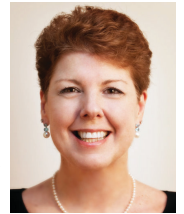


## *An Introduction and Overview*



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Dr. Bruce Lockerbie, in his book entitled *Who Educates Your Child?* says this, “Education must share with religion or philosophy its perspective on the world at large and human beings’ place in the world. Education, as such, possesses no substance of itself. Education is the instrument for carrying out society’s philosophical goals.” We are here today because God has called us into Christian education. And we are here today because our philosophy matters. And so, the purpose of our time together during these twelve lessons is to carefully evaluate our place as educators in the Christian school movement. Our time will be focused on a biblical and a Christian philosophy of education, while also looking at what the world says about philosophy and some of the philosophies of the world. I want to encourage you to go ahead and take out a notebook, some paper, three by five cards, markers, and I want you to, when you can, take notes and engage in these lessons.

Look, I’ve been involved in distance education now for decades. I’m very aware that, when we’re going through training (which I’ve had to do some of myself and continue to do also), but when we go through training, it can become easy to just say, “I’m going to knock out my lessons, and that’s that. I’ll answer a few questions and then I’ll get my certification.” And I recognize that that’s where many of you are. What I also recognize is that many of you are committed to continually learning and growing as a Christian educator. And so, this is a wonderful opportunity to do so and to identify things that you already know and that resonate with your spirit, but also to identify places where you would like to continually improve and grow.

You know, we are continuously looking at how philosophy impacts us as educators, and our prayer is that this course will focus your attention a little bit more clearly. I'm going to pray at the beginning of this lesson. I'm not going to pray at the beginning of all twelve of the lessons. But it's very important that we come before God; and we ask God to please give us wisdom and discernment throughout our twelve lessons together. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we're grateful that You trust us at this time in history to influence the next generation. Thank You for each man and each woman participating in this course. Thank You for ACSI and its commitment to equip and empower this generation of learners. Lord, we recognize that we have the responsibility, through education, to pass down Your truth to the next generation. So, guide each person, I ask, during each of these lessons, that You will speak to each person and show each one, Lord, confirm in their hearts things where their thinking is clear biblically. But we also ask for all of us, myself of course, that You will clarify our thinking. In Jesus' name, amen.

You know, the actual word *philosophy* is an interesting word because it comes from the word of love of wisdom. And when we talk about philosophy, I don't know about you but I took some tough philosophy courses in university; and I will tell you that they weren't necessarily my favorite courses. And I got bogged down in some of the older philosophies and having to memorize philosophers and some of their quotes. And I didn't really give it the attention that it deserved when I was growing up and when I was younger. What I do recognize, as I've grown older and have spent so much more time in academia, what I do recognize is how significant the philosophy is. My personal philosophy but also the current philosophy of culture, as well as a philosophy of the school.

If I want to love wisdom, there're things that I need to make sure that I do. And I love wisdom because God has given us a mind and asks us to follow Him and to pursue Him. But the Scriptures make so clear to us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. And Scripture tells us, and you can see here, we have the Bible as the foundation of actual bedrock. This is the bedrock. So the actual word *philosophy*—how can I love philosophy if I don't even acknowledge God in the whole equation of philosophy? I would be one that would contend that only a believer is able to truly love

wisdom as God created us to love. You know, God is the one who created us.

In Genesis, let us make man in our image. God is the one who created us with a mind to be able to reason and think clearly. God gave us a mind, a body, and a soul, and all aspects of our being are important when we look at education. So we have God's Word as the bedrock. You know, I love geology; and part of the reason I love geology is because of Dr. Frank Roberts, a geologist who is now with the Lord who taught for decades and decades at the Delaware County Christian School. And he would take us on these field trips. And I loved the times that we would go out to the bedrock; and he would talk to us about the different layers and all different kinds of rock, but it was fascinating when we got to the bedrock.

If you've traveled in Canada or in parts of Maine, when you're on this solid rock where it's unmovable, it's not the shifting sand. It's not a big wave comes in and the whole sand patterns are shifting, it's the solid rock. And we would say, because we love wisdom, this is what we will have our foundation based upon. Well, when we talk about Christian philosophy of education, we recognize that this philosophy plays out in all aspects of a Christian school, in all aspects of the Christian school day, the decisions we make. You know, in Romans 12:2, it tells us this, Romans 12:2 tells us that we are not supposed to be conformed, I mean, Scripture tells us, be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our minds. Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our minds. Do not conform. And it's so important that we follow that: not to be conformed.

