

STUDY GUIDE

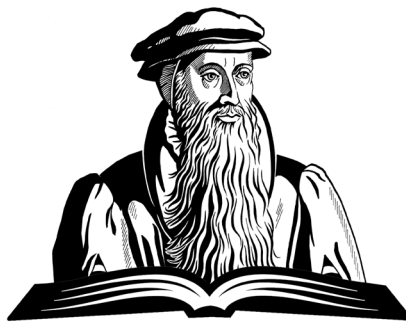
for

Classical Christian Education

Video Lecture Series
by Rev. Jonathan Mattull

LECTURE #5

How Christ Transforms Classical Education



The John Knox Institute
of Higher Education

John Knox Institute of Higher Education

Entrusting our Reformed Inheritance to the Church Worldwide

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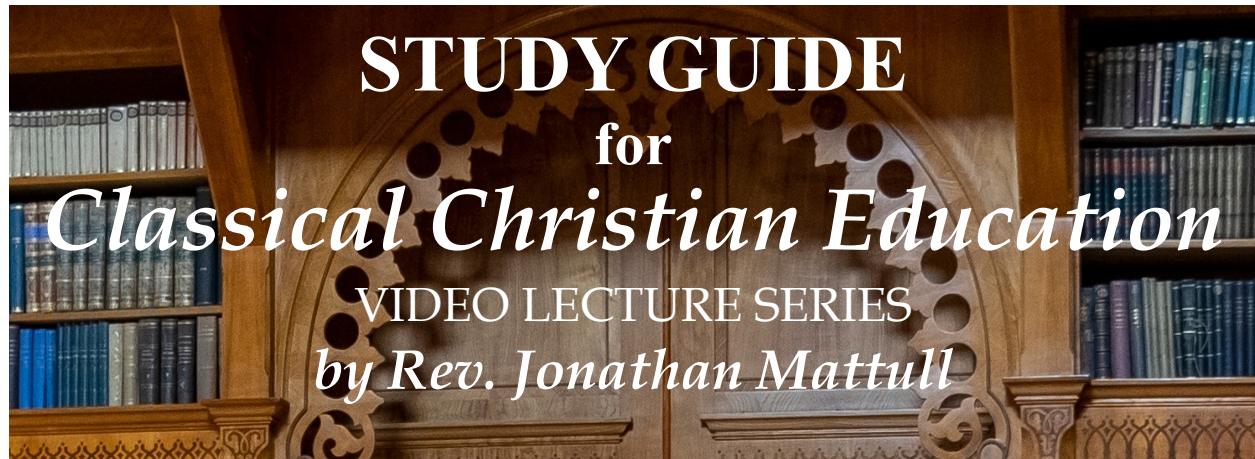
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Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the Authorized King James Version.

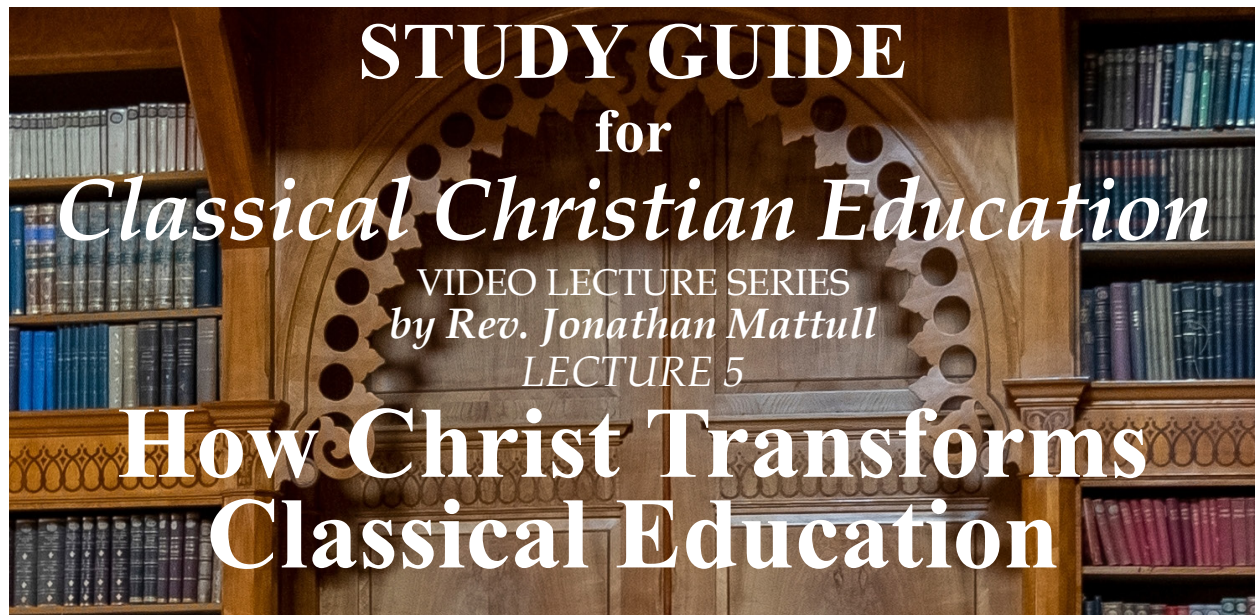
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Introduction

This lesson concludes the foundational portion of our series. In this lesson, we'll look specifically at a few ways Christ transforms the education of the Classical period. We touched on some of this already. You'll remember that in a previous lesson, we spoke of how Christ directs us to the source of learning, as well as to the end, or goal, of learning. Well, in this lesson, we want to look at other important aspects that Christ transforms.

