

MANDATE TO EDUCATE

*An Overview of Biblical Imperatives and
Goals of Education for Family Church
Academy*

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Introduction

With little question to the fact that society's greatest resource is our youth, the training of these youth then is among the most important and honorable endeavors within our society. Throughout history, virtually all civilizations, societies, and cultures have seen the development of the next generation as tantamount to their continual existence. This is done through the daily instruction in traditional values, ethics, and absolutes consistent with the belief system of that society. This is the only way for that society to remain strong in the face of the ever changing winds we call progress. Progress creates pressure to change who we are and what we believe from one generation to the next. Great strength is shown by consistency under that pressure. Constant change without a firm foundation can cause us to lose the strengths we once had, creating a weaker form than the one started with. True growth and progress must be consistent with the foundation already laid while still prompting change. Just as the human body grows in strength and maturity while retaining its original form, the same is true of any society which hopes to truly progress.

It appears in society today that man has taken a much different approach. We have elected for change without holding to the foundation that we once knew as true. Those things that have been tried and found to stand the test of time have been neglected or thrown to the wayside for the seemingly more progressive ways, however untested or unproven they may be.

As in so many areas of society this is true in education. We have allowed ourselves to be sold new ideas and philosophies based on presuppositions that we ourselves don't hold to. How can this be you may say. We forgot to ask.

Within this environment arises a seemingly new voice, the church-school. While a quick glance shows us what looks like new ideas and philosophies, a deeper more concentrated look shows us a picture of a time-tested and proven picture of God's education plan for our youth. The Bible, God's Word, gives us detailed and precise principles which, when adhered to, can present us with a proven means of training our youth. This foundation on God's Word allows us to grow and progress in any society, while maintaining all the strengths of the past. If we want to see God's plan in our lives, the lives of our young people, and in our society we have a responsibility to return to those same principles.

Family Church Academy is one of those church-schools. In keeping with a God-given commandment to educate and train our youth, Family Church's assignment includes a church school that holds to the principles of God's Word, causing true growth and maturity, as God had intended. It is with deep conviction that Pastor Glen Stead and Family Church members seek to educate our children in a godly setting, consistent with the principles and values from God's Word that we hold dear. What you will read in the following pages is an overview of that assignment and the principles behind it.

Philosophy

When speaking of why Family Church Academy exists one of the scriptures we must look at is Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it."

A clear look at this scripture shows us a few different points that must be made here. First, we see that the scripture is not speaking to the child, but rather of the child. This then leaves the idea that it is not the child who is to do the training. It tells of another who is to be responsible for the training of the child. When we understand, as Jacob did in Genesis 33:5, that children are a gift from God to their parents, we understand that this verse is speaking to the parents of the child. Therefore, any institution involved in the training of the child should be careful to do

nothing to impede or interfere with this charge. Rather, the institution should only seek to enhance this parent-child relationship.

Secondly, we see this verse refer to “the way”. The Word leaves no option here, it speaks of only one way. Much the same as Jesus in John 14:6 “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” Much the same as there is only one way to the Father, Jesus. There is only one way to train a child, God’s way.

Third, Proverbs speaks of the way a child “should” go. If a child should go, then the child must go if we are to expect to have the promise that follows - “he will not depart from it.” This promise guarantees success, holding to the principle that true success only comes from being in the will of God.

Family Church and all of its ministries are dedicated to providing support and training to families and parents who recognize this responsibility. From these principles Family Church has established Family Church Academy. We have taken our place along side the home to both support and stand as an extension of the home. The Scriptures are clear that the government has been given no place in the educational process so we intend to preserve the rights of the home to maintain its responsibility for educating or delegating the education of their children. Family Church also understands the church’s responsibility to provide the Christian family with training and counsel from God’s Word, and to point men to God as the source of all knowledge (Proverbs 1:7). We recognize that with this in mind it would be irresponsible of us to allow an entirely humanistic system daily free access to the hearts and minds of our children.

Ephesians 4:11-12, “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” This scripture is clear that the church is to be involved in the training of its people for the work that God has called them to. This must include the youth as the Word clearly recognizes them as part of the body.

Family Church then recognizes the two institutions ordained by God in His word to be involved in the education of young people as the home and the church. The government’s role is to freely permit these institutions to carry out their assignment and protect their right to do so. The procedures, policies, and practices of Family Church Academy adhere directly, and without apology, to this conviction.

Purpose

The purpose of Family Church Academy can be easier seen if we divide it into four separate parts. Those parts include character growth, leadership development, responsible citizenship, and excellence in academics.

Character Growth

To understand this part of our purpose correctly you must understand that as we talk of character we are defining it as “the unconscious doing of right.” We must also understand that God’s Word lays out clear and absolute standards of right and wrong for us to follow. Character then is the following of these absolutes without conscious thought. Family Church Academy is dedicated to the conditioning of our students in these Biblical standards of morality to the point where they are followed instinctively. God’s Word does not adhere to the popular thought of situational ethics and nor do we. We are committed to producing a generation of young people committed to the ethics and standards of God’s Word. We believe this will produce a harvest of youth with self-control, inner strength, and stability, as well as an enthusiastic positive view of their future.

