

## **BCL ep375 How to Find and Train Classical Christian Teachers with Dr. Robert Jackson**

When I was serving as head of school, parents would often ask me two simple questions. Where do you get your teachers and who certifies them? They're reasonable questions, especially because classical Christian schools approach education so differently than most modern schools. So preparing teachers for this work requires a significantly different approach than what most modern progressive teacher certifications offer.

Join us as we discuss the challenges along with the growing number of classical Christian resources to attract, equip and train teachers in this vital work of raising up the next generation, impacting our schools and homes. All this and more on this 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. Davies Owens, your host here on the journey with you of raising up the next generation.

Big shout out to several people here in this episode. I had the joy last week of being at the College and School of the Ozarks. I was on campus as the keynote speaker at the Classical Christian Educators Conference, as well as I had time with the parents and students at the School of the Ozarks and really enjoyed, as always, getting out and seeing the great work that God is doing all around the country.

So many new schools that are starting and mature schools that continue to expand. It is a really exciting time to be a part of classical Christian education. So a joy to be with all of you and a shout out as well to some other folks that are in other parts of the country doing great work as well.

Sam Conin, head of school at Petra Academy in Bozeman, Montana, as well as Darren Walker, who I saw at the conference, who is head of school at Abiding Savior Academy in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Big shout out to you guys, as well as your faculty and staff and parents who are part of the Basecamp Live and Zipcast community. We're so grateful that you guys join us in this great work every week of coming together in a fairly one-sided conversation called a podcast.

So it's always good to hear from you. Info at Basecamp Live, I'd love to hear your thoughts, ideas, anything that's on your mind. I love getting your emails.

So thanks for reaching out to me. In this episode, we have the joy of sitting down with Dr. Rob

Jackson. For 25 years, he has promoted liberal arts education through teaching and scholarship and administrative activities.

He began as a professor of English in education, and then he worked as chief academic officer at Great Hearts, where he founded the Great Hearts Institute. He currently serves as the executive director of the Florida Institute for Classical Learning. He also serves as senior fellow for Flagler College and the Chesterton School Network, while also contributing as an associate editor for Principia Journal.

Dr. Jackson has received teaching awards from Florida State University, the King's College, and was the 2021 recipient of the Salvadori Prize for American Citizenship. Before we jump into this conversation, a big thank you and shout out to our sponsors for this particular episode, the good folks at Wilson Hill Academy, which is a fantastic resource for full online classical education, as well as a great place to go if you're looking for a teacher for a particular class to cover that class. If you're looking for a particular class to be taught, they can help you with even single classes in traditional schools.

It's a great resource. Our good friends at the Herzog Foundation and wonderful training resources that they offer Christian education all around the country, as well as Robert Littlejohn and Chuck Evans, who have written a fantastic book called Wisdom and Eloquence, which is a very helpful guide to understanding classical education for parents. And then our own team here at Basecamp Live and Zipcast.

Zipcast, by the way, is now onboarding schools for the fall. So if you want the opportunity to get ahead of things for the fall, come join us early. It'll give you an opportunity to learn the platform, which is very easy to use and get oriented and get ready to start strong in the fall.

Come check all that out on zipcast.media site. Well, let's get started now and jump into this conversation with Dr. Rob Jackson. Rob, welcome to Basecamp Live.

It's great to be with you, Davies. We have been, I think you and I both been in this classical world for what, at least two decades. You're coming up with 25 years now in this world.

Oh man. Don't, don't, don't, don't, don't bring that up. I mean, come on.

You know, I'm starting to feel it. I'm starting to feel a little creaky now. Creaky.

There's a good word. Well, it has to do with like wisdom, right? I mean, we're supposed to be the guys that have wisdom. This is not a... I certainly hope some of those years have added a bit to my repertoire.

And I think so. I think so. Tell folks in your many years, what you have, your journey into and through classical education, what you're doing now.

Sure. Well, it really began as a quest that came out of my graduate training. I was, in fact,

educated within the more typical frame of a school, a research one university in education.

