon which all academic pursuits are built, and for that reason, students are often better able to reach their full educational potential.

God expects children to be taught the truth in every subject. That requires educators to approach their craft – and their lives – from a biblical worldview. Otherwise, teachers are wholly incapable of instilling or reinforcing that worldview in the lives of their students.

Students need a challenging, comprehensive academic curriculum built on a foundation of biblical absolutes. Some institutions prepare

students for a job. Others equip students for life. Only a Christian education has the potential to do both, because only a Christian education is grounded in the knowledge of our Creator, who grants wisdom and understanding to anyone who seeks Him first.

3. What if we can't afford Christian education?

This is a very real problem, and one of the most common parental objections. Christian schools cost money. A lot of money. However, before we get too carried away with fiscal concerns, we need to ask ourselves an important question: Do we have a moral obligation to give our children a Christian education? If so, then God will do for us what He does anytime He gives us a command. He'll give us the means to obey it.

Statements like "God will make a way" or "If He's called you, He'll equip you" may sound a little trite. However, they happen to be true. If you have a biblical mandate to provide your children with a Christian education – and "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it." (Matthew 13:45-46) all of us have to make that determination for ourselves – God won't let a little thing like insufficient funds stop you from obeying Him. Not if you're committed to hearing and obeying His will in the matter.

He may give you a raise. He may show you how to cut a few corners. But one way or another, He will make a way – because if educating your children in a Christian setting is a genuine responsibility, the financial cost becomes a genuine need. And God has promised to supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19).

At the end of the day, God may ask you to take a step of faith. Then another. Then another. Pretty soon, you'll be walking in a promise that's been repeated so often it's become the quintessential Christian cliché. When God calls us to a task, He equips us to fulfill it. The Red Sea was no match for Him. The red in your checkbook won't be, either.

4. What does God tell us to do with our children?

The first part of this answer has to do with your role as parent. You are the God-appointed leader of your children, it should come as no surprise that the overwhelming task of raising and educating them is in your hands. The Apostle Paul put it this way: "Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

The question is, what are you supposed to teach them? And God has a great deal to say about that. In Deuteronomy 11, for example, He says the education of children is a 24-hour-a-day, 7-day-a-week process that must take place from birth through maturity.

"Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Write them on the doorframes of your houses

and on your gates, so that your days and the days of your children may be many in the land that the LORD swore to give your forefathers ..." (Deuteronomy 11:18-21).

Here we see God instructing His people how to live as they prepare to go into the Promised Land. Critical to the life and health of His people is :Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." (Proverbs 22:6) the teaching of the Word of God by parents on a daily basis in every situation.

Here's the problem. Public schools are not allowed to teach the book upon which you, as a Christian, have based your life. The question is not, "Should I consider Christian education?" but rather, "Why should I consider anything else?"

The education of children and youth must be based on God's Word as absolute truth. If the school your children attend adopts any other approach, it is competing directly against your training at home, and ultimately, against the training God wants you to give them.

5. I went to public school and I turned out okay. Can't my children do the same?

The short answer is yes. Just like you did, your kids can turn out okay. Maybe even better than okay. But our arrival at a place called "okay" does not necessarily mean that all our choices along the way were the right ones, or that our educational experience was the best one.

The real questions are these: Are you the same person today that you would have been had you attended Christian school? And what about the journey that brought you here? Might it have been a little more joyful, a little less troublesome? Is it possible that God

could have used you for His glory even more than He already has?

These are questions only you can answer, and if you haven't already, why not do it right now? Give this issue an honest, thoughtful look, and then ask God what His will is regarding your children's education.

6. Why should I send my child to a school that's nowhere near my house when the public school is right across the street?

Across the street or across town, they're still in a school for six to eight hours a day that is not allowed to teach God's relevance.

If the issue is safety, you'll find that Christian schools are much less dangerous, no matter how far away they are from home. But if it's simply a matter of location, you might be letting the school's proximity cloud your judgment. When it comes to your decision-making pecking order, obedience should always precede convenience.

