



## Patristics and Christian Learning with Dr. Jordan Wood

Optional Discussion,  
Part 1: Dr. Jordan  
Wood and Michael  
Hornbaker

### Outline:

Optional Discussion: Dr. Jordan Wood and Michael Hornbaker

- **Michael:** John Comenius in the 1600s voices a perennial lament of educators. He decries the state of the morals of the youth. “I am curious what you think about the lament of the state of the youth. Is this the perennial condition of the educator, and what do other perspectives maybe from the fathers have to say to us?”
- **Jordan:** I think it is the perennial context or theme. Augustine laments the state of the youth. There is a temptation (parenting) to despair. What does God think of us? How often has God had to be patient with me? I think the Fathers can sympathize.
- **Michael:** Are there things today our children that are unique?
- **Jordan:** Technology comes with temptations. There are unique challenges for sure. These are things that most of the youth already know.
- **Jordan:** I want to turn it around to you and draw from your experience. What do you think is unique about challenges for youth today in education?
- **Michael:** Fighting for limits around technology is a big one. There is a challenge of a loss of local culture. You don’t really need knowledge of a place to live there.
  - This shows up in what students see themselves as training for. It’s largely not training for service in a particular place.
  - It’s training for individual vocation that aligns with particular interests.
  - This is not embedded in love of neighbor.
- **Jordan:** What does that produce in the classroom with the lack of rooting or local culture? What does your typical student bring to the classroom (influence)?
- **Michael:** It is very difficult for them to attend. You have to slow down in the classroom (patience). We are conditioned for things to happen so quickly that we can easily fall into boredom.
  - Meeting students where they are is almost always necessary.
  - Some students couldn’t conceive of reading as a Transcendent activity.
- **Michael:** I am curious what you think about our relationship to tradition. Commonly when we encounter the Fathers (Cassiodorus, speaking of drinking from the spring of the ancients) there is posture of reverence. How do we begin to establish trust and interest with the students?



- **Jordan:** It's easier not to be wise. One of the key roles of the teacher is that they have to be trusted by the students. Students now don't have any interest in the texts themselves. Successful teachers build rapport. We have to become the point of interest for the text (winsomeness and being compelling).
- **Michael:** Cassiodorus makes the point that all secular learning proceeds from the Divine source of scripture. It's borrowed. I am curious what you think about inviting students to love a teacher, who loves a text, who then loves the scripture. I am curious about what you think about that progression versus just putting a Bible in front of a student.
- **Jordan:** Cassiodorus breaks the Bible up into eight sections. For him scripture is integrated. Saint Maximus the Confessor says that the divine word is like a spring of water, those who drink from it rightly, the water sustains the body, and they become an extension of the source. What they see in you is an extension of the scripture.