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GREENHOUSE

Nurturing Home Education in North Carolina and Beyond



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[Homeschooling]...
 recipe for genius:
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 and less of school,
 more of parents
 and less of peers,
 more creative
 freedom and less
 formal lessons.

— Raymond S. Moore —

About GREENHOUSE

The GREENHOUSE is the periodical of North Carolinians for Home Education. It is published twice a year, spring and fall. There is also a special graduate publication in May. It is mailed to all members and posted online. The name GREENHOUSE was chosen to represent the type of care homeschooling parents are able to give to their children. Children are lovingly “tended” in a protected and nurturing environment until they are sufficiently mature to go out and take a place of service in the world. Letters and articles addressed to the GREENHOUSE become property of NCHC with full right to publication without further permission required. Ideas and opinions expressed in articles do not necessarily represent those of NCHC.

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How to Make Knowledge Easy



by Matthew McDill

Several years ago, this Proverb caught my attention:

*A scoffer seeks wisdom in vain,
but knowledge is easy for a man of understanding.
(Proverbs 14:6)*

The part that really struck me was the claim that “knowledge is easy for a man of understanding.” As a homeschooling family, we have observed that knowledge is often not easy! In fact, acquiring knowledge can be so difficult that it brings children, and sometimes even moms, to tears. I began to reflect on this verse in hopes of discovering some secret for making knowledge easy.

Since learning is work, it will never be completely easy. At the same time, the Proverb consistently makes it clear that there are certain factors that put us in a better position for learning and gaining knowledge. In this verse, Solomon said that knowledge is *easy for a man of understanding*. That may seem redundant at first, if we were to equate *knowledge* and *understanding*. The knowledge being gained is not the same as the understanding this man already has.

What understanding might a man have that would make knowledge easy? Another important word in this verse is *wisdom*. Most readers would understand there is a difference between *knowledge* and *wisdom*. Wisdom includes the idea of knowing what is right, while knowledge usually just means knowing facts or skills. I believe *wisdom* is what this writer has in mind when he is referring to knowledge.

What can we conclude from this verse? Here are some basic principles that I have learned from understanding the importance of gaining knowledge in the context of wisdom.

1. Aim for more than knowledge.

Unfortunately, the predominant educational strategy of schools in our nation focuses almost exclusively on knowledge. Moral understanding and life skills have almost been completely removed from the system.

It is critical that we remember that knowledge is a means to an end, not an end in and of itself. In real life, we usually do not want knowledge just for the sake of knowing something. We want knowledge in order to achieve some particular purpose. We learn what is necessary in order to make a living in some line of work. We learn how to plant a garden, so that we can grow vegetables. We learn how an engine works, so that we can fix it. When we know why we need to learn something, we find the necessary motivation and energy to learn it. This is what I would call *understanding*.

One of the reasons children struggle with learning is because they do not understand the purpose of what they are learning. If they were given a broader understanding of the purpose, maybe learning would be easier. One critical part of having an understanding of life that makes learning easy is to understand and embrace God's purpose for our lives. Now we move to the second principle.

2. Prepare your children to fulfill God's purpose for their lives.

God has revealed to us that our greatest purpose in life is to love Him with all that we are. Jesus said that this is the greatest commandment of all. The second greatest commandment is for us to love others (Mark 12:30-31). Understanding that the love of God and people are the most important issues of life helps us to put knowledge in perspective.

Paul compares love and knowledge in 1 Corinthians 8:1-3.

*Now concerning food offered to idols:
We know that "all of us possess knowledge."
This "knowledge" puffs up, but love builds up.
If anyone imagines that he knows something,
he does not yet know as he ought to know.
But if anyone loves God, he is known by God.*

We can teach our children all the knowledge we want, but if we have not taught them to love, then what have we really accomplished? If we teach our children to love, then we have not only taught them what is most important, we

have given them the proper context and purpose for learning and knowledge. Love is what knowledge is *for*. As Solomon said, I believe this understanding will make knowledge easy.

3. Provide as many real-life contexts for learning as possible.

Some of my children have a very difficult time remembering what they have learned in school. It is interesting to observe, however, that when they seek some learning of their own to accomplish some goal of their own, they are quite capable learners. Why is this? I believe it is because humans gain and remember knowledge more effectively when there is a real need.

When we decided to raise some laying hens, we had to build proper living quarters for them. We bought them as chicks and discovered that they needed a certain amount of space per chick. The temperature in their quarters had to be within a fairly narrow range. I gave my middle-school-aged boys the job of figuring out the square footage of the pen and how to properly set up the heat lamp for correct temperature control. The real incentive was that the boys were going to be able to sell the eggs and make some money from these hens. They didn't want any of the chicks to die, because they each represented cash. Math and temperature calculations all of the sudden mattered to my boys in a whole new way!

We will not always be able to provide a real-life context for learning. However, one of the great advantages of home education is that we frequently have the freedom to provide a context. When we provide a real-life context for learning, it provides understanding that makes knowledge easy.

There are three more implications from this Proverb for making knowledge easy, or at least easier. I will share them in the next issue of the *GREENHOUSE*.



Matthew McDill and his wife, Dana, homeschool their nine children in Creston, NC. Matthew has been on the NCHC board for several years and currently serves as president. He is a pastor of Highland Christian Fellowship in Boone, NC. Through his ministry, Truth to Freedom (truthoffreedom.org), he loves to teach and write about discipleship, marriage, family, parenting, home education, and church. Matthew holds a B.S. in communication and two master's degrees and a Ph.D. in biblical studies.

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For details about the conference, go to nche.com/thrive.

Pre-registration prices end May 24.

Teen and Alumni Dance



Keynotes and Workshops



Conference Speakers and Workshops

Featured Speakers



Karen DeBeus is a homeschooling mom who is learning to live more simply and to keep God at the center of it all. She is the author of three best-selling homeschooling books and writes at *Simply Living for Him* and *Bible Based Homeschooling*. She speaks nationally and

locally about homeschooling and her desire for others to clear the clutter from their lives and seek God first. In 2016 she founded the *Simply Living for Him Retreat*, which is a time of rest and renewal for all women seeking Jesus. She enjoys life on her hobby farm with her husband and four children. Together they are a work-at-home family pursuing a simple life with purpose and, above all, seeking to glorify God in all they do.

- **Called Home: Finding Joy in Letting God Lead Your Homeschool**
- **Bible Based Homeschooling: Building a Firm Foundation**
- **Simple Homeschool: Have Less Clutter and More Joy**
- **Real Homeschool: Trading in Pinterest-Perfect for Real Life**
- **Homeschool: Prepare for Life Not Just a Test**



Dr. Kathy Koch (“cook”), founder and president of Celebrate Kids, Inc., has spoken in thirty countries, influencing thousands of people. Her practical, relevant, results-oriented concepts and engaging, honoring, and humorous speaking style draw enthusiastic raves from children, teens,

parents, and educators. Attendees leave her events armed with new beliefs, attitudes, practical tools, and increased hope for building healthy relationships and increasing success in family life and school. A popular guest on *Focus on the Family* radio, she has authored six books. Her most recent are *Guiding Motivation*, *8 Great Smarts*, and *Screens and Teens*. Dr. Kathy earned a Ph.D. in reading and educational psychology from Purdue University. She was a tenured associate professor of education at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, a teacher of second graders, a middle school coach, and a school board member before becoming a full-time conference speaker in 1991. She has loved Jesus for years, and her faith and desire to serve and glorify God are the foundation of her ministry.

- **Frustrated, Perfectionistic Kids: Guiding and Changing Their Behavior**
- **Instill Hope: Motivation Matters**
- **How Are You (or Your Kids) Smart and Why Does It Matter?**
- **Focus Children’s Thinking to Increase Learning and Decrease Frustration**
- **The Power Technology Has over Character and Behavior**
- **Improve the Fruit by Identifying the Root**
- **Maximize the Genius Qualities in Your Children**





Sherri Seligson

and her husband, David, have four children and homeschooled for twenty-one years, recently graduating their youngest child. A degreed marine biologist, Sherri worked at Walt Disney World's Living Seas, publishing shark behavior research. She has authored Apologia's

Exploring Creation with Marine Biology and *Interning for High School Credit*, instructional DVD courses for *Apologia's Exploring Creation with Biology and the Human Body*, as well as companion curricula for feature films including *Dolphin Tale I and II* and *War Horse*. Sherri has written for several scientific publications and homeschool magazines and is a national conference and retreat speaker where she encourages moms on their homeschool journey and teaches families and students the importance of studying God's creation. You can connect with Sherri at www.just-extraordinary.com.

- **A Scientist's Showcase of Creatures That Defy Evolutionary Theory**
- **When You Have a Child, Who Is Not Driven**
- **What Do I Want to Be When I Grow Up? Giving Your Children a Vision for the Future**
- **Why Teaching Science Is a Critical Part of Education (Even for Poets)**
- **Am I Ruining My Children? What I Wish I Knew as a Homeschool Mom**



John Stonestreet

serves as president of the Colson Center for Christian Worldview. He's a sought-after author and speaker on areas of faith and culture, theology, worldview, education, and apologetics. Since 2012, John and Eric Metaxas have co-hosted *BreakPoint*, the nationally syndicated commentary

on the culture, founded by the late Chuck Colson. He is also the voice of the Point, a daily one-minute radio feature on worldview, apologetics and cultural issues. Before coming to the Colson Center in 2010, John served various leadership capacities with Summit Ministries and was on the biblical studies faculty at Bryan College (TN). John has co-authored four books: *A Practical Guide to Culture*, *Restoring All Things*, *Same-Sex Marriage*, and *Making Sense of Your World: A Biblical Worldview*. John holds degrees from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (IL) and Bryan College (TN). He and his wife, Sarah, have four children and live in Colorado Springs, CO. Connect with John at BreakPoint.org, or follow him on Twitter (@jbstonestreet).

