

BCL ep320 Classical Essentials: Classical? Liberal Arts? Humanities? Here's What You NEED to Know! with Dr. Chris Schlect

Have you ever wondered about the differences between the words classical, liberal arts, humanities? Are they distinct approaches? Do they overlap? In this episode, we tackle this common question as part of our Basecamp Live Classical Essentials series. We've gathered some of the most downloaded episodes from our archives to explore key topics in classical education. In this episode, we hear from Dr. Chris Schleich, professor, author, and expert in classical education, who will help us navigate these distinctions and better understand the many educational options available to us as we raise the next generation.

As we raise the next generation, all this and more on today's episode of Basecamp Live. Mountains, we all face them as we seek to influence the next generation. Get equipped to conquer the challenges, summit the peak, and shape exceptionally thoughtful, compassionate, and flourishing human beings.

We call it ancient future education for raising the next generation. Welcome to Basecamp Live. Now your host, Davies Owens.

Welcome to another episode of Basecamp Live. Davies Owens here with you. As always, grateful for your taking the time to listen and be a part of this amazing work we're doing around the country of raising up the next generation.

It's not even around the country, it's around the world. And I'm amazed as I travel. In fact, this has been a really busy travel month for me.

I've been on three different campuses just this past weekend at David Bryant's Providence Classical Christian in Oxford, Georgia. Big shout out to all of your families and your board and your teachers. Had an amazing half day of training parents on this past Saturday and got to spend time with students as well as board members on your beautiful campus.

Wow, 60 plus acres in beautiful Georgia. It was good to be back in my home state. Also a big shout out to Leslie Collins, head of school at Covenant Academy in Cypress, Texas, another Basecamp Live and Zipcast School.

We are so excited. We've got some big news about Zipcast coming out here in just a few weeks. Zipcast 2.0, a huge announcement.

And I'm so grateful for all of you who are part of Zipcast 1.0 as we've been calling it and got on board with this last summer. 60 plus schools. We've got over 20 states represented who are using Zipcast to help communicate with parents.

If you're not familiar with Zipcast, you're gonna be hearing a lot more about it. It's just been a wonderful way to meet you on a busy morning. And this is the long-form podcast.

It takes a little bit more time. I guess you can get more laundry done or grass cut or whatever you're doing while you're listening. It's a privilege to be with you and to hear from you.

Info at Basecamp Live. Give us a big shout out. This is a little series we're doing where we've gone back through the many archives of the past eight years, and so many people are asking many great questions that we've talked about before about classical Christian education.

In this episode, we're going to sit down with Dr. Chris Schlecht. He's the Director of Classical and Christian Studies at New St. Andrews College. He also serves on the faculty as a Senior Fellow of History, and he mainly teaches history and classical rhetoric and related fields.

He's been active in studying history and classical education and teaching and consulting and training all around the country. He and his wife Brenda have five grown children. They're all products of classical and Christian education, as are their spouses, as are many of their grandchildren.

So Chris is an expert in this area and has a lot to share, and I can't wait for you to jump back into this episode. Before we do, just as always, a quick shout out as well to the folks at Classical Academic Press, Life Architects, Coaching, and the Classic Learning Test. All of these and many more are on the Basecamp Live Partners page.

Check out the great resources that they offer. Well, without further ado, let's jump back into this timeless conversation with Dr. Chris Schlecht. Well, Dr. Chris Schlecht, welcome back to Basecamp Live.

Davies, it is great to be here. Great to be with you again. It's so good.

Yeah, we were just going back and looking over the eight years. This is your officially your third time on Basecamp Live, and we've covered some topics in the past. It's high time to get you back on.

Do I get a jacket or a special membership access or something now? Yeah, we need to work on that. I guess in the vein of our theme, we ought to give you like a pickaxe or something. That's right.

Like episode five or something. Strive for the five-timers club or something like that. That'll be the ticket to my arrival.

I will have arrived in classical Christian education if I'd been on Basecamp five times. You know, I think we may just have to call you a sherpa at that point. You may just become like a certified sherpa because you've been there five times.

