**Intellectual Development**

The Holy Spirit chose to summarize Jesus’ developmental years with the statement, “Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and Man” (Luke 2:52). This simple statement emphasizes that well-balanced human development must involve intellectual, physical, spiritual and social growth. We see the evidence of Jesus’ intellectual growth, even by the age of 12. At the end of Mary and Joseph’s lengthy search for their missing son, they found him “sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers” (Luke 2:46-47).

As we think of our responsibility of providing for the intellectual development of our children, it is important for us to consider God’s will in the matter. If we have done our job right, each child should grow into a young adult with the skills to provide for their families, the literacy to comprehend God’s word and the logic and wisdom to make proper application to their lives.

**Marketable Skills –** According to Matthew 13:55 and Mark 6:3, Jesus was a carpenter like His earthly father. Joseph made sure his son learned skills that would equip Him to make a living.

Paul made it clear to Timothy that God expects us to provide for our families (1 Timothy 5:8). While we certainly don’t want to raise our children to covet wealth (1 Timothy 6:9), the painful fact is that folks with few marketable skills often struggle to pay the bills, even in the best of times. We must do our best to give our children the tools they will need to support their families.

**How important is reading comprehension?** – Being able to read is basic, but comprehending what you read is critical to learning in all other fields. In the spiritual realm, God has revealed His will to us in written form, and He expects us to be able to read the words He has provided and understand the message. Paul wrote in Ephesians 3:3-4, “By revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief. By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ.” The people of Berea set the perfect example for all Christians as they “received the word with great eagerness, examining the scriptures daily to see whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11). Sound reading comprehension will help our children in all walks of life, but is crucial as they study God’s word.

**Wisdom is more than just knowledge** – Our children must develop the ability to logically consider scriptural teaching and make proper application of those principles to their lives. We must train our children to avoid the temptation of deciding what to believe, then looking for proof texts to fit. The church of tomorrow needs young adults with the ability and determination to comprehend what the Holy Spirit has written, to combine all that the scriptures teach on a given issue and to ascertain God’s will on the subject. This is the only real formula for ensuring that they will be “no longer children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine” (Eph, 4:14).

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