



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Course 7, *The Remnant Church*, Lesson 7

The Problem: What kind of education should young people receive? The question of how we should educate our youth yields answers as varied as the philosophies behind them. Secular educators prioritize preparation for economic and societal success. Their educational objectives are grounded in this present world: training students to acquire useful skills, succeed in trades and professions, and integrate smoothly into contemporary culture. Their worldview emphasizes human achievement, reason, and present-life outcomes. By contrast, Christian education carries a far deeper concern. Because Christians believe that eternal life is found only in Jesus Christ, Christian educators seek to lead their students into relationship with Him. Christian education is not merely about shaping good citizens—it's about forming disciples. It aims to introduce students to the Lord and equip them to share the gospel with others. While this life matters, it is ultimately a temporary sojourn. Christian education prepares students not only to serve in earthly vocations but also to live in light of eternity.

Such a worldview shapes every academic discipline:

- Science becomes an exploration of God's creation.
- History is understood as the unfolding drama between good and evil, culminating in Christ's victory.
- Mathematics reflects the order and consistency of a God of precision.
- Music becomes an expression of worship and longing for the divine.
- Medicine is not just about treating illness—it's a way to reflect Christ's compassion and bring wholeness to body and spirit.

Even professional training—whether for dentists, teachers, architects, or engineers—is viewed through the lens of service, healing, and calling. The goal is not merely human success, but to embody Christ's mission and introduce others to Him as Savior and Healer.

This philosophy may seem strange to non-believers, who often consider the focus on eternity unrealistic or irrelevant. Some dismiss Christian education as wishful altruism built on a theology they don't accept. But part of the purpose of Christian education is to help students understand and articulate *why* they believe what they believe. It is not enough to be personally convinced—we are called to explain and share our hope with others (1 Peter 3:15).

As we approach the second coming of Jesus, Christian education becomes even more urgent. Christ Himself emphasized the importance of divine knowledge in preparing people to live with Him forever. Our schools and teaching ministries must prioritize truth, character, and readiness for eternity.

We now turn to the Bible's perspective on education, and also reflect on the profound counsel found in Ellen G. White's writings. Her books—including *Education*, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, and *Fundamentals of Christian Education*—are timeless guides for shaping each new generation of believers.

Objectives:

- I. We discover the foundational principles of Christian education.
- II. We explore the educational model established by God for ancient Israel.
- III. We consider Christ as the ultimate Teacher.
- IV. We reflect on the Bible's role as our truest educator.
- V. We study how Christian education equips students for real-world vocations.
- VI. We explore the Seventh-day Adventist philosophy of education and its global school system.

I. THE FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Christian education begins with a biblical understanding of human identity and purpose. Its most vital principles emerge as we reflect on three great realities:

- Humanity was originally created in the image of God, designed for relationship, stewardship, and spiritual growth.
- Through sin, that image was marred, and separation from God introduced distortion into every aspect of life.
- Yet God's redemptive purpose remains unchanged: to restore His image in us through Jesus Christ and prepare us for eternal fellowship with Him.

True education, then, is far more than academic instruction—it is a process of restoration. It invites students into a life of wholeness, purpose, and transformation through union with Christ. Every subject, every discipline, every classroom becomes a place where the great story of redemption is taught, explored, and lived.

The Word:

1. What is the source and aim of true education? Colossians 2:2-3; Job 12:13; 22:21; Proverbs 2:6
2. What was a man like when God first created him? Genesis 1:27
3. What happened when man fell into sin? Romans 5:12; 1 Corinthians 15:21; Ephesians 2:1-3
4. What does Christ wish to do for all fallen humanity? Ephesians 2:4-8; 1 Peter 1:15-19

