

BIG IDEAS TO CONSIDER:

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4. Deuteronomy 6 tells parents that, in all they do, they should provide a godly education 24/7.
5. Three key institutions that shape a child are the home, the church and the school. Children are served best when all three institutions point them in the same direction.
6. Only an education that has the liberty to address the whole child -- social, intellectual, emotional, physical AND spiritual -- reaches the possibility of excellence.
7. The best preparation for effective service is to be well grounded in one's mind before direct engagement of the culture.

This document is adapted from discoverchristianschools.com

WHY SHOULD I CONSIDER CHRISTIAN EDUCATION?

TEN REASONS WHY YOU NEED TO PRAY ABOUT IT TODAY.

Finances. Location. Perceived academic deficiencies. These are just some of the reasons parents spurn Christian education in favor of its secular school counterpart. These and other concerns will be addressed later in this document. But here we'd like to offer you ten solid arguments in favor of Christian education. There are plenty of others, both biblical and practical. But these are the most compelling.

1. GOD'S WORD IS TAUGHT

The place to start is at the beginning, with the first nation, the first educational system. When deciding how to manage your children's education, it only makes sense to ask the One who invented education.

"You shall therefore impress these words of mine on your heart and on your soul And you shall teach them to your sons, talking of them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road and when you lie down and when you rise up." (Deuteronomy 11:18-19)

"I advise no one to place his child where the Scriptures do not reign paramount. Every institution in which men are not increasingly occupied with the Word of God must become corrupt... I am much afraid that schools will prove to be the great gates of hell unless they diligently labor in explaining the Holy Scriptures, engraving them in the hearts of youth."
Martin Luther

it is - the inspired Word of God - but it forms the foundation of all other texts. In math, in social studies, in biology, all academic roads lead to God, in whom all knowledge has its origin. Your children won't travel that road in the local public school.

What we have here is a clear biblical mandate to saturate our children's minds with the Word of God. It's a difficult task under any circumstances, but virtually impossible in a non-Christian school setting. Once inside those doors, children spend 30 to 40 hours a week being told that God, if He exists at all, is no longer relevant. No matter how spiritually grounded your child may be, the repetition of such destructive ideas can't help but have an adverse affect.

The harsh reality is that the U.S. Supreme Court outlawed religious instruction in the public school system more than 40 years ago. A generation later, scientific naturalism and a host of other anti-God values are not only being taught in American classrooms, they're being championed.

Christian schools offer a refreshing, biblical alternative. Not only is the Bible taught for what

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2. GOD'S COMMANDS US TO TEACH KIDS THROUGH HIS WORD

It is a sad but true irony: public schools, the self-proclaimed shapers of the human mind, have chosen to ignore the God who created the human mind. To their chagrin, they have robbed themselves of their most valuable "textbook," and the only available source of absolute truth.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," writes Solomon. "And

"The school system that ignores God teaches its pupils to ignore God; and this is not neutrality. It is the worst form of antagonism, for it judges God to be unimportant and irrelevant in human affairs. This is atheism."

Gordon H. Clark

knowledge of the Holy One is understanding" (Proverbs 9:10). As students pursue the knowledge of math, biology and music in a Christian setting, they're chasing after the knowledge of God. And the by-products of such an endeavor - wisdom and understanding - are the God-given rewards for which every good student strives.

God expects you, as a Christian parent, to plant and nurture His Word in the hearts and minds of your children. This is best accomplished in settings where home, church and school all send the same message, teaching God's truth with clarity, conviction and consistency. And while the benefits of such a commitment are often realized much later, here's one you'll notice in relatively short order. An education that uses God's Word as its foundational text

does more than produce spiritually mature Christians. It makes them wiser and more knowledgeable. It forces them to be better thinkers. And isn't that the goal of education in the first place?

3. THE SCHOOL SHARES YOUR VALUES

If you're like most Christian parents, you've taught your children about God since the day they were born. You've taken them to church, read them Bible stories, sung "Jesus Loves Me." Imagine their shock and dismay when they're thrust into an environment in which God is hated, ignored, or both.

Even the best public schools are prohibited by law from reinforcing the values you teach at home. They either go against them or simply ignore them. And because you care about the mental and spiritual development of your children, you may spend countless hours trying to bridge the philosophical gap between Christianity and humanism - a gap that would never have existed had they

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3. THE SCHOOL SHARES YOUR VALUES (cont.)

attended Christian school. By entrusting your children to educators who share your values, you'll have more time for ball games and bike rides and meaningful conversations. Instead of debriefing your children, you'll be getting to know them.

"To commit our children to the care of irreligious persons is to commit lambs to the superintendency of wolves."

