

Lesson #23: The Triple Crown of Teaching

The Triple Crown is considered by many to be the greatest accomplishment in thoroughbred racing. And rightly so, only twelve horses in the last one-hundred years have been able to do it. It takes pedigree, training and versatility...not to mention being at the right place, in the right weather, at the right time, experts say. It is a summary of greatness as the same horse, in the same year, wins the Kentucky Derby, then the Preakness, and finally, the Belmont Stakes.

I think there's a Triple Crown of teaching, too--a summary of great teaching. I'm putting this lesson at the end of the curriculum and teaching section because of that. And the good news is, this Triple Crown is fair more attainable; you can try for it every time you teach; and there's no horse to clean up after (though probably quite a few children).

Here's my Triple Crown:

Crown #1: Teaching that is Faithfully Understandable

Here is my Kentucky Derby: the sort of first race of the Triple Crown. This is teaching that is true to the God's Word. And, that is presented in a way that the children can grasp. You won't even get out of the starting gate if you leave God's Word behind. We have to make sure we aren't just teaching moralism or what we would like the Bible to say. The children (like us) need the gospel if they are to be saved. That means teaching them about the Great and Good God who created them and is king over them and is worthy of all their worship. That means understanding they are sinners who rebel against this Great and Good King and face His eternal judgment. That means knowing about Jesus, the Son of God, the perfect Savior who came to pay for the sins of all who turn from their sins and trust in as their Savior. Who died on the cross and who rose from the dead in victory on the third day. And this means, hearing the call to repent of their sins and trust in Jesus, themselves. And, as they do so, to live the rest of their lives, not their own way, but God's way and with His help. Yes, we must be faithful to teach all of this, displayed through every page of the Bible.

But to be faithful AND to present it in a (usually simplified) way that children can understand is the half to this challenge. It is something that takes prayer, and practice...and some training certainly does not hurt! Like Lesson #16 reminded us, we might know truth, but we have to think about who we are telling it to, if we want them to know it, too. Children, especially preschoolers and younger elementary-aged children, don't understand abstract ideas like we do. They are very concrete thinkers. That makes some ideas tricky to get across to them. Appendix G and H, mentioned in Lesson #16, can be helpful in reminding us how these little children think.

Crown #2: Teaching that is Enjoyably Rich

Winning the Kentucky Derby is just the first trophy need. Next comes the Preakness: teaching in a way that the children enjoy, yet is deeply rich with Biblical truth. "Enjoyable" is usually not so hard to come by. Most every curriculum has it. Most every teacher can figure that out (even just bring cupcakes to class and see if that doesn't up the enjoyable factor!). But enjoyable that is rich in truth take a bit more forethought. It means thinking about what those children enjoy doing AND what you want them to do and marrying them right there in your classroom. These are the "Conduits of Truth" from Lesson #18. Don't settle with being everyone's favorite teacher because you are fun or funny! Use all that is enjoyable in you and all that the kids enjoy to display truth and bring them back to it again and again.

And that thought, of course, brings us to the crunch race, the Belmont Stakes:

Crown #3: Teaching that is Deeply Rememberable

We cannot be the Holy Spirit. We cannot save the children we teach. But, by God's grace, we can leave a testimony and a trail in their hearts. The testimony of the truths of God's Word. The testimony of His work in the lives of person after person after person through every page of the Bible. And, the testimony of His work in our lives, who He is living in right before them, right now. And the trail of how to come, find and know this great God through faith in Christ.