

# *Parenting a Successful Student*

*How to Help Your Child  
Succeed in the Christian School*



Dr. Steven Harness

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All Scripture quotations are from the King James Version of the Bible

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**Thank God** for the child He has blessed you with. Parenting is more than bringing a child into the world, then later dropping him off at school until he graduates. Parenting involves daily training and instilling personal discipline into your child's life.

The daily rigors of life are challenging, and you may be tired, but your child needs your help to succeed in school. Dr. H. Norman Wright, in *the Pre-marital Counseling Handbook*, writes: "Many factors combine to make us who we are. A person is the product of his family birth order, his neurological structure, and interactions with his mother, father, siblings, and so on. But the atmosphere of a home, and especially the relationships with the parents, has a significant impact on shaping identity and behavior." (Pg 60). Parents, your child depends on you!

Let's begin with a definition of a successful student. A successful student is one who is doing his or her best in each task in school. Listening, taking notes, doing homework, completing quizzes and tests, and responding properly in social and emotional areas are all a part of doing your best. Success is not based on attaining a certain grade at the end of the year, but on being faithful to complete assignments and doing the best job personally possible.

The following thoughts are designed to assist you in helping your child succeed. Some of these thoughts are basic, while others are "easier said than done." No matter where you and your student are, these thoughts can be a help to you.

# Routines

“In 1972, Cathy Rigby was determined to win a gold medal at the Olympic Games in Munich. She had trained very hard for many years and did not want to disappoint herself or the United States gymnastics team. As she began the grueling regimen of performing under Olympic pressure, she prayed for the strength and control to get through her routines without making mistakes. She performed well but did not win. Cathy was crushed by the defeat. When she later joined her parents in the stands, she burst into tears and said, ‘I’m sorry, I did my best.’ Her mother gave these wise words of consolation, ‘You know that, and I know that, and I’m sure God knows that too. Doing your best is more important than being the best.’ Doing our best for the Master is all Jesus has asked. We won’t always be the best, but we can always try to do our best.” (*Stories For Teachers and Preachers - SFTAP*)

In order for your student to do his best at school, daily routines and patterns for study, time management, and proper rest must be established. Daily routines are often forgotten or pushed to the side in the busyness of life.

Think about the calling God has placed on your child. At this moment in life, God has called him to be a student: to learn, grow, and develop as a young person. This proper perspective of God’s calling can help you, the parent, coordinate and schedule daily routines which benefit your child and make his success as a student more possible. Psalm 1:1-2 declares: “*Blessed is the man that walketh not in the*



*counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.*” This passage describes a person who is doing his best to learn of God. He has patterns and daily habits that he has dedicated himself to do.

1. He has purposed to walk daily in godly council.
2. He has decided to stay away from evil.
3. He has declared his intent to meditate on God’s Law.

In order to learn more of his God, his daily pattern and routine included meditating on the Word of God in the day and the night. Commentator Adam Clark, concerning this passage, said, “This is not an occasional study to him; it is his work day and night. As his heart is in it, the employment must be frequent, and the disposition to it perpetual.”

Here are several ideas that will help you set up daily routines to help your student succeed:

1. Set an alarm clock the night before to the appropriate time to wake up.
2. Have a morning plan such as an allotted time to wake up, clean up, dress up; a few minutes for prayer and Bible study; a limit to the amount of time to eat breakfast; and then a time each child should be in the vehicle, waiting and ready to go. (Bags could be packed the night before and

- clothes set out ahead of time to make for a calmer morning. Have coats ready in the winter months.)
3. Once school begins, your student can keep track of assignments and homework in an assignment book. Depending on the grade level of your student, he may have this written out for him by the teacher.
  4. Upon returning home from school, be sure to check the assignment list. Turn off the TV and radio as assignments are being completed. Check that the homework is done correctly.
  5. The first hour could be given to completing homework. You may want to start that hour with 5 minutes for a snack and conversation about their day. Depending on the student's grade, more time may be needed for homework and review.
  6. Be sure to go over the list and sign your initials that the student has completed the assignment if this is required. Because the education of your child is important, parents should not relegate parental involvement to a child's sibling or another person. Your attitude of involvement will be reflected in the motivation of your student.
  7. Plan ahead for the next day. If the homework is completed, be sure that everything is in place to make an easier

