

Biblical Word Study: Education

Let's begin by reading Webster's 1828 definition for education:

EDUCA'TION, n. [L. educatio.] The bringing up, as of a child, instruction; formation of manners. Education comprehends all that series of instruction and discipline which is intended to enlighten the understanding, correct the temper, and form the manners and habits of youth, and fit them for usefulness in their future stations. To give children a good education in manners, arts and science, is important; to give them a religious education is indispensable; and an immense responsibility rests on parents and guardians who neglect these duties.

The most important part of the 4R Process is to research God's Word, deduce (reason) principles from it, and then relate them to our lives. Let's do that by finding a Scripture that sheds light on the word "education."

Ephesians 6:4 And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Let's expand our view of the word by looking at some of the key words Webster uses to define education. Certainly, the words instruction and discipline stand out right away. We'll look at his definitions and then go into the Bible to get more understanding.

INSTRUC'TION, n. [L. instructio.]

1. The act of teaching or informing the understanding in that of which it was before ignorant; information.
2. Precepts conveying knowledge.
Receive my instruction and not silver. Prov.8.
3. Direction; order; command; mandate. The minister received instructions from his sovereign to demand a categorical answer.

Romans 15:4 For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

I Timothy 1:5 But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

II Timothy 3:16-17 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (KJV)

DISCIPLINE, n. [L., to learn.]

1. Education; instruction; cultivation and improvement, comprehending instruction in arts, sciences, correct sentiments, morals and manners, and due subordination to authority.
2. Instruction and government, comprehending the communication of knowledge and the regulation of practice; as military discipline, which includes instruction in manual exercise, evolutions and subordination.
4. Subjection to laws, rules, order, precepts or regulations; as, the troops are under excellent discipline; the passions should be kept under strict discipline.
5. Correction; chastisement; punishment intended to correct crimes or errors; as the discipline of the strap.
7. Chastisement or bodily punishment inflicted on a delinquent in the Romish Church; or that chastisement or external mortification which a religious person inflicts on himself.

There are a lot of different aspects of this word and they all apply in a measure to our study of education. For our purposes, though, we'll look at two aspects in Scripture:

Hebrews 12:5-6 My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reproved by Him; for those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives.

Hebrews 12:11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet for those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

I Timothy 4:7-8 On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds the promise for the present life and also for the life to come.

We could identify many other key words and associated Scriptures from Webster's definition for education. In fact, the more key words (and key words within key words) we examine, the deeper and more solid our Biblical view of the word will become. For our purposes, pick one key word from any of the definitions we have used so far and add to the research I have already provided. Then go on to reap a harvest from your study.

The next step in the 4R Process is to list the insights, nuggets of truth, and principles we have identified through our research. This is done by reflecting on what has been written and asking the Holy Spirit to reveal truth. Here are some insights that came from our brief study so far:

1. Education is comprised of two aspects: instruction and discipline. (Definition of education; Eph. 6:4)
2. It is the parent's responsibility to see to it that the child is educated in the way the Lord has prescribed. (Definition of education; Eph. 6:4)
3. Teaching (instruction) is meant to do more than to just provide facts; it brings understanding. (Definition of instruction)
4. Godly instruction is to be valued more than material things. (I Tim. 4:7-8)
5. The study of history was given to bring us hope. (Rom. 15:4)
6. Scripture is the primary source of education. (II Tim. 3:16-17)
7. Both instruction and discipline have a governmental aspect, bringing direction, control, regulation, and restraint. (Definition of education)
8. Discipline is not warm and fuzzy; it is uncomfortable. (Hebrews 12:11)
9. Discipline is of God and demonstrates real love. (Hebrews 12:5-6)
10. The primary goal of discipline (education) is to build Christian character (godliness). (I Tim. 1:5; 4:7-8)

The list could go on and on. Add any further insights you have.

11. Knowledge Prov. 1:8 Fear of the Lord
12. Instill: infuse by drops
13. Manners: deportment; conduct; Phil 1:27; Eph. 4:1-3
14. Enlighten: quicken the faculty of vision; Col. 2:8

The next step is to write your own definition of the word to reveal your enriched (and Biblical) understanding. Try it with the word "educate." (If you feel you need to research and reason a bit further before you make a definition, do so.)

Finally, relate this study to your own life or circumstance. How will your study affect your life for Christ? Write a brief paragraph that reveals your deeper understanding of God's perspective about education. Write this on a piece of notebook paper and give it a title that suits.