

AN ANALYSIS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AS OBSERVED IN SCRIPTURE

A Paper

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Research Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to analyze human development as observed in scripture. The paper will cover the developmental issues of psycho-social, cognitive, moral and faith development. The paper will evaluate in light of scripture the developmental process of Rousseau, Gesell, Piaget, and Skinner; their theories and characteristics. Second, this paper will examine the social development of Erikson, the moral development of Kohlberg, and faith development of Fowler and how their ideas can be implemented in the Christian context. Finally, this paper will discuss how the author integrates scripture and psychology into a working model of educational philosophy.

Delimitations of the Study

The study will be delimited to scripture and evaluations of Skinner, Piaget, Erikson, Kohlberg, and Fowler.

Research Questions

1. What is the biblical view of humanity?
2. How does the Bible address cognitive, psycho-social, moral and faith development?
3. How does Scripture compare to educational psychologists theories?
4. What is the author's educational philosophy model?

Human Development in Scripture: What is the biblical view of humanity?

The first aspect of human development found in the Bible is the divine origin of humanity, emphatically stated in Genesis 1. "Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." Genesis 1:26-27 NASB95

A second aspect of God's creation of humanity is how God created. Humanity has been

stamped with the imago dei. “The question is: What is the image of God in man? The image of God in man cannot be physical because God is spirit (John 4:24) and does not have a body. The image, then, must be nonmaterial and would involve the following major elements” (Enns 1989, 304). Enns lists those elements as personality, spiritual being and moral nature. Regarding personality, he says “Man has a self-consciousness and a self-determination that enables him to make choices, lifting him above the realm of animals” (Enns 1989, 305). Enns quotes Charles Hodge who comments on the spiritual being saying, “God is a Spirit, the human soul is a spirit. The essential attributes of a spirit are reason, conscience, and will. A spirit is a rational, moral, and therefore also, a free agent. In making man after his own image, therefore, God endowed him with those attributes which belong to his own nature as a spirit” (Enns 1989, 305). That image is now flawed and marred because of the fall.

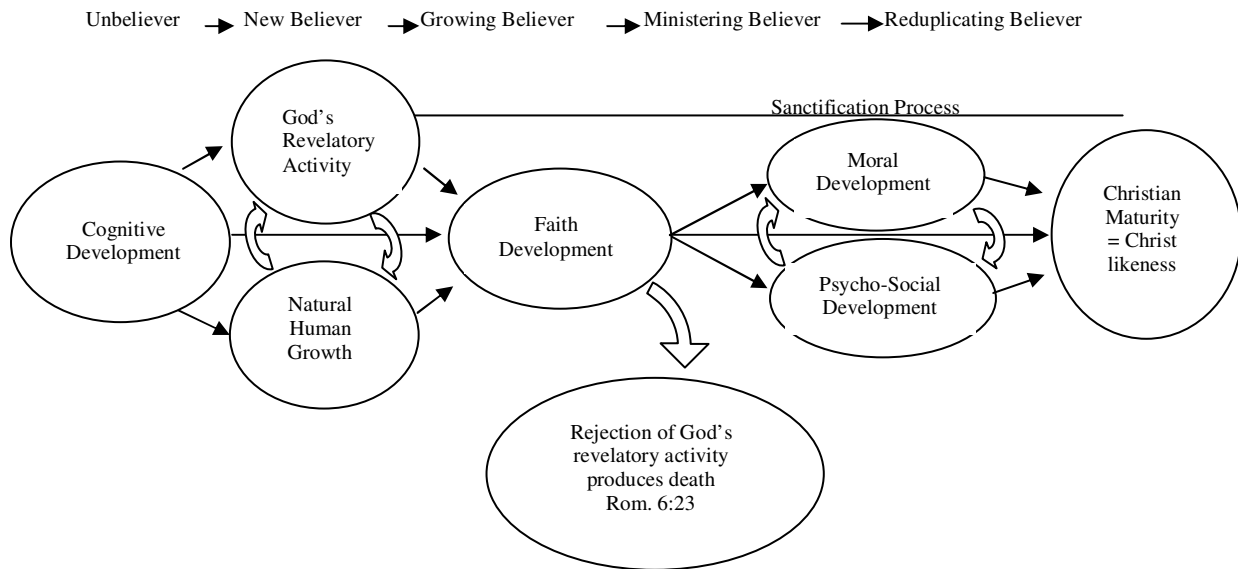
How does the Bible address cognitive, psycho-social, moral and faith development?