Explanation: Many today approach education with too narrow and limited a view—focusing only on academic achievement or preparation for success in this present life. But the Word of God beckons us to embrace a higher aim. True education encompasses the entire being—body, mind, and spirit—and spans the full breadth of human existence, from now into eternity. This kind of education is not confined to the classroom or a curriculum. It is the harmonious development of our physical strength, mental capacities, and spiritual sensitivity. It prepares us for the joy of serving others in this life and for the greater joy of wider service in the world to come. Its source is divine. Scripture points us to the Infinite One, in whom *“are hid all the treasures of wisdom”* (Colossians 2:3). He *“has counsel and understanding”* (Job 12:13); out of His mouth *“comes knowledge and understanding”* (Proverbs 2:6). In Him, the principles of true knowledge and authentic growth find their origin.

Whether exploring the natural world, grappling with truth in study, or growing through spiritual experience, we are brought face-to-face with the unseen Intelligence that works through all. This communion between the human and the divine—between finite minds and the Infinite—forms the highest kind of education. As God invites: *“Acquaint now thyself with Him”* (Job 22:21), He offers transformation beyond what earthly institutions can achieve.

In the beginning, humanity bore the image of God physically, mentally, and spiritually. This likeness was designed to grow ever more radiant with time. But through sin, that divine image was severely marred—our faculties weakened, our understanding dimmed, and our purpose obscured. Yet divine grace stepped in. Through the plan of salvation, God offers us a life of restoration and sacred opportunity. The goal of redemption is the goal of true education: to restore His image within us, to cultivate every faculty toward its original perfection, and to fulfill the purpose for which we were created..

Relevance: Have you entered into the transformational journey God designed for your life—one that renews His image in you mentally, physically, and spiritually? Whether you're maturing in faith, nurturing others, or rediscovering purpose, are you willing to walk in step with His plan of restoration and reflect His character more fully each day?

II. TRUE EDUCATION IN ANCIENT ISRAEL

The form of education practiced by the patriarchs—and later implemented after Israel's deliverance from Egypt—served as a living expression of God's plan to restore His people to His spiritual image. It was not merely academic or ceremonial, but deeply relational and transformational, cultivating obedience, faith, and character through daily life, worship, and communal memory.

The Word:

5. What kind of education did the patriarchs give their children? Genesis 18:18-19
6. What were the ancient Israelites instructed to teach their children? Deuteronomy 6:4-9
7. What industrial school was established in the wilderness after the Israelites had left Egypt? Exodus 31:1-6
8. What kind of schools were established by Samuel? 1 Samuel 19:18-21; 2 Kings 2:3; 4:38; 5:22

Explanation: From Eden to the wilderness exile, and through the schools of the prophets, God has consistently designed education to be far more than academic instruction—it is a sacred process of restoration, character development, and communion with the Divine.

The Patriarchal Family School: The earliest model of education began in Eden, where the family itself was the classroom. Adam, described as “*the son of God*” (Luke 3:38), received instruction directly from his Creator. This family-centered model continued after the Fall, with Christ as the great Teacher and representative of the Father. Parents were entrusted as His representatives, teaching truth through both word and example. This form of education flourished in patriarchal times. Those faithful to God's principles lived in simplicity and close connection to nature—tilling the soil, raising flocks, and engaging in study and meditation. In this setting, character was shaped not by societal prestige, but by devotion, labor, and quiet communion with God. The cities, by contrast, became centers of pride, luxury, and moral decay.

The Wilderness Workshop: God established the Passover and the sanctuary in the wilderness as vivid, hands-on lessons in redemption. The Passover was a living parable of deliverance. The spotless lamb, the blood on the doorposts, and the shared meal all foreshadowed Jesus as the Lamb of God. It called Israel to trust, obey, and be ready for freedom—lessons still vital today. Likewise, the wilderness sanctuary—crafted with specific materials and arranged with purpose—taught that sin separates, but grace makes a way back. Its layout mirrored the journey of salvation: from sacrifice and cleansing to communion and glory. Each element pointed to Christ's ministry, showing how He bridges the gap between humanity and holiness. Together, these symbols shaped Israel's identity and continue to speak to us of God's justice, mercy, and longing to dwell with His people.

