



“A Bible Teacher Teaching Math” by Tim Dennis

In John 17 Jesus is praying for His disciples who are not of this world, but yet they are in the world. Isn't that how we are as Christian educators today? We are in the world teaching the truth, but we are to teach God's truth that includes English, science, history, mathematics, etc. As Christian educators, we cannot fall into the world's philosophy of dividing truth into secular and sacred. This can happen if we teach our class subjects apart from the Word of God. Our subjects must be integrated with the Word of God. Some class subjects are more easily integrated than others. English can be integrated with the Word of God with less difficulty than mathematics. Hence, that is the topic of this article. How does one integrate the Word of God into mathematics?

First, let me tell what Bible integration is not. Bible integration is not just starting class with prayer. Bible integration is not just having a devotion before every class. Bible integration is not just placing Bible verses in the lesson. Of course, this is true of any subject. This is not Bible integration. Please do not misunderstand me here. I am not saying not to do these activities. I practice these very activities in my class. It is how I develop relationships with my students, and it gives me the opportunity to check the classes "spiritual" pulse. What I am saying is that just doing these great activities is not Biblical integration. If this is all that is done in the class-

room, I still will give commendations. I have been to "Christian" schools where these activities are not even practiced. What I am encouraging you to do is to do more. Math and Bible can and should be integrated.

There is one more item that is not Bible integration or, at the very least, it does not guarantee Bible integration – Christian curriculum. Using Christian curriculum does not automatically mean a teacher is integrating Bible in his subjects. Some curriculum does a better job of providing tools to integrate Bible and mathematics. However, regardless of which publisher is used, here is the problem with the Christian curriculum: if the teacher does not use the teacher guide or the material in the way it was intended to integrate the material with Bible, the lesson will not be biblically integrated. I am thankful for our school's decision to use Christian curriculum, but it is not the only tool I use for biblical integration.

So how do I integrate the Word of God into mathematics even if I do use a Christian curriculum? The key to the answer and consequently, the key to the integration, is the teacher. The *teacher* integrates the Bible and the subject. Christian curriculum is good, but it is only as good as how the teacher teaches and what the teacher stresses. As a teacher I need to evaluate these questions if I intend to teach a class that is biblically integrated:

Calendar Reminders

February 3

Deadline to register for Fine Arts Competition

February 27

Deadline to drop/add for Fine Arts Competition

March 2-3

Fine Arts Competition, Santa Maria, CA

March 20-April 28

Window for IOWA Testing

April 4-6

National Fine Arts Competition, Greenville, SC

April 7

Northern Elementary Competition, Stockton, CA

Legal Issues

The Supreme Court heard arguments related to a case involving parents asking for reimbursement of private education tuition because they claim public education couldn't meet their child's special needs. This ruling could impact Christian education greatly. For more information, research *Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District*.

Biblical Integration, continued

- What is my mentality about the Bible, God's Holy Word?
- Do I have a daily personal time where I read God's Word, meditate on it, and study it for application?

As those questions are pondered, let me ask this question: If I would ask what subject do you teach, what answer would most likely be given? I teach math. I teach history, or I teach English. These are good answers. However, I really need to answer that question by saying "I am a Bible teacher that teaches math." As math teachers, we do need to know the math principles, the theories, the methods for teaching the material; but when I say I do not know my Bible, that is an unacceptable statement. If I want to have the Bible to be integrated into my math, I need to know my Bible just as much if not more than my math. At least, I need to work on that goal. That, my friend, is the start to integrating Bible into math.

A second action that I would take would be to show why arithmetic or mathematics is important. Why? If my students have no desire to learn mathematics, it will be a struggle teaching it. So if I can give Bible-integrated reasons to show why math is important, it will help get students who struggle with math to be aware why math

is important to learn. The following three reasons have been gleaned from the experience of other teachers and from my personal study of Scripture. There are many more reasons. As I give these points, I will also give some examples how to use these Bible truths. This, I believe, will help you get started on the path of integrating math with Bible. Other examples can be acquired through Bible study. The more one knows about the Bible, the more the Bible can be applied to the subject being taught. Let the Holy Spirit be the guide; after all, He's the Great Teacher, isn't He? Here are the points:

1. God demonstrates a use of numbers. God cares about numbers. This is demonstrated by the genealogies God provides (Gen 5:1-32; Matt 1:1-17). Time periods are revealed. This can be applied to the students by asking, "What about your family tree?" "How many years back does it go?" "How many years did your great-grandfather live before your grandfather was born?" God also shows His care about numbers by recording numerical data that is preserved for posterity. For example, Exodus 25-27 and Exodus 36-37 give specific details about the construction of the tabernacle along with sizes and numbers. As a project, students can make a scale drawing or model of the tabernacle. Many different elements of math will be used here, and students learn some Bible facts in the process. God's concern about numbers is also shown by His spe-

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Ponderings

We have heard the pithy quote: "Teachers who love teaching, teach children to love learning." This is true that we need to teach our children to love to learn and to never stop learning. As Christians, who happen to be teachers, may we approach our jobs with this thought in mind: "Teachers who love teaching, teach children to love truth." This, more than a love for learning, is our goal. Truth, when accepted, is our freedom, our hope, and our safety.

