



"Experience keeps a dear school, but a fool will learn in no other."
—Benjamin Franklin

15-Aug-14

A Unique Curriculum (Part One)

Several years ago, I was driving in downtown Springfield, Missouri, and came to a stop light. I was heading east on a very busy day. As I watched the traffic passing by going north and south, a question occurred to me: "Where are all these cars going?" It was about two o'clock in the afternoon, and the traffic was very heavy for that time of day.

The different cars were filled with a variety of people just whizzing by, destinations unknown. Your thoughts, like mine, may wander to the prophecy in [Daniel 12:4](#) regarding how in the last days, many will be going to and fro. People can seem like ants scurrying here and there, trying to get everything done as quickly as possible.

This may take one's thoughts on a new tangent: How do these individuals live their lives? Do they have health issues, job stresses, or family pressures? Are any of them neighbors or coworkers? Do any of them know about the true [God](#)? Are some of the people passing by church of God members, perhaps fellowshiping with another group, or could one or more of them be potential [firstfruits](#)?

Another scripture may come to mind about how the tribulations in our lives are "common to man" ([I Corinthians 10:13](#); [I Peter 4:12](#)). Are any of these people scurrying about involved in some of the same kinds of afflictions, trials, or conditions that we may be experiencing? Are any of them looking to God in [faith](#) for solutions to those problems?

Even though we may have some things in common with them, the fact remains that we are all very different people. It has been pointed out many times that each person is a unique individual. We may have some comparable characteristics or experiences, yet no two individuals are precisely alike. Each of us understands things from a slightly different perspective. Not everyone has the same life-experiences, knowledge, education, or opportunities. Also, there is the differentiating fact that some have been called now and others will be called at a different time.

Obviously, God knows that we are all different. He knows that He cannot prepare us all for His Kingdom in the same way. Instead, God uses a distinct curriculum for each individual who is among "the called according to His purpose" ([Romans 8:28](#)).

Even in the secular world, the education of any single person is unique. The education process begins at birth and continues on throughout our lives. Some subjects and areas of life are basic for humans to experience and understand. Yet, even if siblings go to the same schools from kindergarten to graduate school, small distinctions in their course selection, teachers, textbooks, and even the differing times that they attend those schools—not to mention their particular personalities—will make their educational experiences unique to them.

As a baseline, God wants everyone to learn about Him, His way, and His purpose. God told the Israelites in [Deuteronomy 6:6-8](#) to educate their children on a consistent basis about Him and the laws that He gave them:

And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind

them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

God wanted all Israel to participate in educating the children concerning what He does and says so that they would understand and obey His laws and statutes. He desires everyone to learn this basic knowledge so that, even if they are not converted, they will benefit from its positive effects.

Clearly, there are many more things to learn in this life. As we live from day to day, we learn many lessons of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual consequence. By these life-lessons, we have the opportunity to develop moral character, which is the most important thing, but we also learn how things work and operate in [this world](#), how to choose good friends, how to prioritize our time, how to achieve our goals, how to make money, etc.

Some of these lessons have been planned in advance for individual and mass appeal. In school, we call it a curriculum. In a typical school, it consists of lessons in math, English, science, history, and various other subjects that children need to master before graduating. Each grade has a slightly advanced approach to teaching the subject matter, helping students to attain proficiency and educational objectives.

However, not every person will succeed in comprehending the content of the subject at the same rate or in the same manner. Many today homeschool so they can teach at their own pace with their child or at different paces with their multiple children. Some children work at an accelerated pace because they are aggressive in their learning ability, quickly grasping concepts and wanting more. Others need to go more slowly to allow them to assimilate the information correctly. Again, the issue is that each person is unique in his capacity for knowledge, in desire, and in perspective. Therefore, a modified curriculum must be created for each person to achieve the highest mastery that they are able in each of the subjects.

This is why God creates individualized lessons for each person. Some will need extra time or intensity to learn what God wants them to understand. This does not mean that Christians will not have some common experiences on their Christian walks. At times, several individuals may be trudging down parallel paths, and they can help each other as they traverse rough areas

along the way. An older, more experienced Christian may have an advanced perspective, being a bit further along the course and having observed or learned more. He may contribute his experience to help another brother triumph over a difficult trial.

Notice the [wisdom](#) of Solomon in [Ecclesiastes 4:9-10](#): "Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up." Solomon observes that it is better when two people share a burden. In that way, they can help each other when one stumbles or falls.

Spiritually speaking, we are advised to share our experiences and observations to the benefit of our brethren. Not only may it help a brother or sister to overcome and grow, but it will also help us, by relating the experience, to give of ourselves. We will see more of this in Part Two.

- Gary Montgomery

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Lessons From the Animals](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

Mankind, created after the God-kind, has been given dominion or responsibility for the care of animal life, preserving and embellishing their environment, as God would take care of them. Our well-being is inextricably connected to our care of animals (Proverbs 12:20). By having Adam name the animals, God evidently wanted him to become acquainted with their characteristics, enabling him to learn commonsense wisdom from observing their behavior and traits, either for the purpose of emulating particular behaviors, such as diligence and self-discipline from the ant (Proverbs 6:6), affection and motherliness from a deer (Proverbs 5:19), or avoiding negative behaviors such as gossip or slander by observing the behavior of an adder or asp (Psalm 140), aimless willfulness or stubbornness, as in a wild ass (Jeremiah 2:24) or a goat (Matthew 25:32).

From the Archives: Featured Article

[Are You Teachable?](#)

by Staff

Scripture is full of advice about being humble and taking heed to God's instruction because, frankly, many think they know it all already! Here are several basic points to help us become better students of God's Word.

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