- transition into the next school day.
8. Look ahead to future papers, tests, quizzes, field trips, and special projects that will need more than one evening's attention. Many subjects require more than studying the night before the test to succeed. As soon as a chapter or list is assigned, begin studying this with your child to lessen the memorization and study load of the night before the test.
  9. Students with special needs or those who are behind in their studies will need more time and attention to help them achieve their ideal education level. Having routines will remove many of the distractions that can hinder any student.
  10. Have a reasonable hour for bedtime. "School nights" (when there is school the next morning) should be treated as "special." The parent can help ensure the student is in bed and getting the proper amount of rest needed to expand the thinking and ability of the mind. School work is hard work, and every student should receive adequate rest. Depending on the age of your student, a set bedtime should be pre-planned and followed. WebMD recommends that children ages 3-6 need 10-12 hours of sleep, ages 7-12 need 10-11 hours of sleep, and ages 12-18 need 8-9 hours of sleep.

11. Nutrition is a key factor in the routines that should be established. Children already tend to have high energy levels. Avoid sugary drinks and an overabundance of candy. Some families may limit sweets to one per day. With proper eating habits, your child's mind will more readily adapt and develop, and he will have the fuel needed to learn. The Bible informs us in Ecclesiastes 12:12 that "*much study is a weariness of the flesh.*" A balance of protein, fiber, carbohydrates, and vitamins is ideal. Fruits and vegetables should not be foreign items to our children. A proper diet will greatly assist your student's learning.

The following advice by dietary experts Maya W. Paul and Lawrence Robinson could be a help to you.



## Special Nutritional Needs For Teens

- Calories** Due to all the growth and activity, adolescent boys need 2,500-2,800 per day, while girls need around 2,200 per day. It's best to get these calories from lean protein, low-fat dairy, whole grains, and fruits and veggies.
- Protein** In order for the body to grow and maintain muscle, teens need 45-60 grams per day. Most teenagers easily meet this need from eating meat, fish, and dairy, but vegetarians may need to increase their protein intake from non-animal sources like soy foods, beans, and nuts.
- Calcium** Many teens do not get sufficient amounts of calcium, leading to weak bones and osteoporosis later in life. Encourage teens to cut back on soda and other overly-sugary foods, which suck calcium from bones. The 1,200 mg of calcium needed per day should come from dairy, calcium-fortified juice and cereal, and other calcium-rich foods such as sesame seeds and leafy greens like spinach.
- Iron** Iron deficiency can lead to anemia, fatigue, and weakness. Boys need 12 mg each day, and teen girls, who often lose iron during menstruation, need 15 mg. Iron-rich foods include red meat, chicken, beans, nuts, enriched whole grains, and leafy greens like spinach and kale.

## Dietary Guidelines For School Age Children

- Vegetables** 3-5 servings per day. A serving might be one cup of raw leafy vegetables, 3/4 cup of vegetable juice, or 1/2 cup of other vegetables, raw or cooked.
- Fruits** 2-4 servings per day. A serving may consist of 1/2 cup of sliced fruit, 3/4 cup of fruit juice, or a medium-size whole fruit, such as an apple, banana or pear.
- Whole Grains** 6-11 servings per day. Each serving should equal one slice of bread, 1/2 cup of rice or 1 ounce of cereal.
- Protein** 2-3 servings of 2-3 ounces of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish per day. A serving in this group may also consist of 1/2 cup of cooked dry beans, one egg, or 2 tablespoons of peanut butter for each ounce of lean meat.
- Dairy products** 2-3 servings (cups) per day of low-fat milk or yogurt, or natural cheese (1.5 ounces=one serving).
- Zinc** Studies indicate that zinc may improve memory and school performance, especially in boys. Good sources of zinc are oysters, beef, pork, liver, dried beans and peas, whole grains, fortified cereals, nuts, milk, cocoa, and poultry.

