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The Wisdom of Education by Ben M.

The Hebrew word לכתוב means to write. After hundreds of years of redemption history we read this word for the first time in Exodus 17:14. Then the Lord said to Moses, "Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it." When we finally hear this word 'write' it's a command spoken by God himself. It's not that people couldn't read and write before but that at that moment God purposed to do a new thing. The revelation of God went from being held in a verbal form in a relatively small group of people to being a written authoritative document that would be available to a whole nation.

Value Learning: 1,500 years later when Stephen, preaching to his accusers said, "And Moses [the man whom God commanded to write] was a man learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was mighty in word and in deed." (Acts 7:22) At the time of Moses the writing system was being changed from hieroglyphic emojis to symbols representing sounds thus creating an alphabet. As soon as you have an alphabet it doesn't matter what language you speak, you can sound out the words of your language and you can write them down. When God commanded Moses to write he wrote in Hebrew, a language that hadn't had a written form. Moses learned that skill from the Egyptians. The highly developed Egyptian system of education was similar to ours covering every sort of subject but slaves could not get an education. But God took a little Hebrew baby, had him adopted into the royal family, raised him up and sent him to an Egyptian university, gave him a first class Eton, Oxbridge, MIT, Sandhurst education and then saved him by his grace. When Moses heard God at the burning bush, all that education was deployed into God's kingdom. He was the one man who was trained and ready to write when God said 'Write!'. That is not all. The beautiful artefacts from ancient Egypt that we see in museums today are of the same craftsmanship used to create the tabernacle. The slaves who learned their skills in Egypt were free to use them to God's glory.

We are talking about common grace as distinct from special grace. Special grace is the saving grace we need to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. By common grace wisdom and understanding are not just for the redeemed; it's throughout the world. "Every good and perfect gift comes from above." We can give God the glory when leaned and skilful unbelievers may not. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son so that whoever believes on him may not perish but have eternal life." Common grace also comes to us through the cross of Jesus. The sun would not shine, the world would be lost in darkness and sin had not Christ determined from before the beginning to save us by his grace. The collective education capital in this room is huge. Use everything good that you have learned to the glory of God.

Value teaching: This rabble group of escaped Hebrews slaves needed a mighty person who could lead, speak and write well. The first sermons in the Bible are in Deuteronomy. They are three mighty exegetical sermons preached by Moses from texts in previously written books and applied in much the same way I am doing today. Several hundred years later we have a culture based on the fact that there is something to read. (I hope you all read. The more you read the more capable you will be as a writer and the better your spelling.) So it is no surprise that in David and Solomon's time there is a flowering of literary masterpieces like the poetic artistry of the Psalms, Ecclesiastes, Ruth, Job and Proverbs. The Israelites know what to teach because they have a stable consistent system of education throughout the whole

nation for every generation and age group. "...to you and to your children and your children's children after you." (Deut 6:6) What's good for the king is good for the people. 1Chronicles 27:32 tells us how seriously David took the education of his children.

King Solomon opens Ecclesiastes with his number one title not 'king' but 'teacher/preacher'. He has learned and now he passes it on. Are you passing on what you have learned? You can start where you are. Learning and then teaching the young. 'Let the wise listen and learn.' No matter how old you are there is still more that the Lord would teach you and equip you to teach and pass on to others. This is a culture of education for everybody. Pass it on to the glory of God.

Value of life as it is: In 1888 a French team found a papyrus scroll in an Egyptian tomb. It contained 30 wise sayings written by Amenemope. Astonishingly this Egyptian pagan document is almost identical to some of Solomon's Proverbs. (see Proverbs 22:17-23:10) We don't know which was written first. Although our governors are not necessarily Christian, there are points at which we agree. (eg. the attitude towards murder) We tend to polarise the world and the church with a mine-field in between. The truth is that there are a lot of things in the world through common grace that we wholly agree with and vice versa. There is an overlap between the two kingdoms. It can be unhelpful when negative things are going out from the church into the world and likewise when toxic things are creeping into the church from the world. Some people have had all the benefits of common grace but their hearts have not changed. There is an education that every person needs that exceeds all these things we have been talking about. It is an education that no one in is room can give to anybody else. We can't save our kids or another human soul. We have to do all that we can but it is God who saves through his son Jesus Christ and by the powerful workings of the Holy Spirit. It is a sovereign work and all the glory and all the praise goes to him. If it has happened in your life praise him for the rest of your days.

Solomon told his sons to "listen to the voice of your father and do not forsake your mother's teaching". Not one of the mothers of Solomon's children was a believer.' They wouldn't be able to learn the way of salvation from her but she could teach her children a lot of skills and graces. You don't have to be a Christian to pass on some good things. But there is one thing that everyone must know and only God can teach it. That is the regenerating work of the Spirit. As you learn to play football you won't get the rules of the game from the Bible but you will learn what kind of a sportsman you should to be.

Jesus' prayer in John 14:7-9 says that he didn't want us taken out of the world but that we be protected from the evil one. We are in the world for a purpose. Let's do it and remain distinctive to the glory of God.