And it was there that I found myself kind of longing, looking for something more historical, more philosophic, honestly. But it was after grad school that I was paired up with a really great provost, Peter Wood, now the president of the National Association of Scholars, who really gave guidance to that early, those early years as an assistant professor. I was the education guy at a small liberal arts college, the King's College in New York City.

And Peter was just such a, I mean, he was genuine polymath. But as the provost, he was able to really give a kind of vision for how to promote classical, what I would now call classical education, liberal arts education in the context of what was the Oxford degree was at the heart of this new college or a revitalized college. It had been in existence for decades prior, but as it was reborn, we took the Oxford degree, which is politics, philosophy, and economics and framed the entire college sequence, the entire core curriculum around that.

So my education work was to really take the shape of some of those disciplines. And that was what I was hungry for. And so with Peter's encouragement, effectively, I created an education program with the PP&E as a framework.

And I mentioned that in part because what I think we see today in many schools and departments of education is a lacking in those categories. We don't adequately attend to the philosophic dimension. What is an education? What's it for? What are we transmitting by way of a tradition? And how do we do that effectively? I think we also sometimes forget that politics in the pure sense, and I'm not referring to partisanship here, but politics in preparation of the next, preparing the next generation, right, for participation in the polis, politics, is really what we're doing in education.

We're doing it in the family to begin with, but we do it when we educate the young. And ultimately, we should be embodying this. We should have communities where the conversations, the debates, the ideas, the exchange over ideas is really lived out.

It's not this today, obviously, if we were to jump onto social media, if we were to listen to our favorite podcast, well, maybe not, Basecamp being the exception, but so many times the podcasts are really just reinforcing the base, right? You just kind of play into the crowd, as it were, and trying to fire up the partisan sentiments of the group. And that's not what we should be doing when we educate the young. So politics matters.

And then the economic elements, the policy elements, right, that go into all of this to say, that was such a formative experience for me, 12 years of that college, teaching education courses within that framework, preparing the next generation of teachers. And I was just taken with the idea that all of those who were in education classes at the college needed to consider a classical school when they jumped out. So what happened, fast forward, is that in doing just that and sending my students out, some of them landed at a classical charter school, a network of classical charter schools known as Great Hearts Academies.

And they were pleased when my students, when they recruited my students. And as such, word got around that I was the kind of professor that knew his way around classical education and might be useful. I joined Great Hearts Academies back in 2013 and served as academic officer, directed and founded an institute.

And it was there that I really got an opportunity to take the theoretical, the idea that the professor lives in the ivory tower. I got to bring it into contact with the local K-12 communities that we were serving at Great Hearts. And that's really where I think the practical dimension of my experience emerged.

So fast forward now, about 10 years with Great Hearts, and I left to launch what we felt, business partners had all been involved in this work over years. In fact, collectively, we had several decades. So I was the junior officer, as it were, in this group.

But together, we realized there's so much need out there as classical schools continue to proliferate that we really have to do something to help find the kind of talent. It's essentially that next gen of talent that will serve these schools, most of which are individual, they're local, they're sole providers of classical in their community. And they just don't have the benefits or the connectivity of a network as my business partners and I had experienced at our respective institutions.

So we launched Classical Commons to be a membership organization to serve local schools and to provide them access to talents, tributaries of talent, we say, sort of a pipeline, if you will, of talent, but also then to construct resources to equip that talent to make sure that once a teacher lands at a school, that they're going to continue to grow and mature in the craft of teaching. That's what Classical Commons is here for. You and I were in a CLT convened meeting a couple years ago, as both of us being part of the advisory group for CLT.

And there was a survey that had been done among the many leaders. And I think it's probably the most broad reaching group that Jeremy Tate assembles of classical movement leadership. And on that survey was the question of, I'm paraphrasing, but kind of what keeps you up at night? Like, what's the what are the most urgent matters that you think about as a leader? And right there at the top, I think it was number one was teacher training and recruiting.

And that's such a, I mean, to your point, this is it's really a education and apprenticing. It's historically been we become the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. So the type of tree you hire is pretty important into your into your school.

