

The Living Curriculum

By Vernard T. Gant

As an educator, there are two parts to the story of your life—the story that your life is telling to your students and the story that is being written in their lives. One is the story you intend or hope to tell and the other is what is actually interpreted and internalized by them. The same was true of Jesus with His students (disciples). Jesus wrote such a story on His disciples' lives that even their critics were able to read it clearly. In other words, He left His mark on them.

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus. (Acts 4:13)

Paul also pointed this out about the Corinthians:

You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart. (2 Corinthians 3:2, 3)

It is very important for the Christian educator to understand that the story being conveyed to the students is a vital part of the curriculum. The classroom curriculum is usually composed of the content that the educator delivers through teaching. This curriculum is designed to impart knowledge to students. However, the curriculum that is composed of the educator's life story is of a different nature.

In the Old Testament God's people had the written Word (God's curriculum) which was God's truth. It was rich in content concerning what God wanted His people to know; yet it had no ability to impart or to transform their lives. It was only when the Word of God became alive that it became transformative.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14 (NKJV)

The same is also true of God's educators. You are teaching from a written curriculum, but your life is the curriculum that is being read by your students. As God's educators, you are the curriculum that becomes *flesh and dwells among your students full of grace and truth*. It is only when the curriculum becomes flesh that it can be written in the hearts of the children. What is written on "tablets" or deposited into the heads of children can easily be discarded and forgotten. What is etched on the hearts, however, leaves a permanent mark not easily erasable. To write such a lasting story it is important for truth and grace to be integrated. Truth is based on what the educator knows and teaches. Grace, on the other hand, is based on how the educator perceives and treats the students. Grace recognizes that all children are created in the image of God with infinite worth that is not determined by the parents to whom they are born, the income level of their households, the color of their skin, the zip code where they live, or the language they speak at home.

When your life becomes the living curriculum, children who come to you “untrained and uneducated” will be impacted in such a way others will marvel. Whether others note it or not, your students will know beyond a shadow of a doubt. They will know and their lives will indicate that they have been with you because the story of your life will be indelibly written upon their hearts.