

## # 451 06/16/08 Overview of a Classical Approach to Parenting

Last week, I concluded an example of teaching a teen daughter the use of rhetoric to defend her position with peers. Being able to express oneself in a way that persuades others is an invaluable skill to bring into adulthood.

When my daughter was studying engineering in college, she was told that knowledge alone would not make a successful engineer. One had to have the ability to relate to and communicate with colleagues and clients. That statement is true in all areas of life.

When a child leaves home, we want him to know what he stands for, to have already thought through the arguments against his stance and to be able to articulate his beliefs to others.

The concept of a classical education applied to parenting is summarized as follows:

- Until about age ten, children are taught the values and accepted behaviors of their parents' belief system. This includes memorization of Scripture.
- In the middle school years, children are encouraged to use logic to look at all viewpoints when they question what they have learned from their parents.
- In the high school years, children learn to speak and write about what they now have accepted as their own values.

The classical approach to teaching children about history, math, reading, biology, etc. has worked successfully for centuries. The reason that it has been successful is that the teaching methods match the developmental levels of the children. Any parent of a teen knows that trying to teach her facts about accepted behavior does not work. Those facts need to have been taught in the developmental level when she was soaking up everything her parent said as absolute truth. As a teen, she is in the stage when she wants to question and express her own opinion about what she thinks she knows.

I encourage you to think about these three levels as you decide how you will teach your children the values and behaviors they will need to be godly men and women.

