

"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden and overburdened, and I will cause you to rest, [I will ease and relieve and refresh your souls.] Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am gentle (meek) and humble (lowly) in heart, and you will find rest (relief and ease and refreshment and recreation and blessed quiet) for your souls. For my yoke is wholesome (useful, good—not harsh, hard, sharp, or pressing, but comfortable, gracious, and pleasant), and My burden is light and EASY to be borne."

Matthew 11: 28-30 (Amplified Bible)

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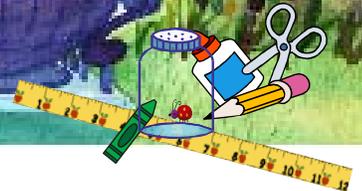
Homeschooling

The Easy Way!

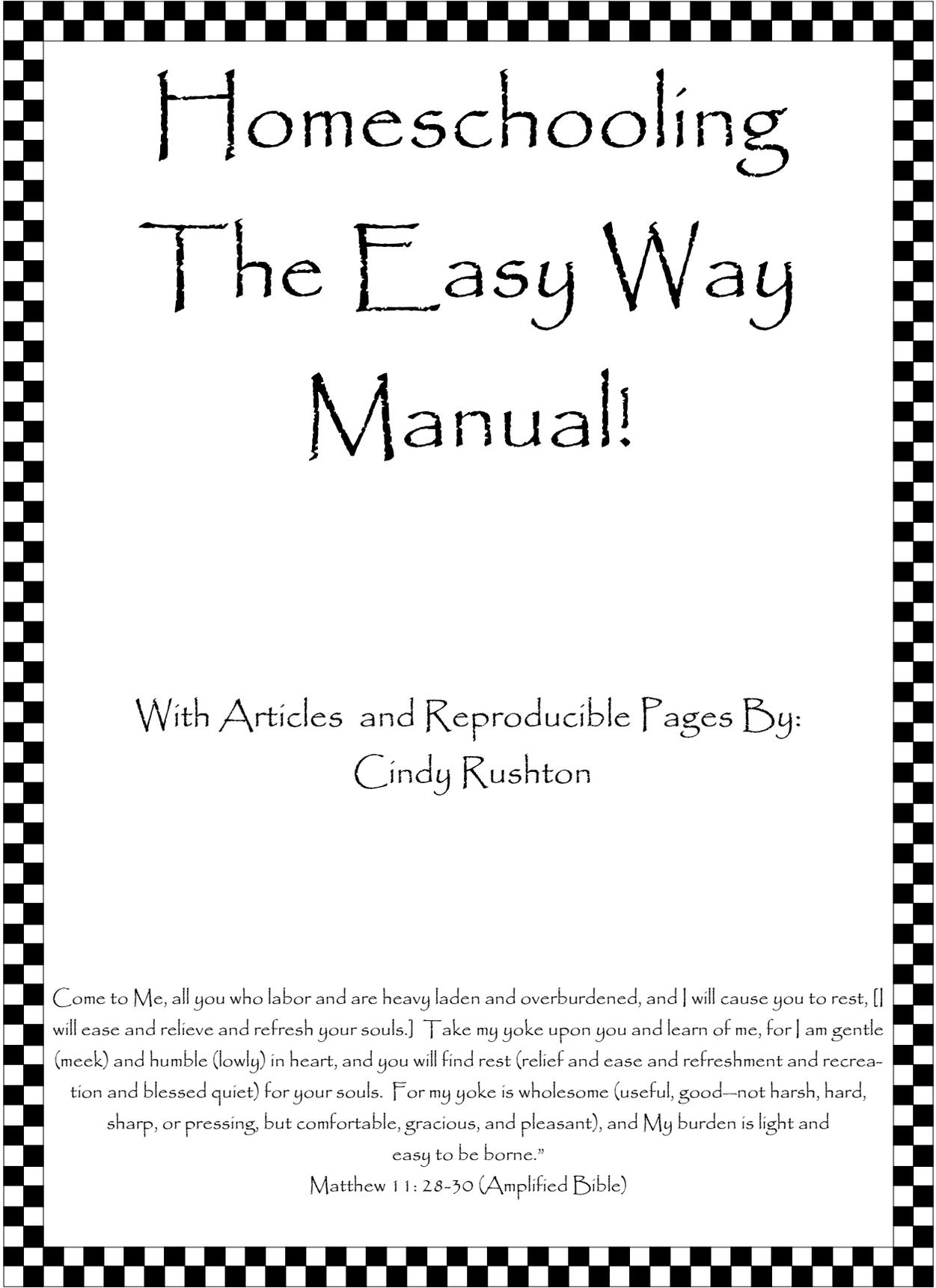


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By Cindy Rushton



Homeschooling The Easy Way Manual!

With Articles and Reproducible Pages By:
Cindy Rushton

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Welcome!



Hi! We welcome you to our Homeschooling The EASY Way Manual! This Manual has been compiled as a companion to our Homeschooling The Easy Way Retreat. During its preparation, we have been so excited behind the scenes! It has been much like preparing for Christmas Morning! Prayerfully, this manual will be a treat for you LIKE Christmas Morning—but, *all* year long—each and every year through your journey!! As you join us, let us introduce you to our keynote speaker and the writer for all of the following articles...

Cindy Rushton...



Cindy Rushton is the wife of Harold Rushton and the mother of Matthew (16) and Elisabeth (almost 13) who have always been homeschooled. Cindy lives in the beautiful mountains of North Alabama in her dream cedar cabin.

Cindy is the author of over 61 books, Bible studies and homeschool resources. She edits and publishes two magazines, *Time for Tea* and *Homeschooling The Easy Way* and *Scrap-A-Latte* Newsletter. She has become a beloved and favored speaker for homeschool conventions and retreats across our country.

Cindy began homeschooling Matthew and Elisabeth over twelve years ago. Her homeschooling journey, tips, and ideas that she has learned along the journey are recorded in the following pages in our humble effort of sharing an EASY way to homeschool.

As you pour yourself a cup of tea and pour through the following pages, you will find a dear, dear friend to give you a great big hug, loving smile, and take you by the hand into a journey of homeschooling the EASYWAY! Get ready...you are definitely in for a treat!