([http://www.helpguide.org/life/healthy\\_eating\\_children\\_teens.htm](http://www.helpguide.org/life/healthy_eating_children_teens.htm))

# Discipline

Personal discipline is rarely taught to young people these days. Personal discipline requires determination and dedication to principles and priorities that will benefit the individual and bring glory to the Lord. The following story illustrates the need for discipline.

“In 1995, nearly twenty percent of the Florida junior and seniors who took the competency test failed. Another ten percent dropped out before they could even be tested. Lawrence Wright is one Florida student who demonstrates that character has everything to do with academic achievement. Lawrence grew up in a poor section of Miami. He was an undisciplined teenager who managed to fail most of his classes. But in high school he started playing football. His coach drove home the importance of discipline and responsibility. His guidance counselor and teachers taught him that this virtue must be practiced in school as well as in sports. Soon, Lawrence even began to see the classroom as an extension of the playing field. He wanted to compete there and win. Although he studied constantly, Lawrence knew he had an uphill battle to overcome years of underachievement. He took the SAT four times before finally earning a score that would make him eligible to go on to college. For three years now, he has earned a spot on the All-Academic Team in the Southeastern Conference with a B+ grade point average. This is no small feat when you consider that in his senior year, Lawrence Wright was the defensive captain of the number-one ranked University of Florida football team.” (SFTAP)

Proverbs 12:1 says, “*Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof is brutish.*” A good student is a disciplined student. This student knows the value of a daily routine and is determined to do what is required to achieve good grades in the classroom. Having personal discipline will affect every area of a person’s life. Behavior, expectations, and personal excellence in work are all impacted by a person’s dedication (or lack of) to personal discipline. In Proverbs 12:1 we find a man who loves to learn. He is disciplined enough to receive and adhere to instructions.

Sometimes students will follow their own ideas rather than the instructions a teacher gives them. This does not work well in school, in society, or in the workplace. The following can help you instill a desire for discipline in your student.

1. *Fear of Authority.* This begins with fearing God in love and a desire to honor Him while seeking His will for our lives. Ecclesiastes 12:13 informs us: “*Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.*” This fear continues to the God-given authority of parents and teachers. Take the following humorous story for example:

“A schoolteacher injured his back and had to wear a plaster cast around the upper part of his body. It fit under his shirt and wasn't

noticeable at all. On the first day of the term, still with the cast under his shirt, he found himself assigned to the toughest students in school. Walking confidently into the rowdy classroom, he opened the window as wide as possible and then busied himself with desk work. When a strong breeze made his tie flap, he took the desk stapler and stapled the tie to his chest. He had no trouble with discipline that term.” (SFTAP)

This teacher had the fear and respect of every student after that! Parents, you can instill the fear of God and the fear of your parental role into your student. He needs to know that you are serious about his upbringing and education because you care about him.

*2. Faithfulness to Obedience.* Your child is called to be a student and has certain expectations and requirements placed on him. Living up to these expectations is important. These are not performance or grade-based expectations, but the expectations to do the best possible job in every task set before him. A willing heart and a persistent following of instruction can help any student succeed. Obedience to simply follow instructions with a positive attitude will help any student go far in education.



3. *Focus on Success.* After Moses died, the Lord spoke to Joshua in Joshua 1:8 and said: *“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.”* Knowing God and obeying Him more each day is a good definition for success. Schooling originated from the need to better read the Word of God and know Him. Encourage your student by telling him the importance of each subject and how it is preparing him to better know and serve the Lord. The goal of a successful parent and school system is developing a student to know God more and serve Him better every day.



# Respect

“A miller and his son were driving their donkey to a neighboring fair to sell him. They had not gone far when they met a group of women collected round a well, talking and laughing. ‘Look there,’ cried one of them, ‘did you ever see such fellows, to be trudging along the road on foot when they might ride?’ The old man hearing this, quickly made his son mount the Donkey, and continued to walk along merrily by his side.

