

Author's Introduction

¹⁷“But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, ¹⁸and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness,” Romans 6:17-18.

I began writing this curriculum for use in prisons but my prayer is that it will find a much wider audience. In Romans 6:17-18, Paul states that those who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart *to the standard of teaching to which you were committed*. In part, this means that the degree of Christian character in a person's life has much to do with the standard of teaching to which they have been committed. In other words, poor instruction leads to a low level of Christian character (sanctification). A higher standard of teaching results in a higher level of sanctification. So, is a lack of education really your problem?

In some ways, you may know a lot. There are men in prison who have attained the highest levels of education. As Richard Gere said in *Pretty Woman*, they have gone “all the way.” Others may just be learning to read. Regardless of your level of education, the source of your learning can be as critical as the absence of it. If fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, part of the problem is the lack of a Christ-centered education. But even that won't do.

For the root, the heart of the matter, is sin. Without the light of Christ, your mind has been darkened. You don't just have a few blind spots, brother, you're blind. The good news of the gospel is that Christ came to, among other things, give sight to the blind and to set the captives free! So you're greatest problem is your need for a savior. And the more you know about this savior, the more you'll grow.

Beyond learning that you're a sinner in desperate, ongoing need of the savior, I firmly believe that the standard of teaching to which you're committed will result in change in your life in one direction or another. One of the reasons there is so much sin in the church, as well as out of the church, may in part be traced to an anti-intellectualism that is so prevalent today. In this curriculum, I start with the basics and finish with stuff you'd learn in seminary. I pray that the standard of teaching to which I've committed you, through the power of the Holy Spirit, will produce the change in you that God requires for your eternal good and His glory!

In Christ Alone,

Chandler Fozard