

MOST FREQUENTLY USED HEBREW WORDS
FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING
AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO
THE BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

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CE 870
BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION:
AN IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS

TRINITY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

October 28, 2004

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MODULE FOUR ASSIGNMENT:

Conduct a word study of the most frequently used Hebrew words for teaching and learning found in the Old Testament. You are expected to consult the standard theological word books, concordances, lexicons, and other similar language helps. In addition, you will need to consult those works in the field of Christian education that discuss these terms as well. The results of the word study are to be presented in a paper that devotes a separate section to each word under consideration. A final section of the paper will engage in a critical appraisal of the significance of your findings for formulating a biblical theology of Christian education. The paper should be as long as needed to thoroughly fulfill the requirements for this module. Some suggested resources to consult would include:

Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis, Zondervan (1997)

Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, Moody (1980)

Learning Outcome: Upon successful completion of this module, you will be able to conduct basic linguistic research using widely accepted tools of inquiry in the theological disciplines and report the results of this work in acceptable written form.

INTRODUCTION

Although there are several Hebrew words used in the Old Testament for and translated into the concepts of “learning” and “teaching”, I have found eight which are most frequently used. These include אָלַף (’ālap I), יָסַר (yāsar I), מוֹסָר (mûsār), יָרָה (yārâ III), לָמַד (lāmad), לָקַח (leqah), יָדָע (yāda‘ I), and בִּין (bîn)¹.

This paper will devote one chapter to a study of each of the above words as used in the OT. A final chapter will be devoted to a critical appraisal of the significance of my findings to the formulation of a biblical theology of Christian education. It is the thesis of this paper that these words contribute at least twelve points to a biblical theology of Christian education. Those points are that a Biblical theology of Christian education (1) needs to have as its major emphasis teaching students the way of establishment or re-establishment of one’s relationship with YHWH, (2) needs to emphasize that Christian education is to be intentional and deliberate, (3) needs to embody an intent to spread the knowledge of God to all peoples, (4) needs to emphasize that knowledge of God comes from a student’s personal/relational experience of God’s character and submission to him, (5) needs to uphold the place of verbal instruction of the word of God, (6) needs to emphasize that the goal of Christian education is a change of heart as well as obedience, (7) needs to hold that students be taught by Christian teachers if that education is to be *Christian*, (8) needs to include the necessity of instilling in students a respect for God and others in authority, (9) needs to include the importance of spiritual discernment

¹ These specific words for learning and teaching were gleaned from my study of the NIV use of these two terms as found in Edward W. Goodrick, John R. Kohlenberger III, and James A. Swanson, *Zondervan NIV Exhaustive Concordance* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), sv. “teaching” and sv. “learning”, as well as the word list found in *The New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 5 vols., edited by Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), vol. 5, 117-118, hereafter designated as *NIDOTTE*.

in obtaining a knowledge of God, (10) needs to include discipleship, life mentorship, and physical training as part of its content, (11) needs to teach that practical *application* of principles that are taught is a necessary part of Christian education, and (12) needs to incorporate the many methods which are discovered from the study of the use of the words “learning” and “teaching” in the OT.

I. לָלַם (‘ālap I)

לָלַם (‘ālap I) is found four times in the OT². E. H. Merrill in *The New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*³ (NIDOTTE) defines the term as meaning “learn” in the qal form and “teach” in the piel form. This definition is echoed by L. Koehler, W. Baumgartner, and J. J. Stemm in *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*⁴ (HALOT), Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs in *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*⁵ (BDB), and by R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*⁶ (TWOT).

This word is found only once in qal form in Prov. 22:25. In that passage the context (verses 24-25) reads: “Do not make friends with a hot-tempered man, do not associate with one easily angered, or you may learn (לָלַם)⁷ his ways and get yourself ensnared”⁸. Here the word seems to indicate a type of learning which involves not so much knowledge as transference of character. Note how it is learning his “ways” (דרכו), his character⁹. Association with a hot-tempered man and one easily angered can rub off on others resulting in imitation of those traits and ensnarement. Merrill notes that the

² Job. 15:5; 33:33; 35:11, and Prov. 25. The information on Hebrew words occurrences in this paper are from John R. Kohlenberger III and James A. Swanson, *The Hebrew-English Concordance to the Old Testament With the New International Version* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 120, hereafter designated as *HECOT*.

³ *NIDOTTE*, vol. 1, 415.

⁴ Translated by M. E. J. Richardson, 4 vols., (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), vol. 1, 59, hereafter noted as *HALOT*.

⁵ (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976), 48. hereafter noted as *BDB*.

⁶ 2 vols., (Chicago: Moody, 1980), vol. 1, 47, hereafter noted as *TWOT*.

⁷ The LXX here uses the aorist of *manqanw*.

⁸ Biblical quotations in this paper will be from *The Holy Bible, The New International Version* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984) unless otherwise indicated.

⁹ *BDB*, 73, defines this word (לָלַם) as used here as “fig. way of mode of living, or of character”, specifically in this verse, “of wickedness”.

context shows this is “learning by association or example as opposed to learning by formal instruction. The proverb thus touches upon the possibility of deleterious effects of peer pressure”¹⁰.

This word is found in the piel three times, all in Job (15:5; 33:33; and 35:11). In each of these passages the word comes from the mouth of one of Job’s adversarial friends (15:5 from Eliphaz, and 33:33 and 35:11 from Elihu). Eliphaz (15:5) addresses Job with “your sin prompts (לְלַמֵּד) your mouth; you adopt the tongue of the crafty.” Elihu states of Job (33:33), “. . . listen to me; be silent, and I will teach (לְלַמֵּד) you wisdom” and (35:11) speaking of God who is the one, “. . . who teaches (לְלַמֵּד) more to us than to the beasts of the earth and makes us wiser than the birds of the air.” The second use of the term above (Job 33:33) seems to indicate a learning and teaching which is *verbal* while the other two instances indicate a learning and teaching which seem to be accomplished *by association*.

Since in each case in Job the word is found in the mouth of Job’s adversaries and in Proverbs it is used to indicate the transference of negative character, this prompts *TWOT* to state, “perhaps this word scripturally has only bad connotations and does not express teaching or learning that is valid”¹¹. While this could possibly be the case, four occurrences would hardly justify this conclusion as to the extent of this word’s possible semantic range. In addition, its use in 35:11 does not seem to necessarily carry a “bad connotation”. It could in fact be a true statement in Elihu’s monologue about the teaching of God.

¹⁰ *NIDOTTE*, 415.

¹¹ Vol. 4, 47.

With respect to the theology of Christian education¹², Merrill’s observation seems to be the most helpful. In addition to the semantic range of this word including verbal transference of information in the process of teaching and learning, this word also includes the concept of “learning by association”. This is contextually verified by its use in Prov. 22:25 as shown above, but also can be seen in Job 15:5 where Job’s sin (עוֹן)¹³ “teaches his mouth”. Here, in the latter case, the mouth speaks what it knows from its association with the sinful nature. From this learning from sin the verse says, “you adopt¹⁴ the tongue of the crafty.” In both cases an association with evil is transferred to the person’s outward character and actions. Hence, נִלְמַד enlightens us as to the nature of learning as well as teaching. Both can take place via verbal instruction or association with the teacher’s character and actions. This highlights the need for a Christian teacher to set the example for the student by his actions and character as well as to be able to transfer information verbally for proper learning to take place.

¹² For a good definition of “Christian education”, see note 125 below.

¹³ *BDB* translates this term “iniquity” here, 730.

¹⁴ The term בָּחַר means “choose”, *BDB*, 104.

II. יָסַר (yāsar I)

יָסַר (yāsar I) is found in the Old Testament 42 times¹⁵. *BDB*¹⁶ gives three main meanings of this verb: “admonish”, “instruct”, and “discipline”. *HALOT* concurs but also lists “chasten, rebuke”, and “be warned”¹⁷. Branson, in the *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*¹⁸ (*TDOT*) summarizes its meanings under three major headings: “instruction”, “correction”, and “punishment”. M. Saebo in the *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*¹⁹ (*TLOT*) indicates that its main meaning is “chastise”. *TWOT*²⁰ defines this term as meaning, “discipline, chasten, instruct” and goes on to make an important point that it denotes “correction which results in education”. *TWOT* goes on to state that it is a discipline with the *intent* of educating rooted in the covenantal relationship between YHWH and his people²¹. This is noted especially in Lev. 26:18, 23, 28; Deut. 4:36; 8:5; Jer. 2:19; 6:8; 10:24; 30:11; 31:18 46:28; Hos. 7:12; 15; and 10:10. YHWH’s discipline, יָסַר, has as its goal the re-establishment of his relationship with his people. Merrill in *NIDOTTE*²² defines it as “admonish”, “correct”, “discipline”, and “punishment”. He notes that it “specifically relates not to formal education but to the instilling of values and norms of conduct by verbal (hortatory) means or, after the fact, by rebuke or even physical chastisement”.²³

¹⁵ *HECOT*, 713.

¹⁶ 415-416.

¹⁷ 418-419.

¹⁸ G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, eds, translated by J. T. Willis (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), vol. 6, 129-134, hereafter designated by *TDOT*

¹⁹ By Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann, translated by Mark E. Biddle (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1997), vol. 2, 548-51, hereafter designated as *TLOT*.

²⁰ Vol. 1, 386

²¹ *TWOT*, vol. 1, 386-87.

²² Vol. 2, 479.

²³ Vol. 2, 479.

