

Speaking from My Heart:
Why It ALL Matters to God and Should Matter to Us

Several years ago, Richard Carlson wrote a book called, *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff . . . and it's all small stuff!* In this little book, he espoused a carefree, detached sort of lifestyle. A year later, Bruce Bickel and Stan Jantz answered with *God is in the Small Stuff and It ALL Matters*. Bickel and Jantz were giving a distinctly Christian answer to Carlson's essentially Buddhist philosophy. These two little books represent two different approaches to life and the difference between the two makes all the difference indeed!

Last night, my wife and I were watching a Paul Tripp DVD series on marriage called, *What Did You Expect?* In the first session, Tripp recalls an incident in their married life when he was giving his wife a hard time about running late for a church breakfast. His nine year-old son politely asked if he could ask something and then came out with, "Dad, do you think this is the way a Christian man should be speaking to his wife?" Ouch! Paul Tripp's reaction, after he calmed down and collected himself, was to be amazed that God would care enough about this mundane moment in their lives to confront him with such a blunt reminder of truth.

God's love is shown in that he pays attention to the details in the mundane and cares deeply about His creation and about His children. In a science lesson one day, Mrs. Grace McManus was highlighting for her students the important of the fact that ice has lower density than water and thus floats. Almost every other substance we know of gets denser when it turns into a solid and thus it sinks. Water does not work that way and because ice floats, life is sustained on our planet. Otherwise, bodies of water would freeze over completely in the winter and all life in them would be killed. This is just one example of God's providential care for His creation.

This all gets me thinking about school and about some of the things we hear as educators that really trouble me as a Christian:

- "Why do I have to learn this stuff?"
- "When am I ever going to use this in life?"
- "Well, that class doesn't matter much. After all, it's just _____."
- "Oh, well, Little Johnny just isn't a _____ person. That's OK with us."

This kind of thinking exposes some hidden assumptions in our worldview. It shows that we don't value all truth equally. We play favorites with truth and especially value either those things that are seen as "practical" and "useful" or else that we like better because we're better at them. But if we understand God's creative mind and will and if we truly love our Creator who has made us in His image, we will understand that all of God's truth is important and we will want our children to cultivate an interest in all areas of academic study. So, quickly, here's my one-sentence answer to why all of it matters:

- **Math:** Math matters because it is the language in which God designed and built the physical universe and it reveals to us that God is orderly and systematic.
- **Grammar & Composition:** Language matters because we are made in God's image and that means we have been given the gift of communication, so we ought to seek to communicate well and effectively, especially since we know we are communicating God's truth.
- **Literature:** Literature matters because God is a God of stories and His word is full of the true and compelling stories of His people and of His grand story of redemption.
- **History:** History matters because it is the stage on which the unfolding of God's providential and redemptive purposes has taken place; it is God's story.

- **Science:** Science matters because it is the exploration of God's creation and the mastery of that creation by us, His image-bearers called to exercise dominion over creation.
- **Music:** Music matters because God is a God of song and of beauty and He has given us songs in His word and in life to minister truth and beauty in ways only music can.
- **Art:** Art matters because God is a God of beauty, having created a world that is beautiful as well as orderly and having given us His word, which is beautiful as well as true.

In all of these descriptions, you'll notice that I keep coming back to the classical ideals of truth, goodness and beauty. In the end, all that we study in school matters because it relates back to God, who is the source of all truth, goodness and beauty. Or, as Paul put it: "whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable . . . think about such things (Phil. 4:8)."

If we want to grow in our knowledge of God in practical ways, we can start by dedicating our time and energies into the pursuit of those things that really matter, that are good and true and beautiful. In this way, our minds and our souls will become shaped by the revealed will of God and not by the nonsensical preoccupations of our culture! May God grant us the grace to have homes and lives filled with His beauty, goodness and truth!