And I can remember as I had a school many times being asked by very thoughtful parents, hey, I love this thing. I get that you're not hiring right out of the government teacher college down the street. In fact, you probably don't want those folks or the certification from the progressive school master's degree in education.

But I also don't want unqualified teachers. So talk a bit about just the with this rapid growth

that we're witnessing in broadly classical liberal arts education. Where are teachers coming from? And what are some of the qualifications and the challenges that school leaders have when they're trying to find teachers? It's a huge.

Yeah, it is. It's critical. And I'll just admit, right, right up front, it was surveys like the one you just referenced, that got me excited at the prospect of doing something substantial for for the larger classical Renaissance, this movement, right, this sort of growth of classical schools, it felt like that's the thing we've got to address the talent question.

Yeah, because of what I'd seen both at Great Hearts and what my business partners had seen in their organizations, we realized that a lot of schools, a lot of networks even reliant on canvassing the colleges where they teach great books or where there's an honors college, where there's a real core curriculum still in place. And those are far rarer than we'd like to admit. Those are actually institutions that probably number a few dozen, right? Whereas we have thousands of institutions of higher education.

And it's not always, it's not, we can't just go always to the local college and expect to find someone who's been well-educated, well-rounded in having studied math and science and literature and so forth. We're looking for someone, obviously, who has that well-roundedness. But what we discovered as we were looking at the talent pathways is that a lot of classical schools had become reliant on 22-year-olds who just graduated from college, had all of the idealism and many of the great ideas of the books that they had just read, but they didn't have a lot of life experience.

Now, mind you, that's always going to be, I think, an element of the population that serves these schools. And we should get them started young. For those who are called to the classroom, by all means.

We want to bring such novices in, and to use the word that you dropped a few moments ago, we want to apprentice them into this craft of teaching. We want them to become masterful teachers, but that's going to take time. So what we're doing at the commons, and I think any of the schools who have matured to the place where they understand the real need on the ground, we're looking for adults at various stages of a life and those who have lived and have some experience to offer as they enter the classroom.

There was a report just this last summer, summer of 25, put out by Robert Pondiscio and colleagues at the American Enterprise Institute that identified so-called refugee teachers as a significant portion of those who are being attracted to classical schools. By refugee, Pondiscio and others were basically describing the teacher who went through an education program, probably like myself, was dissatisfied with what they experienced and continued to look for and study and explore the tradition and find for themselves, perhaps on their own, what it was that they were looking for in their chosen discipline, in their subject area. Those people who, again, may be at a district school or a private school somewhere in this country, are very much attracted when they hear the offer of what a classical school has to present to its teachers.

The fact that they value, that a classical school values its faculty as the very heart and soul of the community, that, of course, what it is, is what we're transmitting, is through the people that we employ, that we hire, that we place in the classroom. So, yeah, go ahead. As you're describing, and I think this is worth just pausing on for a moment, because I think that to a parent listening and to that question of, well, where do you get your teachers from? There's probably, I've seen in the last decade for sure, a shift from, oh, they're not certified to, I'm glad they're probably not certified at the progressive college.

What are you, I mean, so people understand the core of that problem. I mean, typically when people come even out of, and I won't start naming names, but even today, there are large, both undergraduate programs and graduate programs that seemingly are even Christian colleges or Christian organizations, and yet the graduates come out with a fairly progressive John Dewey type of view of education. So help folks understand what's the problem with just broadly trusting these institutions and their graduates.

Yeah, I would say fundamentally it's a disposition, it's an outlook, it's the way they view the educational encounter, the experience of the classroom. In the tradition, from a classical, from a liberal arts perspective, it's understood that the teacher is to be masterful, both in their expertise of the content, their understanding of the content, but also the way they deliver that content, the way they engage students, the way they're able to help students to explore the biological wonders of the world, right? The sort of the puzzles and the wonderment of a mathematical equation. That expertise in subject matter is often not just secondary, it feels like it's tertiary in schools of education, which emphasize, and this has been documented, well-documented, they emphasize a kind of theoretical understanding, an outlook of how the child is a sort of self-motivated, generative being that needs to just be drawn out of himself or herself, right? That we need to explore the creativity that's deep within, as we draw that out in our circles, in our learning circles, right, in the ways in which we construct the class.