You've led people up the mountain that many times. I'm going to work on that. Yeah, and I'm going to want the jacket or the tie or whatever it is.

I'm going to get you. Yeah, you may want like a down jacket on the mountain, but we're going

to work on that. You will be the first to receive this honorary experience.

And so, folks, go to the website. You can look back. We've covered a lot of topics in the past.

And Chris, you're always just such a great voice of wisdom and insight. What I'd love to talk about, and this is one of the blessings of this moment we're in, is there is a serious rise in value and interest for classical Christian education. We see it everywhere.

There's statistics that prove it. It's coming in all forms, five-day-a-week, hybrid, collaborative, homeschool. It's in vogue these days.

And with that, I think, has come a lot of terms that get thrown around. You know, be it there's obviously classical non-Christian charter schools out there. There are schools that will say they're liberal arts, but not necessarily classical.

There are folks that are classical Christian, and sometimes they're Christian classical, which I don't know if that's dyslexia or if that's purposeful. And then there's Christian liberal arts education. So we need help.

So I thought maybe you could just help us sort through all these terms. Yeah, I don't know if I can be of help, but I can at least relate to the problem. I think that whatever classical education is, if they're listening to Basecamp, then they're probably for it.

And a lot of, just like you said, it's a movement, and it's got all the excitement and energy of a movement, but it has also all of the accretions and the lack of stability that a movement might have. And a lot of the terms are thrown around in the framework of boosterism and promotion, which don't necessarily have probative value, for drawing careful distinctions that would be more helpful. Well, and you're right.

And to add again to, what was the word, accretions? That's really good. I gotta write that one down. That's a good one.

That's why you're a Sherpa, by the way. A lot of these, yeah, the various iterations of these schools are, again, it's further complicated by so many schools that maybe were historically denominational schools or kind of, you know, just broadly Christian schools have been looking for kind of branding distinctives and are now coming back in and, you know, taking out whatever Spanish and putting in Latin or changing out their curriculum into something more classical in nature and then flying the classical flag, which I think is well intended. But again, it just adds to that blurring of what is this? Exactly.

So what we do is we take whatever we like, you know, sunshine and sand in my toes and warm puppies and good fellowship. And that's classical education. It sounds good to me.

It's called a classical vacation, I think. Flowers and meadows and, you know, that's what classical education is. Yeah.

Yeah. And part of it is, I think, the adjective classical itself, which wound up being attached to education in the way that we presently attach it. I think in the 1980s and coming into really around 1991 with Doug Wilson's book, *Recovering the Lost Tools*, that was he referred to as a classical education and then followed up by Susan Wise Bower's book, *The Well-Trained Mind*.

I think that those two books, especially Susan Wise Bower, I think you probably had even a wider reach. Doug Wilson's book with, like, day schools and Susan Wise Bower with home schools, and I think the home school community was larger then. But that's how the adjective classical got attached to this traditionalist mode of education in the way that it presently does.

So that's interesting. So if we could time warp back to 1920 and you said, I'm looking for a classical or classical Christian school, would people look at you with some curiosity? Like, what are you even asking for? No, the term existed then too, but it was much more narrowly tailored to, it was classical education referring particularly to Greece and Rome, the education of Greece and Rome. So in fact, you go to the 1920s and I've looked at this want ads in trade journals that were looking for a classical teacher and a classical teacher that was somebody who taught Greek or Latin and then opened up into the literature of Greece and Rome.

So a teacher who was teaching Dante, which is Italian, or Milton, or some of these other things wasn't necessarily a classical teacher. That was just a literature teacher. Wow.

Okay. In terms of the, so the adjective classical, of course, has been around for a long time. But the way we presently attach it to education within the context of today's movement, the adjective classical functions similarly to classic cars, classic rock, classic, which means sort of broadly speaking, tried and true and older and proven.

Yeah. It's classic Coke versus the nasty stuff that came out in 1983, right? It's going back to try to improve it. But I've often said, I mean, correct me if maybe I've not ever said this right, but I've often said, you know, when somebody, as I've trained people on how do you answer the question, what is classical Christian? I'll say, well, it's the way pretty much everyone in the West educated up until a hundred years ago.