- **Amusing Ourselves to Death: How to Handle a World of Entertainment**
- **Marriage: Does It Even Matter Anymore?**
- **Four Cultural Shifts Parents Need to Understand and How to Navigate Them**
- **Preparing for the Talk: Preparing Students for This Sexually Broken World**
- **Right Answers Are Not Enough: Connecting Belief with Behavior**
- **Same Sex Marriage: Clear Thinking on a Controversial Issue**
- **What to Do with the Rest of Your Life: How to Determine God's Will**
- **How (Not) to Read the Bible: Handling the Scriptures with Our Children**





Children's Program



Teen Games



Phil Tuttle, president and CEO of Walk Thru the Bible, has been a vital member of the Walk Thru the Bible family for more than two decades. He served as senior vice president for International Ministries and global teaching pastor before becoming president and CEO in 2007. As president

of Walk Thru the Bible, Phil continues to share God's Word throughout the world in churches, Bible conferences, Christian education conventions, and corporate gatherings. He is the author of *Raise Up a Child*; *Crucible: The Choices that Change Your Life Forever*; *Detour: Finding Purpose When Life Doesn't Make Sense*; *Chosen: When God Calls Your Name*; and *Revolution: How Millennials Can Change the World*. Phil's unique blend of biblical instruction, real-life illustrations, and spontaneous humor makes learning easy and enjoyable. Phil and his wife, Ellen, have two adult children, Emily and Philip, and daughter-in-law, Erika.

Phil will be presenting his talks on this theme:

Revolution: How Millennials Can Change the World (and What They Need from the Rest of Us)

- The Reality
- The Parallels
- The Generations
- The Word
- The Pillar
- The Future



Todd Wilson is a dad, writer, conference speaker, and former pastor. Todd's humor and down to earth realness have made him a favorite speaker at homeschool conventions across the country and a guest on Focus on the Family. As founder of Familyman Ministries, his passion and mission are

to remind dads and moms of what's most important through a weekly email for dads, seminars, and books that encourage parents. Todd, and his wife, Debbie, homeschool five of their eight children (three have graduated) in northern Indiana and travel America in the Familyman Mobile. You can read more at www.familymanweb.com.

- **They Look to You**
- **Choose the Hard Things**
- **Get Real!**
- **Irresistible Parenting**
- **Every Dad a Homeschooling Dad!**
- **This, We Believe!**
- **Raising Dangerous Sons in a Safe World**



Mentoring

Additional Conference Speakers

Diane Allen

The DNPE, the Law and the Average Homeschool Family

Basic Rules of a Record Retention: From Kindergarten to College



Jeff Ertzberger

Thirty Tech Tools to Teach Reading, Writing and Literature

Protect Your Digital Presence—How to Keep Yourself and Your Identity Safe Online



LeAnn Gregory

You Are Your Student's Best Guidance Counselor



Debbie Crawford

Restoring the Nest: Encouragement to Prioritize Your Relationship with Your Children in a Single Parent Homeschool



J. Mark Fox

Time Management for Men: How to Get It All Done

How to Conquer Your Fear of Public Speaking



Eve Hullette

Teach Math to a Child with Learning Challenges



Shawn Curtis

Family Worship as a Cornerstone of Home Education



Tami Fox

Homeschooling with Babies and Toddlers



Monica Irvine

Raising our Girls to Be Ladies

Schedules—Helping Our Children to Be Happy



Raising Our Boys to Be Gentlemen

Andrea Daley

High School Smorgasbord: The Practical

High School Smorgasbord: The Emotional



Jessica Frierson

Homeschool How-Tos



Andrew Kern

Why Should Christians Embrace Classical Education?



Bryan Davis

An Author's Journey



Amanda Garner

Six Steps to a Successful Start

A Shelter in the Storm: Homeschooling through Difficult Seasons



Grayson Marshall

How to Go to College Debt-Free



Katie Dugdale

Creating a Culture of Homeschooling

How Unschooling Saved Our Homeschool



Joanne Giff

Restoring the Nest: Encouragement to Prioritize Your Relationship with Your Children in a Single Parent Homeschool



Ronda Marshall

Secrets of Endurance: Successful Co-ops and Tutorials

Choosing Curriculum



Debbie Mason
Avoiding Burnout
Homeschooling High School



Robert Nelson
Preparing for College in a Changing Secular Environment
NC Community College
Opportunities for Homeschoolers



Amanda Wares
Help for New Homeschoolers



Paul J. Maurer
Being a Big Fish in a Small Pond



Steve Noble
Foundations of Freedom
The Ugly Side of Homeschooling



Dr. Jay Wile
Teaching Elementary Science Using History as a Guide



Penny Mayes
Visualizing History, Increasing Reading Comprehension and Independent Learning Through Visuals and Hands-on Projects



Danielle Papageorgiou
The Power of a Label



What I Have Learned about Homeschooling over the Past Twenty-Two Years
Homeschooling: The Environment for Genius

Dana McDill
Choosing Rest in the Midst of the Chaotic Fun of Homeschooling



Rhea Perry
Home Business 101: Education to Create Financial Freedom
Five Home Business Projects that Teach Financial Literacy and Create Income



Durenda Wilson
Why You Don't Need to Know Everything to Give Your Kids a Great Education



Losing Your Way on the Journey

Matthew McDill
Nine Ways to Help Your Children Know God's Will for Their Lives



Glenna Toney
Processing, Fluency, Automaticity and Working Memory



Unhurried Homeschooling: Why We Need to Slow Down

Ten Essential Topics for Discipling Your Children

Marjorie H. McIlvaine
NC Achievement Testing—Mystery No Longer!



Foreign Language and Homeschooling, the Adventure Begins!

Hal and Melanie Young
Parenting Pre-Teens



Homeschooling from the Beginning

Surviving Struggling to Read





Learning by Doing

by Mary Morse, Ph.D.

When you think back to what you remember learning in any formal educational setting, I am betting you remember things like field trips, interactive projects, or lessons on topics related to your interests. We need something to attach or relate new knowledge to remember it. We need to be able to use this knowledge and apply it to something that is meaningful to us. When we are learning through an activity that engages us, it allows us to apply the knowledge and to test it and maybe even create new knowledge through experimentation. Examples of this type of learning can be seen in the use of online resources for self-directed learning and business learning models.

My son has been teaching himself to do flips and other freerunning moves by watching YouTube videos and following blogs. His progress has been amazing. He reads to find a trick he wants to learn, watches videos, and then goes outside and practices. When he encounters a problem, he goes back and reads, asks questions, and re-watches videos. Then more practice. He also verbally explains to me what he is doing and what he needs to work on. This process is textbook learning theory in action!

An important goal for many business training workshops is to get participants to use the concepts that they learn in their workplace within twenty-four hours. Experience has shown that if new skills are not used in the workplace within twenty-four hours, they will most likely not be implemented at all. In the training industry, the 10/20/70 model is commonly used as a guideline for employee training. This model states that ten percent of an employee's job skills are obtained from formal learning from workshops and formal training sessions, twenty percent are achieved from informal coaching and interactions with others, and seventy percent come from on the job experience. I wonder how effective this strategy would be in the classroom.



In a perfect world, all learning would take place in the setting where it is used. In the traditional classroom, often the best we can do is answer the "So what? Why do I need to learn this?" with lessons that provide interaction, stimulate emotional attachment, and create interest. However, with homeschooling, we have the freedom to learn anywhere and in any way, that works for our children. There are huge benefits to teaching our children to be self-directed learners and providing opportunities for them to learn by doing. Techniques to accomplish this include discussing concepts about your community and allowing students to approach a project through the lens of their interests. Involving community members in your learning activities and using local community resources can help students attach meaning to new knowledge and to relate that knowledge to real life experiences. Using online resources can also support students in pursuing their personal interests as they work on projects and assignments. These techniques allow students to see value and application in what they are learning.

When we think in terms of specific courses or lesson standards, the concept of learning by doing may seem difficult to plan out and evaluate. I think this is one of those times when we must work backward in our planning. Start with what your child is interested in and see where you can go with

that interest. Visit local businesses, parks, or museums that relate to the interest and let your child talk with people and ask questions. Just spend some time talking with your child about what you are seeing and doing. You will start seeing connections to the more formal lessons you are teaching, and you will see the value of your child being able to connect new knowledge to these experiences. The benefit of this type of learning goes way beyond the initial interest. My son has learned amazing video production techniques through filming his tricks and editing these films to

post online. He has greatly improved his writing by composing blog posts on his favorite freerunning and parkour websites. He has strengthened his time management skills, so that he can fit in practice time with school work. Most importantly, he has learned these skills, because he needed them to do something that was of interest and value to him. This type of learning lasts a lifetime, not just through test day.



Dr. Mary Morse earned her Ph.D in education from the University of Tennessee. Her research interests include curriculum design for technology-supported learning environments and gifted education. Her current work involves speaking, consulting, and writing to support homeschooling and to advocate for parental and community involvement in the education of our children. Morse has been involved in homeschooling since the early 1990s. She has served in a variety of homeschool support group and co-op leadership roles for the past twenty years. She is currently the vice president of her local homeschool support group. Her oldest son was homeschooled from pre-school through high school and is now a public-school teacher. She and her husband are currently homeschooling their fifteen-year-old son.



Left to right: Jesse Mindel - 3rd place, Grayson Price, Joseph Marin-Suarez, Sabrina Bradford, Ethan Haas - 2nd place, Mark Bonfim - 1st place, Colson Frank, (participant not in the picture: Graeme Olthoff)

Start Studying Now to Compete in the 2019 National Geographic Bee

by Tiffany Broome

"I remember the moment almost perfectly. The question was, 'One of the major stops along the Pan American highway is the capital of Costa Rica. Name this city.' The first words that came to my head were *San Jose*, so quick that I knew it was my subconscious. But I didn't know the capital of Costa Rica. Oh, no. I started to panic. I saw the timekeeper silently count, *three, two...* 'San Jose,' I guessed. 'Correct.' I breathed out. 'Most of the time,' I thought to myself, 'your (my) subconscious is right.'"