TEACH TRUTH to
TOUCH HEARTS

Education Humor

When toilet paper is placed where the Kleenex box used to be and when students use grocery bags for backpacks or lunch boxes, you know it's almost summer!




Miss Blanch demonstrates how to use a digital tablet.

cific numbering or counting. In Psalm 147:4, God counts the number of stars. God created man with the capacity to use various counting methods. Matthew 10:30 reveals that the number of hairs on a man's head is numbered or counted. In a Bible concordance, look up the word "number" and count the number of times it is used in Scripture. How many times in the Old Testament? How many times in the New Testament? In which testament is the word used the most? By how much more is it used? How many times is the word used as a noun or a verb? God at various times commanded men to count, to measure, and to record their findings. In Numbers 1:1-46 God commanded a census to be taken and recorded. In application, students can take a census of their school. When counting or measuring is to be used, God is concerned that the weights and the numbers are accurate and orderly (Lev 19:35-36; Proverbs 11:1; Matthew 7:2). As an illustration, can a student accurately dispense a designated number of ounces or grams of candy equally to all students in a classroom?

2. Man has the ability to understand numbers. The concept of numbers began with God. For example, in Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 23, 31; 2:2-3 God numbers the day of creation and delineates the events of each one. Mark Fakkema says, "The number concept is man's discovery of what God has made and ordained." God has given man the ability to understand and work with numbers as well as other subjects (Job 32:8, 9; I Cor. 2:14-16). If the truths of mathematics are part of God's truth (and they are) then they need spiritual discernment to be fully understood. I am not saying an unregenerate man cannot understand math; his understanding is just incomplete. The fall of man did not just affect just spiritual understanding; it affected all truths. Glenn Wernstein said, "Man's ability to use the number system completely, effectively, and entirely for God's glory has been marred by sin." As a project that can demonstrate that students do have abilities to understand math and incorporate all methods of learning, use the concept of symmetry (mathematical arrangement of parts). Have the students study sunflower seeds, sea shells, pine cones, flowers, and butterflies and report their observations and findings.

3. Math has value as a subject. Many students and some teachers will disagree with this statement. Mathematical truths are always the same, and they exist because God made them so. Consequently, the consistency of math shows that God is orderly and precise. Consider the instructions for Noah to construct the ark in Genesis 6:14-16. Look at Numbers 1:1-10:10 which gives a careful description of the order in which the tribes of Israel were to camp, march, and transport the tabernacle. Frank E. Gaebelein (*The Patterns of God's Truth*) said, "The world of mathematical precision is God's world, and it is His in a unique identity." A study of math should result in a greater appreciation of God's creation (Psa. 8:3-9; Jeremiah 33:22; Col 1:16-17; Job 38:22; Psa. 139:14). Man's creativity often requires some mathematical understanding. By this, we can control our environment or subdue the earth as God commands. It also permits a man to make the best use of plants and animals for food as God directed. Math helps man to understand other areas of life. In doing so, it uses the processes of arithmetic. We add money to restitutions (Lev. 15:16; 6:5). Adding sins to life (I Sam 12:19). Adding believers to the faith (Acts 2:41). Multiply grace, peace, and love (Dan. 4:1; 6:25; I Peter 1:2; II Peter 1:2; Jude 2) are math in use. In fact, by using a concordance one can look up the words add, adding, multiply, divide, and division. Problems for students to work out can be developed from these verses and at the same time learn that math has value as a subject.

It is important that we, as Bible teachers who teach math, teach math that is truly integrated with God's Word. It shouldn't be divided into two areas: sacred and secular. The key to truly integrating the Bible with math is to read and study the Bible on a daily basis, asking God for wisdom on how to use math in a biblical way. Even if I use all the tools of a good Christian curriculum to integrate God's Word into math, I am still limited to what the curriculum has provided me. I want to go beyond what that curriculum can provide. It is a great place to start, but I do not want to be limited to just the curriculum. Providing students with biblical reasons why they should study and learn mathematics and using biblically integrated lessons strengthens the fact that God Who loves us so much is the same God Who is orderly and precise in His numbers. 

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