

Education in Arts and Sciences



SABBATH—NOVEMBER 28

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Romans 1:18–21; Psalm 96:9; 1 Timothy 6; Proverbs 1; Job 38.

MEMORY VERSE: “The heavens tell about the glory of God. The skies announce what his hands have made” (Psalm 19:1, ERV).



The Bible must be part of all our education from painting to the study of the smallest life forms we see only with a microscope.

EDUCATION includes what are known as “the arts and sciences.” These are college studies that include language, the study of books, writing, the study of wisdom, and scientific ideas. What does it mean to teach the arts and sciences from the Bible? Does it simply mean that we choose Bible verses that talk about some part of modern medicine or art history? Yes, but this is only part of Bible education. The education that the Bible supports is more than including Bible verses in a schoolbook. Bible education is about God’s work to save humans from sin.

God’s Word, the Bible, must be part of all our education from art to science. Without the Bible, we may not see that God is powerful. We also may not see that He is the One who made us. The Bible also helps us to see that God’s power keeps life going. The Bible teaches us to see how much God cares about us and everything He made. Then we understand better how we should teach each subject.

This week we will look at some important rules. These rules help us to know the best way to teach the arts and sciences in Christian education.

ONLY THE LORD (Romans 1:18–21)

Nature shows us proof of God's power. We have heard this Bible truth so often that we no longer think about how wonderful it is. Think about the love of God for us. He made this earth because He loved us. When we remember this, we may understand better how to teach the arts and sciences.

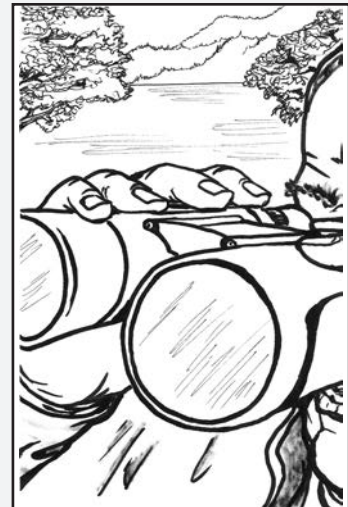
As an example of God's power, think about a human baby growing inside its mother's body. Science teaches us that human life happens when one egg grows and becomes a baby after nine months. We see God's love in this whole miracle. The baby grows under the mother's heart. As the baby gets bigger, the mother's belly gets bigger too. The mother always sees the baby that will soon be born. In the same way, God's eyes are always on His children.

Read Romans 1:18–21; Psalm 19:1–6; and Nehemiah 9:6. What do they tell us about God's work as the One who made us?

God made this earth 6,000 years ago. Many thousands of years have gone by since the Flood. Even so, there is powerful proof on this earth that God is the One who made us. This proof shows us God's mighty power and how much He loves us too. This proof is so powerful that Paul in Romans 1:18–21 says that those who turn away from this God will have no excuse for their choice on the day that God judges the earth. Why? Because Paul says there is enough proof on this earth to teach us about God. We can learn about Him from what He has made.

We live in a time when people worship the things that God made, and not God Himself. So, it is important that Christian education in the arts and sciences always teaches that God is the One who made us. Christian education also must teach that God keeps everything going too. In the end, any teaching or ideas that do not include God or say that He is not real lead only to wrong thinking. Most education on this earth teaches that there is no God. Christian education must not fall into that trap.

Think about all the wonderful beauty on this earth, even after sin. How can we find hope and comfort in this beauty? How will that hope help us during difficult times?



We can learn about God from the things He has made.

BEAUTY THAT IS HOLY (Psalm 96:9)



God “wants us to be as beautiful as flowers.”

Psalm 96:9 says, “Worship the LORD in all his holy beauty. Everyone on earth should tremble before him” (ERV). How do we understand this idea: “holy beauty”? What should this idea mean to a Christian? What part should this idea have in our teaching about art and beauty?

There is a famous saying: “Beauty is in the eye of the person who sees.” In other words, people have different ideas about beauty. What one person sees as beautiful another person sees as ugly. Of course, we must remember who made the eyes to begin with (read Proverbs 20:12). God loves beauty. Nature shows us that God is the One who made beauty. We can learn about God from nature. Of course, we must be careful not to worship nature itself. True, our earth is spoiled by sin. Even so, it continues to be beautiful. Who can dream how beautiful this earth must have looked before the Fall?