7. Many of my friends say they want their kids to be salt and light in the public schools. Shouldn't we do that?

Many Christian parents share this sentiment. And it's a noble one, too. Every one of us should strive to be salt and light wherever we find ourselves. But we have to be mindful that young children (before high school) are generally not equipped to defend their faith and influence others. Even with high schoolers, it is the unusually well-grounded student who can impact others for the Kingdom. However, even with the strongest testimony, we would not recommend that "salt and light" be the primary reason for sending your child to a public school.

No matter how well-grounded your children are, it's highly unlikely they can be the kind of salt and light Jesus was

talking about. Can fifth-graders, or even junior high students, effectively explain the Gospel? And what about high school upperclassmen? Are they, on average, capable of defending their faith to the degree to which they can be genuine salt and light to their non-Christian peers?

In the vast majority of cases the answer is no. Simply put, most kids are not mature enough for the job, emotionally or spiritually. They are still at a time in life when they need to receive salt and light, not provide it.

And in those rare cases in which a young person might be up to the task, placing your child in public school for that reason would put him or her under tremendous pressure. Sending a child into an environment that is not Christian in philosophy sends the message to your child that God can be separated from certain areas of their life. It's a dangerous experiment, one that could have lasting repercussions.

8. If I put my children in Christian school, will I be sheltering them from the real world?

There's no denying it. You'll be sheltering them from part of secular society. But even Christian adults have been instructed to keep the world at arm's length – to be in it but not of it. How much more should we endeavor to protect our children, most of whom are nowhere near ready to withstand the more sophisticated worldly temptations?

But make no mistake. We haven't bought into the common misconception that Christian schools shield children from every temptation and all exposure to sin. This is not only untrue, it's impossible. Christian schools have the same type of kids non-Christian schools have. Sinners. They're all prone to offensive behaviors such as selfishness, anger, and malicious talk.

And no matter where your children attend class, they can hardly escape the worldly influences found in movies, books and television.

The difference in the Christian school is that it can apply the Bible to every instance of sinful thought or action, and with God's help, renew the mind of the child. By doing so, Christians schools have a better chance of helping parents produce adults who have been trained in the fine art of godly living and thinking. And when they finally enter the "real" real world, they'll be much more equipped to handle it.

9. My child wants to play sports, and the local Christian school has a weak athletic program. What should I do?

Let's clear one troublesome hurdle right from the start. Not once does Scripture even hint that athletic competition is sinful or immoral. You and your children are no more prohibited from playing sports than you are from eating a hamburger. In fact, the Bible encourages healthy competition.

Unfortunately, too many Christians presume that once the lawfulness of an activity has been established, they are free to pursue it the same way the world does. Many Christian parents place their children in secular schools solely because of the athletic program. For them, the pursuit of sports has taken precedence over the pursuit of wisdom. This is an anti-biblical mindset.

While we sympathize with parents who want their children to have every opportunity to succeed in athletics, the truth of the matter is that they can participate in sports without attending public schools. Many Christian schools offer sports programs. And for those of you who have particularly gifted children, it may help you to know that college and professional sports rosters are dotted with graduates of Christian

schools. If your kids are good enough, the scouts will find them.

10. Will Attending Christian School Make My Children Christians?

While there are no guarantees on this score – God has not promised that everyone who hears the Gospel will embrace it – it is true that faith in Christ "comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10:17). Because Christian schools share God's Word with their students daily, your children will have more opportunities to accept Christ than they would in any other educational setting.

Of course, whether your children come to faith in Christ during their school days or not, one thing is clear. Their time in Christian school will give them a better understanding of the Bible, and should they eventually accept Christ, they will be better able to defend and share their faith with others.

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represent six Christian schools in
Southwest Minnesota;
Chandler, Edgerton, Hills, Leota,
Worthington & Southwest MN Christian
High School.

United Christian Schools
550 Elizabeth St W
Edgerton, MN 56128
507.442.4471
www.unitedchristianschools.com

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