



Kingdom Education Network

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THOUGHTS FROM AN OLD JR. HIGH TEACHER

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I taught Jr. High for seven years and I not only survived, I loved it! Before I began to teach, I was told that kids that age are difficult to focus, let alone teach, because that is the age when they begin to individuate. I would say that's possibly true, but I always saw them emerging out of their grammar school years in search of what is real and what is true. Like flowers, each one unique in its design, where each one ends up searching for the sun, seeking its light and its warmth, so it is with students. They are after what is real and what brings light and warmth.



As teachers, we all too often forget what it was like to be young. I remember being told that one of the students I was soon to teach was a rebel. I was encouraged to be strict and to not give him much

wiggle room. When school began that year I remember watching this young man that first day. He was sizing me up and I was doing the same. When the day ended I called him over to my desk. He was visibly nervous. I told him that I could tell he was a gifted young man, in intellect and in influence. I told him that I would like him to begin to consider himself as one of the class's leaders. I then let him know that I didn't have a negative history with him and that this was a new and fresh year.

He couldn't have responded better. He quickly became a leader in school and in his youth group. He is now a very successful businessman with a loving wife and beautiful children. He serves in his local church and is considered a pillar in the church community.

II Cor. 3:17-18 gives us a hint of how we can steer people into fulfilling their life's call. It gives us an invitation to behold God and that as a result, we are changed into what we have beheld. If we see God as harsh, we become harsh. If we see God as legalistic, we become legalistic, but if we see Him as full of grace and mercy, we then become gracious and merciful people.

As educators, we have a unique opportunity to reveal God's nature to our students. Maybe you can't talk about your personal faith in your class, but you can live your faith daily, taking others along on your journey.

When I went to my ten year high school class reunion I remember walking into the large room like it was yesterday. As the door opened one group saw me and politely greeted me. As the door opened further, another group nodded and called out my name. But when the door fully opened a final group saw me and screamed out my name, demanding that I come over there because some hugs and kisses were coming my way.

So, which group did I move toward? That's easy. The group that screamed out me name. Why? Because as human beings, we were created to move toward affection. When our students know we care, they will even detach themselves from their present peer pressure and move toward authentic caring hearts.

As Christian educators we also need to be reminded that Jesus came not only in Word, but in Power. If we limit our personal understanding of God as just the source of wisdom, knowledge and guidance, we limit Him as merely being the most incredible intellectual in the universe. We need to expand our understanding of His divine nature as well as His divine desire to break into our lives and reveal Himself in any way He may so choose.

Lastly, if we remember the power of love we will find the world around us will, like the grass, move toward its light, not away from it. Here is a verse to live by: [1 John 4:19](#) which says, "*We love because He first loved us.*" Whatever affection from God we see and respond to becomes the fuel for our affection toward Him and toward others. There are many teachers but not many fathers...or mothers. What an amazing opportunity we have been entrusted with. The difference between the two is what we reveal to our students about Him. Do they see His thoughts only or do they see His heart? May our lives reveal His heart.