

## Thoughts and Prayers for the School Year

There is a school a block from our house and as I was walking this morning a bunch of teachers came out. I figured they had a short meeting this morning before school starts tomorrow. You know you are getting old when the teachers are looking young. This got me thinking about the dangers our young people face as they go back to school and some things they need to keep in mind.

Due to COVID most schools did not have in person learning and those who did were scaled back. It appears most schools starting off will try to have "regular school" with all students and teachers present.

One might think of the dangers of contacting the corona virus as being the top danger but I think of some others. We have seen violence increasing in our major cities with police being killed, gang violence increasing, and just random acts of shootings taking place. I am afraid some of this violence will bleed over (no pun intended) to our public schools. Many schools have on duty police officers, chains and locks on outside doors to keep visitors out, and monitoring procedures to watch students as they enter the school building. One of the benefits of not having in person student learning was the absence of school violence but this year is different. I hope and pray teachers and students will have a safe school year.

There is the danger of what is being taught in many schools. I realize many teachers are doing their best to teach young people while in their class but more and more the curriculum is being questioned. Humanism, situational ethics, evolution, antichristian values are being taught. Parents need to be aware of what their children are learning. Recently, one school specifically told their students to not share the material with their parents. As parents we are to bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, Ephesians 6:4. How can such be done when the parent doesn't know what is being taught? I have heard more than one retired teacher say they could not teach what is being taught now in school.

There is the danger of peer pressure and giving in to temptation. Many a student has lost their virginity because they want to fit in, or use profanity, or use drugs, etc. because they did not want to be ostracized. Young people be careful in choosing your friends. "Do not be deceived: 'Evil company corrupts good habits.'" (1 Corinthians 15:33). Dare to be different!

There is the danger of letting school get in the way of your spiritual growth. As mentioned

in some of Sean Sullivan's articles many a student has left God at home, or stopped studying God's word, or stopped attending services while away at college. Also, many a student has decided to not go to Wednesday night Bible Studies in order to get ready for that exam or write the term paper. Frankly, I was one of those students. I learned to have my priorities right and seek God first. What does it matter if one gets an A in a class but a D or F in soul salvation!

Despite the above warnings, this school year can be a time of growth and blessings. It provides you with the opportunity to learn. Especially for young ladies, in some parts of the world an education is not available. In some Muslim cultures education is seen not only as unimportant but as a bad influence for females. Other countries do not seek to educate all its people, only the wealthy or a particular cast are deemed worthy of teaching. We live in a place where most people can go to school.

It is a time to develop friendships. Earlier I wrote of the danger of peers, there can also be blessings, such as those to encourage and help in time of need. Friends to go to ballgames with, study with, joke with, and yes, eat lunch with. Solomon wrote, "Two are better than one, Because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, For he has no one to help him up." (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10)

This is a time to grow spiritually. Be like Jesus, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." (Luke 2:52). Take time to worship God, read your Bible, pray, and be around other Christians. One of the regrets I have about my time in college was not getting to know the Christians and being involved at the local congregation. You can be a source of great encouragement as you share your talents with those saints. While preaching in Gainesville, FL, I noticed college students do not have lot of money, therefore, they don't contribute a lot of money, but they provide enthusiasm and talent.

I hope and pray every student, parent, and teacher has a good, safe, and spiritually rewarding school year. - - Dennis Tucker