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Christian Education



The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding’ ” (*Proverbs 9:10, NKJV*).

Think about the above text. It entails two closely related concepts: “fear,” as in awe, as in marveling at the glory and power of God; and “knowledge,” as in learning truth about the character of God. Hence, wisdom, knowledge, and understanding are rooted in God Himself. This makes perfect sense. After all, God is the source of all existence, the One alone who created and sustains all existence (*John 1:1–3; Col. 1:16, 17*). Whatever we learn, whatever we know about—quarks, caterpillars, supernovas, angels, demons, “principalities and powers in heavenly places” (*Eph. 3:10*), everything—they exist only because of God. Hence, all true knowledge and wisdom and understanding ultimately have their source in the Lord Himself.

Scripture is clear: “God is love” (*1 John 4:8*), which explains this quote from Ellen G. White: “Love, the basis of creation and of redemption, is the basis of true education. This is made plain in the law that God has given as the guide of life. The first and great commandment is, ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind.’ Luke 10:27. To love Him, the infinite, the omniscient One, with the whole strength, and mind, and heart, means the highest development of every power. It means that in the whole being—the body, the mind, as well as the soul—the image of God is to be restored.”—*Education*, p. 16.

Because the Lord is the Source of all true knowledge, all true education, all Christian education should direct our minds toward Him and toward His own revelation about Himself. Through nature, through the Written Word, through the revelation of Christ in that Written Word, we have been given all that we need, and then some, to come to a saving relationship with our Lord and, indeed, to love Him with all our heart and soul. Even nature, so defiled by thousands of years of sin, still speaks, even powerfully, of the goodness and character of God when studied from the perspective given us in Scripture. But the Written Word, the Scriptures, is the perfect standard of truth, the greatest revelation we have of who God is and what He has done and is doing for humanity. Scripture, and its message of Creation and Redemption, must be central to all Christian education.

Scripture, and its message of Creation and Redemption, must be central to all Christian education.

The apostle John said Jesus Christ is the “Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (*John 1:9*). In other words, just as only through Jesus does every human being have life, through Jesus every human being receives some rays of divine light, some understanding of transcendent truth and goodness.

Yet, we’re all in a struggle, the great controversy, in which the enemy of souls works diligently to block us from receiving this knowledge. Thus, whatever else Christian education entails, it obviously must seek to help students better understand the light that God offers us from heaven.

Otherwise, what? As Jesus said, “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (*Mark 8:36*). What good is a great education in science, literature, economics, or engineering if, in the end, you face the second death in the lake of fire? The answer is obvious, isn’t it?

Thus, the topic for our lessons this quarter. What does it mean to have a “Christian education,” and how can we as a church, in one way or another, find a way for all our members to be able to get such an education?

This Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide has been written by various presidents of Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities in North America.

How to Use This Teachers Edition

“The true teacher is not content with dull thoughts, an indolent mind, or a loose memory. He constantly seeks higher attainments and better methods. His life is one of continual growth. In the work of such a teacher there is a freshness, a quickening power, that awakens and inspires his [class].”

—Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 103.

To be a Sabbath School teacher is both a privilege and a responsibility. A privilege because it offers the teacher the unique opportunity to lead and guide in the study and discussion of the week’s lesson so as to enable the class to have both a personal appreciation for God’s Word and a collective experience of spiritual fellowship with class members. When the class concludes, members should leave with a sense of having tasted the goodness of God’s Word and having been strengthened by its enduring power. The responsibility of teaching demands that the teacher is fully aware of the Scripture to be studied, the flow of the lesson through the week, the interlinking of the lessons to the theme of the quarter, and the lesson’s application to life and witness.

This guide is to help teachers to fulfill their responsibility adequately. It has three segments:

- 1. Overview** introduces the lesson topic, key texts, links with the previous lesson, and the lesson’s theme. This segment deals with such questions as Why is this lesson important? What does the Bible say about this subject? What are some major themes covered in the lesson? How does this subject affect my personal life?
- 2. Commentary** is the chief segment in the Teachers Edition. It may have two or more sections, each one dealing with the theme introduced in the Overview segment. The Commentary may include several in-depth discussions that enlarge the themes outlined in the Overview. The Commentary provides an in-depth study of the themes and offers scriptural, exegetic, illustrative discussion material that leads to a better understanding of the themes. The Commentary also may have scriptural word study or exegesis appropriate to the lesson. On a participatory mode, the Commentary segment may have discussion leads, illustrations appropriate to the study, and thought questions.
- 3. Life Application** is the final segment of the Teachers Edition for each lesson. This section leads the class to discuss what was presented in the Commentary segment as it impacts Christian life. The application may involve discussion, further probing of what the lesson under study is all about, or perhaps personal testimony on how one may feel the impact of the lesson on one’s life.

Final thought: What is mentioned above is only suggestive of the many possibilities available for presenting the lesson and is not intended to be exhaustive or prescriptive in its scope. Teaching should not become monotonous, repetitious, or speculative. Good Sabbath School teaching should be Bible-based, Christ-centered, faith-strengthening, and fellowship-building.