Our job is to not be that sage on the stage. This is often sort of a phrase that's used, you're not to be the wise one before the students, you're to be the guide on the side, to use some sort of parlance. Now, again, these are truisms, but they represent a way of viewing the classroom.

The classical, the liberal arts tradition looks for sages, at the very least, it looks for men and women who are wise enough and sound enough in their thinking that they are exemplary before that group of students, whatever, whether that's fourth graders or, you know, whether that's juniors in high school, and they have an understanding of the subject matter. It's really, it's the kind of depth that the students can probe and ask questions and continue to explore, but that will be modeled. That type of pedagogy, the way we teach, is simply not promoted in your typical college or department of education at the school down the street, typically.

So I'm going to take a break, and when we come back, I want to address, therefore, given that challenge, and having been in that head of school seat, who's having to wake up in the middle of the night, usually the wake up in the night is that teacher who announces, you know, July

31st, they won't be coming back, and school's starting in a week. That's the, and then you're like, oh my goodness, I can actually remember QuickSights for, you know, teaching seventh grade humanities for about two months as a head of school because I refused just to hire anybody. I couldn't find anybody that was qualified, so I just had to step in in that temporary role until God provided a wonderful person to be the teacher.

But my point is that you, we educators are in such a challenging spot because we've, we can't go the typical route as you just described, the challenges of it, and therefore we're left with how do we find a person that's really qualified and that's teachable and so on. So let's take a break. I want to, I want to hear more of the, what solutions you've put into place.

We'll be right back. If you're seeking an education that helps your child thrive academically and spiritually, Wilson Hill Academy has spent years developing a model that I want you to know about. In their free guide, you'll see how their thoughtfully sequenced curriculum prepares students for college and how a biblical worldview helps them understand the world around them with clarity and how their discussion-based classes teach them to think critically, not just what to think.

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During this short break, I have a special invitation to all school leaders, administrators, and teachers. I want you to imagine for a moment stepping away from your everyday routine at school and diving deep into the rich foundations of Christian education, surrounded by world-class scholars, seasoned classroom teachers, and administrative experts with years of experience running schools with a lot of wisdom to share. That's exactly what the Herzog Foundation's Institute is offering.

I've had the joy of serving as a training coach for the last few years, leading their two-and-a-half-day training on spiritual formation and another one on parent engagement. They offer close to 50 unique training events ranging from board governance to marketing to classroom best practices. They even offer a training on how to teach the great books.

And the best part of all, well, thanks to the generosity of the Herzog Foundation, these training events, including lodging, are completely free for Christian educators. Institutes are located around the country in beautiful locations, including at the Museum of the Bible in Washington, D.C., and the Reagan Library in Santa Barbara. Don't miss this incredible opportunity.

Check out the details at [theherzogfoundation.com](http://theherzogfoundation.com). Rob, given the challenges of going out on the open market and hiring a teacher, or I can still remember as I had a school in Atlanta hiring a woman who came highly regarded. She was for 20 years the teacher of the year in DeKalb County outside of Atlanta. And I hired her, and it was the worst hire I'd ever made because she

just couldn't stop literally putting smiley stickers on every kid's paper because no child was to be left behind, and everyone was to be affirmed no matter how poorly they were doing.

And I'm like, excellence is okay, and you can guide a child in their weaknesses. And it just wasn't even in her frame. She had no ability to do this.

So therefore, we're left with this challenge of where then do we go get these amazing people that we're entrusting into our children? So talk a little bit about some of the challenges that have been out there and some of the encouraging new resources are now becoming available. Well, I'll tell you, I want to hit on a couple of these things, but where do we find them? Every nook and cranny, we're looking everywhere to find the kinds of future teachers that may not have considered the classroom as a vocation, may not have actually thought of that profession. But they're somewhere mid-career.