But that's again, probably a difference between classical as you're describing and maybe more liberal arts. So again, help us with this. Well, and I think that, and I would go so far as to differentiate liberal arts and humanities.

Those are different terms emanating from different periods in the history of education that actually capture different valences. I think they can be complimentary, but historically, I think those terms actually were liberal arts on the one hand and humanities on the other referred to not quite the same thing. But if I can circle back to your point that you were just making here, the term classical as it attached to education, we start to see that in the 19th century.

I think what you tell a lot of people is accurate. There is sort of a tradition of education, a mainstream story of education in the West that goes back to the Greeks through the Romans

and medieval and the early modern, you know, humanities, Renaissance Reformation period. And that got disrupted in the industrial age.

And it used to just be education, like that was education. And then when we reach the industrial age and in the 19th century, we see an impulse to foster technical proficiency in education. And then the term classical was really introduced in order to talk about the old-time education that's different than the modern progressive model.

Which is, again, more vocational or job training, that shift. Exactly. So the adjective classical showed up in the 19th century.

There wasn't the need for that kind of classical, for that kind of adjective previously, because there wasn't a need to differentiate, because there was kind of a mainstream way of going about education until that departure in industrialization. But then the adjective classical in the 19th century referred primarily to, it referred to the education where they're retaining the Greek and Latin requirements and the literature that accompanied it. So it was much more narrowly Greek and Latin.

That was the traditional curriculum over against the progressive voc tech approach that was emerging 150 years ago as brand new. So I have a, in my files, I think it's like 1927 copy of National Geographic and the back cover, the full page ad, it's fascinating, is a image of the bindings of great books, you know, the Iliad and the Odyssey. And then the tagline is basically it's to invite you to this subscription service, so they'll mail you one of these great books every month in the mail.

Charles Eliot's shelf of books or whatever. Yeah. Right.

Even before Adler came out with a great book. But anyway, the point is, the tagline is, rediscover the books that charmed you in your youth. And I thought, wow, think about that for a moment, that the average, you know, I mean, granted, these are National Geographic subscribers, but the point is sort of a broad base of American public was solicited by this full page back page ad to subscribe to books that would have, they would have nostalgically thought of as charming them in their youth.

So again, this was a pretty broadly understood and embraced form of education, even if it wasn't called classical back in 1920. Yeah, you're exactly right. In fact, the term literacy is interesting to be lettered used to be, it used to mean that you were a participant in a conversation that include included material that was written in the form of great literature.

And 150 years ago, we sort of took literacy to mean you can read and write, you know, you can cipher. So you have that the technical ability to read whatever it might be a sign or instructions or whatever, like that versus, you know, why do you read and write? Will you read and write in order to engage in a great literary enterprise? Yeah, and that's, and that's obviously the, you know, you get a most open houses for classical Christian schools. I mean, still today that that

differentiators there we want, you know, we're not, we're not just informing, we're forming, we're about the business of the deeper, richer formation of our affections and our human souls and our sensibilities.

I mean, that was, but that was sort of, again, that is education. It's not reading, writing, arithmetic, so you can get a job down at the factory. So that's obviously been a 20th century shift.

So, okay, so I want to take a break in a second. But just to summarize, so basically, the short of it is that we added the adjective classical to differentiate in the latter part of the 20th century from just the broader, progressive education that was forming all around us. It was just really, I would say we added the adjective classical in the 19th century to differentiate it from industrial technical train, industrial model of technical training, scientific vocational technical.

But then in the 1980s, we wanted to, given where the public school was going, we wanted to just have something that was more broadly traditionalist. And so I think the classical education movement today, I think, has a lot more ambiguity in how the adjective classical functioned, compared to how it used to function when attached to education earlier. Okay, okay.

Why don't we take a quick break, I want to come back and I want to then explore yet another adjective, we're adding Christian or, you know, to the front or back, depending on which order we do it in. Wasn't it always kind of Christian? And so where did they need to put Christian into it, which is now to differentiate from for the charter school. So anyhow, we need a big whiteboard to draw this out.

