

BECOMING LIFELONG LEARNERS

"In fact, we believe that our joy in treasuring Christ above all things, and in all things, is essential in displaying his glory. Education is the process of growing in our ability to join God in this ultimate purpose to glorify Jesus Christ. That's why we give joy such a prominent place in our understanding of education. That's why we have a phrase like 'education in serious joy.'" John Piper, *Foundations for Lifelong Learning*, 2.

1. Christians are Called to be Lifelong Learners Because We Serve An Infinite God Who Has Shown Us Unlimited Grace

"Great are the works of the LORD, studied by all who delight in them." (Psalm 111:2)

"When your son asks you in time to come, 'What is the meaning of the testimonies and the statutes and the rules that the LORD our God has commanded you?' then you shall say to your son, 'We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt. And the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand...' (Deuteronomy 6:20-21)

"Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written." (John 21:25)

"...They cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 'Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.'" (Revelation 4:10-11)

"And they sang a new song, saying, 'Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.'" (Revelation 5:9-10)

"When we speak of enjoying God in all things, the things we have in mind include both the word that God inspired and the world that God made. We have honey and sunshine and weddings and dew and rain and light and thunder and vultures and lilies and ravens. We know these things not first from God's word but from his world. Yet I cited a Scripture to go with each one. The significance of that interweaving of world and word is that it points to our answer to the question, What is the focus of our education in serious joy? What do we actually study? If God's aim in creating and governing the world is the display of his glory, where should we focus our attention? Where will we see the glory? Our answer is that God

has two books: his inspired word and his created world. This is what we study: the Bible, on the one hand, and the whole organic complex of nature and history and human culture, on the other hand. We are not the first to call creation and Scripture God's two books." John Piper, "Enjoying God, the Key to Christian Education"

"Babies need not to be taught a trade, but to be introduced to a world. To put the matter shortly, woman is generally shut up in a house with a human being at the time when he asks all the questions that there are, and some that there aren't. Now if anyone says that this duty of general enlightenment... is in itself too exacting and oppressive, I can understand the view. I can only answer that our race has thought it worth while to cast this burden on women in order to keep common-sense in the world. But when people begin to talk about this domestic duty as not merely difficult but trivial and dreary, I simply give up the question. For I cannot with the utmost energy of imagination conceive what they mean... How can it be a large career to tell other people's children about the Rule of Three, and a small career to tell one's own children about the universe? How can it be broad to be the same thing to everyone, and narrow to be everything to someone? No; a woman's function is laborious, but because it is gigantic, not because it is minute. I will pity Mrs. Jones for the hugeness of her task; I will never pity her for its smallness." G.K. Chesterton, *What's Wrong with the World*

2. Christians are Called to be Lifelong Learners Because We are People of the Book

"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness," (2 Timothy 3:16)

"Send out your light and your truth; let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling!" (Psalm 43:3)

"How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word... I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you." (Psalm 119:9,11)

"Write what you see in a book... Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this." (Revelation 1:19)

3. Christians are Called to be Lifelong Learners Because We are Responsible to Love God and Love our Neighbors

"And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:30-31)

“...Because you learn about people. You gain a feel for human experience. You come to understand riches and nuances that you could never understand just from knowing the circle of people you happen to know. You come to understand the ways that people differ from each other, and the ways we are all alike—an exceedingly valuable component of wisdom. You become a bigger person with a wider scope of perception. All those things you come to know illustrate and amplify the relevance and wisdom of our God.” David Powlison, *Speaking the Truth in Love*

4. Christians are Called to be Lifelong Learners Because it is By Thinking that We Will Not be Conformed to this World

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Romans 12:2)

“Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you.” (Philippians 3:15)

“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.” (Philippians 4:8–9)

“Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.” (2 Timothy 2:7)

5. Christians are Called to be Lifelong Learners because by Reading Good Books, we can Renew Our Minds

“Every age has its own outlook. It is specially good at seeing certain truths and specially liable to make certain mistakes. We all, therefore, need the books that will correct the characteristic mistakes of our own period. And that means the old books. All contemporary writers share to some extent the contemporary outlook—even those, like myself, who seem most opposed to it... The only palliative is to keep the clean sea breeze of the centuries blowing through our minds, and this can be done only by reading old books. Not, of course, that there is any magic about the past. People were no cleverer then than they are now; they made as many mistakes as we. But not the same mistakes. They will not flatter us in the errors we are already committing; and their own errors, being now open and palpable, will not endanger us. Two heads are better than one, not because either is infallible, but because they are unlikely to go wrong in the same direction. To be sure, the

books of the future would be just as good a corrective as the books of the past, but unfortunately we cannot get at them." C. S. Lewis, "On Reading Old Books," *God in the Dock*

"Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man." Francis Bacon

"The majority, though they are sometimes frequent readers, do not set much store by reading. They turn to it as a last resource. They abandon it with alacrity as soon as any alternative pastime turns up. It is kept for railway journeys, illnesses, odd moments of enforced solitude, or for the process called reading oneself to sleep. They sometimes combine it with desultory conversation; often, with listening to the radio. But literary people are always looking for leisure and silence in which to read and do so with their whole attention. When they are denied such attentive and undisturbed reading even for a few days they feel impoverished." C. S. Lewis, *An Experiment in Criticism*

Recommendations:

- Read what you enjoy
- Read to stretch yourself
- Buy books
- Read with a Plan
- Keep a list of books you have read
- Keep a list of books you want to read
- Read different kinds of books at different times of the day
- Read in different ways
- Take advantage of even short breaks (read instead of scroll)
 - "Suppose you read slowly like I do — maybe about the same speed that you speak — 200 words a minute. If you read fifteen minutes a day for one year (say just before supper, or just before bed), you will read 5,475 minutes in the year. Multiply that by 200 words a minute, and you get 1,095,000 words that you would read in a year. Now an average serious book might have about 360 words per page. So you would have read 3,041 pages in one year. That's ten very substantial books. All in fifteen minutes a day. Or, to be specific, my copy of Calvin's Institutes has 1,521 pages in two volumes, with an average of 400 words per page, which is 608,400 words. That means that even if you took a day off each week, you could read this great biblical vision of God and man in less than nine months (about thirty-three weeks) at fifteen minutes a day." John Piper, *Desiring God*
- Read with a pen in hand and develop your own system for marking and keeping
- Remember that listening is reading
- Read Andy Naselli, *How to Read a Book*

