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# Learning Lifeline

A LETTER ABOUT LEARNING FROM ESTHER WILKISON

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I remember meeting with some teachers after their new head of school arrived. They were stunned when he announced that he would not allow them to continue teaching students to think for themselves. Independent thought was—in his thinking—rebellious. He made it clear that questions, no matter how respectfully asked by students or teachers, were a direct attack on his authority as pastor over the school. He used his verbal abilities of sarcasm and belittling to maintain his authoritarian control. Some of you think I must be exaggerating. Sadly, others of you know I am not.

Let's assume you are not like that dictator. Instead, you are drawn to Jesus, who never used coercive control, but asked His followers what they were thinking because He genuinely wanted to know. Much as we may desire to help kids think for themselves, here's the problem: all of us tend to do unto others the kind of teaching or parenting that was done to us. Since others lectured at us, we tend to pay that forward. I'm not saying there is never a place for lecture. Yet, if that's all we do, what happens when we are no longer the voice our kids hear? If we don't teach kids to question in order to figure out if a message lines up with the Truth, they will not know how to push back on the lies that bombard them.

The defeated enemy who hates us is masterful at getting thoughts stuck in our heads. Thoughts about God not being kind. Thoughts that pre-judge others. Thoughts that we are incapable and can never change. The defeated enemy uses those thoughts to keep us isolated and stuck—working ourselves to death in hopes we can measure up, desperate to please, or attempting to win over a God who already demonstrated that He loves us more than life. The defeated enemy is going to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10). Our kids can't fight that by simply memorizing the bold-face terms and scoring well on tests. They must have skills to deeply comprehend and cross-examine ideas in light of God's Truth (Proverbs 18:17).

What if we helped our kids learn how to listen to the Holy Spirit and in His power —

- smash warped systems of thought about how life works.
- tear down the rubble and barriers that the defeated enemy uses to block an accurate view of God.
- gently take all loose thoughts, emotions, and impulses and help them fit together into a life structure shaped by Jesus.

That's what Paul said we need to do in 2 Corinthians 2:3-6 (The Message). We cannot smash and destroy lies unless we are given the skills to comprehend and identify propaganda in what we read and hear. We cannot gently fit our thoughts, emotions, and impulses into a life structure that is shaped by Jesus without help from wise guides. Our inside Teacher for this is the Holy Spirit. Outside teachers include all who help us learn not to accept things as they appear on the surface.

All of us are born gullible fools which is why, when I was little, one of my older sisters could trick me into giving her my little dimes in exchange for her larger nickels. I didn't push back on her reasoning until my mom taught me the actual value of my coins and taught me to question my sister's motives. Yes—contrary to what you may hear from an authoritarian head of school, we are right to teach our kids to question so they can detect the defeated enemy's scams.



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Holy Spirit, show us the lies that the defeated enemy has been using to keep us trapped and isolated. You are not interested in our surface conformity, but in fully rescuing and restoring us. Teach us at our deepest level to reject the deception of darkness so we can walk with You in Your Light.

**Note:** This is the first in a series on Deep Learning. I invite you to think for yourself about what you read and to email me your insights and questions.