

**September: Walk in Love, Supporting both Students  
and Teachers**

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**Verse:**

“Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.” Proverbs 22:6 (NIV)

**Upward Gaze:**

Dear Heavenly Father, allow me to hear your message about teachers and students. Let me be open to your teachings, and not my own understanding of these ideas as defined by society. Amen

**Development of theme:**

I am a teacher. I teach 11th and 12th grade literature at The Middle College at Austin Peay State University. Like many teachers, I feel inadequate. Am I doing this right? Will this impact their futures correctly? Did I not teach this well enough? Is “little Susie” hungry again? Did she have breakfast? Did I bring enough peanut butter cracker packs today? Where are my extra sweatshirts or jackets? Little “Johnny” looks cold. Did “Susie” wear that every day this week? Does she have help?

We are responsible for not only the academic education these children need, but also for their social and emotional learning. This is, in fact, a required curriculum now present in many schools. However, please know I’m not complaining. I love my job. I love my kids. Even more so, I’d love support and encouragement as each day presents its own set of challenges. All teachers would - trust me on this!

As we walk with God, how can we support our teachers and students? We trust them with our most precious treasure, our children and yet they are often undermined and blamed in a society that doesn’t value the dedication of educators. How can we help to lift this exhaustion of inadequacy from both the pupil and the instructor? We can look to God for examples of encouragement and replenish the spirits of those working in our community to develop young minds, young lives. Romans 12:8 tells us, “if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.” These spiritual gifts are how we, as a community, can support both teacher and student.

To encourage a teacher or student, remind them they are in your prayers - a note, a token gift, a small thank you - these go a long way on long days. Teachers, like others, are human beings with real and visceral emotions that need God’s loving hand to steady.

To give to a teacher or student, know that it’s not about monetary application. Instead, give of your time, volunteer for a school, help tutor a young member of the church, encourage struggling

students to do their homework. What were your strengths during your academic days, and how can you use them to support today's educational climate?

Teachers and students are often under a microscope. Lead the community in returning to respect for teachers and learning. Embrace the idea of failure, because from failure we learn. And in this failure, should it be difficult, show mercy to the human living inside the role of teacher and student.

Be much like Paul, who traveled through Jerusalem speaking words of encouragement to the people (Acts 20:2). Or more so like Christ:

Therefore, if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

Philippians 2:1-4

Every day in the classroom, for both the teacher and the student, is a new adventure. Sometimes this experience is all we could have hoped for. There is a true connection in learning and love; yet, some days, the journey falls short of the mark and we both need a helping hand. This September, as you see the buses rolling again, remember those inside the school walls and how much they need you and your love each and every day. Walk with them as your walk with Christ.

### **Inward Glimpse (Reflection):**

Read Ecclesiastes 12:9-10 and consider its importance in the ideas of teaching. This epilogue asserts two important ideas: the relevance of wisdom and the power of God.

- How can I support teachers in the ways of the Lord? Consider the idea that teachers are any persons working with others, imparting knowledge - children, youth, even adults.
- How am I a student in this relationship - what can I learn from others in God's ways?

### **Outward Glance (Discussion):**

Consider ways your prayer group could work with a local school to support and encourage teachers. For example, in my church we have prayer pals where adults are paired with youth to let them know that others care. Are there people in your church who could give teachers and students support and encouragement this school year?

### **One more peek:**

“Young and old alike, teacher as well as student, cast lots for their duties.”

1 Chronicles 25:8