



## Charlotte Mason: A Liberal Education for All with Jason Barney

### Lecture 8: Education is a Discipline

#### Outline:

##### Education is a Discipline

- Charlotte Mason meant the discipline of habit. She is drawing from the recent research in her own day about the nature of the brain. They were thinking in terms of physiology.
- Charlotte Mason was trying to understand how habits work.
- Habits are natural to what it means to be human. To Charlotte Mason habits are the railways to life.

##### Habits of Mind and of Body

- In Charlotte Mason's day brain science was just getting going.
- Charlotte Mason was at the cutting edge of her day's science.
- Habits and the brain:
  - As human beings we are embodied souls. Our bodies and souls interact in a way that is mysterious to us.
  - She is not reducing humans to the material that makes us up.
  - She has a sense that spirit and flesh are touching.
  - We can do things with our bodies that have a spiritual affect upon us. The Holy Spirit works in such things. God became man for us.

##### Brain Plasticity

- Neurons that fire together wire together. If you repeat an act it becomes a habit.
- Famous example: the occipital lobe of those who are blind will have neurons that die or move over to the hearing areas of brain. People who are blind can often hear better than people who see.
- The brain grows and adapts depending on how we use it.
- Our brain operates on neural networks. The way that we get neural networks to wire faster and respond or fire most efficiently is through the wrapping around the synapses a myelin sheath. The more the nerve fires, the more myelin wraps around it. The more myelin wraps around it, the faster signals travel.
- The more you practice a skill, recall some bit of knowledge, the stronger that pathway becomes.



- We are training our brains when we engage in habits, practice, or learning.
- The brain is plastic. It adapts to our habitual lines of thought. The brain can be changed and developed. Education is possible through the cultivation of body and intellect.

### **How do we find habit as an important level to lift a child above his nature?**

- “Let the lessons be of the right sort, and children will learn them with delight.” Charlotte Mason
- Children must do the work for themselves. They must perform the act of knowing.
- The children have to handle the tools and the intellectual habits of the good life will form themselves. Curiosity will be set free to run wild.
- Habit is ten natures. A child’s nature may be powerful. Here is the spiritual power in education.
  - Be transformed by the renewing of your minds. There is a mental and educational, spiritual effort of transformation in the renewal of habits made possible to us in Christ Jesus.
- The teacher’s labor of love is laying down the rails of habits for our students.
  - This is where the strenuous work lies.
  - Habit is to life what rails are to transport cars.
  - Habit is inevitable. Habits of wrong thinking will fix themselves if right thinking is not put in place.
  - Lay out the rails by training in habit for good and righteous living.
- Our liturgy is formative.
- We should look at what habits are forming themselves in our child.
- There are many habits of manners that we should train our children in.