We are a part of God’s own artwork too. So, it makes sense that the study of the arts and sciences should bring us closer to God’s heart.

“God wants His children to love His works and take joy in the simple beauty of this earth. God loves beauty. He loves beauty of spirit even more. He wants to clean our hearts. He wants us to lead simple lives. He wants us to be as beautiful as flowers.”—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, page 85, adapted.

Read Genesis 3:6. Then read Proverbs 6:25 and Proverbs 31:30. How do these verses teach us that beautiful things are not always good or holy?

We have an enemy who tries to spoil and destroy every good thing God does or makes. So, we should not be surprised that Satan can cause people to think wrong ideas about beauty or use beauty in the wrong way. So, Christian arts and science teachers need to be careful. They must let the Bible be their guide. The Bible will help them understand that all that is beautiful is not always good or holy.

What are some “beautiful” things that are not holy or good? What beautiful things can be made bad? What helps us to know the answers to these questions?

EXPERTS IN FALSE TEACHINGS (1 Timothy 6)

We know that a lot of art, wisdom, and learning on this earth does not honor God. Many Christians may say that Christians should not study these topics. Seventh-day Adventist Christians carefully must think about how they will earn their living, where they shop, and what they watch and read.

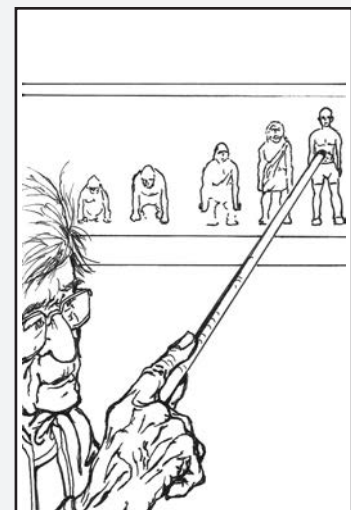
In 1 Timothy 6, Paul gives us advice about things we should not do. But Paul also gives us a clear explanation about why we should not do these things. In 1 Timothy 6:9, 10, what things does Paul warn against doing?

Finish reading 1 Timothy 6. What does Paul say that Christians may do?

Do you see in 1 Timothy 6:20 (ERV) how Paul warns against “‘knowledge’ that is not knowledge at all.” Of course, Paul is not talking about education. But what he says about knowledge is an important rule for teaching and learning. Think about all the wrong information, teaching, and beliefs that were taught from the start of history until now. These wrong ideas show us that people can be “experts” in false teaching.

For nearly 2,000 years, the smartest people on this earth believed that the earth sat at the center of all the stars and planets in outer space. They believed the earth did not move. But they thought that all the stars and planets moved in perfect circles. People used some very difficult math and science to prove this belief. In the end, this belief turned out to be wrong. So, we can say that these people were experts in false teaching. This is the false teaching that Paul talks about when he says “‘knowledge’ that is not knowledge at all” (1 Timothy 6:20, ERV).

Science today is built on the false idea that life started a very long time ago. Life started by chance. God had nothing to do with it. They say there is no reason for life too. Many people have written articles about this teaching. What does this show us about how people can be experts in false teaching? How should our understanding about this help Christian education and the study of science in our schools?



People can be experts in false teaching.

FOOLISHNESS AND WISDOM (Proverbs 1)

Read Proverbs 1. What does this chapter teach us that Christian education should be about?



Knowledge, by itself, is not always a good thing.

The Bible compares foolishness and wisdom. The book of Proverbs helps us to remember the dangers of foolish behavior and being friends with fools. The Bible is clear: God wants His people to seek wisdom.

Students of the arts and sciences use their skills and talents to get knowledge. They try to do excellent work in their studies. Teachers in the arts and sciences do the same. We can make beautiful art and come up with surprising inventions in science because of knowledge and the natural talent God gives us.