Cognitive development is how we learn through the ages and stages in life. Psycho-social development is how we relate to other human beings. Moral development is how we relate to ourselves and faith development is how we relate to God. The result is maturity. Paul in Ephesians 6 says;

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; (Ephesians 4:11-14, NASB95)

Cognitive development is the underlying principle to a biblical model of human development. It is the foundation on which faith, psycho-social and moral development rest. Paul states this principle in Romans 10:11-18. Paul says, “How shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard” and “Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.” There is the

necessity of wedding cognitive development and faith. Faith is jointly wedded to psycho-social and moral development. The apostle James tells us that James 2:26 “For just as the body without *the* spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.” NASB95 Illustrated, I believe a biblical model of human development looks like the following diagram.



Biblical Model of Human Development

Moses and Jesus operated by this principle regarding signs. The miraculous events (God’s revelatory activity) authenticated the messenger and the message. The people would witness what Moses or Jesus did and would either wed what was taught with faith producing righteous and just actions resulting in reward or they rejected what was done and taught demonstrating unrighteousness and receiving discipline and sometimes death. Those who united faith and action progressed toward maturity.

Jesus taught this principle both in the positive and negative as seen in Matthew 21:18ff, John 15, Matthew 25:31ff. The fig tree that failed to produce fruit was cursed. The two sons contrasted between their words and actions. The branch that failed to produce fruit was cut off and cast into the fire. The one that produced fruit would produce more fruit, much fruit and fruit that would remain, and at the judgment Jesus pronounces “well done good and faithful to those

who demonstrated obedience to “the least of these.” He says; “I never knew you” to those who made professions of faith yet their actions did not match their words.

Old Testament books that deal with cognitive development include Deuteronomy Psalms and Proverbs. “Within the Torah the Book of Deuteronomy stands out as one that outlines the norms for the faith community to follow and teach to the rising generations” (Pazmiño 1997, 19). The educational mandate of Deuteronomy 6:4-9 requires passing on the commandments of God to the next generation (Pazmiño 1997, 20). Deuteronomy is a book of three sermons that Moses preaches on the east side of the Jordan River just before Israel’s crossing to receive the inheritance promised to Abraham. In these sermons, Moses fifteen times cautions the children of Israel to “remember” God and nine times warns not to “forget” God. In Deuteronomy 17:18-20 the king (whom Israel would appoint in the future) is instructed to write for himself a copy of the law, read it and obey it. “Unswerving compliance to the heavenly mandate would ensure for the king a long and happy reign and peaceful succession for generations to come” (Matthews 1994, 266).

The Psalms record prayers and praises to God for wisdom, instruction and asking that God teach the psalmist His statutes. In Psalm 119 the request to “teach me your statutes” is made six times, Psalm 119: 12, 26, 64, 68, 124, and 171. The words teach and instruction are used over 300 times in the Bible. Moses uses the term twenty times, the apostle John sixteen times and apostle Paul thirty-three times. The word “instruct” is used 324 times in Scripture with the most uses in Proverbs. (Thomas 1981, [?]). Many of the occurrences found in Proverbs are of a father calling his a son to heed his words of instruction.

In Matthew 28 Jesus instructs his disciples to “make disciples,” “teaching them to observe all that I have commanded.” One of the qualifications of a deacon and elder in 1st Timothy is the ability to teach. Paul instructs Timothy in 2nd Timothy 2:2 to find faithful men

for the purpose of instructing them to teach others also.

How does the Bible address psycho-social development?

