

Biblical Human Development

Education is our effort to shape and guide human development. We hope to fit the human self to take its place in the world as it exists. Any plan we draw up must include the natural process of development. Any understanding of the process of development must begin with God's revelation.

Humanity is fallen. Whatever we come up with has to acknowledge that and address it. The Law Covenants in Scripture demand particular outcomes, but the rest of the Bible helps us grasp what we need to make sense of what we observe as the natural course of human development after the Fall.

As we know, virtually the entire field of modern pedagogy is rife with false assumptions. It denies virtually the entire revelation of God. On top of that is a conscious plan to prevent human development, and channel all methodology into producing a vast slave class. Read up on just about anything from [John Taylor Gatto](#) for the most vivid explanation of this. He recounts the history of elite foundations and think tanks taking over the American education system. To escape this unconscionable evil, we have to pretty much start from scratch.

I can't pretend to write a full curriculum because that defeats the purpose of referring you back to God for His guidance. What follows is merely my own personal ruminations on what must be the starting point. Caveat: Do not ever make the mistake of tying stages of development strictly to birthdays. Everyone moves at their own pace.

An infant is a bundle of appetites, quickly followed by the development of emotional expressions which arise from these appetites. They can breathe on their own, and generally manage to evacuate waste products, but it takes months just to get them to put food in their own mouths. Their brains are still absorbing everything, often fired by the sheer joy of discovery. The goal of parenthood is to encourage exploration, with the minimum of intervention for safety. Such considerations depend on the environment. At any rate, consider emotional outbursts totally normal, even acceptable.

Yes, there are some issues requiring a directive strategy. If you cannot manage to place your personal convenience in a low priority, you will surely become an ogre. If your child is endowed with a strong will, or strong emotional urges, you'll have a chore on your hands. But it's your chore, given from God's hand, and only rarely should anyone consider getting direct outside assistance. If you live, as God expects, in a strong communal setting, things should work out fine.

Preparing a child for their place in God's world is not simply academics and culture. A critical element is the unshakable assumption there is a God in Heaven, and He has revealed what He requires of mankind. All things have a moral element. This moral

development is, if anything, more critical than mere academics. Throughout the early years, you'll be doing well if they understand moral consequences on the most simplistic level of rules and punishment.

Somewhere around age eight, the human brain develops pre-logical structuring. That is, they can begin to structure perceptions into objective reality, facts which do not change, as it were. They can begin to disregard the emotional vibrancy of observation in favor of formal logical reasoning. While we should have been helping them understand God's Laws all along, at this point it becomes utterly crucial, because they can embrace the Laws for their own sake. They can understand how it makes the world a better place.

A couple of years later, they should develop enough individuality to require a much higher degree of privacy. Somewhere in this stage you need to consider ways to establish firm gender boundaries, a distinct sense of separation. They must soon become their own person, as it were, and a critical element in God's eyes is gender identity. They should spend less and less time in socially mixed company (inside the home is another matter). Two more years, at roughly age twelve, most people reach full formal logical reasoning. They are pretty much ready to be very heavily burdened with personal responsibilities. Ancient Hebrew culture recognized this in the /bar Mitzvah/, where a boy becomes a "Son of the Law." Boys and girls are fully accountable to God for at least wanting to obey the Law, of holding a goodness of character and commitment.

At this point, the sexes are on totally separate tracks. Modern Western society pretends this does not exist, but ancient cultures knew better.

Girls will shortly be eligible for marriage and womanhood. It's not that education stops, or that careers are inherently evil. For example, we really do need female physicians. However, aside from some vocational calling to celibacy, God was pretty firm about fallen human redemption for females being tied to child bearing. It's utter foolishness to not seek to have the soul and body ready for this role at about the same time, because putting off child bearing to later years is loaded with all sorts of serious problems, just as it is with starting too early.

Boys have a very long way to go, yet. There is simply no excuse for the Western practice of dating and romance with age mates. The very formation of character itself requires forging in the fires of facing sexual urges which come too strongly and too early. Keep him tied up with the challenges of embracing manly things and mostly far away from the company of younger females. He should see them rarely and under the strictest social controls.

Boys are more likely to face serious internal struggles, but both sexes do to some degree. Within a few years of full formal logic, they will face some degree of self-doubt. If

handled poorly, it becomes an excuse to doubt everything else. The human mind becomes capable of questioning motives, the very definition of morality itself. This is completely normal and necessary for what follows. Handle this poorly – as most Western middle class parents do – and you risk very permanent alienation for no cause. Encourage the questions early. Be supportive and undemanding, because this is the point where your child must step totally into God’s hands with their heart. You aren’t God, just His provisional representative, so give it up when the time comes. They must transfer their loyalty to a higher power, because you aren’t capable.

Notice this is not necessarily spiritual, since God alone brings that change at the time of His choosing. Rather, this is a moral issue, a matter of making the mind capable of processing appropriately, fitted for the proper response in serving the spirit when the latter comes to life. Even without spiritual birth, any human is capable of recognizing there is a higher power and an invisible moral sphere. The problem is not the existence of doubts about that, but of horribly perverted notions about God and this world. If we do not include the place for mysticism, this goes tragically wrong even when our children do encounter spiritual birth.

If economics permit, boys can be ready for marriage and fatherhood around age twenty. If the extended household kin are not already involved in sensible matchmaking, they have utterly failed God. If they haven’t already placed a young man in gainful employment by that point, they are cutting off their own future. Housing should be feasible, if it does not already exist. It is in the clan’s own best interest to make this stuff happen. It doesn’t have to be smooth and flawless, but the transition from birth to responsible adulthood, integrated into the community as a resource for good, is God’s demand of the extended family.

Education merely for its own sake has no place in the Kingdom. All things are harnessed to bear the burden of serving God.

By Ed Hurst

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