Timothy Dwight

"Fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

4. SAFETY

With thousands of students roaming their halls and taxpayer dollars funding their bankrolls, public schools can only go so far in the area of discipline. The result? More frequent occurrences of theft and physical violence, not to mention coarse profanity and open rebellion in the classroom. Simply put, Christian schools are a safer place for your children to receive an education.

While not devoid of problems - even severe ones like drug and alcohol use - they are far less likely to occur, and far more likely to be met with firm disciplinary action.

In addition to physical well-being, Christian schools offer a much safer emotional and spiritual environment. Verbal insults and hazing, things that go largely overlooked in a public school setting, are less likely to be tolerated. And the politically-correct, socially-tolerant attitudes that pervade secular classrooms never see the light of day at distinctly Christian institutions. Anti-Christian behavior such as homosexuality and abortion is exposed for what it is, which helps guard your children's minds against the licentious attitudes fostered by popular education.

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5. ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Contrary to popular opinion, students at Christian schools generally out-perform their public school counterparts. Their standardized test scores are way above the curve, and they're better prepared for college upon graduation. Even in the areas of math and reading, subjects that are students at Christian schools have proven their superiority.

"A truly Christian education is possible only when Christian education underlies not a part, but all, of the curriculum of the school. True learning and true piety go hand in hand, and Christianity embraces the whole of life - those are great central convictions that underlie the Christian school." J. Gresham Machen

The sad truth is our nation's public schools are far less academically rigorous than they may once have been. Only 67 percent of all public school students entering ninth grade graduate with a regular diploma four years later. United States competency in math and science lags behind a host of other countries, despite the vast amounts of government money being spent to educate students. With all this said, Christian schools are far from an academic liability!

6. TEACHERS LOVE AND FEAR THE LORD

Part of the reason why Christian students perform so well in the classroom is that they have a higher percentage of teachers who genuinely care about them. Most of these dedicated men and women sacrifice greater monetary rewards to serve where they can do the most intrinsic good.

In addition to the passion they feel for their students, the vast majority of Christian educators love God with equal intensity. And unlike the well-meaning secular school educator, they are not prohibited by government or school board from making overt claims to that effect.

Teachers are a school's heartbeat. Its pulse. They are also among the most influential role models in students' lives. And while you can certainly find Christian educators in other schools, the best of all academic worlds exists when everyone - the school board, the principal, the teachers and the parents - is operating under the same education paradigm.

"For by wise guidance you will wage war, and in abundance of counselors there is victory." (Proverbs 24:6)

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7. INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION

In addition to having a higher percentage of caring teachers, Christian schools can almost always offer more individual attention than public schools, many of which are overcrowded and hopelessly understaffed.

*"Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another."
(Proverbs 27:17)*

Even in cases where the ratio is virtually identical, class size is not. Christian school classes generally have fewer students. They're smaller, more intimate gatherings that encourage students to be participants rather than spectators. Students learn how to think quickly, and gain valuable experience sharing their thoughts and opinions in a public forum.

8. SUCCESS AFTER GRADUATION

Because Christian school students perform at a higher level in the classroom than their public school counterparts, it only makes sense that their options upon graduation are more abundant. Therefore, they are more likely to be better prepared to handle the rigors of higher education. They have also received the spiritual foundation they need to excel in areas of ministry, whether they are career or volunteer-oriented.

In addition to these practical advantages, there is at least one intangible benefit. Students who have been grounded in the truth of God's Word day after day during their formative years - both at school and at home - are better-equipped to handle discrepant ideas upon graduation. Whether in a secular university or in the work place, young adults with a solid biblical foundation are far less likely to fall victim to the subtle lies of our post-modern culture.

*"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness."
(2 Timothy 3:16)*

The question remains however, how do you define success? Does success equal an Ivy League education for your child, or a certain salary level, or even a prestigious title? Then again, how does God measure success? A healthy marriage? An understanding of biblical truth? These are important issues to pray about.

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9. PEER PRESSURE

If only the Bible had told us that good company improves bad morals, many of us would have a welcome reprieve. Unfortunately, the opposite is true. Bad company corrupts good morals (1 Corinthians 15:33), the Apostle Paul tells us, and we can assume he was writing to a predominantly adult audience. You can imagine what he might say to a group of impressionable children and young teens.

"Bad company corrupts good morals" (1 Corinthians 15:33).

Make no mistake: your kids will be exposed to bad company no matter where they go to school. Sometimes they may even be the bad company. But in a Christian environment, they'll be much less likely to find themselves surrounded by destructive influences, and far more likely to find positive ones.

10. THE STATE OF SECULAR EDUCATION

One final reason to consider Christian schools can be found by taking an even closer look at the alternative. If you study the origin and history of modern government-sponsored education, you'll find some alarming facts. Many of its founders were atheists whose hatred of Christianity is a matter of public record. Its current agenda - the propagation of humanistic ideals that render God irrelevant or non-existent - can be easily spotted in its curriculum.