It's rather complicated. But I think it's a very relevant topic, because I think most folks listening are like, yeah, we just kind of throw these words around. And I know they're part of, we know we're not like the school down the street, but we don't really know what it means when we use these terms.

Let's take a quick break. We'll come right back and further unpack these important words. Hi, this is Dr. Christopher Perrin with Classical Academic Press.

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So Chris, it's fascinating to me as I travel around the country, hearing just again, even in our own organizations, our own schools. And by the way, maybe you saw a number of, you know, people often know me as the guy who tries to answer the question, what is classical Christian education? I did this talk a number of years ago, kind of a TED talk. I stacked up boxes, sort of,

here's classical on one side and progressive on the other.

But as I travel around the country, I hear people calling it Christian classical and then classical Christian. And I don't know if that's just because we want to say, well, God's more important, so he gets to be in the front because it's Christian. But can you make the case, help us sort this out, can you make the case that classical pre-100 years ago was kind of Christian just in its core DNA anyhow? I do think that if you're going to 100 years ago, that takes us to, you know, back to the 1920s, but yeah.

Yeah, 1924. And I think that there were some challenges there too. But by and large, I would say that in the West, the education that has prevailed in the West has been Christian.

Learned people have been animated and motivated to learn by understanding, going further up and further in and understanding God and the world that God made. And that has been understood in a Christian context. So Western education certainly has been Christian education.

And then when Christian missions spread out, they take literacy with them because Christians are people of the book. And the book, the Bible is delivered in an ancient Near Eastern and Eastern Mediterranean context. And so the cultures of the ancient Near East and Greece and Rome are part and parcel to the Christian story.

And so Christians have been motivated for Christian reasons to carry that project forward. And I think even, you know, at least I guess as a story, like the D.L. Moody's that even did Sunday school or things. And part of that was to teach basic remedial reading so that you could then read the scriptures.

I mean, there's always been this pairing of a vision of spiritual formation and actual education to accomplish that goal. Right. And the fact that the Most High God has chosen to reveal himself in the word.

And his son is the word and then the word inscripturated. So yes, it's. But is all classical education Christian? I would say no, because, well, the gospel in the Greco-Roman world didn't come into a Christian world, but the gospel transformed the world that it came into.

So there was education that I think we could call classical that, to use the term broadly and loosely, this would be the education that Plato in his Academy that we see championed then in Athens and extending beyond into Aristotle and other Greeks that will get picked up in the Roman world, exemplified by leading figures like Cicero, Quintilian, Seneca, many, many others. And these were not Christians. These people were not Christians.

But then Christianity, these people of the book come in and they develop a culture of literacy that is conjoined with the culture of literacy that preexisted from Greece and Rome. And so then they read these Greek and Roman texts, but they appropriate them to their Christian purposes and use them to develop Christian understandings of the world. I've heard sometimes it's explained that the Greek and the Romans, what they did that had really not

happened historically prior to that was they basically formed the right, they learned how to articulate the questions and the ideas that really formed what is, what does it mean to be human? They didn't necessarily get the right answers, but they had the right, they were asking the right questions.

So it's interesting, you know, why did, why did Jesus appear where he did and where, when and where? It's again, the Logos appeared to answer the questions that were finally formulated well by the Greeks. So, I mean, it's an interesting, is that, is that fair to kind of pair it that way? Yeah, I think that's, yeah, there's a lot of complications there to, that we can show, but those would be, that's a whole series of podcasts there to, to develop that. This is the 10,000 foot answer.

I'm just trying to explain, because, you know, again, another podcast is, yeah, why are we so fascinated by these Greeks and Romans? I remember, I've had many, you know, prospective parents, like, is it just sort of, you guys are, you know, just, just picked a random historical period and think the guys in the sandals and the robes are just really exciting to hang out with? Like, what's the deal? It's like, no, these are the people that actually historically really framed the big question. So, I think that's, again, these are broad comments, but okay, so we're talking classical, we've talked about Christian and sort of where that pairs. The word liberal arts is often thrown into the soup pot here of terms.

