



Introduction to Classical Education

with Dr. Christopher Perrin

Lesson 11: Deepening our Understanding of Classical Education

Outline:

How Educators Can Deepen and Grow as Classical Educators

How will you renew Classical Education?

- Teachers deliver classical education to the students.
- A teacher is just a more mature student.
- A student is just a less mature teacher.

When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer by Walt Whitman

*When I heard the learn'd astronomer,
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me,
When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add, divide, and measure them,
When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with much applause in the lecture room,
How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,
Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself,
In the mystical moist night air, and from time to time,
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.*

- This poem is about astronomy, listening to an astronomer give a lecture.
- Where is the pivot in this poem to a different way of thinking?
 - “*How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick*”
 - In the lecture room the astronomer is teaching and showing the listener the stars and the movements.
 - Whitman, the hearer, becomes tired and sick in this environment. What is it that accounted for his tiredness and sickness?
- What are the two different ways of engaging the stars in this poem?
 - There is an appropriate place for astronomers to give lectures.
 - There is also a place for wandering off and looking up in perfect silence at the stars.
- We are doing astronomy when we teach children to enjoy the stars and to learn the history of what has been thought about the stars.
- There is the study of astronomy that is a quadrivium art.
- You need both modes in order to learn the art of education.
 - Lecture: Ratio, the part that reasons, calculates, collects, and classifies
 - Wonder and Wander: Intellectus, contemplation, engagement, pondering, and lingering



Proverbs 2

*My son, if you accept my words,
And store up my commands within you,
Turning your ear to wisdom
And applying your heart to understanding –
Instead, if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding,
And if you look for it as for silver
And search for it as for hidden treasure,
Then you will understand the fear of the Lord
And find the knowledge of God.
For the Lord gives wisdom;
From his mouth come knowledge and understanding.
He holds success in store for the upright,
He is a shield to those whose walk is blameless,
For he guards the course of the just
And protects the way of his faithful ones.
Then you will understand what is right and just and fair – every good path.
For wisdom will enter your heart,
And knowledge will be pleasant to your soul.
Discretion will protect you,
And understanding will guard you.*

- What must I do to get wisdom?
 - If you accept my words and store up my commands within you...then you will understand the fear of the Lord.
 - The condition for wisdom is to cry out for it as if it were hidden treasure. You have to seek it if you will find it. You must cry aloud for wisdom and knowledge. It must come from your heart. It must be the cry of your soul.

Psalm 1

*Blessed is the one
Who does not walk in step with the wicked
Or stand in the way that sinners take
Or sit in the company of mockers,
But whose delight is in the law of the Lord,
And who meditates on his law day and night.
That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,
Which yields its fruit in season
And whose leaf does not wither –
Whatever they do prospers.
Not so the wicked!
They are like chaff
That the wind blows away.
Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgement,
Nor the sinners in the assembly of the righteous.*



*For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous,
But the way of the wicked leads to destruction.*

- We want to be this tree.
- Trees grow because they are watered well and they receive sunlight.
- The tree is a sign of blessing and stability.
 - The tree brings fruit, shade, and it is beautiful to behold.
- To become like a tree, delight on the law of the Lord, and meditate on it day and night. To be a stable, strong tree that is a blessing to others so that whatever we do would prosper.

Formed to Form

- Education in the classical tradition involves the formation of the soul and the intellect, the acquisition of the virtues of a student (courage, love, humility, & temperance), and the virtues of being a mature wise human being.
- We need to begin with the end in mind. What is the portrait, your imagined ideal of what a student would look like?
 - The formation of the student is going to mimic and mirror the formed student.
 - Luke 6: When a student is fully trained, he will be like his teacher.
 - The process of formation never ends. Our freshness as an educator is that we continue to be formed.
 - A reservoir can become a stagnant pool unless water is moving into it as well as out of it. There needs to be a source feeding the educator so that I can feed the student.

Good things Grow

- Music
- Art
- Theology, The Church
- People
- You are a good thing. What can be better for a student than to be a great teacher?