Merrill specifically divides the uses of this word into two categories: (1) the verb's use as "instruction" and (2) its use as "chastisement or punishment". Indeed one may classify the type of instruction into these two categories (e.g., Job. 4:3, Prov. 31:1, Ps. 16:7; 94:12; Is. 28²⁶; Deut. 4:36 for category 1, and Lev. 26:18, 28; 26:23; Ps. 118:18, etc. for category II), however, one must not miss what seems to be the root *intent* or *goal* of the one who does the action represented by this word. Prov. 29:19 illustrates that the intent or the goal of **סָר** is *obedience*. It states, "A servant cannot be corrected (**סָר**) by mere words; though he understands, he will not respond".²⁴ Obedience seems to be the goal of the actions of this verb. As such the instruction is deliberate and intentional. Without obedience, what is intended by the one doing the discipline is not accomplished. The word evidently has the meaning of the Greek term *παιδεύω*²⁵ into which **סָר** nearly always translates in the LXX²⁶. It is an educational/disciplinary term with the purpose of instilling values and standards of conduct into the one being educated. It includes verbal as well as corporeal encouragement.

²⁴ Merrill, *NIDOTTE*, 479, *seems* to classify the use of this word here under "instruction". However, the verse seems to say that **סָר** is not achieved by mere words in this instance. It would seem to imply that this use here is focusing on the broader semantic range of this term including "punishment" or "chastisement" not mere instruction.

²⁵ This word means "bring up, instruct, train, educate", "correct", "discipline", Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 608.

²⁶ Edwin Hatch and Henry Redpath, *A Concordance to the Septuagint* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983), vol. 2, 1047, *TWOT*, 386, and *TLOT*, 551.

The use of **רָצַו** in the Old Testament however goes farther than simply gaining obedience. It seems to have as its intent or *goal of the changing of the heart*²⁷ of the one being disciplined. This is seen from its use in Leviticus 26. Verses 18-19 read as follows:

If after all this you will not *listen* to me, I will punish (**רָצַו**) you for your sins seven times over. I will *break down your stubborn pride* and make the sky above you like iron and the ground beneath you like bronze. (Emphasis is mine).

The context of these verses indicate this heart issue. It is their stubborn pride that must be broken. In verses 23 and 27 God says he will punish (**רָצַו**) the Israelites if they continue to be hostile toward him. In verses 40-42 God again mentions the state of their hearts:

But if they will confess their sins and the sins of their fathers--their treachery against me and their hostility toward me, which made me hostile toward them so that I sent them into the land of their enemies--then when their *uncircumcised hearts are humbled* and they pay for their sin, I will remember my covenant with Jacob and my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land . . . (Emphasis mine).

The purpose of **רָצַו** involves bringing humility to the hearts of these people. God wants to “break down” the Israelites’ “stubborn pride” so that they will listen to or obey him and thus restore their relationship with him. Hence this discipline is deliberate and intentional and has as its goal the reaching into the heart of men and changing his pride into compliance²⁸.

In other passages this emphasis on the heart is also indicated. In Deut. 8:2-5 the emphasis is upon the heart of man. This passage reads:

²⁷ In this paper I have intentionally given a greater focus on “heart” aspects/goals behind this word and its substantive **מִן־רָצַו** as it seems to be a purposeful aspect of the educational intent behind their use and has been given very little attention by lexicographers.

²⁸ This would seem to be voluntary compliance once stubborn pride is broken down.

Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to *humble* you and to test you in order to know *what was in your heart*, whether or not you would keep his commands. He *humbled* you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. Your clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years. Know then in *your heart* that as a man disciplines (רָצַח) his son, so the LORD your God disciplines (רָצַח) you. Observe the commands of the LORD your God, walking in his ways and revering him. (Emphases mine).

God's discipline was to humble the Israelite's hearts through discipline of hunger and provision of manna, words out of the mouth of God, clothes that did not wear out, and feet that did not swell. All these things were the actions of רָצַח for the purpose of changing their hearts so that they walk in the ways of YHWH and revere him.

In another place (Hos. 7:12-15) Scripture states:

When they go, I will throw my net over them; I will pull them down like birds of the air. When I hear them flocking together, I will catch (רָצַח) them. Woe to them, because they have strayed from me! Destruction to them, because they have rebelled against me! I long to redeem them but they speak lies against me. They do not cry out to me *from their hearts* but wail upon their beds. They gather together for grain and new wine but turn away from me. I trained (רָצַח) them and strengthened them, but they plot evil against me (emphasis mine).

There is here a goal of God for achieving in these people a crying out from their heart and not just outward wailing. They want grain and new wine but not a relationship or heart of favor toward Him. God's training had not yet reached its goal of instilling in them a *heart* that would cry out to him.

Other aspects of the meaning of רָצַח are also found in the OT. This word appears in parallel with the concept of "rebuke" and seems to take on that meaning. This is found in Ps. 6:1; 38:1; Prov. 9:7 and Jer. 2:19. It also occurs with the sense of "warning" (Ps. 2:10; Is. 8:11; Jer. 6:8; Ezek. 23:48) where actions of God on a third party are to be

learned from to keep people from following that third party's example. Even one's own wickedness and backsliding can discipline him (Jer. 2:19). This type of discipline can be done unjustly and corporeally (this seems to have been done by Rehoboam in I Ki. 12:11, 14; II Chron. 10:11, 14), but not by God for he only disciplines with justice (Jer. 10:24; 30:11; 46:28).

The subject of **רָצַח** can be parents (Deut. 21:18, Prov. 31:1), slave masters (Prov. 29:19), elders (Deut 22:18), kings (I Ki. 12:11, Ps. 2:10), and the LORD (Ps. 118:8, etc.). It is always done by someone in some role of authority, mostly of the LORD. The objects of **רָצַח** are slaves (Prov. 29:19), calves (Jer. 31:18); sons and daughters (Deut 21:18; Prov. 19:18; 31:1), women (Jer. 46:28), men (Ps. 94:12), Israel (Hos. 7:12, 15), mockers (Prov. 9:7), prophets (Isa. 8:11; Jer. 10:24), nations (Ps. 94:10), and one's heart (Ps. 16:7)²⁹.

In each case **רָצַח** seems to have pedagogical overtones (contra Branson³⁰). The term as used in the Old Testament includes both verbal chastisement (instruction, rebuke,

²⁹ Here the instructor seems to be God disciplining one's heart which then instructs the person.

³⁰ Branson, *TDOT*, vol. 6, 134, believes this verb's use in Deut 22:18 Lev. 26:28; Jer 30:11; 46:28; Hos. 5:5; and 10:10 does not have "pedagogical overtones". I do not however agree. Branson seems to limit this word's semantic range to "communicate knowledge in order to shape specific conduct" (129) without noting the passages that speak of the heart and its remediation. Deut. 22:18 speaking of the punishment of a man who gave his wife a bad name by accusing her falsely of not being a virgin would *only* qualify as not having pedagogical overtones *if* one assumed the "heart attitude" of the husband was not involved in the remediation. As I have shown above, the semantic range of **רָצַח** does seem to include the "heart attitude". Hence there would still be a pedagogical aspect to this discipline. Lev. 26:28 also would not qualify, for a changed (perhaps "circumcised", cf. Lev. 26:41) heart is the goal of this **רָצַח**. The whole passage of Lev. 26:14-40 seems to deal the heart attitudes of pride and humility as the object and outcome respectively of **רָצַח**. Jer. 30:11, simply speaks of the LORD disciplining Israel with justice in a passage that speaks of Israel's restoration. The goal seems to be "so you will be my people, and I will be your God" (Jer. 30:22), I see no reason to understand this as having no heart or physical remediation (note also verse 17 where God says, "I will restore you to health and heal your wounds"). Jer. 46:28 again does not seem to fit the bill for the verse says "I will not completely destroy you. I will discipline you but only with justice" Hosea 10:10 does not seem to fit into this category either. The passage indicates punishment of Israel but does not indicate no pedagogy. A few verses later (Hos. 11:10) seems to show Israel will repent and come to the

warning) and physical discipline brought about through circumstances or other actions (sometimes corporeal punishment) of someone in authority over the person being disciplined. The goal of this discipline is the re-establishment of a relationship through a change in behavior and a favorable³¹ change in one's heart. There is also a strong indication (since all the uses of this term involve one person in authority training a person under their authority) that a fundamental aspect of learning is that of learning to respect and obey those in authority. This word's contribution to the theology of Christian education would include the need to see Christian education as having accomplished its purpose when through verbal and/or non-verbal discipline *both* conduct and heart are shaped in a manner that restores one's relationship with and respect of YHWH or others in roles of authority.

LORD. In addition the passage does not seem to exclude the possibility of heart remediation in the people. Pedagogy need not exclude heart attitude pedagogy to be bonifide pedagogy. Even in Rehoboam's evil scourging (רִדְּ) the people with scorpions (I Ki. 12:11-14) one does not have to conclude that there is no remediation. Rehoboam's concept of remediation was harsh but he still intended people to obey him, possibly in both heart and conduct.

³¹ Favorable to the one in authority.

III. מוֹסָר (mûsār)

The term מוֹסָר (mûsār) is the substantive of יָסַר. It occurs 52 times in the Hebrew Bible³². *BDB* defines this term as “discipline (of the moral nature), chastening, correction”³³. *HALOT* defines it as “discipline”, “training”, and “exhortation”³⁴. *TWOT* simply gives the definition of “discipline” and with יָסַר states that it “denotes correction which results in education”³⁵. *TLOT* defines this term as “chastisement, discipline”³⁶ and notes that it exhibits much “wisdom influence” (it occurs 36 of its 52 times in the wisdom literature of the OT). *NIDOTTE* defines it as “instruction, correction, chastisement, discipline, punishment”³⁷. *NIDOTTE* goes on to state:

Fundamentally, it has to do with teaching/learning by exhortation and example, with warning as to the consequences of disobedience, and with the application of penalty following failure to adhere.³⁸

This word definitely has an “obedience” focus but, as with יָסַר, מוֹסָר also deals with the heart. Deut 11:1-18 states:

Love the LORD your God and *keep* his requirements, his decrees, his laws and his commands always. Remember today that your children were not the ones who saw and experienced the discipline (מוֹסָר) of the LORD your God: his majesty, his mighty hand, his outstretched arm; the signs he performed and the things he did in the heart of Egypt, both to Pharaoh king of Egypt and to his whole country; what he did to the Egyptian army, to its horses and chariots, how he overwhelmed them with the waters of the Red Sea . . . It was not your children who saw what he did for you in the desert until you arrived at this place, . . . But it was your own eyes that saw all these great things the LORD has done . . . So if you faithfully *obey* the commands I am giving you today--to *love* the LORD your God and to serve him with all your *heart* and with all your soul . . .