The psycho-social development (how humans relate to each other) has already been touched upon in the example above from Matthew 25 when Jesus says “whatever you have done (or not done) to the least of my children, you have done (or not done) unto me.” The implication is evident that Jesus equates how we treat each other with how we treat God. He is emphatic when asked what was the greatest commandment. He replies in Matthew 22:37-40 “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’³⁸ “This is the great and foremost commandment.³⁹ “The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’⁴⁰ “On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets” NASB.

James 2:14-17 says "What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself." NASB95 “Christian faith is not merely assent to a set of propositions about Jesus: it is a living trust in the Lord which leads to a whole new way of life” (Larry Richards 1987, 161). That new way of life includes the lack of lust that would lead to adultery, lying, stealing or murder. It is honoring parents and dealing fairly in business. It means turning the other cheek and demonstrated by singing in a Philippian jail after being beaten with rods. The latter speaks volumes regarding Paul and Silas’ faith development. This new way of life means being a neighbor even when it is not convenient and exacts a personal cost.

How does the Bible address moral development?

Moral development consists of one’s relationship to self and others. Regarding moral

nature Enns quotes Louis Berkhof's *Systematic Theology* who says:

Man was created in "original righteousness" also referred to as "knowledge, righteousness, and holiness."¹⁵ This original righteousness and holiness was lost through the fall but is restored in Christ. Ephesians 4:24 emphasizes that the new self of the believer is "in the likeness of God (and) has been created in righteousness and holiness." Colossians 3:10 declares that the new self is "being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him," a reference to Genesis 1:26. Enns 1989, 305

God calls on Abraham in Genesis 17:1 to "walk before Me and be perfect." "The word "perfect" does not mean "sinless," for that would be an impossible goal for anyone to reach (1 Kings 8:46). The word means "single-hearted, without blame, sincere, wholly devoted to the Lord." In Exodus 12:5, the word refers to a "perfect" sacrifice without blemish. It was a call for integrity" (Wiersbe, Warren W. 1996.[?]). King David understood the necessity of the working of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer and his continued growth. He says "Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. ¹¹ Do not cast me away from Your presence And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me" Psalm 51:10-11 NASB.

In Matthew 5:28 Jesus addresses moral development in conjunction with motive. He equated thought and action. "But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart" NASB. James 1:14-15 outlines the digression of lust saying "But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. ¹⁵ Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death" NASB. "Ultimately to desire, and to try to obtain, the property of another is to be dissatisfied with what God has given, and thus to show lack of faith in His love. Further, the envy which this encourages will lead sooner or later to the hurt of one's neighbor, and this is inconsistent with the primary duty of love" (Wiseman 1973, 161).

Paul views moral development from the perspective of the non-Christian conscience. Paul in Romans 2:12-16 says;

¹²For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law; ¹³for it is not the hearers of the Law who are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified. ¹⁴For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, ¹⁵in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, ¹⁶on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus. NASB

Paul also views moral development from the perspective of the Christian through the working of the Holy Spirit. Paul understands moral development in the context of a battle that wages between the flesh and spirit as seen in Galatians 5:16ff and Romans 7, and Ephesians 6:10ff. Paul also understands the impossibility of humanity to develop moral character apart from a relationship with God as seen in Romans 3. James 4:7 says “Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you” NASB. Moral development is readily seen in the Ten Commandments of Exodus 20 and the Great Commandment in Mark, 12:30ff, Matthew 22:36ff, and the new commandment of John 13:34ff, “love one another.”

How does the Bible address faith development?

Salvation throughout scripture has been by grace through faith based in relationship to God and His revealed character. Faith is seen in two dimensions; one is “saving faith” of the initial convert and two, “persevering faith” of the one in continued relationship with God. Genesis 15:6 is an example of saving faith. Speaking of Abraham scripture says; “Then he believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness” NASB. This verse is quoted by Paul in Romans 4:3. We see the principle of saving faith and preserving faith in the life of Abraham and his servant in Genesis 24. Abraham demonstrates persevering faith by sending his servant back to his father’s household to find a wife for Isaac. The servant demonstrates saving

faith in his prayer to the “Lord God of my master Abraham.” While the words of his prayer were in his mouth God answered. I believe the implication is that as a result of God’s intervention God become the servant’s God as demonstrated in Genesis 24:26 when it is apparent that God has immediately granted his request, the servant bows and worshipped the Lord.