"I will refresh the weary and satisfy the faint." Jeremiah 31:25



“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden and overburdened, and I will cause you to rest, [I will ease and relieve and refresh your souls.] Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am gentle (meek) and humble (lowly) in heart, and you will find rest (relief and ease and refreshment and recreation and blessed quiet) for your souls. For my yoke is wholesome (useful, good—not harsh, hard, sharp, or pressing, but comfortable, gracious, and pleasant), and My burden is light and easy to be borne.”

Matthew 11: 28-30 (Amplified Bible)

Homeschooling... The Easy Way

By Cindy Rushton



Of all the seasons in the year, I have to admit that this is MY time of the year. Just when I think that I cannot make it one more day in the humidity and sweltering temperatures, the relief comes. I think that my corner of heaven must be THIS temperature and must have this FRESH smell...well, at least this feels like a sliver of heaven to me. Similarly, just when we need a breath of fresh air and new studies, Fall comes rolling in to bring renewal and refreshment.

Now, I say renewal and refreshment, but I have got to admit that this year I was stunned how fast the Summer flew by. I am not too sure that I really wanted to return to the old grind. There was this part of me begging God to let me keep that Summer schedule continue with this beautiful weather! It took sitting in a workshop last week to startle me into the realization that indeed we were fully into a new year. Actually, this year is our first real year to enter into the ranks of Homeschooling high schoolers! EEEK!

So, can Homeschooling be EASY? Oh, yes! My dear one, Homeschooling CAN be easy. Regardless of the age you are teaching...regardless of how long you have called yourself a Homeschooler...regardless of your approach to teaching...Homeschooling can certainly be easy!

How? How can we simplify our homes to make Homeschooling easy? Let's dig in for some quick ideas!

Sit at the Feet of Jesus...

I don't know about you, but through the years I have found myself MORE THAN a few times having what I term as "bathroom moments." What about you? In my home there is no place that means "PRIVACY!!!!" like when I enter into my quiet place of solitude and scum! Experience told my children young that Mommy is always better after a few moments whining before the Lord. Entering into the sanctuary of my bathroom, you must know is not for aesthetics...it is just for sheer sanity!

In spite of the scum (YES! We have only one bathroom!) and never-ending piles of laundry, God has met me every time I have shut that door and pulled out my tear stained Bible to beg for a Word from Him. Of all the things that I believe have made Homeschooling a possibility in our home, I have to tell you that the verses that have been given in those times of desperation have given me the strength and the direction to keep on, keeping on.

You probably have your own favorite verses. If not, overlook the scum and try out your own quiet spot. Now...note! I know that there are those of you with little ones that think that they will DIE if you were to close that door. But, maybe your quiet spot can be in their midst. Maybe on a quilt outside as you watch them scamper around playing. Maybe at a picnic table at the park as they dig in the sand. Wherever you can sneak away to sit at the feet of Jesus, make it a daily date. Don't wait until you are desperate. Don't think you can do this in your own strength. Sit at the feet of Jesus until you hear Him and His will for your homeschool.

I have to tell you that your homeschool will never be the same. God cares about every detail of our lives. In Matthew 11: 28-30, we find one verse that can reassure each and every one of us that God does not intend for any area of our lives to be tough, pressing, hard, and burdensome. In this verse, Jesus beckons each of us...

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden and overburdened, and I will cause you to rest, [I will ease and relieve and refresh your souls.] Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am gentle (meek) and humble (lowly) in heart, and you will find rest (relief and ease and refreshment and recreation and blessed quiet) for your souls. For my yoke is wholesome (useful, good—not harsh, hard, sharp, or pressing, but comfortable, gracious, and pleasant), and My burden is light and easy to be borne.” Matthew 11: 28-30 (Amplified Bible)

Where are you my dear friend? Are you laboring? Heavy laden? Overburdened? Boggled down?? Worried? Having difficulty balancing your homeschool and all of the other things that you juggle in your life? Want a little bit of that...

REST...

RELIEF...

EASE...

REFRESHMENT...

RECREATION...

and BLESSED QUIET???

There is only one place you can go. Only one person that satisfies this longing. Yes, that one place is at the feet of our Jesus. Beloved, go to God! Learn of Jesus! Get HIS Yoke! Walk with His burden! Wondering how? Take a look at the key found in Romans 12: 1-2 (another one of those bathroom verses!)...

“I appeal to you therefore, brethren, and beg of you in view of [all] the mercies of God, to make a decisive dedication of your bodies [presenting all your members and faculties] as a living sacrifice, holy (devoted, consecrated) and well pleasing to God which is your reasonable (rational, intelligent) service and spiritual

worship. Do not be conformed to this world (this age), [fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs], but be transformed (changed) by the [entire] renewal of your mind [by its new ideals and its new attitude], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His sight for you].

Romans 12: 1-2 (Amplified Bible)

I love this passage! I believe that it holds the secret to the only way we will be freed up from the bondage that keeps us from Homeschooling the easy way. Let's look again at that passage:

1. **Present ourselves to God as a complete, living sacrifice....**meaning that all we have and all we do must be completely yielded, dedicated, and committed to Him and His Way! This means *all* that we are: our plans...ambitions...ideas...methods... techniques... fears... concerns... *all* must be presented to God as a living sacrifice. Think back to the story of Abraham. Remember how God asked him to sacrifice his best, his Isaac, as an act of worship? You may think that to be an odd requirement, but God cannot allow us to have anything that becomes more precious to us than worshipping *Him*. Abraham obediently took Isaac up to the mountain. I believe that Abraham *knew* that his heart was committed completely to God, but this was the test to see just *how* committed he really was. God asked him to present his best as his sacrifice, his Isaac. Here, we find that if we are desiring to *know* the good, acceptable, perfect will of God for *ourselves* or *our children*, we must first obediently present ourselves as a complete, living sacrifice. There may be things in our lives (things that are very precious and difficult to get rid of) that must be burnt up as a sacrifice for God's best OR we may find that what we brought to sacrifice before the Lord was acceptable in His sight and can return home with us. However, the key is not in what God does with our sacrifice, it is in our heart coming before Him daily, presenting ourselves and all that we have before His throne!
2. **Forsake the world's standards, the world's ways, and the world's bondage...**meaning that as we search for God's standards, God's Way, and we find God's freedom. There is great freedom in God's design for womanhood and the family. Only in God's design will we find direction for the path our children are to walk upon!
2. **Be transformed by the daily renewal of your mind...**meaning that if you want a changed life, it begins as you sit at the feet of Jesus. As you daily immerse yourself in His Word, you will begin to be transformed. You will soon have different priorities... different beliefs... different ambitions... and soon, you will be able to prove what is good, acceptable, and perfectly in the will of God. If we never experience this transformation, we will always find ourselves burdened under a yoke of bondage. We will always find ourselves looking in all the wrong places for direction, approval, meaning, purpose, and rest!

