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GEORGE W. TRUETT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

THE IMPORTANCE OF SEMINARY

Baptists have long recognized the importance of an educated ministry. As far back as 1755, the Charleston Association in South Carolina formed a scholarship fund to assist young ministers with the cost of their education. (*The Story of Baptists in the United States*, Pamela R. and Keith E. Durso, pg. 39) That was 21 years before the Declaration of Independence was signed.

Muslims, too, realize the importance of an educated ministry. In 2004, Jordan decided to reform its education requirements for mosque prayer leaders. Prior to the change, high school students in Jordan took an exam for college entrance; those who excelled on the test became doctors and engineers while the lower performers became mosque preachers. To become a mosque prayer leader in the new system, a young man must first obtain a bachelor's degree in some other subject then study Islamic law as a graduate degree. The change encourages more young men of talent to go into the clergy and weeds out those who were just "falling in." (*The World is Flat*, Thomas L. Freidman, pg. 564)

When I am asked, "What does seminary have to offer," my answer is that the seminary exists to help the called sharpen their ax. The person who sharpens his ax is not wasting his time. He can cut more wood with less effort with a sharp ax. Of course, if you don't have an ax (a calling and a gift from God) then the seminary can't help you. But if you have a calling and a gift from God, the seminary can help sharpen your skills and make you a better worker for the Lord.

What does seminary offer a person?

- A community of scholars. In seminary you will study with gifted teachers from many different fields. These individuals are great scholars who talk with one another and share their readings and insights so that our faculty will be better next year than it was this year because of the cross-pollination of ideas.
- A fellowship of students. In seminary you will make friends for life. They will enrich your life because they come from different parts of the country and from different cultures and with different callings.
- Multiple opportunities for service. We will help get you a place of service in the church.
- A place you can call home. In the ministry, we move about so much that it is hard to have a place you can anchor to.
- Why does it take three years? I'm not sure, but I know the apostle Paul went to the desert of Arabia for three years of training after his conversion and before he went to preach. (Galatians 1:17-18)

Modern ministers ought to do the same. The first Texas association was formed in 1840, and the following year the association began to urge churches to encourage gifted men to become ministers. Today we once again need our pastors and churches to devote time to "calling out the called" and to encourage the called to go to seminary, especially Truett Seminary.

I remind you that Truett is a Christ-centered Bible-based seminary committed to our historic Baptist principles. Our vision is to be the premiere Baptist theological seminary of the world. With your prayers and with your help we will achieve our vision and our goal.

NEED A QUOTE

- "A recent study of 500 adults ages 60-98 found that optimism and effective coping styles were the most important factors in aging successfully-not health." Martin E.P. Seligman, PhD, University of Pennsylvania's Positive Psychology Center
- "Help others get ahead. You will always stand taller with some else on your shoulders." Bob Moawad, business consultant and motivational speaker

A WORD TO PASTORS

Years ago, a man in my city opened a furniture store. He advertised that wine and cheese would be served at the open house on Sunday afternoon. I received an invitation and attended. When I walked in, he said, "Well, preacher, I was wondering if you would come. Jesus would have." And the man was right. Jesus mixed and mingled with people in every walk of life, and so must we if we are to be his representatives. We must never leave the impression that we are too busy or too good to associate with anyone.

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SERMON

- Title Things to Remember When You Worry
- Preacher Unknown
- Text Matthew 6:25
- Introduction Worry has plagued mankind from the beginning. The answer to worry is faith. Jesus tells us three things to remember when we are tempted to worry.
- I Value yourself. "Behold the birds of the air...are you not much better than they?" (vs. 26)
 - II Accept yourself. "Which of you by worrying can add one foot to his height?" (vs. 27)
 - III Consecrate yourself. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness..." (vs. 33)
- Conclusion Worry is the end of faith. Faith is the end of worry.

LEADERSHIP

To be a good leader you must learn how to deal with difficult people and resolve conflict constructively. And there is often more than one way to do it. Former basketball coach Bobby Knight, who is less than a stellar example of public relations, told that years ago when Indiana was playing Michigan State, a man sat behind his bench and heckled Knight all game long – chewed him up one side and down the other. At the end of the game, Knight turned around and said to the lady who was sitting next to the man, "Does he belong to you?" She ducked her head and said sheepishly, "Yes." Bobby then responded, "You could do so much better than him."

The next year when the two teams were set to play again, Knight checked on the heckler and discovered that he was an economics professor and a one-time interim president of the opposing university. Knight invited the man to visit with his team prior to the game. After the visit, Knight handed the man several pieces of candy and said, "Here, chew on this rather than me. That way we'll both enjoy the game better."

ILLUSTRATION

How do you catch a monkey in the jungle? Drill a hole in a coconut and put food inside it. The hole must be large enough for the monkey to get his hand in, but small enough that he cannot get it out once he grabs the food.

Chain the coconut to a coconut tree. Once the monkey grabs the food, he is stuck. Refusing to let the food go, he is in bondage to the coconut. Now all you have to do is come and collect the monkeys who, by their own choice, are bound.

This parable is for all of us who grab things and can't let go: food, work, alcohol, drugs, sex, pornography, television, religion, money, and tobacco, among others. The many types of addiction often are destructive and rooted in other personal issues. Frederick Buechner defines lust as "the craving for salt of a man who is dying of thirst."

Most of us can connect with Paul when he confesses, "For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do." Addiction: easy to grab, hard to let go.

REMEMBER

George W. Truett Seminary is a Christ-centered, Bible-based seminary committed to our historic Baptist principles. Our vision is to be the premiere Baptist theological seminary of the world. Our mission is to serve the churches by training the next generation of ministers and missionaries.



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