We are committed to building a generation where it can be said of them as Paul said in Galations 4:19 that “Christ be formed in you.” And Hebrews 13:8 refers to “Jesus the same yesterday, today, and forever.” In other words, the more a young person develops the character

of Jesus on the inside of them, the more stable and secure they are as an individual. The stronger the individuals, the stronger the society of individuals. Growth in Godly character is of the utmost importance and highest priority to Family Church Academy. For without this character we will never fulfill the command to be His witnesses throughout the earth.

It has been said that where talent fails character succeeds. For without character, talents and abilities can be rendered ineffective. Therefore, Godly character development has been placed in the highest priority.

Leadership Development

Leaders are not born, they are made. Today's society is plagued with a lack of real leaders, in such areas as politics, business, and even the church. While there are people leading in these areas they often lack respectability and come under great skepticism. We are committed to developing youth with leadership qualities. We are looking to develop leaders among their peers first and then in the community. True leaders don't hide from peer pressure, they either use it for positive gains or rise above it. Leaders do what is right whether the majority agrees or not. They look far enough to the future that they understand that any present persecution will give way to future respect. This type of leadership development in individuals is of high priority in Family Church Academy.

This as an ultimate goal. We must understand that not all students will be leaders in an organizational sense. But understanding that leadership is influencing the lives of others shows us that all will lead in some area of life, such as home, family, job, or community. We are passionate about the development of leaders according to the principles of God's Word.

Responsible Citizenship

It would be virtually impossible to find any system of education or group of educators in Canada who do not place a high priority on promoting good citizenship. Family Church believes its young people should receive teaching on good citizenship as well as opportunity to live it.

The pivotal understanding is that all men are created equal, but all men are not created the same, nor is any man guaranteed success. What an individual becomes depends on the what he makes of the tools god has given him and the opportunities to which he avails himself. Family Church Academy adamantly believes in the principle of personal accountability. If each citizen will give the best of himself to society, then that society will be superior as a result. John F. Kennedy said it well, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but ask what you can do for your country."

Having said this, the Biblical standards of each man providing for his own, doing whatever he can with all his might, taking nothing he didn't earn, respecting those in authority, and looking out for the needs of the less fortunate, form the basis of Family Church Academy's social awareness. Responsibility is more important than rights, liberty is greater than freedom, and giving is better than receiving. Honorable and respectful attitudes towards all leaders and respect for parents and all adults are central to the students' civic training. Therefore, Family Church Academy is confident that we are training young people who will be a part of the solution for society, not a part of the problem.

Excellence in Academics

Family Church Academy believes that man is a spirit, has a soul, and lives in a body. We therefore insist on the development of that "spirit-man" first and the "soul-man" second. Thus, it is not coincidence that we put this element fourth in our discussion. When a student's training considers his spiritual development, a positive academic experience will be the result. Students of character will understand the importance of a proper education to personal development, as well as the importance of it for them to be good leaders and good citizens of our society. Good character will in fact demand of itself a thorough education. At the same time it will not look to

the getting of knowledge as the end of education. Rather, true education has only begun with that knowledge. True education will take the knowledge given it and begin to look for it's application according to the principles of God's Word. We call that wisdom, and any education without the learning of wisdom is deficient.

Family Church Academy then insists that all of its materials are firmly fixed on scripture as their foundation. As Colossians 2:3 says, "In whom (God) are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." If wisdom and knowledge are hid in God then any system of education must be able to pass the test of His Word. Although not all knowledge is found in the Bible, all knowledge should find its foundation in the principles of the Bible.

Family Church Academy also puts great emphasis on the mastery of basics. While some systems remain in their own admission to be "general education", we believe that the mastery of basics is fundamentally important to later success in the more advanced fields of education. The mastery of reading, writing, and language skills, and mastery of computation skills, are seen as the open doors to any future formal education.

Excellence in education should always make man more like God and draw him closer to God. Family Church Academy is convinced of the absolute necessity of preparing our students in the highest level of academics. We desire to teach our young people to not only make a living, but more importantly how to live a life. Jeremiah 29:11 refers to the plans that God has for us. We believe that God has a specific plan for each one of us. The living of our lives includes discerning what that plan is and following it. We are dedicated to providing the highest possible standard of education so our young people will have the necessary foundations to fulfilling that plan.

Goals

It has been said that education should affirm the worth of the individual. Family Church Academy holds to the fact that man was created by God and therefore receives his unique status and worth from God. This conviction determines our primary purpose to be to cause the individual to be more and more like his Heavenly Father. No matter how practical the subject matter, this purpose still dominates.

It is also important to remember that the primary educational institute is to be the home. This will assist any one involved in education in maintaining the proper respect of rights and responsibilities of the parents. This is of great importance so institutions don't take on more areas of training than are within their domain of God-given authority.

Family Church Academy therefore subscribes to the following statement of its goals of education.