As we seek God, die to SELF, and allow Him to renew our mind each and every day, He is free to give us encouragement and wisdom that we need to make Homeschooling EASY! All we have to do is

sit at His feet and allow Him to work!

So, what does this look like? Here are some key elements of our Simplified Approach to Home Education...

Make Discipleship the MAIN Thing!

Notice one of the phrases in Matthew 11:28-30 that is easy to overlook? In the passage, there is the phrase, “**learn of me.**” If we are to have an easy journey in our Homeschool journey, we must first learn of Jesus. His whole entire life was spent teaching. As our ultimate Teacher, His life offers a great classroom for aspiring Homeschool teachers

As I have looked at the life of Christ to see how He taught, I have found some great tips for making Homeschooling great! First, **He dearly loved children.** His command was to let the children come to Him. This was not a mere command for the crowd gathering around Him at that time. It is recorded for us as well. The main thing that we are to do as we teach our children is, first and foremost, to make their lifestyle such that they are constantly brought before Jesus. An education that detracts from this purpose is vain indeed.

Secondly, as we look at Jesus and His method of teaching, we see that **He used the method of discipleship.** As we look at the meaning of this, we find that discipleship is plain and simply teaching **WHO YOU ARE.** As He walked along the way and as He sat down with them...as He ate and as He traveled...all along the way He taught them. But, His lessons were not superficial, they were practical and spiritual through and through. His lessons made the most of the constant interruptions that life brought onto their path. Sound like a home?

If we were to study this model, we would find that much of what we do could be simplified. So often, we run to and fro searching for the perfect curriculum and the perfect plan. We forget that the most important lessons that our children **MUST** have come from our very own lives.

God has not made a mistake in creating families for our children to grow up in. He could have used any model as a “home” to train up children. However, He chose the home, not the church...the schools...the malls...or our televisions. He chose the family because parents **ARE** the best teachers.

Every family has this ability. Actually, the family is the best place to learn these life lessons. After years of ministry, I see that each and every family **AND** each and every parent has something precious to offer the children blessing their homes. Sure, if we homeschool long enough, we will all struggle through teaching at least a few subjects. But, that is not the **MAIN** thing. The main thing God intends for parents to teach is **WHO THEY ARE** and **WHAT IS ON THEIR HEART.**

Each of us if asked would have a different answer for **WHO** we are and **WHAT** is on our heart.

That is EXACTLY how God wanted it. He places our children in our home for us to train for His calling in their life. I love Proverbs 22:6...

“Train up a child in the way he should go [and in keeping with his individual gift or bent], and when he is old he will not depart from it.”

The word **train** means to disciple or dedicate our children. This gets good, so stick with me. What are we to train them up for? We are to be discipling and dedicating them in the way they are to go, which is using their spiritual gifts and natural bents.

No where in the world can our children get a better preparation for their calling than with us. If we will dedicate ourselves to discipling them along the way and training them to use their gifts and bents each and every day, then we can be sure that they will have the perfect preparation for their calling.

If we can accept the vision that God has for our homes to be restored to His design for godly families, we can truly experience Homeschooling that is easy. All it takes is learning of Jesus, getting to know our children (their spiritual gifts and natural interests), teaching who we are, and becoming the family that God wants for us to be. Then, not only is Homeschooling easy, but the burden is truly light!

Make Learning a Lifestyle...

Another key is to make learning a lifestyle. Ask any child to be real honest and you will find that they are not interested in playing school. They do not want a school...they want a real home. Develop your home! Be a family! A Home...not a homeSCHOOL. As you do all else will fall in place...the choices, the schedule, the struggles...all will fall into place.

Want to make learning a lifestyle but have no idea how to begin? First, think of who you are? What do you think your day should look like? What do you think should be taught? How can you practically pull in all you want to teach? How can learning best occur?

As I looked at these things practically, I began to see that it was SO hard to bring school-at-home into my home. The more we used the habits of our lifestyle as tools to teach our children, the more they seemed to learn. You see one of our old habits was READING! In fact, I kept getting off my schedule and missing my learning goals because we were constantly distracted by BOOKS! J You may think I am joking, but I have to tell you that there are many, many other lessons that were totally blotched because I could not break away from a great book! I felt totally guilty for my lack of discipline.

I remember one day pouring out my dilemma to a dear friend. Instead of tears of sympathy that I felt were very appropriate, she began to roar in laughter! Now, I was in a dilemma...my friend felt that I was pro-

viding comedy relief. As she cooled down her giggle attack, she said to me that what I was doing was a mixture of Unit Studies and Charlotte Mason's ideas. You may as well have sounded a trumpet from heaven...all began to click! My methods of bringing school home were not working. On those really bad days, I found myself pulling out the great books and snuggling up with my children. IF this could be a whole approach to education, THEN I needed to just change my approach.

Sure enough! Things began to ease out!

In time, the more that we used those ways Harold and I used to continue to learn, the more things began to fit together. The funny thing, as I have continued to read through the years, those same ideas are certainly not new, they are the old paths that have been eliminated from education of our day. If there is a reason for the inferior education of our day, I believe it is because there is so much experimentation at the detriment of our children. The Bible is clear in Jeremiah 6: 16 that we will find REST (remember Matthew 11: 28-30) as we walk in the old paths...