³² *HECOT*, 917.

³³ 416.

³⁴ Vol. 2, 557.

³⁵ Vol. 1, 386.

³⁶ Vol. 2, 548.

³⁷ Vol. 2, 480-81.

³⁸ Vol. 2, 480-81.

then I will send rain on your land in its season, both autumn and spring rains, so that you may gather in your grain, new wine and oil . . . Fix these words of mine in your *hearts* and mind . . . (emphases mine).

This passage shows that **גִּזְרֵי** here involves *seeing* and *experiencing* God’s “majesty, his mighty hand, his outstretched arm; the signs he performed and the things he did in the heart of Egypt”. It was not just verbal instruction but *life experience* that constituted the LORD’s discipline. The *outcome or goal* of this **גִּזְרֵי** of the LORD was to *love* God with all one’s *heart* and soul and to *keep* his “requirements, his decrees, his laws and his commands”. Hence **גִּזְרֵי** is intentional and deliberate.

When encountering **גִּזְרֵי** there is also a heart attitude of *fear* that is desired and intended by the one giving **גִּזְרֵי**. Job. 33:15-18 states:

In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on men as they slumber in their beds, he may speak in their ears and *terrify* them with warnings (**גִּזְרֵי**), to turn man from wrongdoing and keep him from *pride*, to preserve his soul from the pit (emphases mine).

Here one can see that the warnings are to work on the heart to *terrify* a man to keep him from the heart attitude of pride. Prov. 1:7 states, “The *fear* of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline (**גִּזְרֵי**)”. Here the heart of “fear” or “terror”³⁹ of the LORD will bring about knowledge, wisdom and discipline. The lack of this fear will result in the despising of discipline. It is the fear of the LORD that teaches men: “The fear of the LORD teaches (**גִּזְרֵי**) a man wisdom” (Prov. 15:33). Fear

³⁹ BDB, 432.

is necessary to accept correction: “I said to the city, ‘Surely you will fear me and accept correction (מוֹסֵר)!” (Zeph. 3:7)⁴⁰.

Possessing the *heart* attitude of a love for discipline is necessary for the goal of מוֹסֵר to take place. In Prov. 5:12 it states, “How I hated discipline (מוֹסֵר)! How my *heart* spurned correction!” The heart that will be corrected cannot spurn or hate discipline⁴¹. It is in the *heart* of a child from which folly must be driven *by* discipline: “Folly is bound up in the *heart* of a child, but the rod of discipline (מוֹסֵר) will drive it far from him” (Prov. 22:15). Conversely, the one giving out the discipline *hates* his child if he does not meet it out. Prov. 13:18 states, “He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who *loves* him is careful to discipline (מוֹסֵר) him.” Discipline⁴² is an act of love. Those who hate it or those who hate to do it need a change of heart to achieve the goal of מוֹסֵר.

Hearts must be *applied* to discipline: “Apply your *heart* to instruction⁴³ (מוֹסֵר) and your ears to words of knowledge” (Prov. 23:12). It is the heart that must be applied if one is to learn the lessons of life: “I applied my *heart* to what I observed and learned a lesson (מוֹסֵר) from what I saw” (Prov. 24:32)⁴⁴.

⁴⁰Emphases here and above in italics are mine. Benson (*TDOT*, vol. 6, 133) states that מוֹסֵר associated with the fear of the LORD is “an understanding of the rules for a successful life” which “depends on learning the principles of true religion”. As with יִסָּר however, he does not seem to pick up on the emotional/subjective element of the heart (i.e., here, fear) that seems to be necessary for a proper response to God. Unless Benson is incorporating this element in his definition of “understanding” or “learning” and his “principles of true religion,” he seems to neglect the necessity of having a heart of fear/respect toward God as one of the goals of מוֹסֵר.

⁴¹ Cf. also Prov. 15:5.

⁴² Cf. Prov. 3:11-12.

⁴³ The word for “apply” here is בִּוֵּא (bô’). It is in the Hiphil form and means “cause to come in, bring in” (*BDB*, 99). This phrase might therefore be translated “cause instruction to come into your heart” (my translation).

⁴⁴ Cf. also Jer. 35:13.

Hence, while **מוֹסֵר** can be administered and received without the proper heart attitude or heart change, its desired goal of creating the correct heart/attitude is not achieved in those situations. Thus, the *educational* goal of **מוֹסֵר** would not be accomplished. It takes ***both*** behavioral and heart/attitude change to accomplish the goal of **מוֹסֵר**.

The action of the **מוֹסֵר** of YHWH in the prophets shows that it consists of God's mighty works in the history of the people of Israel and Judah as well as the nations⁴⁵. God punished them with a rod (Is. 30:32), he struck them (Jer. 5:3; 30:14), and he made Israel an object of "horror to the nations around" them by giving them famine, wild beasts, plague, and bloodshed (Ezek, 5:15, 17). In his discipline God desires Israel (and the nations) to learn from what they experience and suffer and return to being true to the covenant.⁴⁶ Without a proper response to **מוֹסֵר**, his people could not have fellowship with him. Ultimately, God decides to provide his Servant to bear our **מוֹסֵר**, to bring about our peace (Is. 53:5) through his own redemptive plan.

Those who give **מוֹסֵר** are the LORD⁴⁷, kings⁴⁸, fathers⁴⁹, teachers and instructors⁵⁰, experiences of life⁵¹, worthless idols⁵², and folly⁵³. Without **מוֹסֵר** one will die (Prov. 5:23). With **מוֹסֵר** one will find life (Prov. 6:23).

⁴⁵ TWOT, 387.

⁴⁶ TDOT, vol. 6, 133.

⁴⁷ Deut. 11:2 and many others.

⁴⁸ Cf. Job 12:18.

⁴⁹ Prov. 1:8.

⁵⁰ Prov. 5:12-13.

⁵¹ Prov. 24:32.

⁵² Jer. 10:8.

מוֹסֵר is important for the theology of Christian education in its emphasis on both correct heart/attitude and proper obedience as its goal. The fact that מוֹסֵר can come through words, life experiences, observations, and/or actions of others highlights the need in Christian education to include more than mere verbal instruction to achieve learning. In addition, since YHWH's מוֹסֵר is for the purpose of repentance in the heart *and* obedience to his commands in one's actions/behavior, the purpose of Christian education needs to be the same. It is to be a means to bring people into or restore covenant relationship with YHWH.

⁵³ Prov. 16:22; cf., 15:10.

IV. יָרָא (yārâ)

יָרָא (yārâ III) occurs 46 times in the Hebrew Old Testament, each time in the hiphil⁵⁴. It has the meaning of “direct, teach, instruct”⁵⁵. Wagner notes that the nature of the word causes it to nearly always have two objects: Something (direct object) is being taught to someone (indirect object)⁵⁶. For instance, note II Chron. 6:27 states, “Teach (יָרָא) them the right way to live”, Ps. 25:8, “Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs (יָרָא) sinners in his way”, and Lev. 10:11, “you must teach (יָרָא) the Israelites all the decrees the LORD has given them through Moses”. This seems to support Wagner’s assertion that there is a definite implied relationship between the one who teaches and the one who receives the teaching.⁵⁷ This relationship has intentionality and deliberateness tied to it: The teacher is to teach someone something.

Although the ultimate goal of יָרָא seems to be to *help* people follow God’s way through instruction, it is in somewhat of a contrast with יָרָא (which refers to *training* by verbal or non-verbal means) as יָרָא seems to refer more to

⁵⁴ HECOT, 739.

⁵⁵ BDB, 435, HALOT, 436, and NIDOTTE, 537-38. Willis Judson Beecher, *The Prophets and the Promise* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1963), 139-40, gives a “mechanical translation” of this verb as “to give *torah*”. Its root is somewhat an enigma. There is a debate as to whether there is one, two, or three roots to this word (TLOT, vol. 3, 1415). Some scholars believe it is related to *yrh* I which means “to throw”, “to cast” or “to shoot”. Liedke and Petersen in TLOT, 1415, state that “whether or how *yrh* III is related to *yrh* I ‘to throw, shoot’ is unclear”. According to them (1415), Gesenius and Osborne believe that *yrh* III was derived from *yrh* I through the idea of “extending the hand, the finger . . . to indicate the way” as it is used in Prov. 6:13. Another possibility is Delitzsch’s suggestion that this word came from the Akkadian (*tertu* which means instruction) and so *yrh* III is from an entirely different root than *yrh* I. There are other possible language root sources of this word as Wagner in TDOT, vol. 6, 339, shows. There its meaning is similar to the concept of “proclaim”.

⁵⁶ TDOT, 339.

⁵⁷ TDOT, 339.

the teaching of *mental concepts* over *life* concepts. The teaching (יָרָה) of God's decrees/laws (Ps. 119:33, 102) seems to involve more the concept of "instruct"⁵⁸ in the sense of the transfer of information than "*corporeal obedience* training".

As for the subjects and objects of יָרָה, יָרָה nearly always (the exceptions being Gen. 46:28⁵⁹; Job. 8:10; and Prov. 6:13) denotes teaching given by a deity or someone in authority who represents deity⁶⁰ to people as recipients. In addition to YHWH teaching people, one sees Oholiab, son of Ahisamach, teaching people skills and crafts (Ex. 35:34), Aaron teaching people the decrees of the LORD (Lev. 10:11), laws of judges and priests are to be taught to people (Deut. 17:10-11), Levites are to teach (Deut. 24:8), animals teach people the natural revelation of God (Job. 12:7,8), a father teaches his son (Prov. 4:4, 11), a scoundrel and villain teach by motioning with fingers⁶¹ (Prov. 6:13), and prophets and graven images teach lies (Is. 9:15; Hab. 2:18-19).