Basic Skills

1. Mastery of reading, writing, and computation skills.
2. Acquiring knowledge through the five senses, and interpreting and understanding that knowledge in the light of the principles of God's Word.
3. Use of computers and the understanding to process information with them..
4. Problem-solving abilities in the light of God's divine laws of creation.
5. The ability to adequately and effectively communicate in both written and verbal form, without using popular cultural slang with an understanding of both concrete and abstract mathematical symbolism.

Life-Long Learning

1. Recognize the value and necessity of learning in all of life, and to judge life's experience in the light of God's Word.
2. Understand and accept God's plan to continue to learn in all of life, and to use one's learned skills to control one's life, rather than allowing life to control the individual.

3. Understanding that the responsibility to learn rests with the individual throughout all of life.
4. Understand that change is part of growth, and discern between genuine growth and instability.

Relating to Others

1. Respect the God-given worth in each individual.
2. Recognize that personal freedom must be tempered with respect for others.
3. Develop compassion for each human based on the understanding of the great price of redemption Jesus paid for each and everyone, and the need to honor right and oppose wrong. This is in contrast to the current tendency of tolerance at the expense of absolute truth.

Appropriate Self Worth

1. Understand personal worth and purpose as a special creation of God.
2. Understand personal abilities and recognize personal limitations, and learn how to live within their parameters.
3. Maintain a highly developed sense of personal motivation through realistic and challenging goal setting.
4. Respond with appropriate restraint to either praise or criticism.
5. Learn how to blend confidence, humility, and respect when presenting oneself publicly.

Positive Life Style

1. Understand that respect for others begins with respect for self. Therefore, careful nurturing and care for the physical being is vital, particularly since our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. This also forms the deterrent for any involvement with alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drugs.
2. Maintain a commitment to productive activity in either a leisure or professional setting.
3. Display creativity and initiative in the workplace.
4. Actively pursue means of positively contributing to the improvement, stability, and safety of the community.
5. Understand and discern environmental issues in light of the difference between respecting and revering nature.

Career and Consumer Decisions

1. See education as a preparation to make a life, not a living. Affirm at all times the highest level of achievement to be that of discerning and obeying God's will, and acknowledge that it will allow the individual his most prosperous and satisfying lifestyle.
2. Access all pertinent training and information to stay abreast of technological changes and employment patterns.
3. With regard to consumerism, exercise responsible stewardship toward the resources God has given to the individual, including exercising caution in spending. Creating wealth should be preferable to consuming and hoarding it.

Membership in Society

1. Clearly understand that responsibility for one's own actions is demanded.
2. Seek opportunities to work in cooperation with others toward the common good. Personal gain should be seen to be contained within the common good.
3. Be a full and active participant in all reasonable, available forms of the democratic process, and fully discharge all normal duties of citizenship.
4. Respect and help protect the rights and property of others.
5. Behave toward others on the basis of integrity and respect.

6. Recognize the freedoms we enjoy and develop a sense of national pride and obligation to maintain those freedoms so that all men may openly hear the message of God's love for them.
7. Seek to bring all men to an understanding of the beneficial consequences of living righteously, and the harmful consequences of living unrighteously. Social justice needs to be taught from the position of understanding both the need for compassion, as well as respect for the law of cause and effect.
8. Do all possible to not only respect law and order, but uphold it as well.
9. Balance the right to dissent with the responsibility to build.

Spiritual Development

1. Behave in all situations so as to demonstrate a grasp of the reality of a righteous, living God Who is vitally concerned with the welfare of every human being.
2. Clearly grasp and promote an understanding of the fact that man's worth is entirely wrapped up in his special creation by God, and his need of salvation and a personal relationship with God.
3. Realize that personal fulfillment reaches its highest potential within the framework of a personal, intimate, eternal relationship with God.
4. Honor the traditional home of father and mother as the only guarantee of secure development, while exercising great compassion and understanding for those not fortunate enough to enjoy this institution throughout their formative years. Recognize the home as the backbone of our nation.
5. Respect and help to rebuild an understanding of the church in society, and its mission to support the family and be the conscience, refuge, and hope for a confused and perverted society.
6. Promote an understanding that a return to God and a nation-wide revival will exalt our country.

Summary

What is written in this document provides a fairly extensive over-view of what Family Church Academy is, why it exists, what its purpose is, and what role the academy and its young people are to play in society. Education has been correctly perceived by a wide variety of organizations and special interest groups as the key to future success. Prolonged exposure to certain information will eventually shape the way people think. As well an imbalance in knowledge creates an imbalance in understanding. The result of which is an imbalance of behavior.

Family Church Academy is not interested in participating in the "information explosion". Rather we seek to equip our young people with the truth, the absolute, eternal, unchangeable principles from God's Word. No one who has ever placed their total trust, confidence, and faith in them has ever been disappointed or ashamed. We take our stand on those time-tested principles. We are committed to the dream of raising a generation that will be a part of the solution, not bring with it a whole new set of problems that drain public resources.

Early results show that this is not a pipe dream. It is possible. Although it demands a very high level of commitment and cooperation between the home and church, the results are exciting. We firmly believe that this is a generation that can help set society back on a course toward true value and high moral standards. Towards this end we dedicate ourselves wholeheartedly.