“Thus saith the Lord: Stand by the roads and look; and ask for the eternal paths, where the good, old way is; then walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls.” Jeremiah 6: 16

Use those tested, tried, and true methods. It may be Copywork and Notebooking, which we find as far back as Deuteronomy 17: 18-20. It may be narration, that method that has brought us the entire Bible and preserved History for us to learn today. It may be apprenticeships with those knowledgeable about areas of interest, as seen all throughout time. Search the old paths for fresh Homeschool ideas. They will work!

Also, look for education in real life! Your greatest resources and easiest learning will be in **real life**. There is no greater way for them to learn nature than to be out there **in nature**. All it takes is turning children loose outside, the lessons are inevitable! There is not greater way for them to learn **practical skills** than to come to a situation that requires them to learn how to use those skills. Parents can teach these skills naturally just by including their children in their everyday life. There are no greater teachers for those areas that you do not know yourself than the **real people** that come across your path or through the pages of **real books**. Put your children in touch with real people. You never know the impact that a person can have on your child's life. All it takes is one person that is passionate about a topic to inspire a child to develop a life long interest in an area of study. Rarely can a textbook have this impact.

Look at your life. What is already in your hand, ready for you to use? What is in your back yard, ready to explore? More than likely, as you develop your home, instead of a homeSCHOOL, you will find that you, too, can homeschool the easy way.

Enjoy the Journey...

Do you know that of all the points that I think will make a difference, I think this one needs to be taught the most??? We can get so caught up homeschooling that we forget to enjoy our husbands...our children...our friends...our homes.

This year we began the 10th year of homeschooling. The first year we began homeschooling I took the summer off to re-group and re-fuel for the second year. I remember declaring that fall that I would NEVER take off the summers again. It was just so hard to get back on track. Well, this spring was the most difficult time of my entire life. So much came crashing down upon me that I felt that I could not go on if we did not take the summer off and allow for me to have a time of renewal and refreshment. I have to tell you real open and honest that realizing that the fall is HERE and that summer is passing away was devastating to me. Gearing up for a new year made my teeth clench tightly and my stomach turn! (I have no idea how many of you just highlighted that last confession, but you probably did so because you are THERE with me!)

As I look back over the last decade of homeschooling, I have so many precious memories that are forever mine as a result of teaching my children. I also have many regrets that I would rather erase, never to plague me again. Most of us do.

As I sit here mom-to-mom, I would like to encourage you to enjoy this journey. It all passes so quickly. The little boy that took FOREVER to sound out words with his southern drawl is now a handsome young teen to takes forever to finish a study because he reads every book in the library on any topic! That little girl that struggled learning to read now believes that God has a call for her life to be one of ministry. They learned their multiplication tables...they learned to read...they learned how to write (and LOVE it!)...only if I could have known back then that they would! If I had known we would get HERE, I would have been a lot more relaxed during those tough times and probably much nicer too!

I also want to encourage you to take care of your home! Take care of that man you committed your life to so many years ago. Harold has shared with me through the years how tough it is outside of the home. Our husbands are bombarded with constant pressures, temptations, and decisions that we cannot comprehend. It is so easy to get so wrapped up in teaching our children that we fail to minister to our husbands. It does not take much...maybe breakfast alone together before the children awake, maybe afternoon coffee while the children read or pursue personal interests, maybe a nightly walk out in the moonlight (exercise AND romance...hummm!) while the children get ready for bed, maybe a time of swinging at the park while the children play within reach, or maybe a long chat all snuggled up in bed at night.

Your husband may have other needs. Take care of them. Even if you do not have as much time to "homeschool," remember that you are doing the most important thing...you are being a help meet. Even if you have to retire one of those beloved blue-jean dress jumpers for his favorite style, you will still find that

Homeschooling The Easy Way Manual

your children will still be able to learn to read, write, and multiply!

Our marriages are not the only focus. Looking at all the things we must do can be overwhelming. Our little ones also need for us to minister to their hearts. They are not merely composed of busy little bodies and hungry little minds. They need to be nurtured and treasured. Mothers are perfect for this job! It is so easy to get so busy with homeschooling that we forget to be mothers. Make time to learn together. Make sweet memories. Cherish this time with them.

Finally, make time to live! I am SO opposed to feminist teaching that often I err on the side of pouring out for my family to the detriment of taking care of myself. Our children will not learn to sit at the feet of Jesus, unless we do. Our husbands are not going to appreciate a tattered, pre-occupied, and busy wife. In time, there will also be a point that we will burn to a frazzle, offering nothing to any one.

This past spring when all of life seemed to be crashing in on me, my husband took me out on a date. It was the first real date we had had in quite some time. Our children were finally old enough to stay at home alone. Although I had no idea of my need, I really needed to take better care of myself.

We went out to dinner and then to the mall. I NEVER go to the mall except when I need more perfume or a gift for someone. As we walked through, Harold took me to Bath and Body Works. My first action walking in the door was to grab some massage lotion that I often buy for him. He gently grabbed my hand and said, "Is that for you??" I said, "No." He said, "Then, you cannot have it tonight." I felt my bottom lip begin to quiver...my insides began to shake. I then, almost immediately turned to see some lotion that my daughter loved. Harold just shook his head, "No."

I was instantly humbled. God whispered into my spirit, "Cindy, this is why you are having such a hard time...you do not know how to take care of yourself...NOR do you know how to accept the blessing of others taking care of you...humble yourself and allow others to minister to you." I realized as I allowed Harold and others to minister to me in the midst of this time of grief and much sorrow that I had not given myself permission to live during these years. I was a mommy martyr. Sure, I could minister and pour myself out for others but I, just like many of you, did not let anyone refill my cup. When I had a struggle, I tried to just be tough and keep going. As a result, I was stealing the blessing of ministering to me from those that loved me the most. While we are called to take up our cross daily, we really do no one favors to refuse the ministry that they are called to bestow upon us. We are better women when we allow others to minister to us.

Maybe your need is for others to minister to you. Let them go! Maybe you need that daily quiet time... your family will thank you! Maybe your greatest need is that date with your man! Go girl! Maybe the best lesson tomorrow in your homeschool lies at the local park, waiting for you to take off with those blessings. My dear one, these days are precious. Enjoy them. Each and every one of them.