They have a very active life of the mind. They're probably very involved in their community, civically, maybe in their church or synagogue. And we are actively connecting to those organizations where we think we're going to, you know, our prospect pool is likely to develop the types of people, again, who are very much alive and well with the mind.

And one of the questions we ask with our screening process at Classical Commons, if we have an applicant, we say, you know, what inspires you about your subject area? And what are the principal concepts that a student would have to master if they were to study some aspect of your area in one semester? I mean, you give someone that question, those two questions, what inspires you and what are you going to actually require students to know and how would you convey that over the course of a semester? And suddenly you're digging in. You're going to find out if somebody has real content knowledge or to your point, if they're just good with stickies and smiley faces, right? So there needs to be substance, but we go and look for people who have degrees and experience in bioethics or biosciences that are working as actuaries or working, you know, in some field where mathematics is directly applied. We're talking, of course, to teachers who have taught Latin or who've taught literature.

Maybe they're at the private school. We're definitely looking to teachers, but I'm saying we're often looking to people who taught in unusual or atypical ways, like the homeschool mom whose fifth child has now graduated, is going off to college. And as they drop that, you know, the caboose off, as it were, we're interested in talking to that mom who's now basically been a teacher for five young souls, has effectively taken them through their paces, and is now asking herself, well, what's next, right? We're talking to military personnel who are returning to civilian life after a 20 or a 25-year career.

Some of those officers, as you may know, will take advanced degrees, often in military history, over the course of their study, over the course of their service. And we're very interested in those individuals, both because if they have an active life of the mind, but also have the capacity to work within a functional organization, sometimes dysfunctional perhaps, but they understand the nature of command and control, they understand the nature of structures and

organizations and the constituents that they have to serve, that actually comes in quite handy in a school context. We're looking for people who, again, perhaps they've been working in the office, they've been working in management, they've been working in various aspects of the profession or the commercial world, and they really are looking for something that satisfies their souls more deeply.

But we always ask that question of, tell us about the subject area that you love, that you studied and that you continue to study throughout your life, and then how would you teach something of that to a group of students in the course of a semester? That's one way that we are able to sort of suss out who's got the right stuff. It makes a lot of sense. I mean, the apple, back to that image, the apple doesn't fall far from the chain.

If you don't love your subject, why are the students going to love it? So you want to be deeply vested in it. But I'm curious, because sort of the other ditch you can fall into, which again, I'm having some flashbacks to being ahead of school, is you hire the person who is incredibly deep in terms of the life of the mind and absolutely passionate about their topic, but they're kind of maybe socially at a step with the generation in front of them, or they're just quite honestly kind of a heady person who doesn't really socially have the EQ that maybe the teacher needs. And you get, I mean, again, I won't go into too many stories, but we all know that situation where the guy's up front with his bow tie waxing eloquently about Pliny the Elder for 45 minutes and the seventh grade boys are about to fall out of their chairs in total boredom, just because you've got a PhD and it doesn't mean these, you've got to be able to, again, extend that to the, how do you find that balance of kind of maybe the more EQ side of it? Yep.

So it's absolutely critical. What you're pointing to is the human element, right? That in transmitting any subject, any content, it happens between people. And those students, as you say, from a different generation, you know, with a different attention span to be sure, are not going to put up with, even if they're respectful, sitting quietly, nothing's really happening, right? That's a monologue.

So a series of questions that we're going to be asking of any candidate is how they would design the activities and the routines and the habits of learning to engage students with that subject. There's the acid test, right? Show us what that classroom would actually look like. And for the person who's never been in a classroom, it's going to be, it's going to be a crucible for them to think that through.

Hopefully they've had some experience teaching Sunday school or they've worked, you know, with Boy Scouts or what have you. And so they have some familiarity. If not, that's going to be a pretty steep learning curve.

But ultimately we're asking them questions pertaining to how their passion for the subject is going to rub off on students, right? Because again, if you're not getting it across to the students, then we've got nothing there, right? Then you're not actually teaching. And I think a lot of this emotional intelligence that you're describing comes along when we interview, when

we talk to those individuals face-to-face. You can tell a lot about a person, as you know, when you sit down with them for coffee.