In summary, יָרָה involves the instruction of mental concepts by a deity, or someone in authority. It involves the transfer of *authoritative* information⁶² from one entity or person to another, used mainly with respect to information on how to

⁵⁸ Note its use at Gen. 46:28; Ex. 4:12, 15; 15:25; 24:12; 35:34; Lev. 10:11; 14:57; Deut. 17:10-11; 24:8; 33:10; I Sam. 12:23; I Ki. 8:36; II Ki. 12:3; 17:27; 17:28; II Chron. 6:27; 15:3; Ps. 25:8; 25:12; 32:8; 119:33, 102; Prov. 4:11; Is. 2:3; 28:29; Ezek. 44:23, etc. This is further supported by the substantive of this verb, תּוֹרָה (torah, law), which is the body of instructions (BDB, 435-36, defines it as "direction, instruction, law", "a body of priestly direction, instruction", "codes of law") someone can teach to someone else. As such, יָרָה might be translated "to give *torah*", *The Prophets and the Promise*, 139.

⁵⁹ This seems to be an instance where simple instructions are to be given to Judah by Joseph, contra Beecher, *The Prophets and the Promise*, 142, who states that this term is "never used of teaching or instruction merely in the sense of giving information".

⁶⁰ *The Prophets and the Promise*, 140-41. These deities can be YHWH, his priests, and even animals (Job. 12:7-8).

⁶¹ "A scoundrel and villain, who goes about with a corrupt mouth, who winks with his eye, signals with his feet and motions (יָרָה) with his fingers, who plots evil with deceit in his heart-- he always stirs up dissension".

⁶² *The Prophets and the Promise*, 142.

follow God in his way. As such, דָּבָר is important for the biblical theology of Christian education in upholding the need for Christian teachers to transfer the authoritative information of Scripture to students. There is definitely a place in Christian Education for *verbal instruction* of God's word.

V. לָמַד (lāmad)

לָמַד (lāmad) occurs 86 times in the Hebrew Old Testament almost always in the piel or the qal⁶³. In the qal it means “to learn” and in the piel it means “to teach”.⁶⁴ It encompasses both the idea of *physical training* and *verbal instruction*⁶⁵. The concept of *verbal instruction*, is seen specifically but not exclusively⁶⁶ with respect to God’s laws. This can be seen in passages such as “Hear now, O Israel, the decrees and laws I am about to teach (לָמַד) you” (Deut. 4:1), “But you stay here with me so that I may give you all the commands, decrees and laws you are to teach (לָמַד) them to follow” (Deut. 5:31), and “I learn (לָמַד) your righteous laws” (Ps. 119:7). The concept of *physical training* can be seen in the passages such as “He trains my hands for battle” (II Sam. 22:35), “Along with their relatives--all of them trained (לָמַד) and skilled in music for the LORD” (I Chron. 25:7), and “Ephraim is a trained (לָמַד) heifer that loves to thresh” (Hos. 10:11)⁶⁷.

There also seems to be a connection of this word with the goal of instilling the *fear* (יָרֵא, yārē’)⁶⁸ of the LORD in the heart of the learner⁶⁹. Note the following

⁶³ HECOT, 883-884.

⁶⁴ TLOT, vol. 2, 646; TDOT, vol. 8, 5; BDB, 540, NIDOTTE, vol. 2, 801. It also seems to have an underlying meaning of “experiencing” something or “accustom oneself to something, become familiar with something” (TDOT, vol. 8, 5), or “exercise in” (BDB, 540).

⁶⁵ TWOT, vol. 1, 480.

⁶⁶ The exceptions are: learning the detestable ways of the nations (Deut. 18:9; 20:18; Ps. 106:35; 144:1; Song of Songs 3:8; Is. 2:4; Jer. 2:33; 9:5; 9:14; 10:2), learning songs (Deut. 31:22), learning warfare (Judg. 3:2; II Sam. 22:35; I Chron. 5:18; 25:7; Ps. 18:34; Mic. 4:3), a lament (II Sam. 1:18; Jer. 9:20), teaching/learning by animals (Jer. 31:18; Hos. 10:11; Ezek. 19:3,6), and learning of language and literature (Dan. 1:4).

⁶⁷ This *training* aspect of the root of this word is seen in its derivative מִלְמַד (ox-goad) which occurs only in Judg. 3:31. This was a training instrument to teach the ox what to do while plowing (TWOT, vol. 1, 480).

⁶⁸ This is the Hebrew word used in all the “fear” and “reverence” passages which follow in this paragraph.

(emphases mine): “Assemble the people before me to hear my words so that they may learn (לָמַדְךָ) *to revere me* as long as they live” (Deut. 4: 10); “Eat the tithe of your grain . . . in the presence of the LORD your God . . . so that you may learn (לָמַדְךָ) *to revere the LORD* your God always” (Deut. 14:23); of the King, the Law “. . . is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to *revere the LORD*” (Deut. 17:19); “Assemble the people . . . so they can listen and learn (לָמַדְךָ) *to fear the LORD* your God and follow carefully all the words of this law” (Deut. 31:12); “Their children, who do not know this law, must hear it and learn (לָמַדְךָ) *to fear the LORD* your God” (Deut. 31:13); and “I will teach (לָמַדְךָ) you the *fear of the LORD*” (Ps. 34:11)⁷⁰.

Nearly all of these occur in Deuteronomy with respect to God’s commands.

Another goal for which this word seems to be used is to help people *learn righteousness*. They are not to “learn (לָמַדְךָ) to imitate the detestable ways of the nations” (Deut. 18:9)⁷¹. When taught, the goal is to have sinners turn back to God: “Then I will teach (לָמַדְךָ) transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you” (Ps. 51:13). This word is used in Isaiah with regard to what is “right”: “Learn (לָמַדְךָ) to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead

⁶⁹NIDOTTE, vol. 2, 801 states “The most important lesson for one to learn in general is to fear God, for this is at the foundation of covenant relationship”. W. C. K. in *TWOT*, vol. 1, 480, notes this but rather than seeing the fear of the LORD as one of the *goals* of לָמַדְךָ, they see “all learning and teaching is ultimately to be found in the fear of the Lord . . . To learn this is to come to terms with the will and law of God”. While learning the fear of the Lord would indeed cause one to come to terms with the will and law of God, I am not convinced that “all learning and teaching is ultimately to be found in the fear of the Lord” (emphasis mine). This word has a greater semantic range than that as people can learn (לָמַדְךָ) evil things from pagan nations. This is shown in Deut. 18:9; 20:18; Ps. 106:35; 144:1; Song of Songs 3:8; Is. 2:4; Jer. 2:33; 9:5; 9:14; 10:2.

⁷⁰Note also this connection with fear in Deut. 31:13

⁷¹Cf. Deut. 20:18, and Ps. 106:35, Jer. 10:2

the case of the widow” (Is. 1:17); “When your judgments come upon the earth, the people of the world learn (לְמֹרָה) righteousness” (Is. 26:9); and “Though grace is shown to the wicked, they do not learn (לְמֹרָה) righteousness; even in a land of uprightness they go on doing evil and regard not the majesty of the LORD” (Is. 26:10). The worship of God must engage the heart and not just outward form which is as if following mere “rules taught by men”. Is. 29:13 states, “The Lord says: “These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship (אֲרָרָה, “fear”)⁷² of me is made up only of rules taught (לְמֹרָה) by men.” The type of learning goal desired by לְמֹרָה in these passages is that of a changed life and a life that obeys God from the heart. People are to be taught to “follow” (Deut. 5:31) and not just know God’s commands, decrees, and laws⁷³. There is thus a deliberateness and intentionality behind this concept.

In summary, לְמֹרָה encompasses both *verbal instruction* and *physical training*.

With respect to teaching and learning God’s laws and decrees, it has as its goal not only the transfer to the learner of instructions but the instilling in the heart and life of the learner the fear of the LORD, righteousness, and a willing and obedient relationship with YHWH. לְמֹרָה brings to Christian education an important point: Learning must change

⁷² Note the contrast between this “fear” passage and those listed above. This fear is only with respect to “rules” of men. The fear God desires is fear of him (a more personal respect and reverence) not just obedience to his laws. The goal of לְמֹרָה thus involves the “heart” inclination of reverence to YHWH along with obedience to his laws.

⁷³ *NIDOTTE*, vol. 2, 801, concurs and states, “The learning is clearly, then, more than academic—it must impact and change life”.

people's hearts such that they come to fear/respect God and change their actions such that they follow him with a righteous lifestyle.

VI. לקח (leqah)

לקח (leqah) occurs 9 times in the Hebrew Old Testament⁷⁴ of which all but two occurrences are in wisdom literature⁷⁵. This term has been defined as “learning, teaching”⁷⁶ as well as “instruction”, “insight”⁷⁷. *TWOT*⁷⁸ and *TLOT*⁷⁹ add the concept of “persuasiveness” or “persuasion” to its semantic range.

Perhaps the most interesting insight into the meaning of this word comes from Seebass in *TDOT*⁸⁰. Seebass states that this term

. . . probably does not mean “teaching” or “persuasiveness” but rather that which a person has been able to acquire in the way of wisdom or teaching and is thus in a position to pass on to others.⁸¹

Seebass seems to take this position based on two points: (1) the basic meaning of the *verb* form of this substantive, לקח (lāqah), “to take”⁸², seems to be characterized by other verb(s) which follow it in context and which indicate the actual act intended when something is “taken”⁸³, and (2) the use of לקח especially in Prov. 7:21 and 16:21.

Seebass’ conclusion seems to be supportable. The verb לקח is many times used prior to other verbs and those other verbs do seem to indicate a goal-action of the initial

⁷⁴ *HECOT*, 891.

⁷⁵ It is found in Deut. 32:2; Job. 11:4; Prov. 1:5; 4:2; 7:21; 9:9; 16:21, 23; Isa. 29:24.

⁷⁶ *BDB*, 544.

⁷⁷ *HALOT*, vol. 2, 535.

⁷⁸ Vol. 1, 482.

