

## 2. The Family (4Q 2020—Education)

**Biblical Material:** Gen. 3:1–15; 2 Cor. 4:6; Luke 1:26–38; Matt. 1:18–24; Eph. 4:15; 1 John 3:18; Deuteronomy 6; Proverbs 1:8.

### Quotes

- Parents can only give good advice or put them on the right paths, but the final forming of a person’s character lies in their own hands. *Anne Frank*
- Every Christian family ought to be as it were a little church, consecrated to Christ, and wholly influenced and governed by his rules. And family education and order are some of the chief means of grace. If these fail, all other means are likely to prove ineffectual. If these are duly maintained, all the means of grace will be likely to prosper and be successful. *Jonathan Edwards*
- Being a mother has been my greatest teacher and also the most self-sacrificing thing I’ve ever done. *Katey Sagal*
- I believe that a parent’s role is to provide a path or opportunity for their children. *David Soul*
- It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men. *Frederick Douglass*
- By crawling a child learns to stand. *Hausa proverb*

### Questions

In what different ways does our family experience impact the educational process? How do our parents views affect our own thinking, especially in the area of religious beliefs? What should this tell us about the way education should happen in our own families? How can we develop wider concepts of the meaning of true education?

### Bible summary

Gen. 3:1–15 is the account of the Fall. Was this an educational experience? “For God who said, ‘Let light shine out of the darkness,’ shone in our hearts to illuminate the knowledge of God’s glory in the face of Jesus Christ.” 2 Cor. 4:6 FBV. Gabriel announces the birth of Jesus to Mary (Luke 1:26–38). Matt. 1:18–24 is the end of the genealogy of Jesus. We are called to grow in Christ: “by speaking the truth in love we ought to grow up in everything into Christ, who is our head.” Eph. 4:15 FBV. We are to do this not just with words but with actions (1 John 3:18). We are to teach our children about God and our own experience (Deuteronomy 6). Fathers and mothers are to be involved (Proverbs 1:8).

### Comment

Education begins in the family. Our earliest ideas, thoughts, experiences all happen within our family, with our parents and siblings. Even our first ideas about God begin here.

So clearly this is a vital part of our development, for good or ill. How this operates is a major factor in our personal development and affects the way our whole life is shaped. So let me share a little of my family “educational” experience!

Albert Einstein begged us “Never lose your holy curiosity.” And I am, I suppose, a curious person. Like the time I took the family clock apart. It seemed that my protestations that I was only seeing how it worked did not cut much ice. My father’s caustic comment was that if I

was curious enough to know how it worked I should at least have been curious to learn enough to be able to put it back together. A five-year-old doesn't usually think that far ahead...

Or the time I tried to perform a chemical analysis on some old fireworks. My curiosity as to what chemical gave what color nearly blew my hand off.

Or the time I decided to indulge my curiosity and follow a rabbit trail over a cliff... I'm grateful that I lived long enough to put my curiosity to better uses. For it is an important trait that serves the mind well, though the inquiring mind does not always receive the best help from overwhelmed parents. My mother frequently would observe that "curiosity killed the cat" in reference to some of my more outlandish adventures in curiosity. (Thankfully our cat died while we were away and so I could not be blamed for that!)

The curious questioning, the asking "why?" and the interested observations of life, lead to who we are and what we think and believe—even if at times children's questions may seem strange to parents! But this is how we learn and grow, and it is the loss of questions that should be mourned, for true education is based on the desire to know, to experiment, to understand. When we no longer wish to do so is the day that education is just about gone from our lives.

My wondering mind was often classified as wandering. In science class I was looking out the window and was called to explain my actions, when I should have been working on my physics problems. The teacher seemed upset when I explained that I was only thinking about what would happen if you were in a car traveling at the speed of light and you turned the headlights on...

Many curious questions came from reading, and the dawning recognition that words are not consistent. Like two words that seem to be the same, but are very different—overlook and oversee. If I oversee something, I'm in charge. If I overlook something, I missed it. Then again, I missed it when I overlooked the fact that our front window overlooked the road, something I should have foreseen, though it really wasn't anything I would have overseen. See?

But enough of my curious childhood. I am however very grateful to my long-suffering parents who took the time to give me a good home education, a love for nature, and most of all, an appreciation for God, whose love for me was modeled by my parents.

### **Ellen White comments**

The great work of parents and teachers is character building--to seek to restore the image of Christ in those who are placed under their care. A knowledge of the sciences sinks into insignificance beside this great aim; but all true education may be made to help in the development of righteous character. The formation of character is the work of a lifetime, and it is for eternity. If all could realize this, if we would awaken to the fact that we are individually deciding our own destiny and the destinies of our children for eternal life or for eternal ruin, what a change would take place! How differently would our probationary time be occupied, and what different characters would fill our world! {NPU Gleaner, March 17, 1909 par. 2}

The education centering in the family was that which prevailed in the days of the patriarchs. For the schools thus established, God provided the conditions most favorable for the development of character. The people who were under His direction still pursued the plan of life that He had appointed in the beginning... But the men who held fast God's principles of life dwelt among the fields and hills. They were tillers of the soil and keepers of flocks and herds; and in this free, independent life, with its opportunities for labor and study and meditation, they learned of God and taught their children of His works and ways. This was the method of education that God desired to establish in Israel. {AH 181}