So, where does that come from and what does that mean? Yeah, it means something far different today than what it used to mean. You know, you could go to the University of Texas and graduate with a degree from an academic department that's housed within the College of Liberal Arts. There's over 40 different major fields of study housed within the College of Liberal Arts.

What does liberal arts mean and what does arts mean? I think higher education has turned this into a weird org chart term that is really extract, taking it out of its earlier context. But the liberal arts, what we know, the history of the liberal arts traces back to Plato and actually the Pythagoreans before him, but it congeals into what we really start thinking of the liberal arts in the Christian Middle Ages. So, I think we have those Greek ingredients, but it starts to become a cake.

Like the flour and the eggs are not a cake. And so, you go back to the Greeks and the Romans for the flour and the eggs, but it becomes the cake in the Middle Ages. So, that's when we have the liberal arts as we're going to recognize them, how we can talk about them intelligently in the educational tradition.

And we'll get the codification of the number seven, seven liberal arts, the trivium and the quadrivium. So, we begin to see that sort of taking shape with Martianus Capella in the fifth century and Cassiodorus in the fifth and sixth centuries. Those figures there are taking these ingredients and sort of congealing them, solidifying them into something that's more or less coherent into the liberal arts.

Yeah. Go ahead. Well, I was going to go on to talk about what arts are then and what we mean by arts and how they conceived of them.

Yeah. Why don't you do that? Because I want to just further dissect the word liberal, which again, we always have to clarify, doesn't mean you're left of aisle or whatever. Like, what does that mean? And then what are the arts? And just, yeah, unpack that a little bit more.

Yeah. So, the arts are habits of thought that are ordered to production, are ordered to produce something. So, somebody who is an artist in cooking produces edible food, tasty food.

A medicine is an art and it produces health. So, it's an art that's carpentry produces bookshelves and useful objects. So, I listed a bunch of arts, but what makes it an art is that there's a theory to it.

There's a reason about it. You think about how to build these things and there's design that goes into it that can actually be taught with precepts. So, the carpenter can have precepts that he will pass along to his apprentice and it's ordered to production.

So, it involves reasoning and reasoning is at the center of it, but it's ordered to production. So, that's what an art is. And so, then we have to distinguish which arts are the liberal ones and which arts are some of the other types of arts.

So, there's fine arts, there's liberal arts, there's mechanical arts, there's practical arts. These are all different types of arts and then the liberal ones are a certain set of them. And so, mechanical arts are arts that produce useful things.

So, carpentry and cooking, those would be mechanical arts, for example, and architecture would be mechanical arts. A fine art is something that it's reason that's ordered to the production of something that's an end in and of itself. So, it's final.

Objects of beauty, for example. So, a painting doesn't serve another purpose other than its own existence. Like, you know, a chair exists to be sat in.

The carpenter produces stuff that serves other ends, right? But a painting is... So, the fine arts, sculpture, painting, that sort of... So, those are fine arts. Music is fine art. So, then which of the arts is a liberal art or are the liberal arts? These are arts that are ordered to the production of further knowledge.

So, mechanical arts is arts to the order to the production of useful things. Fine arts order the production of beautiful things. Liberal arts order to the production of further knowledge.

So, in other words, from the liberal arts, if you are trained in them, once you mature in your training, you can actually become self-directed in your own pursuit of knowledge. So, you're a skilled knower, a skilled further learner, if you will. That's what training in the liberal arts provides, which is why they're sort of foundational to going anywhere else.

Well, that's what I was about to ask because it sounds... I mean, that's the argument, again, you hear in K-12 as well as higher education, which is, you know, everyone should have a good... Even Google says now we like people who come from a liberal arts training because, to your point, you basically... You've been theoretically trained to know how to think versus just trained in a particular final goal of production or vocation. Yeah, to know how to think, but dexterously, to create, to innovate, to adapt, to transfer, you know, to take something learned from one domain and extend it into another domain. The one trained in the liberal arts has a facility for doing that.

Whereas, if I'm trained to cook, I can create nourishment, but I haven't necessarily been trained to move outside of that domain. Right, right. Although, I think today the argument would be everyone should have the founding classical liberal arts education, I certainly believe that, and then go on and get your cooking degree so you can... Exactly.