So, where are you? What will it take to make homeschooling great? My challenge is for you to hear the plea of Jesus...

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden and overburdened, and I will cause you to rest, [I will ease and relieve and refresh your souls.] Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am gentle (meek) and humble (lowly) in heart, and you will find rest (relief and ease and refreshment and recreation and blessed quiet) for your souls. For my yoke is wholesome (useful, good—not harsh, hard, sharp, or pressing, but comfortable, gracious, and pleasant), and My burden is light and easy to be borne.”

Happy Homeschooling!



Excerpted from *Homeschooling The Easy Way Magazine* Volume 1
Companion Audio Tapes and Audio Sets Available!

Teach Me Lord, That I May Teach...

By Cindy Rushton



“You, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself?” Romans 2:21a (NIV)

What about you? Busy teaching? Pouring out all you have? Getting tired? Weary? Struggling to keep on, keeping on? Been laboring to keep this thing afloat?

There is GOOD news! You CAN go to God! Hear the call? Oh, beloved, I hear a call ringing from Matthew 11: 28-30...

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden and overburdened, and I will cause you to rest, [I will ease and relieve and refresh your souls.] Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am gentle (meek) and humble (lowly) in heart, and you will find rest (relief and ease and refreshment and recreation and blessed quiet) for your souls. For my yoke is wholesome (useful, good—not harsh, hard, sharp, or pressing, but comfortable, gracious, and pleasant), and My burden is light and EASY to be borne.” Matthew 11: 28-30 (Amplified Bible)

Come to Me...

I will cause you to rest...

Take My yoke...

Learn of Me...

Take my yoke...

You will find rest!

So familiar. So much wisdom. BUT, what is that, “*Learn of ME?*” Oh, beloved! This is SO good! Imagine for a moment a lesson from the best Teacher of all time? Imagine a lesson on teaching that can truly teach YOU so you CAN teach?

Oh, we are so blessed! We have the opportunity to glean from the best *Homeschool How-To Book* ever written. We can sit at the feet of the best Teacher throughout time!

So, how about it? What about taking a journey back in time to learn of the Master Teacher? How about taking a detailed look at His methods of teaching? What about a look at His ideas of “essential” lessons?

Oh, buckle up for a bit, we are going to teach YOU, so you may teach!

Jesus was Focused...

Looking back over the life of Jesus, the one thing that sticks out to me FIRST is His great FOCUS. Probably because this is one area that I often feel the most bombarded! He sets THE example for staying focused the WHOLE journey!

His call was the MAIN thing! His focus was not on building a great ministry, although as we can all testify, His ministry was and still remains the greatest ministry of all History. His focus was not on building a big name, although it is at HIS name that all must bow and acknowledge Him as Lord and Saviour for eternal salvation. No, His entire focus was on the main thing—the call on His life! The “prize before Him”...

“Therefore then, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses [who have borne testimony to the Truth], let us strip off and throw aside every encumbrance (unnecessary weight) and that sin which so readily (deftly and cleverly) clings to and entangles us, and let us run with patient endurance and steady and active persistence the appointed course of the race that is set before us. Looking away [from all that will distract] to Jesus, Who is the Leader and Source of our faith [giving the first incentive for our belief] and is also its Finisher [bringing it to maturity and perfection]. He, for the joy [of obtaining the prize] that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising and ignoring the shame, and is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God.” Hebrews 12: 1-4 (Amplified Version)

I love this passage! To truly be “focused,” means much more than to stick to a schedule...to read all of the books my curriculum suggests...to meet all of my goals and objectives...to pass the tests given for that year. Rather, to be “focused” as Jesus was focused means a very different thing!

Take a moment to think over His earthly ministry...Want to read over some of it? Take a look at Matthew. In fact, I found several years ago a sampling of “A Day in the Life of Jesus.” It begins actually in Matthew 5 at the famous *Sermon on the Mount* and apparently continues through Matthew 10.

As a LOVER of strange things like grammar and the words like “*And then...*” “*After...*” “*When...*” “*Now when...*” I noticed something incredible about Jesus’ ministry in this passage! Now, keep in mind that this is a “pencil” interpretation of Scripture...but from Matthew 8 until Matthew 10, we see a “Day in the Life of Jesus.” Actually it is possible that this day began in Matthew 5 with the infamous *Sermon on the Mount*. I say this because it appears to continue throughout an entire day. Soooo, what did He do “in a day???”

Preached a 3-book sermon...
Ministered to multitudes who were following Him...
Cleansed a leper...
Healed the Centurion’s Servant from palsy...
Healed Peter’s Mother-in-Law...

Homeschooling The Easy Way Manual

Taught the disciples a lesson as they traveled “to the OTHER side” to minister (OH, on a sail boat...[N a storm!)]...

Calmed the storm...

Cast out demons (on the OTHER side—that place NO ONE wanted to go minister!)

Healed a man crippled by palsy...

Called a disciple to mentor...

Taught a lesson on fasting...

Raised a Ruler's daughter from the dead...

Tired yet?? There is more!

Healed the woman with the issue of blood...

Healed the blind...

Cast out demons...

THEN! You will love this... Taught a lesson on the need for MORE laborers!

Don't you LOVE this? Let me share with you what God spoke to me through this passage!

We KNOW that Jesus did ONLY what the Father told Him to do. He was FOCUSED on the *main thing!* Soooo we know through this that He **was** sticking to THE MAIN THING. But...what about those distractions???

As we *learn from Jesus*, we find that THE DISTRACTIONS WERE THE MAIN THING! Distractions were not hindrances. The interruptions were not obstacles. The delays were no problem! Instead, it is the distractions... the interruptions... the delays that were opportunities for ministry and greater discipleship or “teaching of His students—disciples!”

Jesus used all of the distractions, hindrances, interruptions, and delays that came His way to reach the MAIN thing—His REAL focus! They were opportunities to minister to those that would have been missed if He were moving out in “a plan” similar to those like ours for our homeschools!