"The United States system of national popular education will be the most efficient and wide instrument for the propagation of Atheism which the world has ever seen."

A. A. Hodge

The Nehemiah Institute has put together a list of nine reasons why Christians shouldn't place their children in secular academic institutions. It may be useful information as you consider the educational future of your children.

1. Unsafe environment
2. Negative role models
3. Reverse evangelism
4. Godless curriculum
5. Not thorough - leaves out scriptural, divine wisdom
6. Poor academic results, to a large extent
7. Teaches that success comes apart from God
8. Produces no reverence of God
9. Secular schooling is disobedience to God because it is not training children in God's way and Word.

WHY SHOULD I CONSIDER CHRISTIAN EDUCATION?

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS *WITH GOOD ANSWERS* ABOUT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

What is a Christian Education?

A Christian education is one in which the infallible truths of Scripture reign paramount. They form the foundation upon which all academic pursuits are built, and for that reason, students are often better able to reach their full educational potential. As Solomon writes, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding" (Proverbs 9:10).

God expects children to be taught the truth in every subject. That requires educators to approach their craft - and their lives - from a biblical worldview. Otherwise, teachers are wholly incapable of instilling or reinforcing that worldview in the lives of their students.

Rigorous academics, no matter how thorough, will miss the mark if the reality of God is denied. Conversely, augmenting a secular academic program with a religion class - no matter how true - will fall short. Students need a challenging, *comprehensive* academic curriculum built on a foundation of biblical absolutes. Some institutions prepare students for a job. Others equip students for life. Only a Christian education has the potential to do both, because only a Christian education is grounded in the knowledge of our Creator, who grants wisdom and understanding to anyone who seeks Him first.

What If We Can't Afford a Christian Education?

This is a very real problem, and one of the most common parental concerns. Christian schools cost money—a lot of money. However, the financial costs, though significant, are not the only issue to be considered. Our overall role as parents and the way to choose what is best for our children's Christian education is made up of many factors.

When all of the factors are considered, the question becomes, "Is it God's will that we use Christian school to help us fulfill our role of educating our children?" If so, then God will do for us what He does anytime He gives us a command. He'll give us the means to obey it. That is not to say that everyone will answer this question the same way or answer it the same way every time we are faced with new realities.

Truths of Scripture are always true. He always provides. He always meets our needs. He always gives us the resources to parent biblically. And God has promised to supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19).

Sometimes, if God wants us to have our children in a Christian school, he will provide the income to make that possible. Sometimes He'll provide the discernment to see where to make other changes to make the costs affordable. There are other ways God may provide the necessary funding. In some cases, churches have been known to assist their members. Talk to your pastor and see if that's a possibility. In addition, many schools offer financial aid to families with need or scholarships to academically-gifted students. Never rule out the possibility until talking to others and to the school. Contact the admissions department at your Christian school.

At the end of the day, God may ask you to take a step of faith. Then another—as He does in every area in which He is maturing us. He will make His will known and take pleasure in our faithfulness. When God calls us to a task, He equips us to fulfill it. And He has provided Christian schools as one important tool in the task of parenting.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS *WITH GOOD ANSWERS* ABOUT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Can My Children Get a Quality Education at a Christian School?

Time and again, students in Christian schools have proven their academic mettle. Their test scores exceed the national average. Their grade equivalency soars high above the curve. But inasmuch as education is a two-way proposition, with students shouldering part of the responsibility themselves, we'd like to offer a word of caution.

It's true that, generally speaking, students at Christian schools out-perform their public school peers. Reliable statistics bear that out. *But that doesn't mean every child in a Christian school will excel.*

The important thing for you as a parent to remember is that attending a Christian school in no way prohibits your children from getting a quality education. In many cases, it will enhance their experience, because in addition to solid academic training, they'll be continually reminded of the spiritual foundation upon which all intellectual pursuits are built. As the Apostle Paul writes, "in (Christ) are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3).

Regardless of the academic setting - public, private or distinctly Christian - there are no guarantees. But there are opportunities. And almost without fail, your children will be given plenty of them at a Christian school. Much of the rest is up to them.

I Went to a Secular School and I Turned Out Okay. Can't My Children do the Same?

The short answer is yes. Just like you did, your kids can turn out okay. Maybe even better than okay. But our arrival at a place called "okay" does not necessarily mean that all our choices along the way were the right ones, or that our educational experience was the best one.

The real questions are these: Are you the same person today that you would have been had you attended Christian school? And what about the journey that brought you here? Might it have been a little more joyful, a little less troublesome? Is it possible that God could have used you for His glory even more than He already has?

These are questions only you can answer, and if you haven't already, why not do it right now? Give this issue an honest, thoughtful look, and then ask God what His will is regarding your children's education.

