

## Required Course

“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.”

Psalm

32:8

As a high school classroom teacher, I taught – students, of course, but more specifically – grammar and literature. I had some classes that were filled with honors students and others that were a blend of students with various levels of ability.

In my classroom, I always did my best to provide challenging assignments for all students. When pushed out of our comfort zones, we find just how much we can achieve. I still believe lessons need to be relevant for the learners too. My classroom bulletin board simply stated, “Literature Reflects Life.” That is what I wanted students to understand. I wanted students to be able to apply their knowledge, connect their learning to their everyday lives, and become better communicators. To do this, students had to create new things and demonstrate their understanding. The best classes aren’t passive. They are active.

Students didn’t always get it quite right the first time so I would give them feedback and an opportunity to do the assignment over, better. This was most evident with writing assignments. The writing process can be a tedious one and for some people downright painful. Write. Revise. Rewrite. Revise. Rewrite ... Maybe you can relate. But the process is necessary to improve not just grammar skills but overall communication skills.

As an English teacher, the courses I taught were required for graduation. For better or worse, students needed to pass my class to take one more step closer to receiving a diploma. I never took that responsibility lightly. I wanted students to do well, advance, and ultimately graduate; however, it required work on the part of the student. Grades aren’t just given. They are earned. Earned with help and support along the way.

Jesus is often referred to as the great teacher. His ministry on Earth was one of teaching and healing. He taught many lessons through parables to make his teachings more relevant to the listener or learner. Through the Bible, we see the examples of His teaching and we are challenged to improve and be better. For Jesus, the world is His classroom. We are His students.

We encounter challenges in our lives. These are part of our lessons. Sometimes life is hard. We may think we can't do it, but He is there to support us. Isaiah 41:10 reminds us, "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

We have support and the opportunity to do better, be better. Thank goodness because I can be like that student who finds certain lessons painful because it takes me several tries to get it right. With help from the Lord, I can get it right.

This is Christian Life 101 and it is a required course. We rise each day to new - or maybe repeated - life lessons and face new challenges as they come. Only by working through the challenges in life and following the teachings of Jesus do we reach the ultimate goal to finish and receive our heavenly reward hearing ... "Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord." (Matthew 25:23)

When challenges come your way, don't wish them away. Look for the lesson. Know that you were meant for this. These challenges and trials are part of your development and move you one step closer to that heavenly goal.

Be a great student of the Christian life. Grow as a Christian knowing that by following His teachings you are being led in the way you should go. Find it comforting to know you always have the good counsel of His loving eye on you every step of the way.

Dear Lord,

Thank you for life's lessons even when they are hard. Help me to always look for the good in times of trial and challenge. Let me appreciate the process of continuous self-improvement to grow closer to You. I know you are bringing me to this and through this for a reason. I want to be a good student so that I can be a better Christian.

Amen.