⁷⁹ Vol. 2, 650.

⁸⁰ Vol. 8, 21.

⁸¹ *TDOT*, vol. 8, 21.

⁸² *TDOT*, vol. 8, 16.

⁸³ Seebass, in connection with the basic meaning of this verb (*TDOT*, vol. 8, 16-17), notes, “Compared to roots occasionally used synonymously, this basic meaning does not appear to be characterized as much by the idea of expending energy . . . neither, however, despite the few, seemingly contradictory occurrences, does the idea of force or violence seem to apply . . . Rather, the extremely frequent use of this verb to anticipate a subsequent verb that actually describes the intended act (almost as a *verbum relativum*) suggests that the primary emphasis is on the responsibility of the subject for that act . . . it frequently evokes the idea or aspect of initiative regarding a person’s actions.”

“taking” (קָחָה), making קָחָה a kind of “initiative for subsequent action”⁸⁴. This is amply verifiable in many passages in the Old Testament. For instance consider II Sam. 18:24, which states,

Joab said, "I'm not going to wait like this for you." So he took (קָחָה) three javelins in his hand and *plunged* them into Absalom's heart while Absalom was still alive in the oak tree (emphasis mine).

Also consider I Kings 11:35: “I will take (קָחָה) the kingdom from his son's hands and *give* you ten tribes (emphasis mine)”. Another example is I Sam. 6:7, “Now therefore take (קָחָה) and *prepare* a new cart and two milk cows on which there has never been a yoke; and hitch the cows to the cart (emphasis mine)” (NASB)⁸⁵. All of these examples show that the initial taking of something was *for the purpose of another action*. Other passages in their contexts which support this include Gen. 22:6-8; 28:18; 31:23; 37:24:31; II Ki. 11:2, 4, 19; and Judges 6:27.⁸⁶ Hence the verb form of this word seems to indicate an intended action that goes beyond the initial act of “taking” something.

There thus seems to be a definite *application* aspect to this word’s meaning. The “taking” is to be *applied* in some way. If this nuance can be carried over to the noun קָחָה, this term would then seem to indicate a wisdom, knowledge, persuasion, or insight that is in some way *applied* to life and/or transferred to the life of another. In other words, the meaning of this word group would then include not merely taking (verb) or knowledge (noun) but *applied* taking and *applied* knowledge. Hence, instruction is intended to be applied.

⁸⁴ Seebass, *TDOT*, vol. 8, 17. Els in *NIDOTTE*, vol. 2, 814, also notes several places where this verb is used “as a preliminary to further action”.

⁸⁵ Els, in *NIDOTTE* (vol. 2, 814) states that this use of “take” here is “totally redundant and unnecessary”. However it is possible to see this as an indication of the basic nature of this verb.

⁸⁶ *TDOT*, vol. 8, 18, discusses many other instances of this.

That this concept of *applied* knowledge is also present in the noun חָכְמָה seems to be supported by its use in the Old Testament. For example, Prov. 7:21 reads, “With persuasive words (חָכְמָה) she led him astray; she seduced him with her smooth talk”. Here one sees that the persuasive words (in this case *evil* wisdom) of the harlot are able to influence the man to be seduced. The harlot’s evil wisdom is used (i.e., passed on or applied to the man) with the goal of seduction. The application of that evil wisdom is complete when he applies that wisdom to himself and is seduced.

In Prov. 16:21 one reads, “The wise in heart will be called understanding, and sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness (חָכְמָה)” (NASB). Here one sees that the teacher, when using “sweet” speech, is able to persuade and thus successfully secure a student’s following. Hence we have the application of knowledge by the teacher for appropriation to the student’s life. From the standpoint of the one who *truly* learns חָכְמָה it would seem safe to conclude that the student will act in some way on that acquired wisdom.

Prov. 1:5-6 also seems to indicate that the intent of gaining this learning would be to put it into practice. It states, “let the wise listen and add to their learning (חָכְמָה), and let the discerning get guidance- *for understanding* proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise” (emphasis mine). Prov. 4:2 and its context would also seem to support this:

Listen, my sons, to a father's instruction; pay attention and gain understanding I give you sound learning (חָכְמָה), so do not forsake my teaching. When I was a boy in my father's house, still tender, and an only child of my mother, he taught me and said, "Lay hold of my words with all your heart; keep my commands and *you will live*. Get wisdom, get understanding; do not forget my words or swerve from

them. Do not forsake wisdom, and *she will protect you; love her, and she will watch over you* (emphases mine) (Prov. 4:2-6).

The other occurrences of this word⁸⁷ would also seem to support this aspect of the use of this term⁸⁸.

In summary, חָכְמָה is wisdom or teaching that is appropriated (applied) by the student and/or teacher in a manner that has an effect on an individual's life. This is important for the theology of Christian education in that this word would seem to show that teaching and learning needs to be applied to (i.e., have an effect on) the lives of individuals by teachers and the individual him/herself. It is not the mere passing on of information that is indicated here but information that is passed on in a way that will affect the life of the recipient. In addition, a teacher can enhance the application of חָכְמָה by the type of speech he/she uses in his teaching (Prov. 16:21).

⁸⁷ Noted in footnote 72 above.

⁸⁸ This is in agreement with Seebass, *TDOT*, vol. 8, 21.

VII. יָדָע (yāda‘ Ī)

יָדָע (yāda‘ Ī) occurs around 947 times in the Hebrew OT⁸⁹. It has the basic meanings of “to perceive, know”⁹⁰. Its semantic range is broad and also embraces definitions such as “find out”, “know by experience”, “recognize”, “acknowledge”, “know a person, be acquainted with”, “be skillful”, “teach”, “make known”⁹¹, as well as “to notice”, “learn”, “to know sexually, have intercourse with, copulate”, “to have experience”, and “to take care of someone”⁹². It is only in the Hiphil form that the verb is translated “teach” in the NIV⁹³.

The action of knowing or perceiving embraced by this word includes more than mere objective knowledge which the Greeks tended to conceive of in their term *γινώσκω*.⁹⁴ Although *γινώσκω* translates יָדָע 490 times in the LXX⁹⁵, יָדָע does not designate predominately an intellectual concept⁹⁶. Its major emphases include *subjective* dimensions of knowing not just the objective.⁹⁷ Groome states,

. . . in Greek philosophy *ginoskein* has a predominant meaning of ‘intellectual looking at’ an object of scrutiny and strongly connotes objectivity . . . For the Hebrews *yada* is more by the heart than by the mind, and the knowing arises not by standing back from in order to look at, but by active and intentional engagement in lived experience . . . the Hebrews had no word that corresponds exactly to our words *mind* or *intellect*.⁹⁸

⁸⁹ HECOT, 617.

⁹⁰ TLOT, vol. 2, 508.

⁹¹ BDB, 393-94.

⁹² TLOT, vol. 2, 390-92. Cf., NIDOTTE, vol. 2, 409.

⁹³ The translation “teach” or a form of it occurs 13 times in the NIV: Ex. 33:13; Deut. 4:9; 8:3; Judg. 8:16; I Sam. 14:12; Job. 32:7; Ps. 51:6; 78:5; 90:12; Prov. 9:9; 22:19, 21; Jer. 16:21 (2x); and Ezek. 22:26.

⁹⁴ Thomas H. Groome, *Christian Religious Education* (San Francisco: Harper & Roe, 1980), 141.

⁹⁵ TDOT, 453. Cf., Edwin Hatch and Henry Redpath, *A Concordance to the Septuagint*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983), vol 1, 267-70.

⁹⁶ Groome, 141.

⁹⁷ Groome, 141.

⁹⁸ Groome, 141. W. Schottroff (TLOT, vol. 2, 514) concurs stating:

. . . the meaning of *yd’* in Hebr. would be insufficiently stated if one were to limit it strictly to the cognitive aspect . . . without simultaneously taking into account the contractual aspect of the

יָדַעַתְּ for the most part involves knowledge gained through experience⁹⁹ and the senses¹⁰⁰.

This is contrary to much of our modern day understanding of knowledge and its acquisition which largely involves pure thought by one's own contemplation or mere verbal transmission of information from teacher to student in a classroom setting. That is not to say that יָדַעַתְּ does not include these types of knowledge and teaching but that it has as its major dimension *experientially gained* knowledge. Some OT passages indeed do seem to indicate a more pure intellectual knowledge such as Ezek. 37:3 which states, "He asked me, 'Son of man, can these bones live?' I said, 'O Sovereign LORD, you alone know (יָדַעַתְּ)'" . Another example would be Gen. 3:5 which states, "For God knows (יָדַעַתְּ) that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened". Some OT passages also show that the semantic range of יָדַעַתְּ includes mere *verbal* transfer of information. For example note I Chron. 21:2:

So David said to Joab and the commanders of the troops, "Go and count the Israelites from Beersheba to Dan. Then report back to me so that I may know (יָדַעַתְּ) how many there are"¹⁰¹.

meaning, e.g., the fact that *yd'* does not merely indicate a theoretical relation, a pure act of thought, but that knowledge, as *yd'* intends it, is realized through practical involvement with the obj. of knowledge.

NIDOTTE, vol. 2, 410, also concurs stating, "The fundamentally relational character of knowing (over against a narrow intellectual sense) can be discerned, not the least in that both God and human beings can be subject and object of the vb."

⁹⁹ Lawrence O. Richards, *Christian Education: Seeking to Become Like Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), 33.

¹⁰⁰ *TWOT*, vol. 1, 366.

¹⁰¹ Other passages which seem to indicate this purely intellectual knowledge aspect of יָדַעַתְּ include (but are not exhausted in) Josh. 8:14; I Sam. 21:11; Job. 21:27; Ps. 74:9; Eccl. 9:1; Jer. 29:11; Ezek. 11:5; Dan 10:20; Joel 2:14; Nah. 3:17; and Zech. 4:5, 13.