Each and every moment that interrupted His journey helped all around to see God's provision and His ways so they were better prepared for their calling! They helped all around to KNOW God! Think about it...look at the miracles in the life of Jesus. Every single miracle took place in the midst of a major interruptions, disruption, or delay! Isn't that TOO cute?

What may have seemed to be inconvenient and exhausting actually were really great opportunities for Jesus to “model” before His students how He would respond, how He would react, how He would walk. Yes, they learned, firsthand, the heart of God. There could have been no better preparation for His students to go forth afterward in ministry to the culture than watching Jesus minister through the interruptions, delays, disruptions, and hindrances as He moved toward the main thing. Just imagine if we had this type of plan for our homeschools! A lot different huh?

I believe God is THE best Writer. Nothing is by accident. There are jewels hidden away in Scripture.

We must search for the jewels as we would for the most valuable treasure! The jewel here is that there are MANY things that CAN be done...but the greatest work is to seize opportunities as they come our way while we are reaching for the “prize before us!” Only as we learn from our Master Teacher how to keep our FOCUS and how to use the distractions, interruptions, and delays as a ministry and as REAL LIFE curriculum along the way, will we find true discipleship—true education! Only then will we find “*rest, ease, relief, refreshment, gentleness, recreation and blessed quiet.*” Simply awesome huh?

Jesus Taught All Along The Way!

This time of year, we naturally turn back to precious carols, that remind us of the Name of God, Immanuel! We see cards reminding us that we celebrate Immanuel! We read Scriptures, reminding us of the prophecies foretelling the advent of Immanuel AND the Scriptures that detail the life of Immanuel! I LOVE this Name! Immanuel! Immanuel actually comes from two words meaning *God with us*.

One of the most precious things that we may cling to as Christians is that God IS WITH US! He is a “with us” God! All throughout the Old Testament we are introduced to great men and women who give us a glimpse of what it is like to walk with God. As Jesus Christ is born, we see what it is like to at last have *Immanuel* on earth walking with mankind! We see His EXACT method of teaching—walking alongside of man! Likewise, if we are to learn from our Teacher, we are wise to implement this method of teaching—all along the way! Take a look at Deuteronomy 6:

“Here, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy gates.”

I am sure that many of you could quote this passage by memory in your sleep! But, have you taken it to heart as a method of teaching your children? Have you learned of the Master how to use this as a method of education?

I love God’s WAY—The EASY WAY! He makes it all SO easy! But, trust me education HIS WAY is a bit different from what we normally see!

First, the BEST teachers are the parents! Without wanting to offend ANY teacher who teaches in the classroom, I make this statement with deep conviction. I believe that many of you believe the same thing! In speaking with teachers, the most frustrating thing they face is the void in parental involvement. There is no education without the parents teaching WHO THEY ARE and WHAT IS ON THEIR HEART! Every subject remains void. Every student remains empty. A “whole” remains that cannot be filled. I have no answers for the classroom, but I do have a challenge for the godly homeschools! The best

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teachers are the parents! Teach your beloved children!

Parents are blessed with the ability to get to know their child better than anyone else could. With ANY effort, the results are phenomenal! Ask any parent to think of ONE child in their home...do they truly know that child's greatest educational, spiritual, emotional, or physical needs, struggles, and even strengths at this moment?

Oh, I have never met ONE parent who did not in all of the thousands I have taught in workshops, conventions, and seminars throughout the years. Why? Because God has placed that gift in the heart of every single parent!

He will never fail the parent who teaches a child. He will always show the voids, the needs, and exact methods for teaching step-by-step for each and every child. Our toughest part of teaching is tuning out all that battles for our attention. Then, we find that indeed, we as parents are the BEST teachers!

Secondly, we learn that *the best lessons are what is on our heart...who we are!* There is so much vying to be content in the "perfect education." So much information. So many books. So many ideas. What IS the most important thing to teach?

Go back to our Master Teacher. Look at what HE taught. Go back to Deuteronomy 6. What was to be taught? Look at Moses asking God at the burning bush what HE was to teach and say. Look at Abraham and God's reason for choosing HIM (see where God is about to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah—it details WHY God chose Abraham—too good!).

Oh, beloved, there is a common theme all throughout Scripture as we look at those that were "to teach." Yes, we see men and women called to teach the same "curriculum." God's curriculum!

Yes, as you look at all of those examples and any others that you find along the way, they were ALL called to teach what was on their heart—WHAT THEY KNEW, WHO THEY WERE! They were to impart what they were learning about God. They were to instruct the next generation about the mighty acts of God. They were depended upon to teach the next generation all about God and His dealings with man in every area of life.

We have the same calling. Just as no where in the Bible did God call a man or woman to teach Algebra... or English Composition (or GRAMMAR—praise God!)... or Chemistry...or Biology...no, not one of those "subjects" that we tend to get "hung up on." Instead, we find lessons that were taught prepared the students for their calling. Lessons that truly prepared the next generation with all they needed to learn, but even more, to step up to the call themselves!

But, HOW do you do it? Why not use the methods JESUS used?

Think about Jesus' ministry. His lessons had impact! In fact, they not only impacted the generation in which He lived...but, NOW we see that they have continued to shape and impact all of the world for the past 2000 years! Phenomenal!

