



The Real Payoff

Reflections From a Public School Teacher by Cale Prindle

Did you know that the moon used to be its own planet? Billions of years ago it collided with another planet as it danced around the fire on a careless orbit, and the little bits of dust spun around the earth until they all came together in the earth's gravitational pull to make our moon. From there it used its own gravitational pull to churn the oceans in order to create the primordial soup that we can all call our hometown and birthplace.

I was a science teacher for the day at a local public school, and this is what I was supposed to present to my students. I learned quite a bit from the material and probably could've passed the quiz, but I may as well have been taking a test in science fiction. The presentation was nothing but a big one-third truth, and intelligent design was nowhere revealed.

Education is defined as the act or process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and judgment, and preparing oneself or others intellectually for mature life. And as I watched the roomful of students absorbing the knowledge put before them (or sleeping through it entirely), I thought of the great amount of information they were missing.

Can the Bible be taught without bias? More importantly, should it be?

What were they supposed to be learning? What was the payoff? A great deal of class work is assigned because students "need to know," but I've found that most classes do little more than fill the brain with information that is then discarded as quickly as possible. They were supposed to learn the answers to the test. The payoff was a good grade.

I thought of my time spent in Adventist schools. The goal was to learn how information would get me through life with God's guidance. The payoff was a righteous life. The Bible was something to be lived, not just studied.

A recent issue of *Time magazine* carried the cover story "Why We Should Teach the Bible in Public Schools." I took the issue with me for the day and initiated a discussion in my classroom. The majority said that it would be a bad idea to allow the teaching of Scripture in public school, and one individual stated openly that the Bible was nothing but cow excrement. Others said it would need to be taught as either theory or nothing more than an item of cultural importance. My heart stirred with warning flags. Can the Bible be taught without bias? More importantly, should it be? If the values and principles and divine commands are taken away, does the Bible have anything left? Is the Bible worth studying because of its impact on our culture, or is its truth the cause of its cultural inspiration?

Throughout the nation, students are presented enough information to fill them to the brim. Fact upon fact is stacked. Students' brains are provided an opportunity to expand as much as each individual allows, but their hearts are not invited to warm and love. The curriculum does not require the teaching and practicing of compassion. If not for the individuals who strive for equality and kindness, each class might be void of humanity.

Academic achievement can be attained at any school; test scores can soar in any classroom. The richer qualities of education, however, are seen only when the Author of information is included. When studying human experience through literature, when examining the ways of the world through science, when contemplating the splendor of galaxies and celestial bodies, knowledge is complete only when the Architect who scripted humanity, designed life and decorated the sky is revealed.



Cale Prindle is a substitute teacher for Lincoln Public Schools in Lincoln, Nebraska.