

Classical Christian Education (Thirteenth in a Series)

A Salt Mine

As described in the seventh of this series, the three stages of classical education are grammar, logic, and rhetoric. The logic stage is characterized by a student's inquisitiveness expressed in asking the why of things. By the middle school years this curiosity is often accompanied by the urge to challenge explanations and even become argumentative. As a parent or teacher, who hasn't heard, "Why do I have to do it that way," "Why do I have to do that now," "What happens if I don't," and "My way is better!"? There may be an element of natural rebelliousness in this, but ultimately, it is a quest for a reason, for a logical explanation, for truth. Instead of responding, "Don't argue with me!", what if we try to direct that natural inclination into a positive process, a process of discerning why things are to be the way they are or are not, for arguing well, and arguing for the right reasons?

There is an element that can shape that process and, is, in fact, one of the very things that makes us unique as living beings. That element is *reason*, and what is amazing is that the tool which helps us reason well has been absent in virtually all schools for decades. That tool is *logic*.

Perhaps it is coincidental, but it seems that in the absence of the teaching of logic, our world has moved away from sound reasoning based on principles. Journalism has moved from reporting the facts so a thinking person could come to a reasoned conclusion on their importance, to advancing a narrative intended to form opinions. Social media platforms manipulate and censor what is shared for the same reason. Advertising is filled with subtle, and increasingly less subtle allures to purchase their product or make claims that only seem reasonable. Students are taught to challenge everything for its own sake without discerning the wisdom of their actions. Worst of all is using "science" as a reason for abandoning God's Word.

To defend themselves against such manipulation, more than ever, students need strong reasoning skills to discern error and to correctly, effectively, and eloquently, speak truth. Logic is foundational to all learning. It systematically defines sound versus erroneous reasoning; it forces one to think before they speak; it helps to understand God and His Word; it helps to discern truth and error. It is fundamental to the next stage of classical education which is *Rhetoric*. Students at FLCS begin formal logic training in the seventh grade.

Ah, but there is a danger to students becoming learned in logic! More than one FLCS parent has admitted that they've been embarrassed by weaknesses in their arguments, gleefully pointed out by their kids. Maybe that's an opportunity for us who haven't had the benefit of being taught logic. Heads up to you parents of younger students. Brush up!

(Article submitted by Art Pencek, a member of our School Board)