Funny thing, Jesus did not seem to get all wrapped up in the "stuff" that we are most frustrated with in the Homeschool! Instead, He continued day-in-and-day-out using methods that we could really stand to implement into our HOMES. Here are a few:

- ♥ **He taught along the way!** No desks. No chalkboards. Not even those big, fancy projectors we see at conferences! Those things would have hindered the teachable moment. Instead, as we go back in time to see His classroom, we find that it is rarely even within walls. He took His students with Him everywhere (Well, except when He had to go apart for renewal—more on that in a bit), teaching them all along the way as lessons IN LIFE came up! This brings me to the next point...
- ♥ **He taught what HE KNEW!** As the "Ultimate Teacher," can you imagine His lessons? Yet, as we look back over His ministry, we must take into consideration that His lessons did not allow for Him to depend upon teacher's manuals or even texts to teach. Instead, He taught what was on His heart. He taught WHO He was! He used what He KNEW as the examples of the information He taught His students! And the impact? Well, it has yet to be matched in 2000 years! I think I will take that method!
- ♥ **He used the practical to teach deep Spiritual insights.** The lessons were not taught for knowledge sake or even understanding's sake. The lessons were for wisdom—for spiritual wisdom! So much in education makes no sense for the student—and teacher, if truth were told! Oh, but we need not have this type of void in the education of our children! Rather, we CAN teach our children and it CAN bring meaning and purpose to their lives! We can teach them so they can truly "*subdue and have dominion*" over ALL areas of learning within their reach! We don't have to have the same struggles in education as others—we can truly have an excellent education for our children that uses the practical areas of life to teach deep Spiritual truths, give purpose, and point them back to God! Just think of the difference! Learning History to get a credit toward graduation...or "just because!" OR learning History, the practical information. Then, letting that information open up a book of the Bible like Daniel or Revelation that is merely puzzling without a proper understanding and working knowledge of History! There is a big difference! I had a great education. I earned my diploma. Yet, I had only gained credits and passed the tests in courses that I took "just because" I was SUPPOSED to! Years later, studying Ancient History as an adult alongside of my study of the Book of Daniel, revealed that the only reason that History never made sense was the same reason that Bible Prophecy never made sense—they were never MESHED together. I had never learned the "practical areas"

in conjunction with the “spiritual areas,” much less learned the practical information so I could learn deep spiritual truths! It really made a difference! So, consider learning from the Master Teacher—it WILL make a difference!

- ♥ **His focus was on faith—not on a method.** One thing that has always intrigued me about the miracles of Jesus was how He did it. Now, let me get real honest here! If *I* were Jesus, I would have a “set way” that you could ALWAYS depend upon for any “set need.” You know, like IF you needed to be healed of blindness, I would say that you COULD be healed IF you promised to spend 7 years as an indentured servant in my kitchen! Good idea huh? Or, for those with Leprosy—I would say that they would need to go bathe at a nude beach! I bet then everyone would run fast and get dressed—then, we could solve TWO problems in one blow! You know? Well, Jesus just blew ALL ideas of consistency! He would heal one blind man by speaking a word commanding that he be healed... another, He would “spit on the ground” (REALLY!) and make mud to rub on the guys eyes. Upon washing it off, he would no longer be blind. One thing that you COULD depend upon, you could not depend upon a METHOD for healing, just FAITH! We need to learn this from Jesus as well! In a movement as full of methods and curriculum as there are families homeschooling, there is a quiet desperation of so many moms to find the PERFECT curriculum...the PERFECT approach...the PERFECT method! Well, it is not always fun to be the prophet with a tough word, but there IS NOT going to ever be a perfect curriculum, approach, or method for ALL of us. Even in saying, look at Jesus’ WAY—His EASY WAY, I am not promoting a special approach that you can place your faith upon! Rather, I am promoting the SAME Jesus and HIS EASY WAY that will reflect the same diversity of methods for education as we find in His healing methods. He has not changed! However, His focus has never been upon the METHOD, but instead His focus was on FAITH! He has faithfully extended His hand to us, as those in the past He offered healing to, to simply have FAITH in HIM and HIS methods for helping us individually with our “needs.” So, if we want to learn of HIM, we must move from *homeschooling methods* to *homeschooling faith*. Then, we will find homeschooling to be easy!

Jesus LOVED Children!

Yes! What a precious, precious thought when we think of the affection that Jesus exhibited toward children! How that affection contrasts with the feelings that our society has about children. Look at just one instance we find in Mark 10: 13-16 of Jesus interacting with children...

“And they kept bringing young children to Him that He might touch them, and the disciples were reprovng them [for it]. But when Jesus saw [it], He was indignant and pained and said to them, Allow the children to come to Me—do not forbid them or prevent or hinder them—for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive and accept and welcome the kingdom of God like a little child [does] positively shall not enter it at all.”

Isn't this precious? Can you picture this scene in your mind? Perhaps you may be like me and be able to

easily envision this scene! Others in the background here were much like those in our society today—children, in their eyes, were distractions, hindrances to the “plan of the day,” a “duty,” a “displeasure,” an “inconvenience!”

Yet, here in this passage, we see the view of GOD about the little children! We see how He sees them as treasures, a blessing, no labels, no limitations, just precious in His sight!

Remember those sweet little songs we all sang in church as little children?

*Jesus loves the little children,
All the children of the world,
Red and yellow, black and white,
They are precious in His sight,
Jesus loves the little children of the world.*

Oh, yes! He loves ALL! Unconditional, unchanging, unlimited love for ALL of us! Oh, there are no exceptions! Wonder if there are even more specific lists? Well, Isaiah 61 includes even more possible exceptions, yet there are NO exceptions with the Lord. Not even...

The poor...
Brokenhearted...
Prisoners...
Blind...
Oppressed...
Religious...
Hurting...
Sick...
Demonic...
Hated...
Despised...
Rejected...
Unlovely...
ALL!

All may come to Jesus! He loves us ALL! And all of those labels are lost! Lost to become the “redeemed,” ministers and priests of the Lord. No more labels! No rejection! Complete love!

Contrast this love for children with the world's (and EDUCATION'S) opinion's about children. It is a common fact that educator's believe that EVERY child has a “label.” Yet, with Jesus, ALL labels disappear. Just go in public a bit and you will see how children are shunned or considered inconvenient and disruptive. Mention that you “want” children, lots of them!, and you will see the real heart of our culture!

How does this affect education? Well, obviously there has been a battle in education for the view of the child that has waged for centuries. The debate still goes on, even in homeschooling circles! Believe it? Well, think of the sides lining up as one declares that the child must have “ideas that feed and challenge the mind” whereas the other side declares that “the mind needs to be challenged with rote memory skills.” What about the lines that form when discussion begins over whether lessons should be “teacher directed,” “curriculum directed” or “delight-directed.” Yep! There is a battle still waging over the view of the child!

Another affect is the “pace of the child.” I am constantly challenged in my view of my children when I consider the loving words in Genesis 33...