Presently they came up to a group of old men in earnest debate. ‘There,’ said one of them, ‘it proves what I was saying. What respect is shown to old age in these days? Do you see that idle lad riding while his old father has to walk? Get down, you young scapegrace, and let the old man rest his weary limbs.’ Upon this the old man made his son dismount, and got up himself. In this manner they had not proceeded far when they met a company of women and children. ‘Why, you lazy old fellow,’ cried several tongues at once, ‘how can you ride upon the beast, while that poor little lad there can hardly keep pace by the side of you?’ The good-natured miller immediately took up his son behind him.

They had almost reached the town when a man said, ‘Pray, honest friend, is that donkey your own?’ ‘Yes,’ replied the old man.

‘O, one would not have thought so,’ said the other, ‘by the way you load him. Why, you two fellows are better

able to carry the poor beast than he you.’

‘Anything to please you,’ said the old man; ‘we can but try.’ So, alighting with his son, they tied the legs of the donkey together and with the help of a pole endeavored to carry him on their shoulders over a bridge near the entrance to the town. This entertaining sight brought the people in crowds to laugh at it, till the Donkey, not liking the noise nor the strange handling that he was subject to, broke the cords that bound him, tumbled off the pole, and fell into the river. Upon this, the old man, vexed and ashamed, made the best of his way home again, convinced that by endeavoring to please every body he had pleased nobody, and lost his donkey in the bargain.” (*Ministry* 127)

We cannot please everyone, but we should strive to please the Lord concerning respect. It is a common complaint among older generations that young people today have no respect. Perhaps this has been said by the elders about every subsequent generation. Respect is needed today. Respect for God, the church, the home, parents, teachers’ authority, and even self-respect are all important parts of a godly life.

The psalmist in Psalm 119:15, declares his love for the Word of God and respect to follow the ways of the Lord when he says, “*I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways.*” Respect is defined by *Encarta* as “to pay due attention to and refrain from violating something; to esteem somebody or something.” The psalmist is listening to God’s Word and seeking to obey it because he respects and loves

the Lord. The awesome authority of God should be respected by all. One day, every knee will bow and tongue will confess that Jesus is God. Soon everyone will listen to and obey what Christ says. In the meantime, we need to teach respect to our children.

If a student has not been taught to respect authority, he will not respect the teachers' instruction or even the lessons and facts that are presented in class. Here are a few observations that will help your student with respect:

1. *Respect is Taught in the Home.* Parents are the first people a child will look up to. This is an incredible responsibility of the parent to be a respectable person. Some parents are so consumed with their own problems and have lived such pacified lives that they have not developed the character of respect in their own child. The parent should be a respectable person in the following:
  - A. Faith in God.
  - B. Faithfulness to serve in church.
  - C. Practicing the Christian life more than just on Sunday. The home, the workplace, the neighborhood life, and political and social views are all impacted by living the Christian life each day.

Perhaps more is “*caught than taught*” when it comes to a parent teaching respect. If you are prone to mood swings or being easily agitated, ask the Lord to help you

better model Christ-likeness in front of your children. Some parents act like they have no time to be involved in the life of their child, and the child is treated like a cast-away. A child in that type of situation will not have much respect for that parent. Some parents “pawn off” their children to others because they are not willing to invest the time and personal attention their child needs from them. Ask the Lord to make you a respectable parent. Respect begins in the home.

2. *Respect Continues in the Church.* A parent has the opportunity to serve in the church, hold positions, and be a blessing to other people. The Christian parent can share his faith and find ways to demonstrate God’s love. The child will see this. If each Sunday the parents are complaining about something (teachers, the pastor’s message, the progress of the church on a special project, etc.), they are showing disrespect in front of their child. The Bible speaks of church leadership in Hebrews 13:17: “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.” When a believer joins with a church, they place themselves under the watch care of an under-shepherd, a pastor who cares for the flock and feeds them the Word of God. To disrespect the ministry and people of the church models sinful thoughts and disrespect.

3. *Respect Continues in the Classroom.* The teacher whom

the parents entrust their student to teaches reading, writing, and arithmetic, but they are not perfect people. We are all sinners, and Christian teachers are saved sinners. Thank the Lord for a school where people who fear and love the Lord are the ones giving instruction and guidance to our youth!

Wherever there are two people, there is potential for conflict. In the classroom , the teacher is the God-given authority. Issues may arise concerning homework, tests, discipline, and other events.