The Schools of the Prophets: Later, amid cultural decline and rising corruption, the schools of the prophets were established to safeguard truth and equip future leaders. Led by inspired men such as Samuel, these institutions nurtured youth who were intelligent, devout, and eager to serve. The curriculum centered on God's Word, practical labor, and spiritual formation. Manual work was not beneath them; it was considered essential. Both teachers and students engaged deeply with Scripture and honest labor, developing integrity and wisdom for leadership.

Relevance: The Passover and the sanctuary were not just ancient rituals—they were divine object lessons. God taught His people through symbols, stories, and shared labor. Today, He still invites us to learn through Scripture, service, and spiritual reflection. Are you allowing the symbols of redemption to shape your understanding of Christ's work? How might your home, church, or classroom reflect the sanctuary's lessons of grace, cleansing, and communion?

III. CHRIST THE MASTER-TEACHER

Jesus did more than convey truth—He embodied it. The way He taught His disciples and the crowds was not only effective; it was transformative. His methods revealed the kind of education God desires: one that reaches the heart, awakens faith, and invites lasting change. In Christ, we see the perfect model of teaching that blends clarity, compassion, and divine authority.

The Word:

9. Who is the Source of all true enlightenment? John 1:9-13; 8:12
10. How did Jesus train His twelve first disciples? John 17:6; Matthew 5:1-2; 8:23; 9:10; 10:1
11. What method did Jesus use in teaching the people? Matthew 13:34
12. What use of nature did Jesus make in illustrating divine truth? Matthew 6:25-33; 13:1-9, 18-23

Explanation: In sending Christ, Heaven gave humanity its greatest gift—the One who had stood in the councils of the Most High and dwelt in the innermost sanctuary of the Eternal. Jesus came not only to reveal the knowledge of God, but to embody the perfect ideal of what humanity, indwelt by divinity, could become. His life was a living standard for spiritual attainment, and His teaching showed how sons and daughters of God are to be trained to live the principles of heaven here on earth (*Education*, pp. 73–74).

Christ's most complete teaching method was seen in His training of the twelve disciples. These men, chosen for their potential and openness to His Spirit, were entrusted with weighty responsibilities. Through daily companionship, Jesus impressed His character upon them—not through lectures alone, but through shared life. As John testified, "*The Life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us...*" 1 John 1:2. True education, Christ showed, is not merely the transfer of information—it is the transmission of life (*Education*, p. 84).

Jesus often veiled spiritual truths in parables, using figures and symbols drawn from nature and daily life. This method allowed Him to communicate profound truths in ways that were memorable, accessible, and often disarming to His critics. From the lilies of the field to the lost coin, His illustrations connected divine principles to familiar experiences, awakening hearts and minds to eternal realities (*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 236; *Education*, p. 102).

Relevance: Have you allowed yourself to be taught by Christ—not only through doctrine, but through relationship, experience, and quiet reflection? Do His teaching methods—rooted in grace, storytelling, and daily connection—shape the way you learn, share, or respond to others in your own life?

IV. THE BIBLE'S ROLE AS OUR TRUEST EDUCATOR

No book in human history has shaped minds, hearts, and civilizations more deeply than the Bible. Its influence is unmatched in scope and endurance—crossing cultures, centuries, and academic disciplines. Yet its true power lies not merely in literary grandeur or moral instruction, but in its capacity to reveal divine truth. For both teacher and student, the Bible stands as the ultimate textbook—not of temporary facts, but of eternal principles. It educates not only the intellect but the conscience, guiding individuals into wisdom, identity, and purpose through living connection with God. Scripture doesn't just inform—it transforms.