Well what does it mean as a Christian educator, what does it mean as a Christian teacher, to not be conformed and to have the wisdom of God? As we talk through these twelve lessons, I'm going to emphasize for you the role of Scripture. And there will be many times when I will actually read the Scripture out loud. Because it's my observation that, even in Christian settings, in a Christian school, it's very easy to talk in circles around the Bible, as opposed to going directly to the Bible and seeking exactly what God says.

My philosophy and what I believe—you know my philosophy is my belief system about the world. About what is important in the world. About the nature of the universe and the nature of the child and my place in this world. When we talk about philosophy, I

want us to always keep in mind why this is important. You see, the whole purpose of Christian education is to transmit knowledge and values and to pass truth down to the next generation. So, while we can talk about these concepts theoretically, it's really very significant to always recognize our whole purpose of existing is to help families fulfill their God-given appointment, to raise up a generation, to teach your children when you come and go.

I'm struck by the fact that I recall so many specific things about my own Christian education. And I was very blessed to go all the way through Christian school, K through 12. In fact, I just recently spent quite a bit of time with my mother who taught in Christian education, but [also] a number of my own teachers. And one of them being my sixth-grade teacher. And we sat and talked about different things about school. What's interesting is, I don't remember one math lesson. But I remember the classroom. I can picture the classroom. I can picture what it felt like going in there. I remember some of the books she actually read to us. And I remember the whole environment of learning. I also remember the field trips. The actual lessons are very valuable, but they are always in the context of what else is going on around us. And I shared with her, and was able to thank her again, for what she invested in me as a young woman, the difference that she made in my life (as well as all of my other teachers) with regard to having a philosophy, a world view, coming back to it over and over and over again.

Throughout the Old Testament, there's a little phrase that comes up, and it's a disturbing little phrase, and it says this: "And there arose a generation that knew not God." *And there arose a generation that knew not God.* When we take the time to reflect on that, we have to recognize that a generation that comes up without knowing God is a generation who had parents who dropped the ball. Parents who bought into a different philosophy. Parents who were not vigilant to make sure that philosophy and ideas were passed down. Now look, God made us individuals, and God does not have grandchildren. He doesn't; he only has children. And every person has to make that commitment: to know God and to love God. But when our philosophies and our belief systems and our values are not passed down, then we see what we saw all through the Old Testament and certainly the New Testament and certainly today: "There arose a generation that knew not God." We don't know who Daniel's parents were exactly—or even take Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and different ones who, people who were raised in captivity. But it's fascinating when we

look at that to see the philosophy: these were children who grew up in a pagan, foreign land, totally removed from God's Word as God's laws and the existing God's Word out of the Old Testament at the time. And yet they grew up knowing God.

Look at Moses, whose mother became his wet nurse and Miriam who made sure when Pharaoh's daughter found him—and here he is, being raised and educated in the highest levels that the Egyptian world had to offer at the time, probably had the top teachers, and yet, from childhood, from birth, my guess is, all the way through when his mother was telling him and reciting the truth to him and it got embedded into his mind. We cannot underestimate the power of learning things when we are young. Of getting the values and ideas into our mind. You know, Scripture does promise that, when we train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is older, he will not depart from it. It actually implies that perhaps there're many who might turn away in their middle years. I've observed this personally, with people that I grew up with, that people that went off to university or went through a season of life and turning away from God and then, coming back to God, coming back to the truth that they knew as children.

So, the philosophy really does matter. We are not here as Christian educators just to offer a nice, safe place. Now look, safety is very important. I'm not marginalizing that at all. But a Christian education is totally different philosophically, or it should be. And, even as you go through these twelve lessons, I want to encourage you to make sure that you jot down lists and identify some places where you would say: You know what, we may be slipping a little bit here, maybe I haven't been giving as much attention to this area—in my education or as a part of a faculty team or a leadership team—as I should be. Christian education only exists if it is based on a Christian philosophy of education.