Sometimes well-meaning parents side with their child on every issue that comes up. Statements are given, such as, “My child would never do something like that!,” which simply gives the student license to disrespect and disobey his teacher. Why should a student listen to a teacher who is supposedly “getting everything wrong” according to his parents? We are undercutting our authority as parents when we entrench ourselves in a battle against the teacher. The fact is, the parent and teacher are on the same side with the same objective: to see the student grow and develop into the person God wants him to be. This leads us to prepare him academically, socially, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. When parents and teachers work together with mutual respect, the student is better prepared to respect others and to listen to the instruction and teaching he will receive in class. Avoid the “he said, she said” game that many students try to initiate between himself, the teacher, and the parents. Instill the character trait of respect into your

child. It will help in every area of the student's life, both now and in the future, influencing their obedience to civil law and their relationships in the workplace, marriage, family, and church.

## Responsibility

“James Cash Penney (who started J. C. Penney stores) made some unwise commitments and became very depressed. He worried so much that he developed shingles. He went to see his doctor who admitted him to the hospital, but his condition became worse. One night he was prescribed a sedative that quickly wore off, and he awoke believing that he would die that night. He wrote letters to his family and fell asleep.

He woke up the next morning and was surprised that he was still alive. He heard people singing ‘God Will Take Care of You’ in the chapel and went in. He listened to the singing and message with a heavy heart, but then something happened. He later said, ‘I realized then that I alone was responsible for my troubles. I knew that God with His love was there to help me.’

He said that from that day forward his life was free of worry, and it was all because he realized that God would take care of him.” (*Ministry*127)

Paul reminds us of personal accountability in Romans 14:12, where the Lord says, “*So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.*” What a compelling thought to

ponder! When J.C. Penney realized he alone was responsible for his actions, it changed his life. This is a lesson all of us need to understand and apply in our daily lives.

Our society thrives on blaming other people. When the coffee is too hot, the phone is not correctly functioning (because the person does not know how to make it function,) or when advice is taken and the outcome is not what the person wanted, blame is pointed to someone or some company. How tragic, that our world is so quick to blame others, and yet this is often the case in our individual lives as well. We tend to blame other people for the problems we have.

Have you ever heard a student complaining about his grade and blaming the teacher?

Sometimes there are legitimate concerns such as the teacher giving a test and not previously covering the material; yet a test is used to gauge what a student comprehended to better help the teacher know what to teach and review.

When students are quick to blame others, it is nothing new. Parents many times play the “blame game” much like Adam and Eve did in the Garden of Eden. Adam blamed Eve for his sin, and Eve blamed the serpent for her sin. These exchanges are unhealthy and unhelpful to the school, church, and family environments. Self-examination first and foremost and giving others the benefit-of-the-doubt is the best way to live. For more information on this concept



of judging self before judging others, please read Zechariah chapter 7. This way of living is based on personal responsibility.

When a student comes to class, learns, is tested, and then brings home his grade – it is the grade he has earned. No one can change that immediate grade, but the student can improve for the next opportunity. With hard work and focus toward the test, quiz, or homework, the student can “make the grade” they were hoping for.

Distractions are facts of life we can learn from. For example, in the future, your child may have to deal with workplace distractions. There may be marital distractions that have the potential to disrupt a marriage. Teaching the student how to deal with distractions helps him “own up” to personal responsibility and do his best with whatever circumstances or experience he finds himself in. However, in the Christian school, distractions are minimized as much as possible to better enable the receiving of instruction.

Have you ever seen a situation like this: An adult walks into a room of children to find food all over the floor and walls – a disastrous mess! The group of children is asked who made the mess, and yet amazingly no one knows what happened! We as humans have a great need for personal accountability. Maybe one child points to another and says, “He made the mess bigger,” to minimize their personal involvement. If a tardy slip is given for being late to school, was it someone else’s fault you were late? Many astonishing excuses are given when students are asked to give an

account. You have heard the old saying, “The dog ate my homework.” Sadly, many parents have been known to give flimsy and weak excuses when approached as well.