Saving faith and persevering faith are seen in the covenantal relationship with God. Saving faith was demonstrated via obedience regarding the initial Passover that resulted in the Exodus from Egypt. In the negative, persevering faith was not initially demonstrated at Kadesh-barnea. As a result, all those over twenty years old died in the wilderness over the next thirty-eight years of wandering. Throughout the Old Testament, there is a linkage between faith and observance of the covenant. One example is in Deuteronomy 32:48-52. Moses would suffer death and could not enter the Promised Land because he “broke faith” with God. The same is true of those who worshipped the golden calf, those who demanded meat and those who rebelled with Korah.

Another observation regarding faith is it is both a noun and a verb. Faith is both cognitive and effective. Faith is something to have and something to do. That is the message of James. The Book of James is about faith. But it is *not* about “saving faith.” It is about the role faith plays in the life of a person who is already a believer (Richards 1987, 160). The role faith plays in the life of the believer is called sanctification. Paul refers to sanctification in calling the Philippians to “work out their salvation with fear and trembling” Philippians 2:12 NASB. Sanctification/preserving faith is God’s work in the life of the Christian conforming them to the image of Christ.

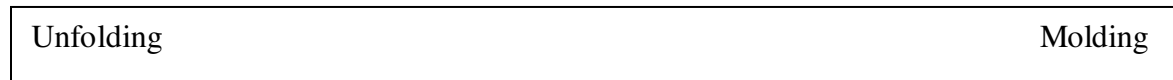
How does Scripture compare to secular educational psychologists theories?

In the scheme of human development as found in Scripture a question that must be asked is where does the Bible land on the Unfolding-Molding Continuum? Theories of development

fall on what Daniel Barlow calls the Unfolding-Molding Continuum that he has adapted from B.B. Lahey and M. S. Johnson's *Psychology & Instruction*. The following chart comes from Barlow's text *Educational psychology; the teaching-learning process*.

Unfolding-Molding Continuum

Wilson			Bloom
Gesell	Piaget	Brunner	Havighurst
			Hunt
			Bandura
			Skinner
			Watson



The Bible clearly stands against the unfolding mode of development. The answer according to Paul in Romans 3:10-18 is an emphatic no, to the question, "if left to ourselves would humanity come to the saving knowledge of God?" The Bible leans toward the molding aspect of the continuum. With creation, we find God personally forming creation. He takes Adam and forms him from the dust of the earth and breaths life into him. Isaiah 45:9, 64:8 and Jeremiah 18:4-6 use the imagery of God as potter and humanity as clay. God asks Jeremiah "Can I not, O house of Israel, deal with you as this potter does?" declares the Lord. "Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel." NASB

Does this mean God is a behaviorist like B.F. Skinner? Are human beings in a divine mouse maze? It is true that God acts with some behaviorist tendencies with rewards and punishments. In Deuteronomy Moses speaks of conditions to the covenant. However there is the unconditional covenant found in Jesus Christ.

Evaluation of Skinner

Skinner is criticized for seeing little difference between the shaping of behavior of a pigeon and a child. "Skinner reduces people to robots or automatons; dehumanizes people, destroying freedom and personal responsibility; denies the existence of the mind; undermines the basis for morals through rejection of all but empirical bases for ethical decisions; fosters

totalitarianism by his emphasis on control of human behavior; confuses his personal philosophy with his science, resulting in scientism rather than science” (Benner and Hill 1999, 1130).

While Skinner dehumanized, Jesus demonstrated the value of all persons regardless of economic status, sex, or social position. Jesus taught from Luke 6 that environment is not what controls behavior, but what is in the individual’s heart. Christian education is to transform lives, not into the image of the teacher, but of the Master Teacher – Jesus.