“My lord knoweth that the children are tender, and the flocks and herds with young are with me: and if men should overdrive them one day, all the flock will die. Let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant: and I WILL LEAD ON SOFTLY, according as the cattle that goeth before me and the children BE ABLE TO ENDURE, until I come unto my lord at Seir.”

Truly, only ONE day of pushing the pace and we all would DIE in our love of learning! Yet, consider the view in many education circles today. The children are constantly pushed. In fact, a typical school day is not set to the pace of the child, but rather to the “set” bells. The child is trained from an early age to move to the bell. No TIME is given to really pursue any studies! Oh, but it need not be this way! We have THE EASY WAY as an option!

There are many, many more areas affected, but here is one more! Want to see another area that is influenced? The whole training! I love Proverbs 22:6 in the Amplified Version...

“Train up a child in the way he should go [and in keeping with his individual gift or bent], and when he is old he will not depart from it.”

The word **train** means to disciple or dedicate our children. This gets good, so stick with me. What are we to train them up for? We are to be discipling and dedicating them in the way they are to go, which is using *their spiritual gifts and natural bents*. This is the WAY that God sees the little children!

Contrast this with education today that has the same plan, and the same requirements for all students. Contrast the focus: on the child and the child’s individual gifts and bents OR on the scope and sequence provided by the state. Or, what about the end product? Students with no intimacies, no direction in which to go, and no preparation for real life!

No where in the world can our children get a better preparation for their calling than with us. If we will dedicate ourselves to discipling them along the way and training them to use their gifts and bents each and every day, then we can be sure that they will have the perfect preparation for their calling. All it takes is learning of Jesus, getting to know our children (their spiritual gifts and natural interests), teaching who we

are, and becoming the family that God wants for us to be. Then, not only is Homeschooling easy, but the burden is truly light!

Jesus Had FUN!

Look again at Matthew 11: 28-30...

"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden and overburdened, and I will cause you to rest, [I will ease and relieve and refresh your souls.] Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am gentle (meek) and humble (lowly) in heart, and you will find rest (relief and ease and refreshment and recreation and blessed quiet) for your souls. For my yoke is wholesome (useful, good—not harsh, hard, sharp, or pressing, but comfortable, gracious, and pleasant), and My burden is light and EASY to be borne."

Matthew 11: 28-30 (Amplified Bible)

Did you see those words? Recreation! Easy! Fun! Does this send shivers up and down your spine? Does this make you long for a different kind of homeschool? Well, why not LEARN of Jesus?

Think about the settings behind Jesus' life that is recorded in Scripture. His first miracle was at a party—a wedding! He taught and ministered aboard a sailboat (the guys at our house consider this to be a really FUN way to minister!). Oh, time and time again, we join Jesus as He eats, travels, sits by the sea. We see Him on top of the mountain. Oh, and in gardens. REAL LIFE! FUN!

Not just in the life of Christ...also take a look in the Old Testament! Constantly throughout the Old Testament, God-Himself-commanded His people to party! In fact, as I read through the book of Esther this past year in my daily Bible Reading, I was excited to see that God commanded a yearly feast (Purim) to help His people to remember the HISTORY behind God's provision for His people:

"To command them to keep the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and also the fifteenth, yearly. As the days on which the Jews got rest from their enemies, and as the month which was turned for them from sorrow to gladness and from mourning into a holiday—that they should make them days of feasting and gladness, days of sending choice portions to one another and gifts to the poor...that these days should be remembered (imprinted on their mind) and kept throughout every generation in every family, province, and city, and that these days of Purim should never cease from among the Jews, nor the commemoration of them cease among the descendents."

Fun! Gladness! Feasting! TO LEARN HISTORY!! What a way to learn!

You can have FUN homeschooling! Your children can have FUN! They can follow their interests and delights! You can have abundant life! Freedom! No legalism! No superficiality! Teaching as you go along the way, having fun! Having a home, not a homeschool! Enjoying your children and learning with them! Truly Homeschooling the Easy Way!

Jesus Got Weary!

"So Jesus, tired as He was from His journey, sat down [to rest] by the well. It was then about the sixth hour (about noon)." John 4:6 (Amplified Version)

What do YOU do when you get weary? Tired? I don't know about you, but as for me, this is what it looks like:

- ♥ I get a little tired...
- ♥ I look at my planner—at all of the “stuff” I have YET to do...
- ♥ I get a little distressed (well, a lot!)...
- ♥ I get in a frenzy...
- ♥ I work even harder, only in MANY different directions...
- ♥ Then, I begin to battle exhaustion...that just makes me more tired and irritable...
- ♥ Inevitably, at this point things start to BREAK all around me...others call with their to-do's...my children begin to squabble...and the planner falls on the ground SPILLING all of my “stuff” I have yet to do...
- ♥ Then, I begin to get in a frenzy...nothing works out...more stuff breaks...more demands on my time...
- ♥ Oh, then...the fit! More work! All of it compounds! I feel depressed! Then, it is all doom and gloom!

Then, I read...that Jesus, when He got tired on His journey, HE SAT DOWN!

When Jesus was on His journey, He DID get tired! Now, that is revolutionary for me! Especially considering that we are talking about GOD incarnate! The Creator of EVERYTHING that we see, hear, touch, smell, and feel...plus, all that makes this world our home! Unbelievable! Oh, Creator God Who created all in this world in just SIX DAYS! In flesh and blood, God got TIRED! Oh, and women, do not miss that He was tired and sat down and it was ABOUT NOON! Hoot, hoot!

I beat myself up for getting tired after being up all night with a sick child...waking up early to feed and send my darling husband off to work... then, beginning a full day of school while taking care of the same sick child and juggling homemaking, baking, and answering phone calls, filling orders and writing articles...then, doing this schedule ALL day for weeks...then, I find myself completely out of sorts!

Oh, and I don't know about you, but there is something within me that simply does not feel the liberty to let ANYONE see me SIT DOWN, much less REST! Is rest godly anyway???

But, Jesus! We are “to become like Jesus.” If ever there is a need for the godly homeschool mom, this is an area that I believe that we could all stand to “learn of Him!” What do you think?