The Word:

13. Who is the central theme of the Bible? What does knowledge of Him do for you? John 5:39; 17:3
14. What initial transformation of life is produced when God's Word is received into the heart? 1 Peter 1:23
15. What special power does God's Word impart to life? Psalm 119:9-11; 1 Peter 2:2; John 17:17
16. What special educational value does the Word possess? Psalm 119:105, 130; 19:8; 1 Timothy 3:15-17

Explanation: God's design for human development—whether of mind, body, or soul—rests on the principle that strength is gained through effort. Growth requires intentional exercise. In harmony with this law, God has embedded within His Word the means for both mental and spiritual advancement. The Bible holds within it every principle essential for preparing individuals for this life and the life to come. These truths are not veiled in mystery, accessible only to the learned; they can be understood by anyone whose heart is open to receive its instruction. Even a single verse, when read with reverence and readiness, can offer a practical insight for life.

Yet the richest treasures of Scripture are not discovered through casual or disconnected reading. Its great system of truth is intricately woven—meant to be uncovered through sustained, prayerful study. Many of its gems lie deep beneath the surface and must be mined by those who are both diligent and devoted. This kind of study awakens and strengthens the highest faculties of the human intellect. No one can genuinely engage with Scripture in this way without experiencing mental transformation.

Even greater, however, is its power to shape the spiritual nature. Humanity, created for fellowship with God, finds its truest life only in that sacred relationship. Nothing else can satisfy the heart's deepest cravings or quiet the soul's hunger like communion with its Creator. Those who approach the Bible with sincerity and humility—seeking to grasp its eternal truths—will be drawn into fellowship with its Author. And unless one deliberately turns away, there is no ceiling to the spiritual and personal growth that follows.

Relevance: Have you made Scripture the cornerstone of your learning journey? The Bible is not merely a source of knowledge—it is the living voice of God calling us into communion with Him. Through its pages, we discover the clearest expression of divine love and the unfolding plan of salvation.

The *LifeTrac Curriculum* is crafted to support this sacred pursuit. By guiding believers through thoughtful, systematic Bible study, it helps cultivate a habit of daily worship—a rhythm of grace where head and heart are nurtured together. LifeTrac doesn't just teach Scripture; it encourages drawing near to the heart of God and finding joy in His presence.

We warmly invite you to make the Bible a central part of your daily spiritual rhythm. Let it guide you into regular, heartfelt worship—drawing you closer to the heart of God and nourishing your soul with truth and grace. As you grow in personal communion with Christ, we also encourage you to use Scripture as a tool to inspire and equip others. Whether you're mentoring, teaching, or simply sharing life with someone, the Bible offers timeless wisdom and transforming hope for every journey.

The *LifeTrac Curriculum* is designed to support this twofold purpose: deepening your walk with Jesus through systematic study, and empowering you to lead others into that same life-giving relationship. True education begins and ends in fellowship with God—and in that place, transformation begins.

V. HOW CHRISTIAN EDUCATION EQUIPS STUDENTS FOR REAL-WORLD VOCATIONS

True preparation for life involves both professional readiness and spiritual maturity. Christian education values both dimensions—but places character development at the center. This is not simply about acquiring skills, but about shaping a life that can reflect God's purpose through any vocation.

The Word:

17. What should be the first ambition of every Christian believer? Matthew 28:19-20
18. What does the Bible say about God's call for people to work in different trades and professions? 1 Corinthians 7:20-24; compare Mark 6:3; Acts 18:3; Colossians 4:14
19. As we near the end of time what call to work for the lost is given to all Christians whatever their trade or profession? John 4:35-36; Matthew 9:37-38; 20:6-7

Explanation: God appoints each person to a unique sphere of labor, suited to their abilities and temperament. He does not expect the hyssop to become a cedar, or the olive to grow into a towering palm—but He does call each of us to aim as high as grace and effort allow. Through the union of human effort and divine power, we are enabled to reach the fullness of our calling. Yet many fall short of what they might become—not due to lack of talent, but from neglecting to draw on divine strength. Some seek recognition in roles they are not shaped for, while others settle into comfort, avoiding the effort needed for deeper usefulness. True success is not measured by prestige, but by faithfulness to the calling for which we are fitted and empowered.

