

The Comforter Is My Teacher

Welcome Back, Kotter was a popular sitcom that aired in the late '70s on ABC.

The show launched the career of John Travolta. It also gave us Arnold Horshack, arguably the brightest of the class of misfits lovingly labeled "the Sweathogs."

Horshack was promoted out of Kotter's remedial class because of his test scores and passion for learning. My favorite memory of the actor/student was his response to all of Kotter's questions.

His arm raised a waving hand, "Oh, Oh, Oh, Mr. Kotter, pick me."

Horshack demonstrated an undeniable passion for learning. After his promotion to a higher-level classroom, he was sent back to Kotter because his passion turned stomachs. He didn't fit in. Horshack did well with the Sweathogs because his passion was no threat to a roomful of non-learners.

Indifference is rewarded and passion is punished.

Education occurs through an installment plan. Students move from lab to lab for further processing.

The bell rings and class ends.

The lesson of the bells is that work is not worthy of a long finish. Don't care too deeply about anything; the bell will ring any minute.

Pavlov proved that bells inject a conditioning effect. Years and years of bells imprint that work and effort end at the bell. During the industrial revolution, factory owners employed steam whistles to remind workers that "the bell rang."

Bells convert passion to indifference.

Leaders who love silence the bells. Learning is rewarded. Seminars run overtime. Reading goals accelerate. Questions flow without fear.

Passion percolates.

Jesus talked as He walked. Before the time came for His passion to flow, He promised His disciples that learning would continue. He promised a Comforter: "And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth" (John 14:16-17).

Through the power of the Holy Spirit, learning thrives. The Spirit is a master teacher. Class remains in session. Eternal learning is our promise.

"Now I know in part; then I shall know fully" (1 Cor. 13:12).

When the teacher comes into the classroom and asks, "Who wants to learn about Jesus?", may every hand be lifted up.

"Oh, oh, oh, Jesus, pick me!"

Jesus silences the bell.