Good People Grow and Deepen

- Roots and Branches: The roots receive the water and nutrients from the soil that result in the beautiful vibrant tree.
 - Width: Wide exposure to learning: You don't want just surface knowledge.
 - Width includes the liberal arts and the Great Books.
 - The educator needs to know and contemplate pedagogies.
 - We should go deep in several areas over our life.
 - Depth: We also need depth: You don't want to be silos.



- The heart that yearns for and wants to know the true, good, and beautiful are the roots of your life.
- Good Soil
 - The soil are the Great Books.
 - The great educators never stop reading and never stop talking about what they are reading.
- Water
 - Water are the friends and colleagues who moisten the soil.
 - We go nowhere alone. C.S. Lewis
 - We are standing on the shoulders of giants. Isaac Newton
 - We need new ideas to delight us in the ongoing learning process.
- Sun
 - God makes all of this work together in some mysterious ways.
 - To return to truth is to return to the author of truth.
 - God animates this entire process.

Bad News

- It takes a while to recover the whole.
- We do have to unlearn bad habits. These don't change easily, we dwell in these things. We have to replace bad habits with good habits.
- We have become like our teachers. This is part of the bad habits that we learned. We need to become aware of what we do that is not helpful as teachers and not helpful to students.
- We go nowhere alone. Americans tend to be individualistic. We need human beings in vital fellowship with us in order to recover classical education and to go deeper ourselves.
- The downside of the self-educated man: We need to be in fleshly community. We need to pursue learning on our own, but we need the guidance and accountability of others.
 - Wise people can give us guidance.
 - We need models whom we can emulate.
 - These things are not always present for the self-educated persons.

Good News

- We have received parts of a classical education.
- Our past study can be redeemed. Some things should be forgotten.
- We have discovered aspects of classical education without realizing it.
- We are blessed whenever we start to recover classical education.

How to deepen

- Contemplate
 - Slow learning that would become permanent learning
 - Related to the word that means *what happened in the temple*
 - Read



- Memorize important passages. For the true, good, and beautiful to speak to you at any time, it needs to be in your soul so that deep can call to deep.
- Ponder, linger, savor
- Specialize *and* Broaden
- These things happen simultaneously.
- Some books that you read should be outside of your own formal study.
- Formation is what we are seeking as we are contemplating the true, good, and the beautiful. We are seeking to beautify ourselves. We are humbling ourselves in the presence of the true, good, and the beautiful. When we encounter greatness, we become small. The way to humility is to get into the presence of God.

Collaborate

- If you want to become an educated person over time take two hours a day. (A.G. Sertillanges, *The Intellectual Life*)
- Some preparation for classes is contemplative.
- Set aside a quiet regular place for reading and study.
- Praying the hours eight times a day for 5-10 minutes. (Phyllis Tickle, *The Divine Hours*)
 - Set aside time to reorient, connect to God and the things that are true, good, and beautiful.
- Proverbs 2: We need to seek, cry, and pray, “God give me wisdom.”
- Your reading list: You should know which books you will read and the order.
 - Read two old books to one contemporary book. Our current age is best addressed and exhorted from an age outside of ours (the past). C.S. Lewis, *The Reading of Old Books*
- Commonplace book: Studies show that working with physical notebooks are superior, they are tangible and not as distracting. Write passages from book that you want to access and memorize.
 - You could take notes of lectures and sermons.

Collaborate

- Community of Friends = Faculty
- *Conversation* means to turn with (versus). We are moving with one another in an exchange of ideas.
- Apply and Practice: Talk about how to improve your art.
- *Conversation*
- Observe others/Be observed
- *Conversation*
- Be coached/Coach others
- Scholé with colleagues



- Academic teams, learning groups, every teacher should be part of an academic team to set goals together. A team leader should be in place. Observations should be in place.
- Mentorship: Teaching is an art that requires modeling and apprenticeship (Luke 6).
- Learning with students, students are blessing us by giving us privilege of teaching, you are a student, just a more mature student.
 - The students' souls are going to light fire within your soul.
 - A teacher remains perpetually a student (a more mature student).
 - Students have to have zeal for truth, goodness, and beauty. They don't really have it until they give it away.
 - Together we collaborate towards our possession of truth, goodness, and beauty.