William Yount suggests that behavioral changes must take place for reasons that the student accepts. Why did Zaccheus in Luke 19 change his behavior of defrauding those from whom he collected taxes and repay them with interest? I think that Jesus’ treating him as a human being and worthy of value through the action of publicly acknowledging Zaccheus, and Jesus’ demonstrating his acceptance of him as a person by coming into his house and eating with him had a significant impact on his life. I believe he saw a reality in Jesus he did not see in others. I believe those factors caused Zaccheus to want to change. He wanted to be like Jesus. Did Jesus want Zaccheus to change his behavior? Yes. Did Jesus command him to change? Did Jesus manipulate him to change? No. It was voluntary. The transformation began with Zaccheus climbing a tree to see Jesus. Even the amount of money he returned, four times, was greater than Jewish law required.

Yount’s third suggestion is an ethical application of behavioral principles that will focus more on intrinsic rewards and incentives. If Zaccheus wanted to be treated with human dignity, it had to begin with him. He changed and others saw the change. Jesus saw the change and declared “salvation has come to this house.”

Yount gives eleven suggestions for using conditioning principles in *Created to Learn*. I will emphasize one, called the Premack Principle. It is as a motivational strategy that “involves using what the learners want to do to reinforce what the teacher wants them to do.” Also known

as “Grandma’s Rule,” that is “Eat your peas”(what Grandma wants) so you can have dessert, (what the child wants). Teachers need to clearly identify student needs and wants and help merge the two. Jesus effectively did this with the woman at the well in John 4.

Evaluation of Piaget

Robert Pazmiño evaluates Piaget in the following areas. First, Piaget is criticized for placing “an exclusive emphasis upon reasoning without a corresponding concern for motivation, feeling, behavior, and tendencies revealed over time” (Pazmiño 1997, 199). He further criticizes Piaget for his assumption of the fundamental goodness of humanity. Christianity, as noted earlier, has a fundamental assumption in the fallenness of humanity. That fallenness affects human reasoning. Though Piaget demonstrates the connectedness between mind and body, he emphasizes a psychology focused upon patterns of reasoning to the exclusion of other dimensions of human life. His philosophical presupposition is naturalism and humanism that is in direct conflict to the Christian worldview. He views “growth in terms of the restructuring of one’s perceptions as new cognitive structures emerge, creating one’s own reality” (Pazmiño 1997, 199). The Christian understanding of growth (maturity) is an integration of truth based in Scripture, along with other sources in conjunction with God as Holy Spirit that provide a framework to build upon. Life is understood in light of Scripture and other truths are viewed through the lens of Scripture.

Evaluation of Erikson

I appreciate that Erikson views development as a lifelong process. He demonstrates the importance of society in the developmental stage. His model is adaptable in the Christian context. As I write, I think of Jacob near the end of his life when he stands before Pharaoh. “Then Joseph brought his father, Jacob, and presented him to Pharaoh, and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said to Jacob, “How many years have you lived?” So Jacob said to

Pharaoh, “The years of my sojourning are one hundred and thirty; few and unpleasant have been the years of my life, nor have they attained the years that my fathers lived during the days of their sojourning.”¹ Genesis 47:7-9 NASB. “Few and unpleasant” grab my attention. Are those years few and unpleasant because Jacob was robbed of his son Joseph for some twenty plus years? Has he experienced disappointment with life over the untimely loss of Rachael and Joseph? That would certainly appear to be the case especially earlier in the context of the story; Jacob is distraught at the prospect of losing another son to imprisonment in Egypt during the famine and the risk of losing Benjamin.

Evaluation of Kohlberg

Kohlberg’s method was an example of Piaget’s equilibration model by creating dissonance and the child thinking through the issue and coming to a resolution (equilibrium). In Jesus’ teaching style he used this method. The question of who is my neighbor is answered in the parable of the Good Samaritan. Jesus created dissonance in the hearers who were Jewish when they listened as a fellow countryman is robbed, beaten, and left for dead. The Jewish religious leadership walk past, refusing to help, but a Samaritan, the enemy, the undesirable, takes the initiative and helps.