Problem-solving cook, right. Right, but you're not doing liberal arts when you're doing that, but you're doing a good, worthy thing, and I'm very grateful for those who are trained in the medical arts for helping for my own health, the health of my families and my loved ones, and that carpenter who put up my house, that's valuable and worthy. It's not liberal arts, it's... And this is one of the problems, is a tendency... This is the problem of boosterism that we were talking about earlier, where we think, oh, liberal arts are good, therefore anything that's good, I'm going to try to find a place within the liberal arts for it.

Yeah, liberal arts don't have an exclusive purchase on what's good and worthwhile. They're just a certain part of what's good and worthwhile. Yeah, that makes sense.

But again, I think just broadly where our culture is right now, you have people in the medical field that came through a very narrow STEM education, if you will, that's even in K-12, and then they get straight into vocational training, and nowhere in that process were they really formed to think broadly and to have the equipping to problem solve at a higher level in that sense. Exactly. So they're wonderful technicians, and boy, you and I need that technique if ever I need my appendix out or something.

I'm grateful for that. So it's not to cheapen it, it's just to understand what its strengths and limitations are. Right.

But you do want a doctor that knows you as a human, not as a lab report, and they took your appendix out, and it was actually some hernia thing, but they never thought more broadly. At any rate, we're into the weeds now. But let me ask before we're going to get a break again.

So again, the term liberal arts, I've heard it talked in terms of at open houses, where it goes back to the liberated man, the free man, as opposed to the common worker in the field that didn't have that education. Is that a fair, is that another use for that liberation? I think that that's, yes, I think that that's accurate. Now, the Romans understood by liberation, obviously, they often understood it in a social class term, where you're liberated from being able to attend

a subsistence labor.

So whether you were a slave or a wage earner, you know, that was one kind of work. And the liberal man, the liberally trained man, pursued other things rather than those so called lower interests. And I think we see that impulse within the tradition.

As a Protestant, it's one that I don't embrace, I think that there's a dignity to getting dirt under your fingernails, that coming back to the carpenter and the physician that you and I were just talking about. There's a tendency to kind of look down on subsistence type labor. And in within the liberal arts tradition, that's not the only facet of it that we could carry forward.

That's one that I'm happy to let die on the right. Right. And I mean, again, I know, again, there's so many roads we can go down, but just quickly like the term common arts, because I have, in fact, my youngest son did his senior thesis on entitled why the liberal arts need to rediscover the common arts, because that's, you know, and that's also kind of a trend right now, like every child doesn't need to head off to the academy, but can go and be an auto mechanic or a doctor or whatever, and have this base of a liberal arts.

So what is common arts part of that collection? Yeah, common arts. You know, one of one of our friends, our mutual friend, Chris Hall, wrote a great book on the common art. And I think Chris Hall would agree that, you know, we need to recapture a vision of the liberal arts that doesn't disparage any, some of the other types of arts.

Right. You know, exactly. So while the liberal arts are deeply important, their importance lies in the fact that it's sort of like from here, you can go anywhere, but you should go to these anywheres, right? The technical proficiency is very important.

So the part of the liberal arts that's always been there that I think really does carry forward is, well, we can jettison the idea of, you know, subsistence work is, is base. But what we want to preserve is that it liberates you from being beholden to someone else or a school of thought to order your pursuit of knowledge for you. Which you've perfectly described sort of the modern moment where for most young people, kind of big tech is, you know, through their algorithms, creating a, a singular voice that most people don't have the discernment to, to really work their way through.

And then you're vulnerable at that point. So that's a really important point. Yeah.

So if I'm trained in the liberal arts, that doesn't mean that I know everything. What it does mean, however, is that all of the teachers now become accessible to me in a way that I can sort of self-direct. I am equipped to make use of them, fruitful use of them.

And so I continue to learn, but I don't need to, I don't need to continue to learn as an extension of someone else's project. Right. Right.