Theme

How Christ transforms Classical Education.

Key Points

1. Christ Transforms Our Understanding of the Nature of "*The Good*".
 - a. *The good* is the eternal and perfect idea or form, after which every lesser or particular good is patterned (as defined by Plato and others).
 - 2) It directs and informs all human virtue.
 - 3) It is impersonal—not a god, but used by the gods.
 - b. Classical Education was leading a child to become *a good man*.
 - 1) To become *a good man*, one must know *the good*.
 - c. Christ directs us to God, who *is good*. So he transforms our understanding of what is *good*, or *true*, or *beautiful*.
 - 1) Christ is not just another teacher.
 - d. True education is actually God drawing near to us to teach us.

2. How Christ Transforms Our Understanding of the Nature of Man.

a. The ancient Classical writers had penetrating insight into the nature of man.

- 1) The way man's mind works.
- 2) What emotions are.
- 3) How to instruct and motivate men.
- 4) They were gifted at differentiating between good and evil.
- 5) But they thought that man's nature was basically good.

b. Christ taught that man's nature is fallen, corrupt, depraved; he is a sinner.

- 1) John 8:34—"Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin."
- 2) Ephesians 2:1 to 3—"Who were dead in trespasses and sins...in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath."

c. This transforms our understanding of what we are doing in education.

- 1) For boys and girls to be led to true virtue, this demands a radical change.
- 2) The highest form of virtue is loving God with our whole heart, and loving our neighbor as ourselves.
- 3) This does not transform our teaching on morals and behaviors.
- 4) We must teach them to trace the actions and displays of sin back to their source—Matthew 15:19.
- 5) We must emphasize that our students need to be under the means of grace in a faithful church.

3. Christ Transforms Our Understanding by the Way of Virtue.

a. The ancients believed we should strive to live *the good life*.

- 1) A life of wisdom, courage temperance and justice.
- 2) That demanded sacrifice, patience, endurance, kindness, restraint, and love.
- 3) They did not have the gospel, yet they lived a life of self-denial.

b. They had a high regard for the ability of man.

- 1) But the initial cause of any and all true virtue is God's saving grace.
- 2) John 3:5 and Ephesians 2:4–10.

4. Conclusion.

a. The Classical Christian school should emphasize Christ as a robust answer to the way of virtue.

- 1) Man is not a savior of himself.
- 2) Education is not a savior of man.

3) Man cannot attain to virtue without the saving grace of Jesus Christ and the true knowledge of God.

b. There is no true knowledge of *the good, the true, or the beautiful* without a true and saving knowledge of Christ.

Study Questions

1. In the ancient Classical writers, what is the idea of *the good*? How was it used in Classical Education?

2. How do we know from Scripture that Christ directs us not just to the idea of *the good*, but he directs us to God, who *is good*? What does this imply?

3. What does it mean to say that Christ transforms the teachings of the unbelieving Greeks and Romans? Are we saying that Christ is just another teacher in a long line of teachers, perfecting and correcting what preceded him?

4. In light of how Christ directs us to God, what actually is true education?

5. How did the ancient Classical pagan writers view the nature of man? What part of their teachings about man's nature is good, and what part is bad?

6. How does Christ transform our approach to teaching students about the nature of man?

7. How does all this transform our understanding of Classical Education? How does this transform the end goal of leading a student to *the good*? What is the transformed goal?

8. What is the initial cause of any and all true virtue? How does Christ teach this? How do Paul's writings explain this as well?

9. Does the transformed Classical Education dispense with clear lessons on the nature of the four cardinal virtues? What should we emphasize about the only way these virtues are possible? What are the dangers of ignoring this?

10. Please summarize the main teachings of this lecture.

Further Study

1. Using the footnoted references in the PDF transcript of this lecture, please find some ancient pagan works about the nature of man. Try to find similarities in the pagan writers to what the Scripture teaches about the nature of man, as well as teachings that are in direct contrast to the Bible's teachings.

2. Rev. Mattull said, "Another way this should transform our teaching is by emphasizing the need our students have of being under the means of grace in a faithful church." How important is it to you to be a member in a faithful church where the gospel of Jesus Christ is regularly preached?