Soon after responding to that question, my son, Joshua Broome, placed third in the state of North Carolina for the 2014 National Geographic Bee. Joshua won the local HINTS bee and went to the state competition four years. In 2014, he placed third, and another year he was one of the top ten finalists. This year, Mark Bomfim, seventh grade homeschooled student, won the CHEA-HINTS homeschool competition on Saturday, January 6.

HINTS support group (Home Instructors Need Team Support) has been generously sponsoring the bee in the Charlotte area for over twenty years, paying the required school and registration fees, for area homeschooled students to participate in the bee.

My family has personally benefited from HINTS generosity. Because he is now in ninth grade, Joshua is no longer eligible, but I would love to see this opportunity continue to be made available to homeschoolers. Since this has been such a good experience for my family and others, I want to help publicize it so that more may participate. I took the following information from a press release for the bee.

"This year, 2018, is the thirtieth anniversary of the National Geographic Bee, a geography competition designed to inspire and reward students' curiosity about the world. Thousands of schools around the United States and in the five U.S. territories are participating in the 2018 National Geographic Bee. The school champions take a qualifying test. Up to 100 of the top scorers on that test in each state will then be eligible to compete in their state Bee on April 6, 2018.

The National Geographic Society developed the National Geographic Bee in 1989 in response to concern about the lack of geographic knowledge among young people in the United States. Over three decades, 1,583 state champions have traveled to D.C. to participate in the finals and more than \$1.5 million in college scholarship money has been awarded to winners of the competition by the National Geographic Society.

The National Geographic Society will provide an all-expenses paid trip to Washington, D.C., for state winners to participate in the Bee national championship rounds May 20-23, 2018. The first-place national champion will receive a \$50,000 college scholarship and an all-expenses-paid expedition to the Galápagos Islands. Second- and third-place finishers will receive \$25,000 and \$10,000 college scholarships, respectively. National Geographic will air the final round of the National Geographic Bee Championship in May 2018."

While the potential prizes may seem enticing, the thought of competing sometimes intimidates people. We've had several mothers and students express feelings of trepidation when considering participating in the local bee, possibly caused by watching the national bee on television. I tell parents that our local bee reflects our local homeschool community and is a much more relaxed environment. My son, Joshua, also initially felt intimidated.

"Knowing how I liked geography, she, (my mom) signed me up, and then told me about it. Of course, I was happy, and being a very competitive person, I was eager to test my knowledge against other kids. However, I was only in the fourth grade and knew the contest was up to eighth graders. Secretly, I was sure I'd be horribly embarrassed. To my surprise, I did not miss a single question until the tiebreaker questions in the championship round. I missed a question about where the Kunlun Mountains were."

In giving advice to those who are considering participating in the bee, my son advises:

"The thing about geography is that, unlike biology or spelling, it's really not just one subject. Geography is a compound word. *Geo*, meaning earth, and *graphy*, meaning to describe, so it is not

just maps and places. Geography, and thus the *geobee* questions, can be about anything from religion to food to clothes to trains to drugs to politics, and anything else that has anything to do with a place; which, I found, is everything.

It, of course, is impossible to know everything, so you have to find out what National Geographic likes to use. A great way to do this is by watching and obtaining copies of past bees. Even then you can't know everything, so I study what I feel like studying. Once you get the A, Bee, Cs down, (tallest mountains, longest rivers, biggest countries, etc.) then you really have a choice of what to study. I study where my natural questioning leads me.

Another great way to study is to find online and book quizzes.

Two of my favorite sites for study are Triviaplaza and Sheppard software. Good books are: *How to Ace the National Geographic Bee*, *The Handy Geography Answer Book*, *The Geography Bee Complete Preparation Handbook*, *Goode's World Atlas*, and *Introduction to Geography*. All are books that will expand your knowledge of the world and of the bee. If you are a newcomer to the bee, study hard. Use logic on questions you don't know. And most of all, just have fun."

The CHEA-HINTS School Bee is generally held the first Saturday of the year. If you think your student may be interested in participating in the 2019 bee, start preparing now and contact me at jeremiah3128@gmail.com. To qualify for the CHEA-HINTS School Bee, your student must be homeschooled in the fourth to eighth grades, and be a resident of North Carolina. We hope to see you next year!



Tiffany Broome has been homeschooling her three children from the womb, vowing to God that she would do all she could to teach them His way. Her oldest is a high school junior, preparing for college. She also has a high school freshman and a middle schooler. She has been married for over twenty-five years and enjoys spending time with family, hiking, traveling, and, of course, homeschooling.



When You Feel like Quitting

by Becky Seamon

The ugly threat gushed quickly from my mouth in a moment of complete frustration. The words, my words, had cut so deep that the wound was unbearable. I saw the salty water brimming in my son's eyes as he turned to hide the spillage. I had said the words before but vowed never to say them again. Honestly, I was tired of homeschooling and wanted out. The harsh words and threat of public school had rolled off my tongue and pierced the air between us.

Why did I want to give up when I had loved the adventure at the first of the year? Why was I struggling to finish? When seeing the hurt that I had caused, I settled in my heart that we would finish and finish well. I was going to be *all* in, for I never wanted to see that look on my son's face again. I had to refocus and renew my will if I was to continue.

Three points have carried me since that day. From one homeschool momma who was tired and worn out, may I whisper some found encouragement into your ear? These three truths helped me resolve my will to finish the race set before me (Acts 20:23-24). I hope they will encourage you as well. These truths became my A-B-Cs of homeschooling.

Anchor Yourself with the Reason of the Routine

Remember why you started homeschooling in the first place. Write it down. Was it a calling? Was it because you wanted to instill godly principles in your children? Was it because you felt your child needed one-on-one attention because of a learning disability? Be reminded of your *why*. Sometimes when we are in the middle of a storm, we forget the reasons behind the original decision. Refocus on your reason and let that be your anchor. Remember the *why* of your homeschool routine.

Believe in your God-Given Ability to Teach

It is tempting to see what another mom is doing and walk away feeling less-than and lacking. Once, I heard of a mom teaching Greek, so I thought my kids deserved Greek. Another mom bragged about her gifted son learning to play the guitar, so I signed up all four of my children in guitar lessons. Then there was the challenge of soccer, football, and piano lessons. The truth is, we need not compare our days to anyone else's. Just because *that family* is doing a certain activity or curriculum does not mean it is best for mine.

Theodore Roosevelt stated, "Comparison is the thief of joy." Instead of copying my homeschool neighbor, I learned to ask the only One who really matters, my Lord, to direct our steps. He knows my child better than anyone else. He promises to direct our steps. Peace is found in stepping into your own calling. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths." (Proverbs 3:5-6).

I also learned to trust my gut. Instead of being a slave to the curriculum, I began to modify the lessons to meet our needs. There is not a perfect curriculum, so be brave enough to make yours fit the needs of your child. Trust yourself enough to tailor the lessons for your good. "You're braver than you believe, and stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think," states Christopher Robin.

Create a Positive Atmosphere for Learning

I had to start by changing my attitude. If momma is complaining about the difficult math problems, it will steal the love of learning from the soul of my child. When I focused on getting the problems done, instead of the pleasure of learning, so did my children. Create a positive atmosphere for learning by focusing on a love for reading. If you can help your child love to read, they can learn anything. "Education is not the learning of facts, but the training of the mind to think," stated Albert Einstein.

I suggest you learn to love to read. Model this passion in front of your kids. You can instill a love by often reading to your young children. Try stopping at the cliff-hanging parts of the book. Make your child wait until the next day to finish the story. Anticipation creates participation.

It has been a few years now since the hurtful threat I made, though it seems like only last week. With twenty-five years of this journey behind us, I can testify that homeschooling was the best choice for our family. I am so glad we did not quit. Now with three grown men in college and one daughter (with her master's degree) happily married with two beautiful children, I believe in homeschooling more than ever. By God's grace, we finished the race laid before us. All four of our children graduated from our little school and have stepped into other adventures. It has been a joy, a privilege. A privilege that others have fought for, some privilege other countries do not have. Be thankful sweet momma. One day you may make a well-thought-out decision that public school is best for your family. In the meantime, don't give angry threats. Instead, may I suggest you remember your A-B-Cs? Hang in there little momma! I will greet you at the finish line.

Anchor yourself.

Believe in your ability.

Create a positive atmosphere for learning.



Becky Seamon, wife of thirty-one years to Terry, is the proud momma of four beautiful children. She and Terry have homeschooled for twenty-five years. Becky's passion includes encouraging young mommas in their faith and family relationships through blogging and speaking engagements. She also serves as director of women's ministry of her local church.