And while we can't do that at scale, we have interviews, we have videos that we collect from candidates. We strongly encourage our school leaders who are hiring to make sure that they both view the video snapshot and introduction and then immediately get on the phone. If they like what they see on paper, if they like the response to the essay questions, if they can, you know, they feel like that individual in their video presentation has got some of the flesh and, you know, the enfleshed, the flesh and blood that kind of the vibe, right, that we need, that they get on the phone with them or get on Zoom ideally and really talk to them.

Just sort of push into that and see how would they probably relate to and ask those questions. How would you relate with a group of, you know, a classroom full of 14-year-olds? What connection would you make on this content? But again, what would be the activities? How would you break it down? What habits or routines would you establish that would help those young people really grasp the subject that you love so much? And I've seen quite often and I know I was a big fan of anybody that's going to potentially become a teacher has to come and model teach and we can evaluate that individual. And I always remember, you know, my evaluation actually started the minute they walked on the property because if they're, you know, how did they interact with the office staff? How did they interact with students in the hallway before they formally began the teaching segment? And all of that, to your point, kind of nets out to an observation of their innate gifts and skills as well as maybe where they would be teachable.

And that humility and teachability is certainly a prerequisite, I would think, as well. It most certainly is. We, you know, we absolutely are looking for individuals who acknowledge when I teach this subject, whatever that subject is, when I teach this subject, I am standing atop the shoulders of giants, right? I've inherited a tradition that I don't even deserve, truly, but am very thankfully a recipient, a beneficiary.

And as such, I humbly bow before those who've gone before me, right? I acknowledge they're my betters. And I share that with my students. I let them know, listen, I'm a couple steps ahead of you to be sure, but understand I and you, we are the inheritors of this rich legacy.

Yeah. And that's part of the joy of coming in as a teacher when you realize you're part of a dynamic community. It's not just here's your lesson plan, there's your classroom, it's August, C and May, don't get anybody in trouble.

I mean, that's literally what I've talked to some teachers and said, yeah, that's kind of the school model was, you know, out of sight, out of mind, you just go do your thing and nobody can get below a C and it'll be great. I'm like, okay, well that's probably, and then you come into a classical school and it's like, wow, this is ideally a living community. And I know in many cases, new teachers are paired up with veterans.

So the two third grade teachers are working together and the older one's mentoring. I mean, the mentoring process is often built into classical schools just with great intentionality. So.

You know, one of our member schools was just really hit hard when they knew they were going to lose two of their most senior faculty. And I'm talking 30 year veterans, both of them. And they appealed to them, no, please like, you know, don't do that, don't leave us, right? Is there any way? But they understood, right? Sure.

You know, these women, two women really had done their tour of duty and they were taking care of grandkids now and so forth. But the school leader was astute enough, wise enough to know, I don't want to lose that wisdom that those two 30 year veterans have. I'm going to find some way, even in a part-time capacity to bring them around to serve as apprentices, as mentors to those novice teachers who were coming in.

And that's exactly the arrangement they came up with, you know, maybe 10 hours a week. And of course these women magnanimously responded, generously responded with a positive. Of course we can help you with that.

We just, you know, we're not going to be full-time anymore, but yes, we would love to pass along what we have to the next generation of teachers. I think that's so critical. I really do that.

We've got to find those mentors and those models and just mind the depths of their wisdom. To this theme, we keep coming back of, I mean, a biblical and certainly historically classical education liberal arts model of apprenticing. It certainly applies, as we're talking about in the classroom, to veteran teachers pouring into younger teachers.

And it's even with parents. I see so often some of the gold that gets tossed out in classical schools are the alumni parents. And I've seen other schools very effectively tap those alumni moms and dads and say, hey, come back and have, you know, coffee or tea with these younger moms who were so hungry for wisdom and guidance.

