

HEY MOM! Take a look at THIS!
The New Issue of HOMESCHOOLING
THE EASY WAY is HERE!!
Hoot! Hoot!
Holler! Holler!



Volume 3

HOOH! HOOH!
HOMESCHOOLING THE EASY WAY is here
AT LAST! WE ARE SO GLAD! We LOVE Bible
Study... and Notebooking... and Picture Studies... and
Field Trips... and Copywork... and Making Our Very Own
Books... and Reading Fun Books... and Nature Studies...
and History Re-enactments... and Symphonies... and
Baking... and Making Timelines... and Art
History... and TEA! Blast! Fun! YIPPEE!



Homeschooling

The EASY Way!

Inside This Issue:

THIS
ISSUE:
Let's Get
Organized!



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- Quick Tips For Setting Up Your Daily Schedule!
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- Just Too Busy!
- FREE Dated Monthly Calendars Ready for YOUR Planner!

Hom eschooling???
W hy not
Hom eschoolTHE
EASY W AY??



"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)

Don't Forget to See Us Online at www.cindyushton.com

\$4.50

Welcome To Rushton Family Ministries!



Hi! Welcome to our magazine you see now is part of that vision, **HOMESCHOOLING THE EASY WAY!** **HOMESCHOOLING THE EASY WAY** is published by me, Cindy Rushton (pictured above), and our family. Each issue is written as our little piece of encouragement from our home to yours.

Our prayer is that each and every issue will encourage, inspire, and equip you better for your Homeschool journey! This issue is no different! In fact, we pray that this issue will give you a **BIG DOSE** of encouragement and practical help as you curl up (hopefully with a **BIG** cup of hot tea) and join us!

Just to give you a little background...HSEW wraps up its third Volume with this issue. Although **HOMESCHOOLING THE EASY WAY** is a young magazine, this is actually our 8th year of publishing our magazine. Sound crazy??? Well, originally all of our homeschooling articles were published in each issue of our **TIME FOR TEA** magazine. As time went on, TFT grew so much that we faced the dilemma of "what to do" in order to minister the best to all of our subscribers. God led us to separate the magazines and expand our vision for each. What

The focus of **HOMESCHOOLING THE EASY WAY** is to encourage homeschooling with a lifestyle of real learning that returns to the **OLD PATHS** that have worked for centuries. Topics range from hearing God in your homeschool to balancing all of the many demands that the busy homeschool mom faces day-to-day to teaching lessons in a simple, **EASY** way to **VERY** practical ideas that are sure to make homeschooling in your home **EASY** too! You won't want to miss a single issue!

At this time, HSEW is available for free by email. Be sure to sign up **TODAY** for your free subscription at our website: <http://www.cindyrushton.com> or <http://www.homeschoolingtheeasyway.com>. Our articles are sent out by email and posted on our website each week. After each Volume is completed online, we offer Reprint Books in print. You are holding a Reprint Book of Volume 3.

Each Volume covers a theme in depth—such as this Volume covering ideas written to help all of us to get (and stay!) organized. You

can access many of our past articles at any time on our website or in our past article Reprint Books—see later in this issue for more information about them! :)

If you would like to share us with a friend or your support group, we are more than happy to send samples of our magazines on CD-ROM. Each CD includes a sampling of past issues in PDF format. We love this format because our printable planning and notebook pages can be printed off of your computer at any time! Plus, you and your friends can see each issue in full color! If you want to share us, we can send as many as you may need. We always appreciate your support of our ministry!

Well, it is time for **THIS ISSUE** of **HOMESCHOOLING THE EASY WAY**. Each article and section was planned with **YOU** in mind. So, curl up with a big cup of tea...kick back for a while...this issue is **JUST FOR YOU!**

With Love,
Cindy Rushton and The Rushton Family Ministries Staff

From the Editor's Desk (Laptop)...

By Cindy Rushton



Once again, I can hardly believe that it is ALREADY a brand new year! I love this time of year! I just cannot believe that yet another year has FLOWN by only to be added to history...our history!

Since our last issue (I KNOW it has been waaaayyy too long!), so much has happened and so many things are changing—constantly!

Our Family...