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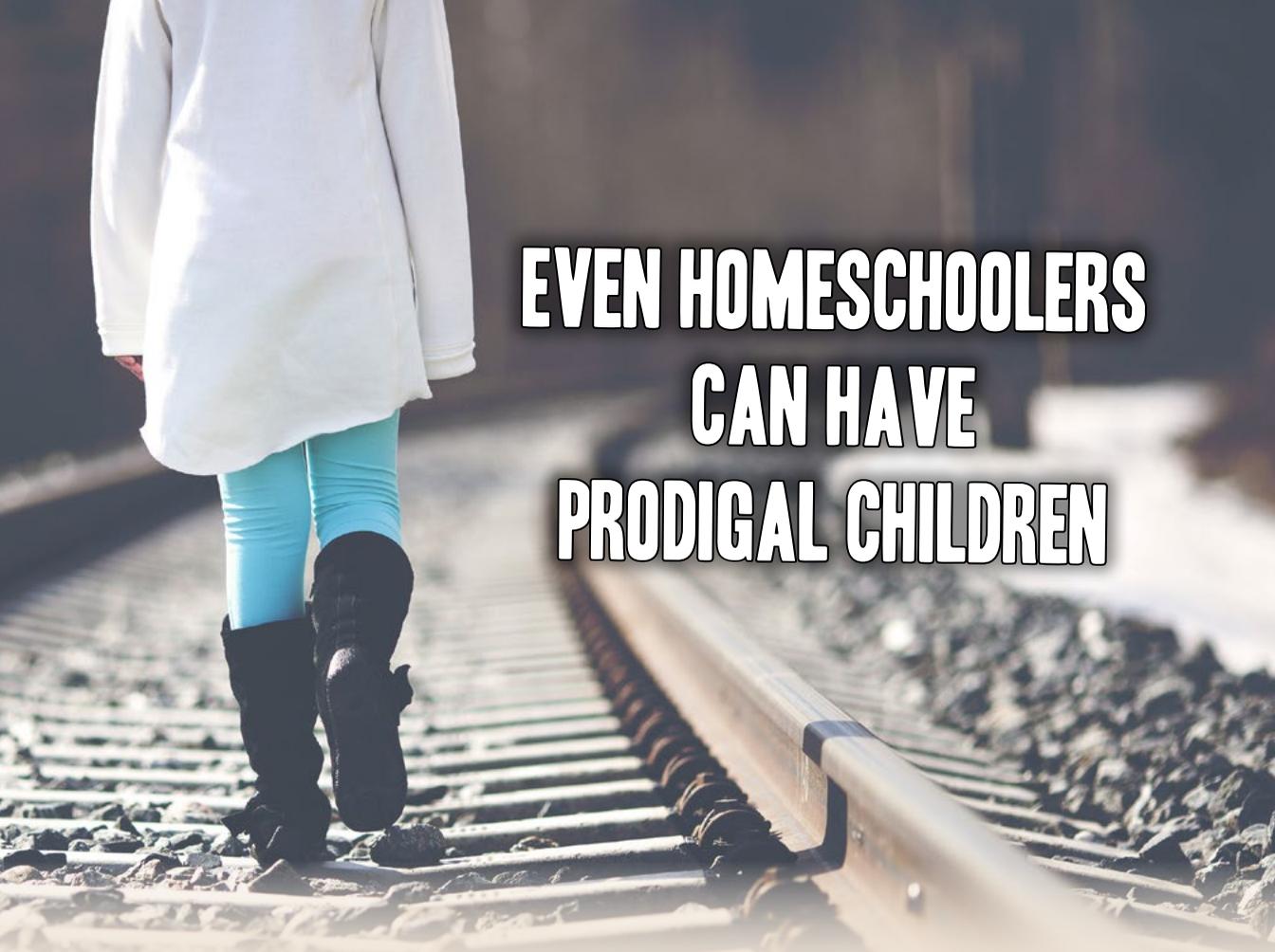
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EVEN HOMESCHOOLERS CAN HAVE PRODIGAL CHILDREN

by Tami Fox

In the past year, my family has experienced the pain of a prodigal child. We have homeschooled our children for the last eighteen years. We have provided many hours of spiritual training for all our children. We have sought to fill their hearts and minds with Scripture. We have taken them to church from birth.

We feel we have used the *right* formula for raising children for God. Of course, we have made mistakes, but our motive in everything we have done for our children has been to raise them to love the Lord and serve Him with their lives. We even developed a family mission statement to help us in the process.

Despite our best efforts as parents, we cannot control the free will of our children or what they do once they reach adulthood. Some of you reading this today have experienced the pain of a prodigal child. You know that the free will of Adam and Eve led to the original sin in the Garden of Eden. God gave us a free will to follow Him or to choose to do otherwise. When our young adult children chose to exercise their free will to do something that is contrary to our beliefs, our first reaction is to take responsibility and feel like we have failed as parents.

When our young adult children choose an ungodly path, we can love them and pray for them. We do not have to support them financially. We do not have to take responsibility

**OUR GOAL IS TO
RAISE CHILDREN
WHO LOVE THE
LORD AND SEEK TO
FOLLOW HIS WILL
FOR THEIR LIVES.**
FOX FAMILY MISSION STATEMENT

for their decisions. We may need to make decisions that are tough to make. Prodigal children may choose to, or be asked to, move out of our homes.

Right now, you may not know where your child is. You may not be able to contact them. Your heart will ache. You will cry out to God continually. Know that He is with you, and He will not leave you. He will be with you through this valley. You are not alone.

Since I first started writing about parenting a prodigal child, I have had many messages from parents in the same situation. Many of them are suffering in silence. They are fearful of telling others about the situation. The first person we talked to about our situation was our pastor. He and his wife counseled us and prayed for us. They prayed for our child. We had close friends that we also told as the situation progressed. We could not have walked this journey without the support and love of prayer partners that God put in our lives.

Many months have passed, and our prodigal has decided to follow God and His plan for his life. It has not been an easy path for him to get to this point, but praise God, he has turned his life around.

If you are in this situation, you have Hope for your child. That

Hope is Jesus. He can deliver your child. I encourage you to find a prayer partner or a couple who can pray with you and your spouse. You do not have to walk this valley alone. God is with you no matter what, and He uses everything for His good and His purposes. Sometimes it takes a while for us to see the good, but it is there.



Tami Fox and her husband, Jonathan, have homeschooled their six children in North Carolina since 2000. They have graduated three, and in 2018, they are homeschooling three boys in grades eleven, nine, and six. Tami has written two books to encourage the homeschool mom. In Giving Your Children

Wings, Tami shares about training her children in life skills through their homeschool journey. In her second book, Finding Joy in Brokenness, Tami shares about finding joy in less than joyful situations. You can read her daily tips on home organization at TamiFox.net.

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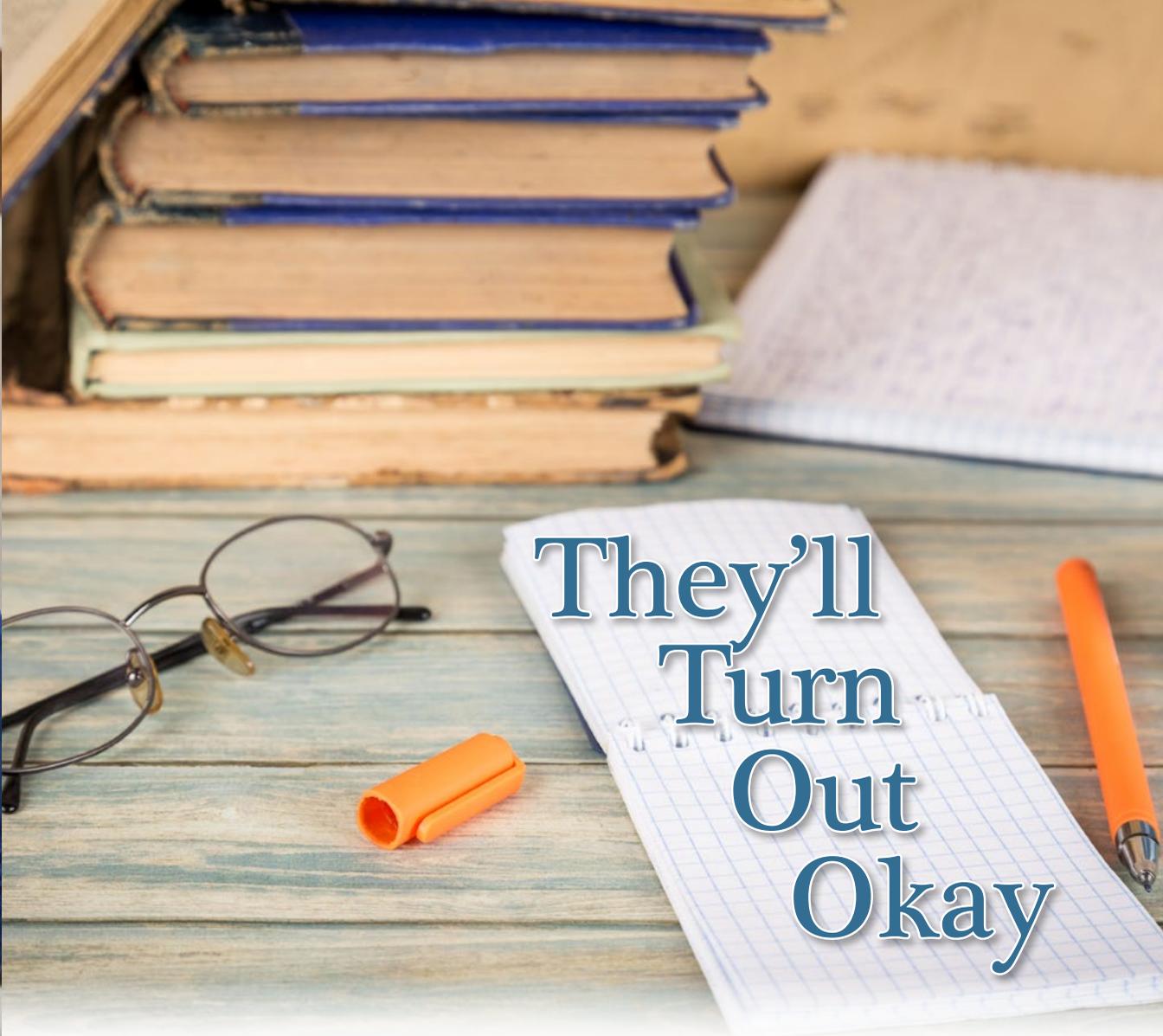
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They'll Turn Out Okay

by Evelyn Bickley

The stress. The anxiety. Every homeschool parent has experienced these same doubts and fears:

- I may be doing this wrong.
- Surely a “professional” would be doing a better job!
- I don’t know everything!
- Maybe I won’t teach them everything they need!
- It’s already March, and we’re still struggling with the first half of the textbook.
- I didn’t study calculus, or Shakespeare, or theology. How can I ever get my kids through it? I will fail them, and they’ll never get into college. They’ll struggle and flounder all their lives, and it will all be my fault!
- They hate learning. They hate me. What happened?