Keep in mind, what we do with this trait of responsibility will impact your student for life. When we stand before the Lord, we will not have acceptable excuses to give Him.

Those who refuse Christ as Savior will be told “*Depart from me; I never knew you.*” Believers who do not live for the Lord will not receive the rewards given to the faithful. We will all give account to God one day. Help your student to realize this and be responsible for himself. Responsibility is needed in the following areas:

1. *I am Responsible for my Attitude.* Thoughts of the mind are expressed in words. Some children are allowed to say: “I hate ...,” yet these thoughts should not be allowed to be dwelt on. Parents can help minimize sinful thinking by not allowing these words to be spilled out of the mouth. Body language also speaks volumes. Certain gestures, slouching, lack of eye contact, or harming things or other people are good indicators of a bad attitude. The simplest and quickest solution to remedy this attitude is found in Proverbs 22:15 where the Bible instructs, “*Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.*”

2. *I am Responsible for my Actions.* “Why did you lie?” “The devil made me do it” is not an acceptable response. Sinful actions cannot be

continued without repercussion. Every student will be presented with opportunities to do wrong: lie, steal, cheat on a test or homework assignment, or even plagiarize another person's work.

(Plagiarism is wrong. A student should receive a zero on the entire project along with disciplinary action if he commits plagiarism.) Opportunities for good will arise in school as well. The student should have a clear conscience knowing that he did the best job possible, while not cheating or lying in an attempt to get a better grade.

When your student does a good thing, praise him for a job well done, and let him know you are proud of him.

Romans 13:7 says, "*Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.*" While honoring good work and right decisions, parents must not cover up mistakes, but allow their student to take responsibility for his wrong choices. A parent offers accountability for a minor, and it is crucial that the parents instill personal responsibility in their child during the transition from child to adult, so their child will be prepared for real life.



# Expectations

Book reviewer James Tophem writes “*Great Expectations* is one of the most famous and much-loved novels by the great master of Victorian prose, Charles Dickens. Like all of his great novels, *Great Expectations* has Dickens's brilliant use of character and plot—along with an incredible sensibility and sympathy for the way that the British class system was constructed in the nineteenth century. *Great Expectations* features some of Dickens's greatest characters and one of his trademark convoluted plots. The novel is a fantastic read, and a wonderful morality tale. Full of romance, courageousness and hope—*Great Expectations* is a brilliant evocation of a time and place.”

Just like Pip, the main character in the book *Great Expectations*, had a great expectation and desire for a better life as an English gentleman, we should have expectations as well. Some families appear to have no expectations for how their children may turn out, and no expectations in home life, personal discipline, or educational goals and objectives.

Have you ever said, “Get good grades!”? Good grades may be a result but should not be the ultimate goal of school. Doing the best the student can do with the right attitude should be the goal. The objective of the educational institution is not only to pass students on through each grade level, but also to give them a well-rounded education which will better prepare them for life and whatever calling and vocation the Lord calls them to. Here are some

expectations we can attempt to instill in our students:

1. *Expect Excellence.* Doing our absolute best should be the expectation of every believer, no matter what the task. Whether taking a test, cleaning the lunchroom, or playing a game at recess or gym class, an A+ effort should always be put forth. The Bible tells us in I Corinthians 10:31, “*Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*” Shame on the student who gives up or doesn’t even try when it comes to games or work, and the mindset of not participating in an activity due to a bad attitude should not be accepted. Expect excellence in involvement and effort.

2. *Expect Enthusiasm.* Life is not boring. I appreciate the Dodge Ram truck slogan: “Grab Life by the Horns.” There are many things to do, people to meet, and achievements to be made. If your son or daughter says: “I’m bored!” find some work for them to do! I guarantee you will not hear those words often! Let your children play outside. It is good for them to explore, breathe fresh air, and get dirty in the great outdoors. Limit time spent playing video games and handheld devices.

“Things” will never satisfy. A child focused on self-fulfillment rather than a Christ-honoring life will have nothing to do. A Christian student has books to read, subjects to study, tracts to hand out, people to interact with, and the wide-open outdoors to play in. Encourage enthusiasm and zeal to excel at whatever task or opportunity is at hand.