But what does a knowledge about the arts and sciences really mean if it does not teach us about knowing right from wrong? Or good from evil? Or truth from lies? Just because a person is a wonderful artist with a lot of talent does not mean that this person is holy or good. Read a bit about the lives of the most famous artists who ever lived. Then you will see this is true. One can say, too, that the scientists who make weapons that can destroy life are super smart and educated. But what about their work?

As we said before, knowledge, by itself, is not always a good thing.

Read Proverbs 1:7. What does all true Christian education start with?

A man who does not believe in God also won the Nobel Prize. He studies outer space and the forces that cause it to work. This man wrote: “The more we seem to understand space, the more it makes no sense.” What should this man’s view tell us about how knowledge, without God, can have no meaning and lead people into false thinking?

THE LORD ANSWERED JOB (Job 38)

Read Job 38. What does this chapter teach us about God as the One who made us and gives us life? How should this important Bible truth change how we understand the arts and sciences?

“Many people teach that objects have life-giving power. They believe that these objects have a force or energy. These objects continue their life by their own power. People also believe that everything that happens in nature is because of laws that nature must follow. God Himself cannot change these laws. This is false science. The Bible does not support these ideas at all. Nature is the servant of the One who made nature. . . . Nature shows us the intelligent mind and energy of God who works in and by the laws in nature. God and His Son work in nature all the time. Jesus says, ‘ “My Father never stops working, and so I work too.” ’ John 5:17 [ERV].”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 114, adapted.

Sadly, as we said earlier, so much of science teaches that there is no God. This means that a scientist can study something very beautiful and difficult to understand. But he or she will say that this object is here on this earth because of an accident. God had nothing to do with why it is here. And there is no meaning to its beauty or reason for its life.

This false thinking is what most science teaches in many schools. Life on earth, from butterflies to humans, happened because chemicals became simple life by accident a long time ago. Over time, that simple life then changed into all that lives and moves and breathes on this earth today. This teaching is named evolution.

Evolution today teaches that the very idea that there is a God who made the earth is not “scientific.” Science cannot study the idea of God because there is no scientific “test” to prove God is real. So, science throws out the idea of God. Science itself does not teach this idea that God should be thrown out. Scientists do. Science teaches that all the beauty on the earth shows us proof of a God.

The problem is that the Bible teaches something different than many scientists. God made everything. He gives life to everything and keeps it going too. So, teachers in Christian education must go against the popular ideas that science teaches today. They must teach Bible truth.



Science teaches that all the beauty on the earth shows us proof of a God.



It is wrong to think that the Bible teaching about how life started and modern science are the same in any way. If we make this mistake, it will lead us away from Bible truth to false ideas.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Two rules show why modern science is wrong about the explanation for how life started on earth. First, science studies nature and its laws. So, modern science must look only to nature and its laws for answers. Second, many modern scientists say that the laws of nature must stay the same. But both these ideas are wrong when it comes to an explanation for how life started on earth.

Let us look at the first rule. This rule says that there is a natural cause for everything that happens in nature. That is a fine explanation for understanding a hurricane. But it does not help us to understand Genesis 1:1 “In the beginning God made from nothing the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1, NLV). Science says God had nothing to do with why life started. So, how can science teach us about life that started with a miracle from God?

And the second rule? This makes sense until we read Romans 5:12, ERV: “Sin came into the world because of what one man did. And with sin came death. So this is why all people must die—because all people have sinned.” This verse teaches us the idea that at one time, there was no death on this earth. This teaching goes against everything that evolution teaches us today. It is wrong to think that the Bible teaching about how life started and modern science are the same in any way. If we make this mistake, we will turn away from Bible truth and accept false ideas.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① In class, talk about the idea of beauty. What is beauty? How do you know what it is? How will a Christian’s understanding about beauty be different from a non-Christian’s understanding?
- ② What if Jesus came as a very smart scientist to this earth when He came the first time? Or what if He came as a very talented musician? But He did not. He came and trained as a carpenter. Jesus made the earth in the beginning. But when He came here He learned how to work with tools and wood. He did His work as an obedient student. What encouragement does this give us as students and workers?
- ③ God does not ask every Christian to teach in schools. Many Christians teach by sharing Jesus with people. Or they show Him in their everyday lives by their works and behavior. What habits should the Christian have, as a student of Jesus and as a teacher to the people on this earth?