So I think we are, we are the purveyors of, you know, wisdom and virtue and we don't want it to age out of our building. Like let's keep bringing these voices back in, which is really important. Let's take another break, Rob.

I want to come back and get real specific here at the end, just hearing specifically some of the resources that are out there. Some of them you've created just to help someone on that journey into the classroom to know the best resources that are there. So we'll be right back after this break.

Every school year tells a story, but the quieter pages often go unread. A science experiment that sparks wonder, a teacher guiding perseverance, moments parents long to hear. Zipcast brings those stories to light.

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Hi there, classical Christian parents, students, and teachers. This is Robert Littlejohn, co-author with Charles Evans of *Wisdom and Eloquence*, a Christian Paradigm for Classical Learning, published by Crossway Books. We want you to know about our new book with well-known family counselor, Keith McCurdy, published by Classical Academic Press.

The book is titled *Wisdom and Eloquence for Parents, How Classical Christian Education Can Transform Your Children, Your Family, and the World*. We have written this shorter parent-focused book specifically as an admissions and parent education resource for schools and families. We are excited to be proud sponsors of Zipcast and Base Camp Live, and we hope you are enjoying these two great resources for classical learning as much as we are.

And we would invite you to visit our website, [wisdomandeloquence.org](http://wisdomandeloquence.org), to explore the various services offered by the authors of *Wisdom and Eloquence for Parents*, and to let us know how we can best serve you. We look forward to hearing from you soon. Rob, we've covered a lot of ground looking at the challenges of finding teachers and both the opportunities then for bringing new teachers and getting them established into the school community.

But for those who are listening that are maybe part of that list you gave of just many different ages and stages, seasons in life, who are thinking, maybe I do have something I could offer a local school. How do folks go about that process of both self-evaluation and finding schools that might be a good fit? Yeah. Well, I think it begins with just making contact with one of these classical schools.

I think it's so critical that we bring more people into our schools. We ought to have a lot more show and tell going on in our classical schools, just open opportunities, whether it's a musical performance, stage play, whether it's really just coffee with the school leader, the head of school. We ought to make sure that the broader community knows we're actually here not just to entertain you, but to serve this community and the next generation that's coming through our classrooms.

You're a part of that community. In a sense, you are, as a member of this community, a beneficiary of what we're doing in this school. So I think there ought to be a lot more openness to begin with just on the part of school leaders, their boards, to think creatively about how to invite the community in.

So let's assume that someone in that community says, yeah, I'm really interested in classical education. I've heard about it. It sounds like the right kind of thing.

I'd like to learn more. There are now a variety of resources and online platforms, including our

own Classical Commons, that are directing people towards little modules that will help them to become familiar with the liniments of classical education. Classical Commons has partnered with Classical U, for example, and we have a sequence of courses that could be taken over the course of two or three hours that would really be a nice introduction to classical education for those who are relatively unfamiliar.

That was not the schooling that I had growing up, but I want to know more. And obviously, there's a bibliography that we could offer with two or three books just to get started reading. So I think it's important to do your research, probably to sit in on one or two of these courses.

No charge for these courses, right? Because we're really just trying to assimilate folks who are, as of yet, unfamiliar with, but somehow drawn intuitively to classical education. I think the other piece in terms of trying to understand or self-assess is something that we're going to see a lot more of because we're working with partners to use some assessments and personality assessments and temperament assessments, you know, the kind of classic four temperaments and the notion of virtue and how we relate to others. It was that emotional intelligence you referenced a few moments ago that we're going to be able to offer to potential prospective teachers just so that they can take that self-inventory, you know, begin to ask themselves, do I have the right stuff? Would I do well in a classroom? How would I work with other colleagues? That kind of information is now becoming a lot more accessible.

And we're seeing within classical education a kind of specific design to focus on both temperament and virtue and the kind of habits of virtue that help people to grow and deepen their understanding, their self-understanding. Because again, unless the individual has that kind of ability to look and say, here's who I am, here's what I have to offer, they're going to be hard pressed to bring it into the classroom. So those are a couple of things that I would point to for someone who's exploring this.