You're self-learned. That makes it, let's take, take a break. I want to come back and address the

ways that this lack of maybe clarity and multitude of terms kind of gets again, mixed in where is, here's the question, and we'll come back and answer it after the break.

You know, when you think of this education historically as being a, a very limited number of people that had access to a true classical education, not the farmer in the field that would have been the son of the emperor or whatever, would have this kind of, and so there's a bit of a, I mean, use a term, maybe elitist or limited number of people in the population that could use it. And some of that then gets associated with people that were higher performing. And, you know, I, you know, it wasn't for 50, I remember 50 years ago or so, I remember telling my father about this.

I was like, dad, why didn't you go to Vietnam? He said, because I went to law school and I went to college and I went to law school. And he, and I remember asking him, I said, so that's so interesting that there was a time period where only a few people went off to higher education, which would seem to say that it's not for everybody. My question, Chris, is there's a lot, a little bit of, we talk out of two sides of our mouth.

We talk about rigor and, you know, high, high excellence and everything. And yet we're also trying to say, this is an education for all kids in a family. And then we see increasingly numbers of schools struggling because they're, you know, the third child shows up and they've got some learning challenges, but we're telling everyone that this is a, you know, high-stay-nine, high-performance school.

So some of the, I think there, that creates a lot of times, you know, some real hurt feelings and misunderstandings. Like, wait, I thought I signed up for this, but I got that. So I'd love your impression of how do we best articulate what it is we're trying to do? And some schools may choose to go one way or the other, but at least let's use the right terms to do it.

So we'll be right back and continue to unpack all these words and these implications. You choose a traditional education for a reason. So why use standardized tests that don't reflect that? Basecamp Lab is proud to partner with Classic Learning Test, which offers online academic assessments that strengthen a traditional education.

CLT's assessments for grades 3 through 12 provide a meaningful metric of students' abilities, equipping parents and educators and helping students pursue a fulfilling future. Explore CLT's assessments by visiting www.cltxam.com forward slash Basecamp. So Chris, as I travel around the country and hear different open house talks and the way that we present this to families coming in, often is this is a amazing education for your whole family.

It's an amazing education, no matter whether you're going to end up in a more vocational environment or you're going to end up in a more humanities, like this is for everybody. And yet, I think what often when we get down to the reality of living out school, some schools maybe fall more into that more early Greek version, which is this really isn't for everyone. It's for those who can keep up because we're going to read the 48 great books here in the next two months.

And we're going to really push hard. And we're even going to use the term rigor. And then others are saying, no, this really ought to be a school for everybody.

Can we be true to historical, liberal arts, classical Christian education? And where do we fall on that? Can we be for all people or do we need to be for a few? Well, I think that many Christian schools are being faithful, serving their communities. And if their community has different gifts and talents, which I would hope and pray that they do, I think that that school can serve everybody. And yet, not everybody is going to wind up being an academic in that school.

If I could use the analogy, I was trained, I have a PhD in history. And so I teach people history. I teach all kinds of people history, but I'm not expecting all of them to become historians like I am.

In fact, many of them go on to become something. They earn more money. And they become way more proficient than I am in whatever their field of expertise is.

And so I think schools sometimes present this optical illusion. I do think that the liberal arts are for everyone, but the liberal arts, as we were talking about earlier, are designed from here, you can go anywhere. Now, those who are delivering liberal arts education are going further up and further in, more specializing within the liberal arts domains, right? And so they become, the institutional context is going to draw and attract that, but the whole idea is to move on from the school.

And at the college level, where I am here at New St. Andrews, New St. Andrews College is not for everybody. If we pretended that we were for everybody, then that would be kind of troubling. Right.

But you state that at the onset. So you don't go in there looking to get your welding degree when you're done. I mean, it's not going to happen.

Right. But I do think, so I think what we're saying is that, especially in the K-12 journey, it's really important, in fact, to have that well-rounded liberal arts education and then for sure launch. And again, I think sometimes families say, well, this was great for grammar school, but we really kind of need to start earlier the vocational path.

And maybe in some cases there's some argument for that. But I think overall, no, I think this is the right education for every student straight through 12th grade and then maybe for others to continue on into college. So that does make sense.