Another example is Deut. 4:9 which states, “Teach (עָרַף) them to your children and to their children after them” and Dan. 8:19 which states, “I am going to tell (עָרַף) you what will happen later in the time of wrath, because the vision concerns the appointed time of the end”¹⁰². Both of these aspects of the semantic range of עָרַף which we consider “knowledge” or “teaching” in our modern day are, however, infrequently encountered in the Hebrew OT when contrasted with the 947 total occurrences of this word. The majority of the occurrences show a knowledge that is gained through the experience of life whether relationally acquired by interaction with other persons or interaction with one’s environment.

This experiential knowledge is gained by several means. It can come through interaction of the senses with the world. One’s eyes can bring this knowledge. For instance consider Deut. 4:34-35 which states,

Has any god ever tried to take for himself one nation out of another nation, by testings, by miraculous signs and wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, or by great and awesome deeds, like all the things the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your very *eyes*? You were shown these things so that you might know (עָרַף) that the LORD is God; besides him there is no other (emphases mine).

It can come through ears as Is. 48:8 indicates: “You have neither heard nor understood (עָרַף); from of old your ear has not been open”. A combination of both sight and hearing is indicated anthropomorphically in Ex. 3:7:

¹⁰² I have found only a relatively few number of other passages which seem to show עָרַף in its semantic range of purely verbally/written transferred knowledge. These include (but are not exhausted in) Ex. 18:16; Josh.4:22; Ruth 3:14; 4:4; I Sam 21:2; II Sam. 24:2; Job 10:2; 37:19; 38:3; 40:7; 42:4; Ps. 78:5; 89:1; 145:12; Prov. 1:23; 22:19, 21; Isa. 5:5; 38:19; Jer. 38:24; Ezek. 22:26; 36:32; 43:11; Dan. 2:3; 8:19; 9:25; and Hos. 5:9.

The LORD said, "I have indeed *seen* the misery of my people in Egypt. I have *heard* them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned (עָרַף) about their suffering (emphases mine).

Knowing also comes through immediate or past historical circumstance. Noah knew (עָרַף) that the water had receded from the earth when a dove he had released returned to him in the ark with a freshly plucked olive leaf. In the Law (Ex. 21:36) the owner of an ox that was known (עָרַף) by past history to have a habit of goring which then injured another bull was charged the cost of the gored animal. Exodus 1:8 speaks of a new Pharaoh who did not “know about (עָרַף) Joseph”. All these examples have to do with a person’s interaction with or understanding of history.

Perception is also gained by application of the heart and mind to investigation, testing, consideration and reflection.¹⁰³ Men of Israel were to understand in their hearts through circumstances in the wilderness that God was disciplining them like a father disciplines his son (Deut. 8:5). This knowledge could be gained through investigation and searching (Eccl. 7:25). It can also be gained by inquiring of God (Judg. 18:5), by testing (Jer. 6:27; 12:3), by applying oneself to understand wisdom (Eccl. 1:17), and by pondering things (Isa. 41:22). In all of these, knowledge gained has to do with the heart or the subjective or internal aspect of a man.

Perhaps the most intimate aspect of עָרַף is seen in its use indicating sexual relations between a man and a woman (e.g., Gen. 4:1, 25; Num. 31:17, 18, 35). It is also used of homosexual relations (Gen. 19:5). The term describes intimate physical relationship.

¹⁰³ *TLOT*, vol. 2, 512.

עָרַף also involves a knowledge that adults have but small children do not (Deut. 1:39; Is. 7:15-16). It is a knowledge related to maturity which brings the ability to distinguish and choose between good and evil. This is maturity knowledge or the knowledge of wisdom¹⁰⁴.

עָרַף is also used in reference to technical skills. For instance one knows (i.e., has technical experience with) how to hunt (Gen. 25:27), how to sail on the sea (II Chr. 8:18), how to play a musical instrument (I Sam. 16:16), how to read a scroll (Isa. 29:11-12), the details of law and justice (Est. 1:13), and the skill of construction (Ex. 36:1; II Chron. 2:14) or the felling of timber (I Ki. 5:6). There is even an instance of one being skilled in flattery (Job. 32:22) and one of a righteous man knowing the needs of and how to care for his animal (Prov. 12:10; 27:23). These all indicate practical involvement of a person with some object.

This word is also used in the sense of a person's personal/relational knowledge of another. It is used of a person not being concerned with something as a result of a personal relational knowledge of another's character (Gen. 39:6, 8; I Sam. 10:11; II Sam 17:8). It is used to indicate personal knowledge in the sense of friends, acquaintances, and relatives (Gen. 29:5; Job 19:13, 14; 42:11; II Ki. 10:11; Ruth 2:1; Deut. 22:2). It is used of Israel knowing, not knowing, or having relations with other nations (Deut. 28:33, 36; Jer 9:16; Zech. 7:14). These all deal with a person's relational involvement with other persons. Here knowledge gained is relational, personal, and experiential.

Perhaps one category of the use of עָרַף which has the most important concern (as judged by its many occurrences) in the OT has to do with a person's, the nation of

¹⁰⁴ Cf., the numerous passages in Proverbs which teach a young man wisdom: E.g., Pr. 1:2-9; 4:1, 19; 7:23.

Israel's, or foreign nations' or people's knowledge of YHWH. This knowledge involved relational or experiential knowledge of YHWH. YHWH brought the plagues on Egypt so that the Egyptians would “know (עָרַף) that I am the LORD” (Ex. 7:5) and that the Israelites would “know (עָרַף) that I am the LORD your God” (Ex. 16:12). This knowledge of YHWH was brought about through signs and wonders and his personal relationship with them (Ex. 29:42-44). It is his action in history before their very eyes that brought knowledge of him. Cyrus also was to acquire this knowledge of YHWH through the actions of YHWH in helping him be victorious over nations (Is. 45:3). It is *through* God's power and might that people come to know him. Jer. 16:21 states, “Therefore I will teach (עָרַף) them--this time I will teach (עָרַף) them my power and might. Then they will know (עָרַף) that my name is the LORD”. This knowledge of YHWH however does not just come on its own. Rather it comes with a change of heart given by YHWH. Jer. 24:7 states: “I will give them a heart to know (עָרַף) me, that I am the LORD. They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart”.

Ezekiel also repeats this concept of knowing YHWH through experiencing his character. At least 68 times¹⁰⁵ he speaks of the knowledge of YHWH (using the terms “know that I am the LORD”) by both Israel and other nations as coming on the heels of their experiencing his mighty judgments and vengeance. This concept of knowing “that I

¹⁰⁵ HECOT, 622. TLOT, vol. 2, 519, counts a total of 78 occurrences.

am the LORD”, occurs so frequently in Ezekiel and the rest of the OT that it has been dubbed the “recognition formula”¹⁰⁶.

The use of **יְדָע** in Hosea 2:20 and 6:3 shows that knowing YHWH involves being in a right relationship with him¹⁰⁷. Hosea 2:19-20 states:

"And I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice, in loving kindness and in compassion, And I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness. Then you will know (**יְדָע**) the Lord (NASB).

This shows that knowing the Lord involves *experiencing* his righteousness, justice, loving kindness, compassion, and faithfulness. It can also be said that the intent of YHWH here is that people know him. He deliberately expresses his character so people can know him. Hosea 6:2-3 also shows that knowing the LORD involves relationship and experiences with him. It reads:

He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day that we may live before Him. So let us know (**יְדָע**), let us press on to know (**יְדָע**) the Lord. His going forth is as certain as the dawn; And He will come to us like the rain, like the spring rain watering the earth (NASB).

Here one sees that knowing God involves trusting and experiencing his faithfulness to revive them and take care of them. *TDOT*¹⁰⁸ correctly states, that knowing God involves “a personal relationship growing out of a living encounter with God”.

Another passage in the OT which reveals this aspect of knowing God is Jer. 31:34. It reads,

“No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know (**יְדָע**) the LORD,’ because they will all know (**יְדָע**) me, from the least of them to the greatest”, declares the LORD. "***For*** I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." (emphases mine).

¹⁰⁶ *TLOT*, vol. 2, 519.

¹⁰⁷ *NIDOTTE*, vol. 2, 413.

¹⁰⁸ Vol. 5, 478.

Here one sees that knowing the LORD comes about as a result of their experiencing the LORD's forgiveness and his forgetting their sins. Knowing God thus comes by *experiencing* his grace.¹⁰⁹

To know YHWH also is associated with one's responses to him. It is associated with one's obedience to him (I Sam. 2:12; Job. 18:21), fear of him (I Ki. 8:43; II Chron. 6:33), serving him (I Chron. 28: 9), belief in him (Is. 43:10), trust in him (Ps. 9:10; Prov. 3:5-6)¹¹⁰ confession of one's sin (Ps. 32:5), and knowledge of the Torah (Ps. 119:79)¹¹¹. It thus "involves not just theoretical knowledge but acceptance of the divine will for one's own life"¹¹². Hence, combining this latter paragraph with the ones before, knowing YHWH can be summarized as coming from a life experience of the relational blessings from him as a result of one's trusting in and following him. Knowing God involves experiencing his character and willingly submitting to him as YHWH.

On the opposite side of the issue, to *not* know God means one is guilty of spiritual prostitution in one's heart. Hos. 5:4 states, "Their deeds will not allow them to return to their God. For a spirit of harlotry is within them, and they do not know (יְיָ) the Lord" (NASB). Those who do not know God are those who are evil men (Job 18:21), spiritual leaders who do not follow him (I Sam. 2:12; Jer. 2:8), and adulterers, the unfaithful, and liars (Jer. 9:1-6)¹¹³. Lack of knowledge of God is equated with being "skilled in doing evil" and not knowing how to do good (Jer. 4:22), and disobedience to God (Jer. 5:4-5).

¹⁰⁹To know God is, as Terence E. Fretheim states, "is to be in a right relationship with him, with characteristics of love, trust, respect, and open communication", *NIDOTTE*, vol. 2, 413.

¹¹⁰ *TLOT*, vol. 2, 518.

¹¹¹ *NIDOTTE*, vol. 2, 413.