And there are now finders galore out there. I'll just say, if you're looking for a classical school, you should be able to hop onto the web at our Classical Commons, at Humanitas Institute, any number of associations. I think Davies, of course, SCL and ACCS both have school finders.

There's going to be a lot more aggregation in the next year, I suspect, under the influence of AI, that if you want to find one of these schools, you're going to be able to find one in no time at all. I definitely recommend that you drop in and visit with one of them. Well, to that point, I mean, what are those natural entry points are certainly come just take a tour and visit if I would think, I don't know, high percentage of teacher hires are already in some orbit around the school, as you mentioned, either a parent or a grandparent that's in a different season life and has availability.

I also think substitute teaching for a lot of schools has been a kind of a rent before you buy experience, maybe come in and teach some classes and we can watch you and you can watch us and see if there's something here worth following up on volunteering at the school. So all of that, just when you have proximity, you have a higher level of awareness engagement. It's

certainly hard when the only interview is, you know, like you were referencing just a distant person on a zoom call, and you just kind of make a decision without seeing them.

It's so much better for both parties when you can have that just interaction there on campus without a lot of pressure of the big interview. So, but yeah, you're right. We're in a new world where it's a lot easier now to find those opportunities, those openings.

And to your point, there's also more resources than ever before to help someone understand what is a classical Christian education and how does one teach classically? I can, I mean, there's no question. I mean, 10 years ago, it was, here's a lost tools of learning or something. Go, you know, go read this a few times and, and then here's Gregory seven laws, whichever, whatever that means still, you know, hopefully that'll, that'll guide you correctly, but boy, it's, it's a new world and it's encouraging to see the resources and the connections that you're putting in place.

So any other, just kind of final words of encouragement to the leaders and the parents. Yeah. I'd say, you know, the resourcing is, is of course the thing that we are committed to a classical commons in part, because we see not only finding talent and making connection to schools, but cultivating the faculty on the ground in those local communities is crucial.

And so I mentioned classical you, the classical teaching initiative out of Boise. We've got grad programs that we're working in partnering with across the country, and we really do want to see regional representation from Florida and Texas and Arizona and California, all around the country where honors colleges or smaller liberal arts colleges have begun to take this work. I would say something that your audience should take a look out, be on the lookout for is how civic institutes have really become something of a dynamic emergence in higher education at the state level, in the state university system.

Now, again, we typically are thinking in classical Christian education, well, we have to go to a Christian school to find the kind of faculty that we're, that we're looking for, if we're hiring a young 22-year-old. That, that may well be, but there are on state campuses across this country now, civic institutes. The one I'm thinking of most recently is the Hamilton School at the University of Florida.

And they were able to attract some of the most extraordinary talent, professors of longstanding, James Hankins, just retired from Harvard, decided to go down to the University of Florida because the Hamilton School, he believes, is where Western civilization is going to get a rebirth. I mean, he's going to Gainesville for this, right? I say that because there are now more than 30 of those institutes at state universities from Ohio and North Carolina, Chapel Hill, obviously in Florida and here in Arizona. And they are attracting the kind of scholars and colleagues, many of whom, by the way, share the Christian faith and are certainly, you know, there's, there's no dissonance there, but they are true liberal educationists.

And I suspect that that's one of the ways that we're going to revitalize liberal education and

perhaps see the next generation equipped with a sound education. And so I would encourage any of our list, your listeners to get out there and really take a look at those, if those state university institutes happen to be in their backyard, that's a, that's a new development. That's so encouraging.

And again, there's so much happening right now. We can't even begin to make the list of all the different voices that are offering guidance and training and support, but it's a great time to be curious about this to join the movement. You are in good stead of finding a collaborative community that can help guide you in that process.

But Rob, thanks for what you're doing. It's important work and look forward to staying in touch with you. I'll have to have you back and, and see new developments because there's so many things happening and there's links in the show notes for people that want to learn about classical comms and the resources that you have.

So thanks so much for your time. I appreciate it, Davies. Good to be with you.

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See you back next week.