As earth’s final moments approach, the need for consecrated workers intensifies. *“The great day of the Lord is near, it is near and hastens greatly”* Zephaniah 1:14. Whether young or old, God calls us to prepare and participate in a global work of warning and witnessing. Christian educators—and every disciple—have a role in equipping willing hearts to join this final movement.

Relevance: Whatever your vocation—artisan, teacher, technician, caregiver, or student—your greatest mission is eternal. The work of soul-winning is not reserved for pastors or evangelists alone. Every believer is called to reflect Christ and share His message in the ordinary rhythms of life. With the world in urgent need of hope and truth, we cannot afford to stand idle. The *LifeTrac Curriculum* exists to help both seekers and believers find their place in God’s work, guiding them in systematic study, heartfelt worship, and practical service. As we near the end of time, may our professions become platforms for ministry, and our lives channels of grace.

VI. THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

The Seventh-day Adventist Church operates one of the largest Christian educational networks in the world—second only to the Roman Catholic system and the largest among Protestant denominations. As of 2023, this global system includes over 9,800 schools, 2.1 million students, and 111,000 teachers, spanning nearly 150 countries. From early childhood through doctoral studies, students can receive a Christ-centered education at every level.

These institutions are founded on the principles of Scripture and the inspired counsel of Ellen G. White. Their mission is not merely academic excellence, but the harmonious development of the spiritual, intellectual, physical, and social-emotional faculties of each learner. Adventist schools seek to cultivate character, purpose, and a living relationship with Christ—steering students away from practices that harm body or soul, and toward lives of service and integrity.

Whether preparing teachers, preachers, nurses, physicians, engineers, scientists, business people, tradespeople, homemakers, or those serving in behind-the-scenes capacities, the goal remains the same: to equip Christ-centered individuals who bring skill, integrity, and compassion into their chosen paths. Many serve in leadership, education, healthcare, finance, public service, technology, agriculture, hospitality, creative arts, transportation, domestic care, and volunteer roles—living out their faith in clinics, classrooms, offices, boardrooms, farms, workshops, and homes. Adventist education affirms that every vocation, whether formal or informal, visible or quiet, can become a sacred platform for stewardship, service, and meaningful witness when surrendered to Christ and guided by Scripture...

Relevance: If you are a student, have you prayerfully considered attending a school where Christ is honored and His Word is central? If you are a parent, mentor, or church member, are you encouraging the young people within your influence to seek an education that nurtures both mind and soul? You may be helping shape a life—and through that life, a ripple of eternal impact. In a world where secular education often neglects spiritual foundations, God has graciously provided a system that uplifts truth, character, and mission. Let us support it, promote it, and participate in it with joy and conviction.

Review Questions

1. True or False
 - a. The Christian philosophy of education is based on Bible teaching.
 - b. Education was not important in Old Testament times.

- c. Christ was and still is the source of all enlightenment.
 - d. The Bible is the greatest textbook for education.
2. Discuss: If Christ is the embodiment of truth, and His Word the foundation of genuine wisdom, what should be the guiding purpose of education? Many students attend non-Christian institutions for reasons such as academic reputation, affordability, or career preparation. These are real considerations—but they come with real risks. What happens when the worldview shaping a student’s identity is subtly or overtly at odds with Scripture? How do we prepare young people to engage with the world’s ideas without compromising biblical integrity—or allowing those ideas to shape their hearts more than Christ does?

Christian education offers more than protection—it offers formation. It’s not just about avoiding error, but about building lives on truth. In a world of shifting values and competing voices, why not choose an education that anchors students in God’s Word, nurtures their calling, and prepares them to live with purpose, courage, and grace? What could be more relevant, more urgent, or more transformative?