What happened? Perhaps, you have lost sight of your goal: to raise functioning adults. The goal is not to download certain banks of textbooks or knowledge into your children’s brains, but to have adults who can learn what they need to know, to handle life as it comes their way, and to know

how to find wisdom. As British journalist, Miles Kington, said, “Knowledge is knowing that a tomato is a fruit, wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.” You need to return to your focus on wisdom and practicality.

What about college?

We have heard for years that, as a group, homeschooled students are more prepared academically for college than public schooled students. For the 2013-14 school year, the national mean scores on SATs for home educated high school seniors were 567 (reading), 521 (math) and 535 (writing)¹ compared with 492 (reading), 501 (math), and 478 (writing)² for public-school students. These numbers are more than 10% higher overall, with the greatest lift being in reading (over 15%) and the least in math at only 4%.

Once homeschooled students get into college, they tend to fare better than non-homeschooled peers. On average, they transfer more college credits earned while in high school (for example, through dual enrollment programs or CLEP testing) than the number of credits of public schooled students transfer (14.7 vs. 6.6).³ When you consider that an average college semester is comprised of fifteen credit hours, this translates to the savings of a semester in both time and money. They graduate from college at a higher rate and earn significantly higher-grade point averages along the way.⁴ They have had the opportunity to observe or shadow, and possibly even try out careers while still in high school leading them to have a slightly better idea of what they want to do when they grow up, and therefore, what fields to study.

Students and instructors alike have reported to me that

homeschooled students are generally more engaged—and engaging—in college classes. They tend to pay close attention, ask and respond to questions, and they actually come prepared to class by having read the text! One very impressed professor privately asked a student, “Are you a homeschooled student? I’ve never had one of those!” Later she called attention to the student’s outstanding performance and asked the rest of the class if they were all going to take second place to a homeschooler. Not exactly the attention craved by the student, but it was all done with a sense of awe and respect.

Because many homeschoolers have had the practice of learning how to learn while in high school (how to dig into a subject, read for content, and study independently), their transition to college isn’t as difficult as for other students. Homeschooled students tend to be given more responsibility for their own learning in the final years of high school than non-homeschooled students. This gives them practice at learning to manage themselves, their time and responsibilities—something most college freshmen struggle with.

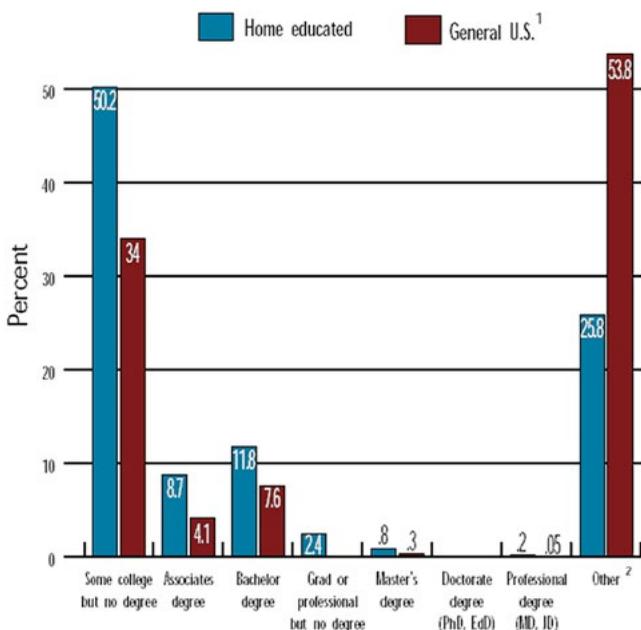
As parents, you have, I hope, given them opportunities to learn and practice time management skills and decision making: from how much time to spend with friends to healthy food choices to not overspending at the campus food court.

What about socialization?

A 2009 study entitled “Examination of Previously Homeschooled College Students with the Big Five Model of Personality”⁵ compared previously homeschooled students to college-age students in the general population. They examined the five personality traits of conscientiousness,

Figure 1. Educational attainment of the home educated and the general population ages 18 through 24.

(This age range consisted of 78.6% of the respondents in this study.)



¹ Source: United States Census Bureau (2003, March 21). Educational attainment of people 18 years and over, by metropolitan and nonmetropolitan residence, age, sex, race and Hispanic origin: March 2002. Retrieved 8/27/03 online <http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/education/pp1-169/tab11.pdf> Washington, DC: Author: n=27,312,000 for general U.S. and n=4,129 for homeschool sample size.

² Other = Less than high school, high school graduate, voc/tech program but no degree, and voc/tech diploma after high school.
Note: Total does not equal 100 due to rounding errors from original data source.

agreeableness (including trust, altruism, and modesty), extroversion, openness (to new ideas or experiences), and neuroticism. The researchers expected to find the homeschool alumni testing higher than the general population in the first two categories and lower than the general population in the last three categories. In other words, they expected that homeschooled alumni would be conscientious and agreeable, but more introverted, close-minded and neurotic (more given to moodiness, feelings of anxiety, fear, loneliness and other similar traits, and more likely to respond worse to life stressors.)

What they found seems to confirm what homeschooling families have been saying all along: that overall, there's no problem with the social adaptation of their children. The study found no statistical difference in extroversion or neuroticism than the general population. The tests for agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to new ideas all showed significant—and positive, in my opinion—differences from the general population.

“The finding that the homeschooled sample was significantly more agreeable and conscientious supports the belief of many homeschooling parents, [and] observers of homeschooled children. . . .”⁶ High conscientiousness is further correlated to intrinsic job satisfaction and success in life.

Home educated students in this study were shown to be more open than the national sample, tending to contradict the charge that is sometimes leveled at homeschooling families that their children are too sheltered and may end up being close-minded. The very fact that many of us encourage our children to follow their interests and intellectual pursuits, seek out unusual or independent learning opportunities, and try different cultural opportunities (such as dance, music and the arts) appears to be having a positive effect. “This finding may reflect that these students are more independent, intellectual, and creative as compared to their traditionally schooled peers.”⁷

Since the study found no statistical difference between homeschooled students and the general population in the categories of extroversion and neuroticism, homeschooled students cannot be said to be adversely affected in those areas by the family's educational choice. Overall, “homeschooling parents should be heartened that their atypical lifestyle and educational practices are having a positive impact on the character development of their children. In addition, this study does not support the concern of critics or parents that homeschooling will have a negative impact on a student's openness to others' ideas in society or have a negative impact on the emotional and social dimensions of their personality.”⁸

In a separate article by Dr. Patricia Lines, commissioned

by the Discovery Institute in 2000, videos of children playing were shown to counselors who did not know which children were homeschooled and which were public schooled. Based on the counselors' evaluations, homeschooled children had fewer behavioral problems than the non-homeschooled children in the samples. Dr. Lines' conclusion: There is no basis to question the social development of homeschooled children.⁹

What about success in the real world?

We see that our students, as a whole, do well academically. Studies show that, as a whole, homeschooled students are at least as well, if not better, prepared for life emotionally. What about real life? What about living as an adult? There are many listings of famous homeschoolers: Bethany Hamilton, Venus and Serena Williams, the Jonas brothers to name a few. But what about the rest of our students? After extensively searching the Internet, I found only a few studies concerning how formerly homeschooled adults relate to life after college. The lack of studies is attributable, I believe, to the fact that they fly away and go about living their lives.

A report updated January 2018 by Dr. Brian Ray of the National Home Education Research Institute indicates that the majority of homeschool graduates seem to be managing adulthood pretty well. Based on available research, he has found that in adulthood, homeschool graduates:

- “are more politically tolerant than the public schooled in the limited research done so far. . .
- participate in local community service more frequently than does the general population
- vote and attend public meetings more frequently than the general population
- go to and succeed in college at an equal or higher rate than the general population
- by adulthood, internalize the values and beliefs of their parents at a high rate”¹⁰

A 2009 Canadian study reports: “Homeschooled adults who participated in this study were more likely than the comparable Canadian population to have completed an undergraduate degree, to be civically engaged, to value their religious beliefs, to have multiple income sources, to report income from self-employment, and to report high satisfaction with life. They were found to be physically active, to have higher average incomes than their peers, and were notably more engaged than the comparable population in a wide variety of cultural and leisure activities.”¹¹

From more than twenty-five years of being involved in the homeschool world, I can give you anecdotal evidence that at least as great a percentage of homeschoolers as those who come from non-homeschooling backgrounds make the transition to self-supporting and independent adulthood.

As with any other group, some decide to go on to higher education or a trade school, and some decide to go directly into the workforce. I know a number of homeschool graduates with an entrepreneurial bent who have started businesses: a photographer, a dog groomer, a videographer, a pianist, a house painter, a hair stylist, a lawn care professional. Others pursue careers as stay-at-home moms or with the military—one family has two Marines and two in the Air Force. I know twenty and thirty-somethings who were homeschooled and are leading successful lives as engineers, medical professionals, IT professionals, and teachers.

Alexandria, a twenty-something mechanical engineer who was homeschooled all her life, attributes some of her success as an adult to the ability to think critically. "I've had different random people say that the fact I can think sets me apart. I've heard it said to other formerly homeschooled adults as well."