¹¹² *TDOT*, vol. 5, 478.

¹¹³ *NIDOTTE*, vol. 2, 413.

There is also a strong emphasis in the OT of human responsibility in helping others “know” YHWH. Moses is to “teach (עֲדַבֵּר) them the decrees and laws, and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform” (Ex. 18:20). Priests are to “teach (עֲדַבֵּר) my people the difference between the holy and the common” (Ezek 44:23). Levites are to make known the words of the Law (Neh. 8:12). Parents are to teach their children and their children to teach their children the decrees and law of the YHWH (Deut 4:9; Josh. 4:22; Ps. 78:5; Is. 38:19). It was Israel’s responsibility to be witnesses to God and his mighty acts and make him known to the world (I Chr. 6:18; Ps. 67:2; 77: 14; 79:10; 105:1; 106:8; 145:12; Is. 12:4; Ezek. 38:16)¹¹⁴. It is the intent of YHWH that all people come to know him.

With respect to the contribution of עֲדַבֵּר to the biblical theology of Christian education several things can be noted. First of all this knowledge involves more than mere transference of information. It is, rather, experiential knowledge. Learning and teaching involves one’s senses, interaction with the environment, personal relationships, appropriation of the heart to search for, investigate, consider, and reflect on God’s will and his word. Secondly, knowing God is not merely knowing *about* him but is relational and comes about through experiencing his character in life of righteousness, justice, loving kindness, compassion, faithfulness, mercy, forgiveness, and even judgment or discipline. Thirdly, knowing God also involves the human response of submission to him and the acceptance of his will for one’s life. Since this knowledge of God is relationally gained through experiences, it necessitates that teachers teach in a manner that

¹¹⁴ I am indebted to Terence. E. Fretheim, *NIDOTTE*, vol. 2, 414, for the emphasis contained in this paragraph.

relationally brings its appropriation into the lives of others. Fourthly, Christian education, taking its queue from the OT, needs to emphasize the need for the transference of this knowing/experiencing of God to *all* people, children and adults of all races and nations.

VIII. בִּין (bîn)

בִּין (bîn) is found 170 times in the Hebrew OT¹¹⁵. It has the basic meaning “to distinguish”¹¹⁶, “to understand”¹¹⁷, or “discern”¹¹⁸. *BDB*¹¹⁹ gives meanings of

. . . perceive (with the senses) . . . understand, know (with mind) . . . observe, mark, give heed to, distinguish, consider (with attention) . . . have discernment, insight, understanding . . . give understanding, make understand, teach.

בִּין is to be distinguished from יָדַע in that יָדַע involves a process in which knowledge is gained through experience and interaction with objects, circumstances, and one’s environment. בִּין on the other hand involves the “power of judgment and perceptive insight and is demonstrated in the use of knowledge”¹²⁰. בִּין involves more than just the possession of information. It involves insight into the relevance of that knowledge for life as well as its application to life¹²¹.

The foundation of this insight is the heart. Once insight is gained then wisdom can dwell in the heart. Prov. 14:33 states, “Wisdom reposes in the heart of the discerning

¹¹⁵ *HECOT*, 254-55.

¹¹⁶ *HALOT*, vol. 1, 122.

¹¹⁷ *TLOT*, vol. 1, 230.

¹¹⁸ *TWOT*, vol. 1, 103.

¹¹⁹ 106-107.

¹²⁰ *TWOT*, vol. 1, 103.

¹²¹ As such, this word is more cognitive and perhaps less relational than יָדַע, *NIDOTTE*, vol. 1, 652.

(בִּינָה) and even among fools she lets herself be known”. It is the discerning heart that seeks and acquires knowledge (Prov. 15:14; 18:15). It is this type of heart for which Solomon asked God in I Ki. 3:9. There Solomon prayed, “. . . give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish (בִּינָה) between right and wrong”. God answered, “I will give you a wise and discerning (בִּינָה) heart” (I Ki. 3:12). It takes perception in the heart for people to be healed and have a good relationship with God. Is. 6:9-10 states:

Be ever hearing, but never understanding (בִּינָה); be ever seeing, but never perceiving. Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand (בִּינָה) with their hearts, *and turn and be healed* (emphasis mine).

Although the semantic range of this word includes *natural* skills and skills resulting from training (e.g., singing in I Chron 15:22, music in I Chron. 25:7, II Chron. 34:12) and can be gained through the senses of hearing, seeing, and taste, physical inspection of the environment (Prov. 7:73; 29:19; Job. 6:30, I Ki. 3:21; II Sam 12:19), *spiritual*¹²² discernment comes from God (Job. 32:8; Ps. 73:17; 119:34, 73, 125, 169; Dan. 10:1). This spiritual discernment comes in a variety of ways. It can come directly from God in a vision (Dan. 10:1) or directly from the Scriptures. Daniel states,

I, Daniel, understood (בִּינָה) *from the Scriptures*, according to the word of the LORD given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years (Dan. 9:2, emphasis mine).

¹²² I am defining spiritual as those insights that pertain to God, his word, moral issues of right and wrong, and one’s relationship to God and others. It is important to note that in this chapter I will focus on the discernment of man since it is the major focus of this word in the OT. It must be noted however, that God also has much discernment that is greater than man’s, a discernment that is beyond man (Job. 37:14-38:18, 20; 42:3; Ps. 19:12; 33:15).

It can come from the Proverbs of Solomon (Prov. 1:1-2, 5, 6) or other parts of the Word of God (Ps. 119:169). This insight from the Word of God causes a certain character and attitude to be developed. Ps. 119:104 states that it causes hate of wrong paths: “I gain understanding (יָבִין) from your precepts; therefore I hate every wrong path”. It brings obedience (Ps. 119:100). It also brings wisdom on one’s lips (Prov. 10:3), easy knowledge (Prov. 14:6), thought to one’s ways and steps (Prov. 14:8, 15), the holding of one’s tongue (Prov. 17:28), acceptance of rebuke (Prov. 17:10), the ability to see through those who are wise in their own eyes (Prov. 28:11), the distinguishing between right and wrong (I Ki. 3:9), as well as the understanding of true justice (I Ki. 3:11).

This spiritual discernment can come from the contemplation of the power of God which brings about the fear of God. Job experienced this as he thought about God’s power. Job. 23:15 states, “That is why I am terrified before him; when I think (יָבִין) of all this, I fear him”. Hence, contemplation (discernment) of the power of God brings fear of him. This discernment of the fear of the LORD can also come as a result of several other actions. Prov. 2:1-7, 9 states:

My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand (יָבִין) the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding . . . Then you will understand (יָבִין) what is right and just and fair--every good path.

Gaining or finding spiritual discernment is not a simple task. In addition to the action of contemplating the power of God, this passage shows that it takes *accepting* of God’s words, *storing up* commands, *listening* to wisdom, *applying* the heart, *calling out* for insight, *crying out* loud for understanding, *looking* for it, and *searching* for it. This is how

the fear of the Lord is discerned and the knowledge of God found. Once found, one then discerns what is right, just, and fair. Evil men do not gain this discernment, as Prov. 28:5 states, “Evil men do not understand (בִּינָה) justice, but those who seek the LORD understand (בִּינָה) it fully”. It takes seeking the LORD to gain this insight.

Spiritual discernment can also come through teachers. Zechariah instructed (בִּינָה) King Uzziah in the fear of the LORD (II Chron. 26:4-5) and the Levites instructed (בִּינָה) all Israel in God’s ways (II Chron. 35:3). Nehemiah 8:2-12 is perhaps the most comprehensive passage with respect to teachers bringing discernment to God’s people. That passage states:

Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, which was made up of men and women and all who were able (בִּינָה) to understand. He *read it aloud* from daybreak till noon . . . in the presence of the men, women and others who could understand (בִּינָה). And all the people listened attentively to the Book of the Law . . . The Levites . . . instructed (בִּינָה) the people in the Law while the people were standing there. They read from the Book of the Law of God, *making it clear and giving the meaning* so that the people could understand (בִּינָה) what was being read . . . Then all the people went away to eat and drink, . . . and to celebrate with great joy, because they now understood (בִּינָה) the words that had been made known to them (emphases mine).

Discernment was gained by God’s people through those who read the Law to them, and teachers who made it clear and gave its meaning. This teaching was deliberate and intentional on the part of the Levites and Ezra: They wanted the people to understand (בִּינָה) the words of the Book of the Law.

One more aspect of בִּינָה, which is important, is found in Job 31:1. It states, "I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully (בִּינָה) at a girl". This shows that one’s

discerning is controllable by oneself. One can limit his discernment for doing good (as is seen in this case) or for doing evil by refusing to allow that discernment into his life.

Ps. 28:5 states, “Since they show no regard (בִּי) for the works of the LORD and what his hands have done, he will tear them down and never build them up again”. Again, in Ps. 32:9 it states, “Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding (בִּי) but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you”. The reception of discernment is determinable by the heart and will of each person. Those who refuse it bring judgment from God upon themselves.

With respect to a biblical theology of Christian education, the study of בִּי indicates that having a discerning heart is essential not only to the gaining and use of *natural* skills (such as singing) but also essential to having *spiritual* skills for attaining a good relationship with and fear of God, as well as a good relationship with others. *Spiritual* discernment comes through the Scriptures, contemplation of God’s power, through the actions of accepting God’s words, storing up God’s commands in one’s heart, listening to wisdom, applying one’s heart to understanding, calling out to God for insight, crying out loud to God for understanding, looking for it as for silver, and searching for it as for treasure. It also comes through teachers who read, make clear, and give the meaning of the God’s word to his people. Once gained, this insight causes one to willingly follow God’s path in life. It would seem essential therefore that Christian teachers of today use the Scriptures, make plain the meaning of the Scriptures, and instruct students in how to gain this heart of discernment as well as its application to their lives.

