

# GraceNotes

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## GROWING IN GRACE “LIVE AND LEARN; LEARN AND LIVE”

As August arrives, for families with children it's "Back to School Time." Not too many years ago, no one went back to school until the Tuesday after Labor Day in September. It still seems strange to associate August with school. Nevertheless that appears to be the established standard. So it's back to school we go, along with the busy schedule it requires. And the busyness is not limited to students; it's a family affair. Life for everyone gets organized around school. The flow of school becomes the flow of life - at least for families with school age kids. But even apart from kids, everyone's goings and comings are affected in one way or another by the school calendar. Slowing down in a school zone or stopping for a school bus applies to one and all.

Perhaps this "back to school" month of August is a good time to be reminded that school is not just 'kid stuff.' It's 'life stuff' as well. The fact is that life itself is school. To be specific, life is schooling for eternity. God's plan for our lives is a perpetual series of lessons aimed at "conforming us to the image of His Son" (Rom. 8:29). In that regard, we are never out of school. We can't afford to be. Too much is at stake. Those who refuse or rebel against life's learning under God's administration do so at their own peril.

In the Book of Proverbs, Solomon repeatedly compares the "wise" and the "foolish." Essentially the "wise" are those who listen and learn. As he noted, "Those who listen live securely" (Prov. 1:33). The "foolish," on the other hand, are those who are unwilling to listen and learn. Again, as Solomon says, "The waywardness of the foolish will kill them" (Prov. 1:32). It's a stark comparison and contrast that reveals how much is at stake as per the willingness (or lack thereof) to be an ongoing learner – yes, a student – of the teaching God administers all through life.

Going back to the 1970s, the concept of "Lifelong Learning" exploded and adult education opportunities proliferated in public education settings. But God has always been in the "lifelong learning" business. Where He gives life, He teaches lessons. And, O how we need to be taught! We humans have such a penchant to be 'hard-headed' and 'stiff-necked.' It is not hyperbole to say that resistance to learning is rebellion against God. He expects us to learn. In fact, the essence of following Jesus is learning-based.

The Greek word for "disciple" is "mathetes" which literally means "learner." So a disciple of Jesus is one who learns from Jesus. Jesus Himself said, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly My disciple; and you shall know the truth and the truth will set you free" (John 8:31-32).

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