Last year, I attended a panel presentation at the HSLDA Leadership Conference. The panel consisted of five homeschool

graduates: a published author, the director of external affairs for the Leadership Institute, one each in the state legislatures of Indiana and Florida, and Jordan Taylor of BlimeyCow (Messy Mondays) on YouTube. We in the audience were sitting there in awe of these high achieving former homeschoolers. It made me look at my efforts and think, "Wow, you could've done so much better!" Then, Jordan spoke, as if reading my mind: "Don't worry. You see us up here and stress about all that you should've/could've done with your kids or are doing with your kids. And you think you have to keep doing more and more. But don't worry. You're not going to ruin your kids. They'll turn out okay."

And that says it all!



Evelyn Bickley is a homeschooling veteran of more than twenty-five years. She has served on the boards of several different support groups and as an adviser to the Zeta Epsilon chapter of the National Homeschool Honor Society. Wife to Barry and mom to four homeschooled graduates,

Evelyn enjoys traveling, leading Gavel Clubs for teens, and advising other homeschool families on their journeys through high school. She currently serves as the NCHC activities director responsible for field trips, scholarships, and athletics.

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<https://www.hsllda.org/research/ray2003/Fig1.gif>

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THE VALUE OF GRIT



by Diane Helfrich

I retired after homeschooling for fourteen years. Our school graduated two students who moved on to college and then graduate school. Ours was not a perfect journey—far from it. We weathered multiple significant illnesses. We also lived through the aftermath of 9/11. Because my husband was a Middle East analyst, his weird work hours took him away from us for years on end. Financial difficulties left us wondering if we would make it through the year. In our homeschool, we never got through everything I had planned. We had to adapt. We had to adjust. We had to learn to support each other in ways I never expected. The interesting thing is that my story is basically no different than any of yours; living a successful life is about adapting and changing. We all face difficulties. There is no such thing as a tidy life-in-a-box, elegantly wrapped, perfect and organized. It's just not a neat and clean world. It has never been; it never will be for anyone!

In hindsight, I see that the difficulties we went through fostered a degree of independence in the children. While there *was* still oversight during my cancer years, there was a lot less than there would normally be. At the time, I felt like I was ruining their lives, and that I needed to put them back in school—bad option. Maybe I needed tutors—we couldn't afford them. During this time, the children rose to the opportunity and took on increased *ownership* of their

learning. We missed some things along the way, and I worried about future setbacks. Still, they owned their education and continued to make progress. It was hard. It took grit and tears at times, but the learning continued. One of the things that makes them successful college students and grad students is that they aren't waiting for anyone to tell them what to do or how to do it. They know how to figure things out, adhere to schedules, and manage complexity.

There were other things, too, that built us. My son is a third-degree black belt in HapKiDo, and my daughter achieved her second-degree black belt. The week-in and week-out practice of little details mounted in thousands of tidbits of learning over several years that made them strong. They internalized tremendous amounts of information and body knowledge that made them very good in that sport. The same principles apply in learning any sport, musical instrument, or preparing for any competition. It isn't about what discipline we chose to learn; it's about the *practice*. Practice takes grit. We don't always want to do it on a given day, but we rise to the demand and meet it head-on. Practice is repetitive. Practice can be boring. It is that ongoing stamina that teaches us how to hang in for the long-haul, and those same skills morph into other areas of our lives. College careers take years, and there can be large projects and papers. Jobs aren't usually short-term. The cool thing about practice is that it normally involves something they choose. That makes it easier to push through when the desire wanes for a period. They learn the value of practice as they see the progression of skills.

I will always feel that one of the things we did right was to invest in scholastic competitions. I know there are mixed philosophies about the value of *competition*. But I know that getting into college is competitive. Applying for and getting a job is competitive. Progressing on a career path is competitive. In short, life is often competitive. We chose competitions as part of schooling our children because they compel them to dig deeper, and that is the stuff of grit. We did MathCounts, the science fair, Envirothon, speech, and debate. All of these involve practice and a year-after-year progression of skills. There is always a higher goal. People you do not know evaluate what you do and provide feedback. The science fair and debate drive learning how to research, write, and publicly present your ideas. Debate teaches you to listen well and think quickly on your feet. There is nothing you will do in

life where these skills are not valuable. I'm not saying that you must compete or that you must do multiple competitions. What I am saying is that I now see the skills that have helped my children excel as they have left the nest, and many of those were rooted in competitions and the sheer grit of preparation. They have learned to work hard and to prepare well. That will serve them for a lifetime!

The other side of competitions is that they teach you how to *fail*. We don't always win. When we fail, if we spend some time evaluating the competition, we learn what we can do better. There are tears and sadness in failure, but if the attitude is that of *failing forward*, the lessons learned through failure are usually deeply planted and launch us to higher levels. In our society, I'm not sure we value failure, yet, those who learn to embrace it tend to be very successful. I am often reminded of Thomas Edison who said, "I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work." Failure teaches perseverance. Failure teaches success, but not if you don't have the grit to see it through.

In the end, I'm not sure it's *what* we learned, but rather, *how* we learned it. If you separate *what* from *how*, the what can be anything. It's the *how* that prepares you for what life puts in your path. Teach your children the value of grit and struggle. Teach them to love learning and to work hard; these will teach them how to learn anything and to achieve their goals. In the end, if you teach these two things, when you, too, are looking in the rear-view mirror I believe you will have found your homeschooling journey to be a successful one!



Diane Helfrich is a retired homeschooler, and she enjoys being a lifelong learner. Her husband, David, works for the Department of the Army as a civilian. She and her husband have two children: Ian is in a Ph.D. program in Economics at Georgia Tech, and Anna is in the Honors College at George Mason University, majoring in Conflict Analysis and Resolution. Diane serves on the NCHC board as secretary and as the region 8 liaison.





Choose a Clear Finish Line

by Amanda Garner

I stood on tiptoes, peering over the shoulders of those crowded into the stands, hoping, as the others around me, to catch a glimpse of my beloved athlete. The white line stretching across the lanes was an invisible dam, holding back the flood of runners waiting to burst through at the sound of the gun. At the cry of “runners, take your mark,” a holy hush fell over the crowd as we waited with a collective holding of breath. In an instant, the shot opened the floodgates, releasing the runners fueled by a rush of adrenaline. Within ten seconds the blob of runners started to thin out, forming a single file line as the most powerful athletes surged to the front. Another ten seconds later and a group of three or four broke from the pack. Then, we watched in awe as one runner pulled away with long, strong strides. With calf muscles burning and leg muscles bulging, he kept the pace for three laps. Rounding the corner for his final lap to victory, however, he began losing steam. Within one hundred meters of the finish line, he was overcome by a small chase group and finished fifth instead of first. The finish line was within sight, but it started looking fuzzy, and he lost his focus. Although he started strong, he failed to finish well.

I relate that story to you, because I fear the same thing happens to us as homeschool parents. Much like the athlete who shows up on race day having trained and prepared, we line up at the start of the year with lesson planners in hand. We've attended conferences and workshops, gathered books, pencils and markers, and we are pumped! The adrenaline of new curriculum and a new school year courses through our veins, and we start off running full steam ahead. As we round the corner of the calendar and head into January and February, things start looking bleak. We lose our enthusiasm in October, our focus in November, our determination in December. The start line is too far behind us to remember the zeal and the finish line is too far ahead—too fuzzy to keep us focused. We started strong but now wonder if we'll even finish at all!

The good news is that we can finish and even finish well! With a little bit of planning and one last deep breath, you can push through and cross the finish line with hands and head held high in victory. Here's how:

Choose an end date. Few things will frustrate and discourage you and your students more than a vague, undetermined finish line. Can you imagine an athlete entering a race where he is told there is no finish line, that he is to run until he cannot run any longer? That is absolute lunacy, but how often are we tempted to take the same approach to our school year? We have good intentions: work a little more, do one more lesson, finish that book, but I've seen it backfire on me every time. Why? It will sap every bit of motivation your students can muster. Decide on a date that will be the last day of school and stick to it! Circle it on the calendar and post it in a place where everyone can see. Once there is a visible finish line, you can work together to push through.

Roll to a stop. In our homeschool, we need a week or two to ramp up at the beginning of the year, and at least that much time to wind down at the end of the year. Just as an athlete warms up before the race and then must cool down afterward, we need those same times of transition as well. One strategy that works very well for our family revolves around our end of year testing. Every year I plan to have my children tested three to four weeks before our last day of school. Up until that time, it's full steam ahead across all subjects, and we run a regular school day. After testing, however, we start to back off little by little. Usually, we have completed history by then and science by the next week. That leaves a week or two of math and reading for my younger students and time to tie up loose

ends for my high school students. I also try to incorporate field trips in the last couple months, and it's not uncommon to find us doing our school work outdoors, either in the backyard or at Duke Gardens.

Celebrate! If you ever watch the Iron Man Triathlon, there's one thing you'll notice about every athlete who crosses the finish line; they raise their hands in victory! Whether they finish first or last, running or limping, smiling, or crying, they celebrate the fact that they finished. We need to give ourselves permission to do the same. Maybe you've watched another friend have an awesome year as her children scored multiple grade levels ahead on year-end testing, took fabulous field trips, and played five sports. All the while, you struggled with your students over the basics of reading or math, and a good day was when everyone had clean, matching clothes to wear! If that's you, I'll let you in on a little secret; I have seen more adoration for—and celebration by—those who limp across the line last. Why? Everyone expects the pros to win and we clap and congratulate them for a race well run. Those stragglers—those who barely made it past the cutoff points, those who pressed on with excruciating pain, those who pushed themselves when they had nothing left—those are the ones we admired, because they didn't give up. When they cross the line, there's every bit of cheering and celebrating by them and the crowd as there was for the one who finished first. Celebrate your victory! Go out to dinner, have an ice cream party, go skating or to a movie. Be creative and celebrate with your students that you have reached the finish line!