I want to, yeah, go ahead. And I think, yeah, well, I would say that I think that we tend to delay the vocational path too much in today. You know, it sort of perpetuates adolescence, but there should be this organic connection if we're doing it right, where yes, you know, a young person, 13 or 14, is starting to show some strengths and proclivities, and we should encourage and foster those.

And yet as we do, we also press them forward further up and further in the liberal arts so that when they fully launch as specialists in their area, in their specific calling, they're most fully adaptable and can get the most out of it. That's really helpful. Well, as we kind of wind it down, a couple of things, you know, as we think about many who are listening that did not have any form of classical liberal arts, Christian, any of the terms they were, you know, in maybe a progressive school, where are some good entry points? Because I know that it can be intimidating just trying to get our head not only around the terms, but just even watching our own children in many cases go through it.

It can be intimidating. Where do you advise, you know, parents or, I mean, hopefully educators are on the path too, but even educators are kind of training on the job in many cases. Yeah, there are a number of books and resources, or this podcast is one place.

But I think that the first thing I would say in reaction to that is to not get tripped up over the question, where do I start, in a way that gets in the way of starting. Just start somewhere. And the somewhere that you start has a lot to do with where you are.

So get together with other people and start a book group and begin with what's accessible to the group and what serves the interests of the group. And maybe invite in the local teacher who teaches history to your kids to give you a recommendation saying, or choose the books that your kids are reading, so that you might have community access to somebody who can help you through it. That's where you should start.

And so you should start by starting, not by gumming up the wheels on where do I start. That's a great question. Right.

Which is just an excuse for not starting, I suppose, for some. Yeah, that's right. And I also don't know what gumming up the wheels means either, but I don't know.

That sounds very classical or maybe it's liberal arts. I don't know. I think the point is probably vocational technical.

It probably is. If I was more technically proficient, I wouldn't have said gumming up the wheels. There you go.

That's a good point. All right. Well, no, I think that's a really good word of encouragement.

And I know a lot of families do kind of lean over their kid's shoulder and sort of discover the books along with them, which makes for great conversations. And I think the thing that's so, I know even part of the reason we began this podcast talking about just the surge of influx of interest in classical Christian education, I mean, part of it is because I think people were looking over the shoulders of their kids and realizing there's not as much substance or it's kind of they're reading anthologies and summaries. And when you know you were in those, I think many of us have been in moments in classrooms where the living text of a great book comes alive and you're, you know, you're just raptured up into these rich ideas and conversation.

You're like, okay, now that's what this is about. And so I love your encouragement to just step in and invest a bit more. Yeah.

Remember the Lord picks us up where we are and not where we think we should have been. Yeah. Right.

And he just blesses us in that. And then I think another thing is to lean into having your, you know, getting your humility presented to you. Yeah.

Okay. I don't know this. That's, I don't get it.

I don't know where to start. What a great place to be. Maybe if that's where you are, you should be there.

And that's just, and that's material the Lord is just delighted to work with. When we are weak, he is strong. Well, when we are weak educationally and resume wise, he is strong and that's where he takes, that's where he loves to show off.

Yeah. I'll take a person in that position over someone with a long pedigree any day. Yeah, absolutely.

Well, well said very helpful. Thank you for joining us again, Dr. Schleck and look forward to having you back on. Maybe we won't wait so many years this time to get you back on.

You're always such a guest because we got it. We got to get you your shirt. Yeah.

I'm working on the jacket for you. So we'll get you back on. Okay.

Thanks again. Davies, thank you so much and blessings to you. Well, you did it.

You stayed till the very end of the podcast. Thanks so much for listening to this conversation and a special thanks to our sponsors who make this episode possible. Classical Academic Press, Wilson Hill Academy, Light Phone and the Classic Learning Test.

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What's on your mind? Help us tell stories that may be reflective of what you've seen impacting in your personal life or as a teacher in your school of what classical Christian education is doing again around the world. We appreciate you as a faithful listener. Hey, we're going to be back again next week for another episode.

Please join us. We wouldn't want you to miss.