

# The Christian Educator

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[Home](#)


---

[Educators' Seminar](#)


---

[Newsletter Sign-Up](#)


---

[About TCE](#)


---

[TCE Archives](#)


---

[Contact Us](#)

## About the Author



Johnny Esposito has a wife, five children, and two grandchildren. His three sons are currently on staff with him at PBS and his two daughters are presently enrolled in Bible College preparing for the ministry. Brother Esposito, a 1984 graduate of Hyles-Anderson College served in the pastorate for seven years, and for the past 14 years has served as an Assistant Pastor, School Administrator, and for the past 5 years as the Vice-President of Pacific

## The Importance of a Biblical Education

By Johnny Esposito

### Judges 2:10-13

I am presently writing a book entitled *And There Arose another Generation*, which is based on Judges 2:10. My reason behind this is simple. It is my conviction that there are numerous parallels between this time period in Israel's history and so-called American "Christianity" today. In the first two chapters of the book of Judges we find **Apathy**. In chapters 3-16 we find **Apostasy** and the book concludes with **Anarchy** in chapters 17-21. The people of God had entered Canaan - which of course pictures for us today the abundant and victorious Christian life - with great faith and anticipation. As one commentator noted:

*You would expect these people - who were delivered out of Egypt, led through the wilderness for forty years, and brought into the land with such demonstration of God's power and direction - to attain a high level of living and victory in the land. **SUCH WAS NOT THE CASE** (my emphasis). They failed ignobly and suffered miserable defeat after defeat.*

As another commentator noted, "This is a book of defeat and disgrace."

**Why was this so?** Because the previous generation had failed in transferring their faith down to their children as they had been commanded to do (Deuteronomy 6:4-7), God's people failed to provide their children with a proper education that was biblically based.

I am often compelled to ask myself, "Am I part of a generation that doesn't truly KNOW the Lord?" By the way, there is a vast difference between knowing the Lord and knowing about the Lord. Am I part of a

generation that has not truly EXPERIENCED the works of the Lord? Sadly, I am afraid that the answer is YES! A few years ago, Pastor Jack Schaap wrote a book entitled *Independent Baptists ... Where Were We? Where Are We? Where Are We Going?* In his book, he asks a very sobering question,

*If we Independent Baptists change as much in the next 33 years as we have in the past 33 years, will my grandchildren even recognize what their grandfather knew as the old-fashioned Baptist way of church building?*

Well, you don't have to be a rocket scientist or a theologian to answer that question correctly. The answer is a resounding, "NO!" No, they aren't going to have the slightest idea what it truly meant to be an independent, fundamental Baptist. We can take that question a bit farther. Why don't we ask ourselves a few more thought-provoking questions, such as, if we Baptists continue to change over the next few decades at the rate we have changed over the past few decades, will we come close to resembling the Baptist brethren of just one hundred years ago? How about these questions? In comparison to our Ana-Baptist forefathers of 400-500 years ago, where are we? Would they recognize us today? In comparison to the New Testament church of almost 2,000 years ago, where are we? If the apostles Peter, James, John and Paul stumbled into our Baptist "churches", how would they feel about our brand of "Christianity"? Dr. Clarence Sexton, Pastor of the Temple Baptist Church in Powell, TN has noted:

*This is the first generation of Christians in a whole-sale fashion that cares nothing about living like the Bible describes a Christian should live, but does not blush when they say, "I am a Christian."*

And, isn't that the truth! As I look upon the horizon of "Christendom" or "Christianity" in our day, I often think of the question our Lord Jesus posed in the Gospel of Luke when he said, "When the Son of Man commeth, shall he find faith on earth?" (Luke 18:8). I am not simply talking about those other "churches", those contemporary "churches", or those new-evangelical "churches." No, brothers and sisters, I am thinking of something a bit closer to home. Let's say, I am thinking about **our** "churches." While I am definitely concerned - to say the least - about those other "churches" and what I believe to be a real departure from the faith "which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3), my primary concern is for **our** "churches." I'm concerned for those of us who claim

to be the closest thing to the New Testament “church” that can be found in America today.

From the beginning of time, parents and society as a whole understood the value of transferring on to the next generation basic academic skills that, along with character development, would not only assist the child in living a fruitful and fulfilling life, but would also guarantee that the child would one day contribute to the community in which he lived. Not only as Americans is education vital, but also as Christians. It is not just any education that we seek for our Christian children. No sir! We seek a Christian education that is biblically based.

As far as the Bible is concerned, the function of transmitting truth and knowledge and educating the young belongs to the home and the church. Concerning the parent’s responsibility of educating the children, one author writes:

*Education is the moral responsibility of the parents. They are the ones who must determine whether or not their children are being taught the truth. They are responsible before God for the rearing of their children. They are held responsible even for the content of their children’s education. This is why it is a great responsibility to bring children into the world.*

Over 100 years ago a Presbyterian minister, Robert L. Dabney rightly said:

*The education of children for God is the most important business done on earth. It is the one business for which the earth exists. To it all politics, all war, all literature, all money-making, ought to be subordinated; every parent especially ought to feel, every hour of the day, that next to making his own calling and election sure, this is the end for which he is kept alive by God – this is his task on earth.*

Just a casual study of the Holy Scriptures reveals that the true purpose of education is to instill a fear of God, the wisdom of God, and knowledge of God into the hearts and the lives of the next generation. There are so many passages that could be considered.

Here are but a few: Proverbs 1:7; Proverbs 9:10; Ephesians 6:4; and 2 Timothy 3:15. God’s Word makes it very clear that our children belong

to God and we are simply stewards who have the blessed privilege and the awesome responsibility to “bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” (Ephesians 6:4). Both the home and the church have the responsibility to teach and train up these children for the glory of God and for their own good. In Deuteronomy 6:5–8, Moses, inspired by the Holy Spirit, commanded us to:

*Love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.*

This type of teaching and training is more than just simply bringing our children to church and having devotions with them in the evening; it is a way of life that is permeating their mind and their soul from the moment they wake up until they hit the bed at night. **That is why those thirty to thirty-five hours, set aside each week for nine months a year at school, would have to be included.** As Christian parents, pastors, and educators we must ask ourselves this question. Are our children receiving a Christian education that is biblically-based with the intention of producing life-long disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ? Or is it possible that we are producing a generation of young people who don't personally KNOW the Lord, or the works that He has done.

A few thoughts to ponder:

1. If our Christian students are ever going to be what God has intended for them to be and do what God has intended for them to do, they need for those of us who are a part of the “education” or “discipleship” process to walk with God!
2. If our Christian students are ever going to be what God has intended for them to be and do what God has intended for them to do, they need a distinctly Christian education that is biblically based and that affects not only the head, but also the heart!
3. If our Christian students are ever going to be what God has intended for them to be and do what God has intended for them to do, they need

the church, the home, and the school to be going in the same direction!

4. If our Christian students are ever going to be what God has intended for them to be and do what God has intended for them to do, we need to quit looking to the world – and its education system and techniques – for help. We need to look to God and His word!

5. If our Christian students are ever going to be what God has intended for them to be and do what God has intended for them to do, they need to be **challenged** to go further than just being a “church member.” We need to challenge them from God’s Word to blaze great trails for the cause of Christ!

As families and as churches, along with our Christian schools, we must commit ourselves to training up this generation of young people not simply to be great students, but to be disciples of Jesus Christ!

If we are going to accomplish this, we must get back to the good old Book and base all that we do and teach on its eternal principles!

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