Seasoned homeschool mom, author, and serious coffee connoisseur, Amanda and her family live, love, and learn together in Oxford, North Carolina. Married for twenty-four years, she and her husband, Wes, have their first homeschool graduate with three more to go! In addition to voracious reading, freelance writing, and teaching, Amanda also enjoys encouraging other homeschool moms via her blog: www.dropsodelight.weebly.com. 🍵



Six Things to Do When Your Child Is Being Picked On

by Hal and
Melanie Young

Homeschoolers tend to think that their children won't need to worry about bullies. Some may have started homeschooling to get away from bullies. It's also true that homeschooling parents are more involved in their children's lives, so bullies generally get caught and corrected sooner.

Sooner or later, though, it happens to most of our children. Someone will exclude them, be nasty to them, intimidate them. Lately, we've been getting more and more questions from parents who need help knowing what to do in these situations. Here are six things we've done when our children have been picked on or bullied:

1) We explain that often, a mean behavior is a result of fear. We sit down with our child and explain that frequently other children are mean to each other because they are desperately afraid that because they're not the popular ones, someone will be picking on *them*. We explain that it's fear-based, it's ugly, and it's displeasing to God, who says we should not show partiality (James 2:8-9). Their awful behavior isn't about the victim at all.

2) We use this trial to teach them to be compassionate. We tell them to remember how horrible it feels to be on the receiving end of this stuff, so they never treat anyone else that way. Their righteous indignation at how they've been bullied creates a rare opportunity to help them understand how

the Lord means for us to treat one another. I John 3:16 and following says,

*By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us,
and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.
But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his
brother in need,
yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love
abide in him?
Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in
deed and in truth.*

3) We remind them they aren't alone. Our Lord Jesus knows exactly how they feel. Jesus came to earth as one of us but was rejected by the very ones He'd created (John 1:10-11). We read to them about the hours before the Crucifixion and how Jesus was betrayed and mocked (Matthew 26). We assure them He knows just how it feels, and He loves us and sympathizes with us. We hold them tight while they cry and remind them of *our* love. It's hard, but it helps.

4) We encourage them to act like believers. Revenge is not an appropriate response: God says that vengeance is His alone (Romans 12:19). Instead, Jesus said in Matthew 5, "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven." It's really hard to pray for people who've been hateful to us, but that's what God calls us to do. When we do, it changes us, too, and makes it easier to forgive.

We are sure to tell our child, though, that although it is "to your glory to overlook a transgression," (Proverbs 19:11) if they are physically threatened, they have a right and duty to protect themselves. At one point, the Lord told the disciples to sell their garments and buy swords! (Luke 22:36). We tell our children, "Don't start a fight, but if someone else does, then fight back. Defend yourself!"

5) We prepare them for the next time. People are like chickens, we explain—they tend to peck (or pick!) on those they perceive as weak. Often the biggest bullies are cowards at heart and will crumble when someone stands up to them.

It helps to role-play appropriate responses with them. A chicken that fluffs up its feathers and struts confidently across the yard is much less likely to get pecked on, so we talk to our children about how to respond when *they're* picked on. It's better to act strong and secure than it is to get mad or upset.

It's better to respond to teasing with a little gentle teasing back than to burst into tears.

6) Ultimately, though, we protect them. *Sticks and stones can break my bones, but words will never hurt me*—the nursery rhyme asserts, but it isn't true. Bruises and scrapes will heal, but words can be replayed again and again in our minds, hurting us again each time. Bullying can cause lifelong struggles for our children.

If teaching our children better strategies for dealing with mean ones isn't helping, we encourage them to go to the authority in charge and ask for help. Sadly, in our experience, it seldom does any good. Bullies are often very good at hiding their activities and taking advantage of parents who believe the best of them; still, it's an important step in the process.

If going to the authority doesn't help, then we take our child out of the situation. Sometimes that means we give up visiting with our friends, so that we can supervise the children's play. It could mean skipping an activity, resigning from a club, or even leaving a church for good. We know too many adults who still struggle with being bullied as children. Our children deserve our protection!

When children get picked on, it could just be a transitory bit of spite. On the other hand, it could be very serious, even dangerous, maybe life-changing bullying. Our children need our wisdom and support, and sometimes our intervention. We've got to be there for them!



*Hal and Melanie Young are the award-winning authors of *Raising Real Men; Love, Honor, and Virtue* and an upcoming book on parenting preteens. They are popular conference speakers, known for their Christ-centered focus and practical, real-life stories. They are the parents of six boys and two girls and live in noisy, messy happiness in North Carolina. Find their blog and store at www.raisingrealmen.com, their speaking ministry at www.halandmelanie.com, and their weekly podcast at www.halandmelanie.com/radio.*



If You Don't Spend One-on- One Time with Your Children, You Should!

by Christina Brown

I remember when I was a child still living in Miami, probably about eight or nine years old. My aunt was in the Army, and she would come to visit us a few times a year. What I remember most about her visits is that every time she came, she would take me away from my house, my mom, my life, and spend a quality hour or two just to talk to me. One memory sticks out vividly. She took me to a pond outside the Baptist Hospital in Miami, and we fed the ducks. We just talked—about me.

I had never had another adult so interested in me, one who looked me in the eyes and took the time to get on my level. I couldn't verbalize it then, but she made me feel important and special. My Aunt Sandy continues to purpose her time in this way. We have had some amazing conversations over the years. She is a big reason I became a Christian and a homeschool mom. Because now I have no living parents, she is the closest thing I have to a mother. She has also purposed her time with each of my three children on every visit. I don't know if they will appreciate this gift until they are older, but I do know we all love her! I don't think she will ever fully know her impact on me.

Giving one-on-one time to my children occurred to me only a couple summers ago when one of my daughters mentioned that we rarely did anything together, just the two of us. We homeschool, so we are together a lot. Special alone time is not something I had purposed. It isn't the same as being home all day with everyone. It is time *set aside*.

I decided to be intentional about our time. Over the last several summers, I have asked my girls what they would like to do for our one-on-one times. Not only is there anticipation—we both look forward to the time—but I can individualize what we do to each child. For example, my oldest girl and I love to go thrift store shopping. This kind of time wouldn't be nearly as special with my middle daughter who does *not* love thrift stores.

The point is, you have about eighteen summers with your children, unless if you are mid-way through raising them. Purpose this time. Ask questions. Find out what makes your child tick. I promise you won't regret it.

If you don't spend one-on-one time with your children, you should!

Ideas to get started:

1. Let your child choose the activity. Having the choice helps them to get excited about the time and helps you to discover what your child likes to do.
2. Put it on your calendar.
3. Don't incorporate chores and errands into this time if you can help it. (True story: My "kill two birds with one stone" attitude left my daughter feeling less than special. She described it as time with "Brick, from The Middle.")
4. Vary the time frame. Rather than a day trip, or a night out, the time could be special bedtime routines or those thirty minutes in between appointments and school. It all counts.
5. Make it a tradition. Do it monthly, quarterly, or during the summer every year. I have a friend whose husband takes a different child out for breakfast every Saturday.
6. Pray that God would reveal the heart of your child. Ask them what they are struggling with.
7. Pray with them. It is amazing how they will open-up to you.

The one-on-one time doesn't need to be expensive or elaborate. The point is the time spent only with each other, investing in each other. Lunches and meals out are good and easy to do; they also force you to sit across the table and look at each other and just simply talk.

Here are some ideas for simple one-on-one times you could do with your children. I have done most of these.

- paint and/or decorate your child's bedroom together
- take short road trips
- take college tour trips
- spend time at a coffee shop
- eat lunch at a special restaurant or one you haven't tried
- go thrift store shopping
- get manicures
- go mall walking and people watching
- go to a movie and get a treat
- ride bikes
- do cloud watching
- go picnicking
- visit a museum
- play a board game
- have a slumber party for two
- bake
- go for a walk or hike, plan a 5K
- get an inexpensive makeover, or do one yourself

- get ice-cream!
- attend a play
- go fishing
- give the child \$20 to spend for your one-on-one time any way they wish
- do a movie marathon at home
- paint or do an artistic venture, such as painting pottery or building Legos™ together

Now it is *your* turn!



Christina Parker Brown is a momma of three, homeschooling since 2000, and the author of AKAHomeschoolMom.com and Alphabet Smash. Her work has been featured in Proverbs 31 magazine, The Old Schoolhouse magazine, Home Educator Family Times, GREENHOUSE and others. Christina's passion is to encourage others to intentionally connect faith, family, and fun. She is a hopeless logophile and always brakes for yard sales. Her writing is inspired by her faith in Jesus Christ, adventures in NC with her adventure group and her twenty-four-year marriage to her best friend, Richard.

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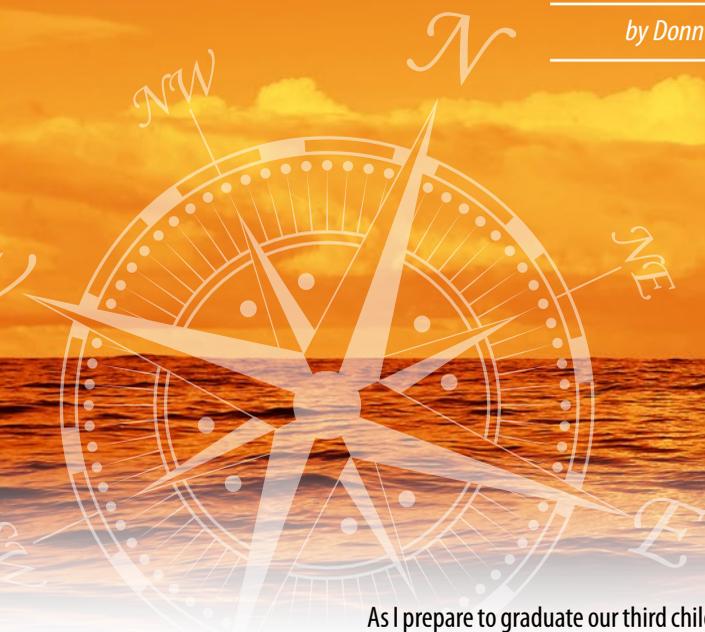
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Stay the Course

by Donna Mariucci



As I prepare to graduate our third child from our homeschool in May, I am keeping in the forefront of my mind the advice I heard from more than one seasoned homeschool mom over the last sixteen years. Stay the course.