Kohlberg’s main thrust was on why children reasoned the way they did, not the content of their reasoning. Of Kohlberg’s approach Pazmiño says, “Evangelical theology maintains the need for radical transformation in order to bring about change in moral life. Without such transformation and the continuing operation of God’s grace, moral development cannot be adequately addressed” (Pazmiño 1997, 208). It is important not just to understand why one reasons the way one does. As Christian, educators we must make conclusions and train in the

¹ NASB, The Lockman Foundation, Moody Press, Chicago: 1977. 41.

“what” of reasoning. Psalm 1 speaks about meditating on the law of the Lord day and night. That meditation is to have a direct correlation to behavior.

Evaluation of Fowler

“Fowler assumes that all human beings have some form of faith that proceeds through a rather predictable process of development” (Anthony 2001,83). There is a distinction between faith and belief. “Beliefs are significant means by which faith is expressed Fowler defines faith in terms of loyalty and trust” (Anthony 2001,83). Faith is expressed as devotion to ideas or persons that have personal worth to us. There is loyalty to what Fowler calls centers of value (evangelical Christian understands this as God) that provide a sense of security. Finally, Fowler believes that the person of faith is “devoted to a ‘master story’ that gives direction and hope in life” (Anthony 2001,83). Fowler sees two qualities that define the nature of faith. First, faith is relational in the structure of a triad with the center of value at the apex; self and others form the base. “Second, faith is seen as knowing that leads to being and doing” (Anthony 2001,84).

My Integrated Model

My first presupposition is that Scripture is the basis for integration. Any psychological/educational model must be evaluated through the lens of Scripture. Scripture is the sole standard and must have in the words of Crabb “functional control” over thinking, meaning scripture takes priority over non-biblical opinion. How do the above observations and evaluations fit? First, there are inborn differences. God created humans with differences in skills, talents, and capabilities. In the Christian context, we are called the “Body of Christ,” each having a specific role to play within the body. Paul reminds us of this in 1st Corinthians 12. Secondly, humans can be shaped. Jeremiah 18 reminds us of what God wants to do in our lives by molding us as a potter does with the clay. Third, Christians have an active role as participants with God in the sanctification process. Paul in Philippians 2:12-13 “Work out your salvation

with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure” NASB. The fourth assumption is the total depravity of humanity. Jeremiah, Paul, Isaiah, and Moses address that the human heart is consistently evil and chooses to do evil. The final assumption deals with the role of adults in the education of children. The Shema of Deuteronomy 6 sums up the role that the adult is to diligently train the child in all aspects of life and intentionally look for teachable moments as each day unfolds. Proverbs 22:2 “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”

I see humans as having three basic needs. We need security, significance, and satisfaction. I need to know that my basic needs (food, shelter, acceptance, and love) will be taken care of. I need to know that my life has meaning and purpose. I need to know that my life makes a difference. Finally, I need a sense of accomplishment. It is my contention that these needs can only be fully met in relation to Jesus Christ. I am significant because I am created in His image and He has given His life for me. I have security because of His promise to never leave or forsake me and to care for my needs. I have satisfaction through the use of my spiritual giftedness whereby I understand my purpose as it fits into God’s plan.

Education that is uniquely Christian views development as a lifelong process of God in Christ maturing the believer and molding him or her into the image of Jesus. It is a process that will never be completed in this life. I see God more on the molding side of the continuum, but he allows us the freedom to “unfold” at our pace as we partner with Him in submission to his will and purposes. God lets us choose, but we face the consequences either positively or negatively. Moses tells the children of Israel just outside the Promised Land to “choose life.” Joshua says to chose whom you will serve. I believe the biblical model of development is relational, adults modeling behavior and intentionally training through all ages and stages of life, seeing the student as an individual and helping them progress toward mature relationship with

Christ. I see this principle working as God uses dissonance in our lives to teach us. As we walk in obedience to Christ, we experience equilibrium and we become more like Him.

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