IX. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE WORDS FOR FORMULATING A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

A biblical theology of Christian education¹²³ will be a theology that ultimately¹²⁴ has Christ or God as its center with the Bible as its standard. Christian education is taken in this paper to be an education (involving both teaching and learning) about the God found in the Bible, his character, his relationship with his creation, and man's appropriate response in heart and actions to that God¹²⁵. This study of the words used in the OT concerning teaching and learning contributes at least twelve points to the theology of Christian education.

First of all, all these words are used¹²⁶ with a common goal of the establishment or re-establishment of a personal relationship with YHWH¹²⁷. This emphasis is very

¹²³The foundations of Christian education are broad. Robert W. Pazmino, in his work *Foundational Issues in Christian Education: An Introduction in Evangelical Perspective*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997) delineates seven major foundations of this topic. These foundations include biblical, theological, philosophical, historical, sociological, psychological, and curricular.

¹²⁴ At least from a conservative evangelical perspective, which is the perspective taken in this paper.

¹²⁵ Pazmino (*Foundational Issues*, 87) after listing several definitions, gives what seems to be a very good definition of Christian education. He defines it as the following:

Christian education is the deliberate, systematic, and sustained divine and human effort to share or appropriate the knowledge, values, attitudes, skills, sensitivities, and behaviors that comprise or are consistent with the Christian faith. It fosters the change, renewal, and reformation of persons, groups, and structures by the power of the Holy Spirit to conform to the revealed will of God as expressed in the Scriptures and preeminently in the person of Jesus Christ, as well as any outcomes of that effort.

¹²⁶ Albeit, not exclusively as there are usages of these words other than with reference to YHWH.

strong (as seen from the great number of incidents¹²⁸ of these words used in association with one's relationship with God) and would seem to signify a main goal of teaching and learning in the OT. This would then necessitate that a major emphasis and goal of Christian education be to teach the way to establishment or re-establishment of one's relationship with YHWH. A biblical theology of Christian education would incorporate this emphasis.

Secondly, the very fact that *goals* were found associated with nearly all of these Hebrew words with regard to educating people about God shows that this education was *deliberate* and *intentional* (i.e., intentional whether by human teachers or by God himself)¹²⁹. Hence this would seem to indicate that Christian education needs to be intentional and deliberate on the part of the teacher (and also expected of the student) and not haphazard or accidental. A biblical theology of Christian education would incorporate this point of deliberateness and intentionality.

Thirdly, this deliberate intent is broad in scope for it is YHWH's goal that not only the Israelites know him but *that all nations and peoples* do so¹³⁰. Hence a biblical theology of Christian education will embody a deliberate intent to spread the knowledge of God to everyone in the world.

Fourthly, knowing God is not merely cognitively knowing *about* him. Rather, to know God is to *relationally experience his character*. It involves heart, mind, and body.

¹²⁷ Note especially our study on יָדַע, לָמַד, יָרָה, מוֹסֵר, יָסַר.

¹²⁸ E.g., the more than 65 occurrences of יָדַע in Ezekiel alone in the phrase, "Know that I am the LORD".

¹²⁹ As shown for instance with the use of בִּינַי in Neh. 8:2-12 and יָסַר in Deut. 8:2-5.

¹³⁰ As seen in our study of יָדַע. Stephen D. Lowe, *You Are My Witnesses: A Biblical Theology of Christian Education*, (Newburg, IN, Trinity College and Seminary, 2000) has excellently captured this idea of the divine intent to communicate God to the Israelites and to the rest of the world through the biblical concept of "witness". He has set forth, I think justifiably, this theme of "witness" as the biblical organizing center for a biblical theology of Christian education.

This experiential knowledge comes through a student's understanding and personal interaction with God's character of righteousness, justice, loving kindness, compassion, faithfulness, mercy, forgiveness, and discipline. Knowing God also involves the *human response of submission* to him and the acceptance of his will for one's life¹³¹. This would dictate that the Christian teacher communicate verbally not only the personal nature of God, but reveal *how* to access that personal knowledge of him. The student needs to be helped to personally experience the character of God in his life. The teacher must also communicate that obtaining this knowledge of God necessitates the student's response of submission and obedience to God. Hence, a biblical theology of Christian education needs to emphasize the necessity of the student experiencing God in a personal, relational and reciprocal manner.

Fifthly, although relational experience with God is essential to knowing him, verbal transference of authoritative information about God is not excluded. There is a place in Christian education for the teaching of *mental concepts* about God¹³². Hence, classroom type verbal instruction of the word of God is indicated and should be used in Christian education. A biblical theology of Christian education will thus uphold the need for verbal instruction of the word of God.

Sixthly, many of the Hebrew words illustrate that the goal of godly education in the OT was to secure not only physical obedience but a *change of heart*¹³³. As such, the goal of Christian education is not achieved if only physical obedience is secured.

Behaviorial change is not the only end desired. There must also be a training of the heart

¹³¹ As seen from our study of יָדַע

¹³² As seen from our study of יָרָה and בִּין.

¹³³ As seen in our study of יָסַר, מוֹסֵר, לָמַד, יָדַע, and בִּין.

in which attitudes are changed. A biblical theology of Christian education will include the OT focus on the need for heart change as part of that education.

Seventhly, *life transference of character* from one individual to another definitely does take place in the realm of teaching and learning¹³⁴. As a result, the personal associations of those being taught needs to be directed. Christian teachers (including parents) need to exemplify the principles of the Christian faith and the character of God as much as possible in their lives to ensure the best atmosphere for correct Christian education to take place. Hence students in Christian education need to be taught by Christian teachers who are exemplifying the proper example for the students in their lives. This requirement of teachers will be a point included in a biblical theology of Christian education.

Eighthly, OT teaching and learning includes instilling the fear of the LORD in the heart of the student. Respect for God (as well as other authority figures such as the teachers, parents, etc.) is necessary for one to know him and follow him¹³⁵. Hence, Christian educators need to insist on respect from the student not only for themselves but especially for God. This respect for authority needs to be included in a biblical theology of Christian education.

Ninthly, in order to understand the fear of the LORD and gain knowledge of him, a student must gain *spiritual* discernment. Spiritual discernment is something that comes from God through the Scriptures, contemplation of God's power, through the actions of accepting God's words, storing up God's commands in one's heart, listening to wisdom, applying one's heart to understanding, calling out to God for insight, crying out loud to

¹³⁴ As indicated in our study of אֱלֹהִים .

¹³⁵ As indicated in our study of לְיָמֵי .

God for understanding, looking for it as for silver, and searching for it as for treasure¹³⁶.

As such the Christian teacher must teach this and the student implement it in his life. The student must realize that discernment comes from God and that he will need to go to great lengths to gain this discernment and knowledge of God. The teacher, if he or she has also experienced this spiritual discernment, can be a great guide in helping a student come to this point in life also. A theology of Christian education will incorporate the teaching of the importance of and the road to obtaining spiritual discernment.

Tenthly, these Hebrew words indicate that learning is gained through giving physical training and discipline on the part of the teacher to the student¹³⁷. The goal is to help the student learn righteousness and justice toward God and others via a changed life¹³⁸. Both student and teacher must love discipline. This means that there must be personal interaction between the student and teacher. Discipleship or life mentorship is thus indicated here in addition to simple verbal transference of information from teacher to student. This would indicate that Christian education needs to be expanded beyond the formal classroom setting of mere verbal instruction to include personal in-life pedagogy¹³⁹. A theology of Christian education will thus include discipleship or life mentorship as part of its teaching.

¹³⁶ As indicated from our study of בִּינָה.

¹³⁷ As seen in our study of מוֹסֵר and יוֹסֵר.

¹³⁸ As indicated in our study of לְמִדָּה.

¹³⁹ Recent trends in evangelicalism tends toward this as is exemplified by the proliferation of books on the subject, including for instance Bobb Biehl, *Mentoring: Confidence in Finding a Mentor and Becoming one* (Nashville, Broadman and Holman, 1996), and David A. Stoddard, *The Heart of Mentoring* (Colorado Springs: Nav Press, 2003). Cf. also Pazmino's (*Foundational Issues*, 152-58) and his discussion of the recent trends and historical foundations of recent evangelical educators (including Frank E. Gaebelein, Lois E. LeBar, Gene A. Getz, and especially Lawrence O. Richards).

Eleventhly, our study shows that the principles taught must be applied to life¹⁴⁰. Simply knowing cognitively about God, his ways, or his word is not enough. His way must be applied to one's life. Hence Christian teachers must realize that Christian education has not been completed until the student has been helped to successfully incorporate biblical teachings into his life and heart. Thus, practical application will be a necessary element in a theology of Christian education.

Twelfthly, the study of these words indicates many *methods* by which the learning processes of all of the above can be enhanced. These include intentional personal in-life example-setting¹⁴¹, verbal instruction, rebuke, chastisement, or corporeal encouragement¹⁴², hands on experiences, historical circumstance, interpersonal relationships, investigation of problems, testing, contemplation, reflection¹⁴³, sweetness of speech¹⁴⁴, use of the senses (including seeing, hearing, touch, taste), explanations to make things clear, as well as interpretation of the meaning of Scripture for the student¹⁴⁵. In addition, there is also the method of using those taught (e.g., children) to pass on this knowledge to the next generation (their children).¹⁴⁶ All these methods must be a part of a theology of Christian education.

In conclusion, these Hebrew words show that education in the Bible involves the whole person. It involves the mind, heart, spirit, will, and body. Knowledge of God and his ways involves interpersonal experience of his character in addition to verbal

¹⁴⁰ As shown by our study of לְקַדְּשׁוֹ.

¹⁴¹ As seen in the use of אֲלֵךְ.

¹⁴² As seen in our study of יָסַר, and מוֹסֵר.

¹⁴³ As seen in our study of יָדַע.

¹⁴⁴ From our study of לִקְחָהּ.

¹⁴⁵ As indicated from our study of בִּינָה.

¹⁴⁶ E.g., Deut. 4:9 from our study of יָדַע.

transference of authoritative information about him from teachers to students. A biblical theology of Christian education will include *all* of the above points in its theology in an effort to effectively help the student achieve the goal of a healthy personal relationship with God and with others.

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