This Christmas break was a very busy one for our family, as our one and only daughter married her sweetheart two days before Christmas. We had a wonderful time making special things for her ceremony. Of course, getting the house ready for wedding guests, as well as having our daughter and her attendants get ready at home, was busy but rewarding. In the end, everything was perfect for their special day. It was such a blessing for all.

We paused the next few days remembering the birth of our Savior, something we never want to take for granted. Family went home. The house returned to the new normal. I had plenty to keep me busy preparing for a change of rooms for our oldest son, who was taking his sister's room, and refreshing the other boy's room. We took a day off to celebrate the start of a new year with many friends. Then the painting was finished, furniture moved, everything was in its place—a place for everything.

Today, as I rest and begin to prepare to start back to school on Monday, I am reminded that sometimes starting the second semester can be daunting. Stay the course, I remind myself. This is what we have been called to do. It is a joy to spend our days together and learn together. The children will not be here for much longer. Soak it all in. Enjoy each day.

My kids made me a special book for Christmas with pictures of everyone and a letter from each of the four of them. In her letter, my daughter, always perceptive, mentioned not being sad about all the lasts, but looking forward to all the firsts. There have been many lasts lately. I was trying to take



them all in, not just run past them, but note them, enjoy them. Quietly, I told her I am not sad; I just did not want these events to pass me by unnoticed, unremembered, unappreciated.

We will work to finish this school year strong, enjoy the completion of the school year of child number three, and prepare for the last three years of our last child.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up.

And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.

We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith.

Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame.

Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne.

(Hebrews 12:1-2)

Will you join me? Will you stay the course? We've got this!



Donna Mariucci is a follower of Jesus Christ and wife of twenty-three years to Rob. They have four wonderful children. All of their children have been homeschooled from the beginning; two are homeschool graduates and in college, and two are still in their home high school.

Donna enjoys serving in ministry along-side her husband, spending time with family and friends, studying God's Word, and reading an occasional Christian fiction novel. She has contributed to the homeschool community in many ways over the years, through co-ops, homeschool groups, working at a homeschool bookstore, and being on the board of a local teen group.





The Joy of Homeschooling Together

by Davis Carman

Let the rivers clap their hands; let the hills sing for joy together. Psalm 98:8

What brings you joy or delight? Is it walking on a beach hand in hand with the love of your life against the quiet backdrop of a stunning sunrise? Is it preparing a big holiday meal in the kitchen with beloved family members while mentally making note of your many blessings? Maybe a smile comes to your face, and you experience a deep feeling of satisfaction when listening to the innocent thoughts of your young children during a Deuteronomy 6 moment at bedtime or while running errands together during a normal day.

If you're like most folks, the moments that bring you the greatest joy in life involve other people. In fact, your highest highs and lowest lows tend to revolve around your key relationships, with the bond between husband and wife and the children that God brings into your family being the highest value.

Then, you make the decision to homeschool.

Now, you're walking a path that changes everything. Your marriage, your parenting, the education and discipleship of your children. Everything. Homeschooling is often described as a lifestyle, and it most certainly is.

Yes, it is true that homeschooled students score better on standardized tests than their public and private schooled peers. They are also being recruited by colleges in growing numbers because of their social bearing, leadership, and time management skills. Homeschooled students tend to retain the faith of their parents after graduation at a much higher rate than other teens raised in the church. All this is good

news, of course, but what about the effect that homeschooling has on the relationships in your family?

Let's circle back for a moment to my question about what brings you joy in life. Wouldn't it be awesome if you could do something everyday that has purpose and mission, requires vision and resolve, and provides you with tremendous joy, primarily because it involves the people most precious to you? That's homeschooling.

First, homeschooling requires you, as the parent, to make intentional decisions regarding the subjects your children will study, the education philosophies and methodologies you will employ, the unique gifting of each individual child, your daily and weekly routines, the annual calendar, goals for each child, and so much more. Though all this can sound a bit daunting, when you think about it, it's just an extension of your role as a loving, caring, nurturing parent.

Now, I don't doubt the love of any parents, whether or not they have chosen to homeschool. Let's face it, however, homeschooling parents have a lot more skin in the game. Quite frankly, the responsibility (and risk) is greater, but the fruit (and reward) has potential to be so much more.

For example, there's the effect that homeschooling has on family relationships. Consider that home educating families spend a *lot* of time together. It's just part of the deal. Yet contrary to what many might think, the more time you spend together, the more you will learn to enjoy each other! Speaking from personal experience, I find it immensely satisfying to watch my older kids interact with each other as young adults. They love spending time with one another, sharing memories of our homeschooling adventure, and investing themselves in each other's lives. This is a natural by-product of having shared so much of life, and it is beautiful to witness.

Spending time together as a family is just one of the many benefits of homeschooling, but it shouldn't end there. If you are going to spend all this time in

each other's company, why not make it meaningful, fun, and enjoyable?

To homeschool is to do life together, and it has the potential to bring tremendous delight and joy to every member of the family. If you aren't already doing so, start thinking in terms of *the joy of homeschooling together*. These words really do go well together—in a sentence and in life.

Will you choose to walk by faith and enjoy the homeschooling adventure of a lifetime?

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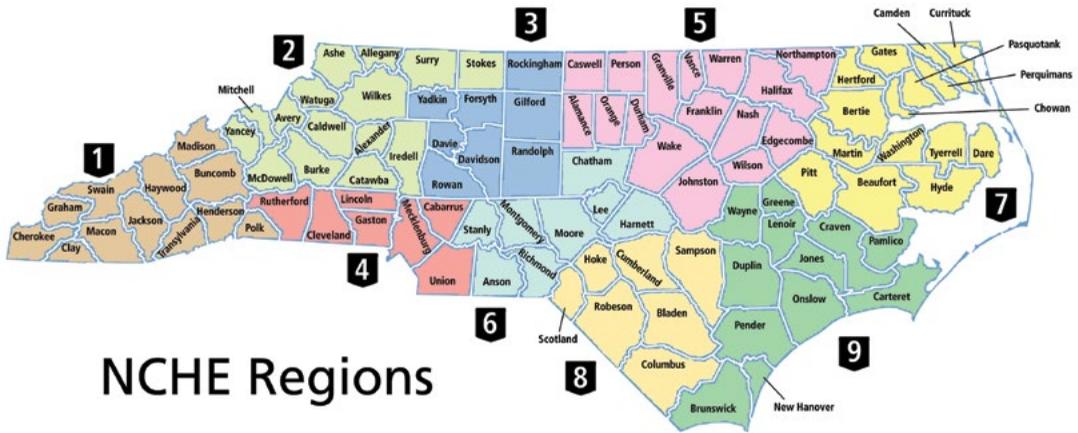
Davis is the president of Apologia Educational Ministries, the number one publisher of creation-based science and Bible curriculum. He is the author of four illustrated children's books designed to help kids learn a biblical worldview. He believes that if there was ever a time to homeschool, it is now!



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About NCHE

In 1984, North Carolinians for Home Education was organized by homeschool parents to support and encourage home educators and to achieve the right to freely home educate in North Carolina. Since that time, NCHE has endeavored to serve the homeschoolers in NC. NCHE continues to work to promote the excellence of home education, provide support for those who choose to do so and protect the right to homeschool. Our name was selected so as to include all who are for home education, not just those who are currently homeschooling. NCHE is governed by a working board of directors who volunteer their time and efforts to serve homeschoolers. A non-profit organization, NCHE operates on the basis of biblical principles and welcomes members of all races and religions.

GREENHOUSE Information

The GREENHOUSE is the periodical of North Carolinians for Home Education. It is published twice a year, spring and fall. There is also a special graduate publication in May. It is mailed to all members and posted online. The name GREENHOUSE was chosen to represent the type of care homeschooling parents are able to give to their children. Children are lovingly “tended” in a protected and nurturing environment until they are sufficiently mature to go out and take a place of service in the world. Letters and articles addressed to the GREENHOUSE become property of NCHE with full right to publication without further permission required. Ideas and opinions expressed in articles do not necessarily represent those of NCHE.

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The NCHE Talent Showcase will be held Friday, June 1, 2018, at 7:45 PM at the NCHE Thrive! Homeschool Conference. If you know a talented homeschooled student, encourage them to audition to be a part of this very entertaining show. The deadline to submit an audition is March 31. See more details on the NCHE website, nche.com/thrive/talent.

Updates to NCHE Website and Your Account. The NCHE website is being gradually updated to be more mobile friendly. If you have not signed into your NCHE account since January 9, you will need to create a new password. From the NCHE homepage, click on the "Member Login" link in the upper right corner of the page. Click on the "Lost Password" link on the Log In page. Then, enter your email address, and click the "Get New Password" button. You will be sent an email with instructions on how to reset your password. Once you are logged in to your NCHE WordPress dashboard, scroll down and generate a new password by clicking on the

"Generate Password" button. Enter the password you want into the field that opens. Then scroll down and click the "Update User" button. To get to the home page click on the "North Carolinians for Home Education" link in the top left corner. You will not be able to access your downloads, membership ID, transaction history, or order history until the upgrade is complete. If you need help, contact Spencer Mason, 704-661-6299, spencer.mason@nche.com.

Special Activities with Discounted Prices for Homeschoolers. NCHE works with museums and event venues across the state to create special activities and discounted admission for NC homeschoolers. Connect with other homeschool families this year! Coming soon: March 16-18, family camping trip at Morrow Mountain State Park; April 20, North Carolina Transportation Museum in Spencer. More details are available on our website www.nche.com/field-trips. Also, check the site for events to come.

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