

Thankful for Education

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Congratulations! If you are reading this, you are educated. It might not seem like a big deal, but it is. According to UNESCO, only 74% of the world is literate. You are on the good side of that percentage. When you consider statistics about educational opportunity from The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development and others, you realize just how few people in the world get the chance to be educated.

The majority of the readership of this publication constitutes a very unique group indeed. You have been given the opportunity to have not just an education, but a good one. Most of you have been given the opportunity to have not just a good education, but a Christian education. Many of you have been given the opportunity to have not just a good Christian education, but a Protestant Reformed Christian education. You are in a small subset, an incredibly blessed subset.

It's easy to take this blessing for granted. I recall being at young people's conventions with friends from our western churches who would say how "lucky" we were to have Covenant Christian High School. They pointed out just how quickly we forgot that blessing in our lives. Now, by the grace of God, many students from our western churches have the opportunity to be educated in a Protestant Reformed high school too. Congratulations.

So from a global perspective on education, you are unique. Unique doesn't always mean blessed and thankful. We are blessed, and we should be thankful.

Thankful for what? A Protestant Reformed education is particular in that it emphasizes the sovereignty of God in every way. God is sovereign first in salvation, but also sovereign in creation and order and reason. God is sovereign in the giving of talents, in the development of skills, and in the application of

education. God is sovereign in science, but also in math and grammar and in every subject ever taught in our schools. We can be thankful that there is one absolute in the universe. We must be thankful that we are given the opportunity to be taught everything from that perspective.

Thankful to whom? Our covenant God, of course. But God uses means. God uses the means of parents, teachers, coaches, staff, and supporters to give you the opportunity to be educated. This has been true all throughout history. From Moses to Daniel to Timothy, through the Reformation and the fathers at Dordrecht, passed on to the founders of our own schools, people have had to sacrifice for the education of the youth of the church. This continues in all of our schools today. By God's grace, parents and school board members give of themselves to build and maintain our schools. By God's grace, our teachers invest themselves in the training of covenant youth. We should thank God and then thank our teachers.

So now what? You've been given this education. Why? Why you? God didn't give it to you to put on a shelf and admire. What are you going to do with it? Remember the unique subset into which you have been placed when you consider that question. Young men, consider that when determining whether you are called to the gospel ministry. Young people and young adults, consider the great blessing that you have been given, and prayerfully ask whether God gave it to you in order that you might help fill the urgent need for Protestant Reformed schoolteachers.

Most of us aren't called to those two professions. I know that I am not. Are the rest of us then excused from considering what to do with the great gift of the education that God gave to us? No. We are still members of the blessed subset. Why? What should we do with it?

Make money with it. Doesn't that sound greedy? Look at the purpose though. Use your education to make money not for you, but for the God who gave you the education. Consider using your education as a basis for more learning. Use your education to further your education if that is what you need to do to support his kingdom. God gave you the education; now serve him with it. Your family will need to be

fed. The Lord's poor will need to be helped. The ministry of the gospel costs money, and you are the means which God will use to accomplish that end.

Last but not least, read Deuteronomy 8:18. God has given you the ability to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant. One of the most obvious covenant blessings that we have been given is our schools. Use your education to support our schools. Get educated and be thankful for your education to support more education? Isn't that just circular logic? What happens in that circle? Remember how God's sovereignty is expounded in our schools. God is glorified in that. Use your education to support that. When you have a chance, listen to Rev. Brian Huizinga's sermon from January of 2015 entitled "Observing the Day of Rest." He clearly points out how close the maintenance of the schools and the gospel ministry really are. He also makes the statement, "The maintenance of our schools is one of the purposes of our six days of work."

You are called to be a member of God's church. At some point, you may be given the calling of mother, father, minister of the gospel, Christian schoolteacher, church office-bearer, school board member, or any kind of laborer. Your education prepares you to fill those roles. Be willing to serve. The people whom God used to give you your education were. You can say that you are thankful for your education, but when you use it for God's glory, then your educators really want to say, "Congratulations."

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