Why Should I Send My Child to a School That's Nowhere Near My House When a Secular School Is Right Across the Street?

If the secular school system is rooted in a humanistic, truth-is-relative philosophy - and whether they openly admit it or not, virtually all of them are - does it really matter how close to home your children are when they hear it? Across the street or across town, they're still being taught for six to eight hours a day that God is irrelevant.

If the issue is safety, you'll find that Christian schools are much less dangerous, no matter how far away they are from home. But if it's simply a matter of location, you might be letting the school's proximity cloud your judgment. When it comes to your decision-making pecking order, obedience should always precede convenience.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS *WITH* GOOD ANSWERS ABOUT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

My Child Wants to Play Sports, and the Christian School has a Weak Athletic Program. What Should I Do?

Let's clear one troublesome hurdle right from the start. Not once does Scripture even hint that athletic competition is sinful or immoral. You and your children are no more prohibited from playing sports than you are from eating a hamburger. In fact, the Bible encourages healthy competition.

Unfortunately, too many Christians presume that once the lawfulness of an activity has been established, they are free to pursue it the same way the world does. Many Christian parents place their children in secular schools *solely* because of the athletic program. For them, the pursuit of sports has taken precedence over the pursuit of wisdom. This is an anti-biblical mindset.

While we sympathize with parents who want their children to have every opportunity to succeed in athletics, the truth of the matter is that they can participate in sports without attending secular schools. Many Christian schools offer sports programs, as do parks and private leagues. And for those who have particularly gifted children, it may help you to know that college and professional sports rosters are dotted with graduates of Christian schools. If your kids are good enough, the scouts will find them.

If I Put My Children in Christian School, Will I be Sheltering Them from the Real World?

There's no denying it. You'll be sheltering them from *part* of secular society. But even Christian adults have been instructed to keep the world at arm's length - to be in it but not of it. How much more should we endeavor to protect our children, most of whom are nowhere near ready to withstand the more sophisticated worldly temptations.

But make no mistake. We haven't bought into the common misconception that Christian schools shield children from every temptation and all exposure to sin. This is not only untrue, it's impossible. Christian schools have the same type of kids non-Christian schools have. Sinners. They're all prone to offensive behaviors such as selfishness, anger, and malicious talk. And no matter where your children attend class, they can hardly escape the worldly influences found in movies, books and television.

The difference in the Christian school is that it can apply the Bible to every instance of sinful thought or action, and with God's help, renew the mind of the child. By doing so, Christians schools have a better chance of helping parents produce adults who have been trained in the fine art of godly living and thinking. And when they finally enter the "real" real world, they'll be much more equipped to handle it.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS *WITH* GOOD ANSWERS ABOUT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Many of My Friends Say They Want Their Kids to be Salt and Light in Secular Schools. Shouldn't We Do That?

Many Christian parents share this sentiment. And it's a noble one, too. Every one of us should strive to be salt and light wherever we find ourselves. But we have to be mindful that young children (before high school) are generally not equipped to defend their faith and influence others. Even with high schoolers, it is the unusually well-grounded student who can impact others for the Kingdom. However, even with the strongest testimony, we would not recommend that "salt and light" be the primary reason for sending your child to a public school.

No matter how well-grounded your children are, it's highly unlikely they can be the kind of salt and light Jesus was talking about. Can fifth-graders, or even junior high students, effectively explain the Gospel? And what about high school upperclassmen? Are they, on average, capable of defending their faith to the degree to which they can be genuine salt and light to their non-Christian peers?

In the vast majority of cases the answer is no. Simply put, most kids are not mature enough for the job, emotionally or spiritually. They are still at a time in life when they need to receive salt and light, not provide it.

And in those rare cases in which a young person might be up to the task, placing your child in secular school for that reason would put him or her under tremendous pressure. Sending a child into an environment that is anti-Christian in philosophy subjects the mind of your child to daily teaching that is determined to replace God in every area of life. It's a dangerous experiment, one that could have lasting repercussions.

My Children's Friends go to a Secular School. What Should I Do?

If your children have good friends at a secular school, it's only natural that they'll want to join them. And it's a given that they'll fight against the alternative. As a parent, this is a difficult problem to have.

But if you know what the Bible says about training your children, and if you're familiar with the origin and history of secular education, you know the environment there is unhealthy - spiritually, emotionally, relationally and intellectually. It's unhealthy for your children. It's unhealthy for your children's friends. The fact that their parents have chosen to send them there should never deter you from sticking to your educational guns. Ultimately, the decision is yours. Or at least it should be. The Bible makes it unmistakably clear, in both the Old and New Testaments, that the primary responsibility for educating children rests with their parents. Make the decision God asks you to make, even if it hurts a little. Your children may fight you now, but they'll thank you later.