3. *Expect Encouragement.* In the social aspects of school life, our students should be striving to be an encourager to the other students to do right. Sometimes a “ringleader” will be in a class, urging others to follow him in doing wrong. The Bible teaches us that we are to encourage other Christians to do right in spite of the day and age in which we live, and parents can teach their children this concept. When preparing for the day, talk to your student about how he can do right and help other students do right. Paul told the believers in the church in Ephesus in Ephesians 4:29, “*Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.*” We need to expect our children to be leaders for right and encourage other students to do right by their example of obeying the Lord and their parents and teachers.



# Motivation

“A farm boy got a white football for Christmas. He played with it awhile and accidentally kicked it over into the neighbor’s yard. The old rooster ran out, looked at it, and called the hens to see it. ‘Now look here,’ the rooster told them, ‘I don’t want you to think I’m complaining, but I want you to see what they are doing next door.’”  
(Ministry 127).

This chicken was comparing the hens’ eggs with the neighbor’s “egg” and was using this as motivation for his hens to lay bigger eggs! Of course, there is no chance for a chicken to lay an egg the size of a football, no matter the motivation.

What is the motivation behind a Christian school education? Is it to do better than the other students and become more knowledgeable? No. Is it to compare ourselves and see who is more committed to excellence? No. Is it to just make it through another year? No. School has a motivation that is none of those things.

Multitudes of people gathered around Jesus as He began to teach in Matthew’s Gospel account. Jesus says in Matthew 11:29, “*Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*” I propose to you that the purpose of education is to know Jesus and learn of Him. Every subject and every class has purpose and meaning. Math helps us understand the order of life and deal with monetary issues. History gives us a glimpse of how past generations have known the Lord or

rebelled against Him. Reading and writing help us read His Word and then communicate it to others, so they too can know of the Lord.

There are many side issues that have crept into education systems today. False religions, false science, and even the dispute of absolute facts like  $2 + 2 = 4$  are permeating the schooling landscape. Our God is a God of order, purpose, and design. Education is not just something to do; it is the calling that God has placed on all people - to learn of Christ.

The academics we expect in the classroom are designed to help us learn of Christ and know Him in a greater way. Don't get sidetracked from the purpose of education, particularly a Christian education. There will be days you may think it would be easier to have your child enrolled in a different school, or you may want to simply do the minimum required to just get by, but that is not right before our Lord. Our motivation is to do the best we can to honor our Lord and to better know our God, so we can love Him better each day - that is the goal.

The Bible declares in Psalm 90:12: *"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."* With whatever time you have remaining with your child, purpose in your heart to help him have the proper motivation to strive, work, excel, compete, study, and do the best he can at the important task of being a student who glorifies the Lord.

Awarding stickers, prizes, and using other incentives can



encourage the student, but the objective of education is much greater than a report card with good marks at the end of the year. The goal of fully preparing their Christian child to be ready to follow the Lord's leading should be a great motivation for the parents' involvement in their child's life. This same motivation should be instilled in each student. Be patient, be praying, and be persistent with the goal at hand.

## Conclusion

Parenting is no easy task, but with the Lord's help, your student can succeed. The successful student does his absolute best in all he puts his hand to. The concepts of routines, discipline, respect, responsibility, expectations, and motivation will help you guide and train your child as they prepare for life. By God's grace and with His help, you can parent a successful student!



**Pastor Steve Harness** was saved at the age of seven. His father led him to the Lord in their home after a Sunday night service. The Lord has blessed Pastor Harness with many educational and experiential opportunities. Educational opportunities include a Bachelor of Bible, a Master of Ministry, a Doctorate of Biblical Studies, and a PhD in Counseling.

Experiential opportunities include pastor, youth pastor, Christian school educator, school board president, teen evangelist, camp and conference speaker, radio broadcaster, and much more! He is thankful for each opportunity the Lord has given, and he desires to “serve the Lord with gladness” while seeing people saved and growing in their relationship with the Lord.

For more church or school information please go to:  
[www.wiltonbaptistchurch.com](http://www.wiltonbaptistchurch.com)