Harold has retired and come home to begin his own business. He is LOVING it! Matthew, now a senior in High School, has been enjoying working with his father and using his spare time (ha!) to study with me. Elisabeth and I have been having lots of time to work on her high school lessons (she is a freshman in High School) and all of the fun "girl" things that we have been needing to focus upon—sewing, cooking, writing, etc.

This year has been our very best year yet! Both of the children have been studying hard, working hard, and growing into simply incredible young adults! I LOVE this sea-

son of parenting!

Our Magazines...

If you are online, you may have already noticed that our magazines have recently been moved to our website. We have our magazine articles on our OWN website. Check it out today!

That is not all, you may have also noted that when you sign up for our ezines, you do not sign up with Yahoo or MSN anymore. We are administrat- ing our own ezines now— complete privacy, no nasty ads, and now signing up is even eas- ier than ever! We are simply elated! This transition has taken A LOT of work, but I believe it is already COM- PLETELY worth it!

If you are a subscriber by regular mail, this is one of the many reasons that your issues have been delayed. We have tried to keep the data-base as organized as possible with our transition. The long, long wait and extra work (added to a busy homeschool mom's sched- ule) has gotten everything off schedule. In doing so, this brings us to our next an-

nouncement...

Changes with the Magazine!

It is really difficult to be- gin an issue of the magazine with the theme of "Let's Get Organized" explaining about delays and changes. Ha! One great reason to get organ- ized—so you can handle the delays, crisis situations, changes, interruptions with a semblance of confidence. I think that you will see that *I* still struggle with getting it all done and underestimating the impact of all of the delays, interruptions, and snags that can prevent us from doing all we WISH we could do. (More on that in this Volume!)

I have had the best year yet! However, this has been one of the most demanding years. The pace was fast, but not overwhelming. Everything that makes up our lives— family life, health, stamina, homeschooling, business, trav- eling, ministry—everything went better than ever. I had spent my fall and winter get- ting geared up for the New Year and getting everything as organized and systemized as I

could before we hit the road again.

Everything worked better than ever. Well, except one area. The only thing that did not work out AT ALL was publishing the printed format of the magazine. It was not so much researching, hearing for the topics and message, or writing that is required with such a huge project. Rather it was finding TIME to update the data base and set-up, print, and ship out the printed issues. UGGGH!

I guess that this is the perfect theme to express my own personal frustrations with time—

or the lack of twice as much time as I needed this year (no, NONE of us get twice as much time for any reason, however good!)! ☺

As I prayed over what to do, the Lord showed me that everything has its season and there are always neat options if we will just seek for HIS will...HIS way. I was tore to pieces over what we needed to do in publishing our magazines. Then, I looked at what we WERE able to do EASILY (remember...THE EASY WAY???) and how we could actually balance doing what we loved and make it even better.

Our biggest problem with "getting it all done" was getting the issues into print and maintaining the complicated

databases. However, we could easily write the articles and

set up the reprint books (We publish numbers of new books each year.) and process orders for those books—even the two issues left, this is our same number as in our subscriptions. We prayed, sought God, discussed options, and we



think you will love what we decided to do!

We will continue to publish the magazines. However, we will have a few changes. Our magazines will no longer be available by regular mail subscriptions on a quarterly basis. Rather, we will offer our magazines online by email or to view at our website (whichever you prefer). You can either subscribe to our free ezine or check into our website on a periodic basis (You will find articles at our magazine links AND on our Mom-2-Mom Discussion Board (which is also on our website—just click DISCUSSION on our links).

For those of you who have subscriptions, you will note that we have gone through our

data base evaluating how many issues we owe each of you. We decided to send this complete Volume to every one of you. For those that only had one or two issues left, this is our treat for your long, long wait—you get the entire Volume! We cannot express how much we appreciate your patience and understanding about the many demands that we face, just like so many of you. For those of you who have just subscribed, we have also included a few freebies in your package as a special treat for you. You are also very precious to us! We hope that this will completely bless you and give you ALL of your articles at once! ☺

We want for all of you to know how much you mean to us and how much we love preparing each issue—which makes changing the format SO VERY DIFFICULT. I consider this to be a long-distance tea-party mom-to-mom. Changing the "way we have ALWAYS done it" is very, very hard. But, for the very best!

Future issues are planned out and ready to roll. Actually rolling out the issues this new way (tell you in a bit) will help me to catch up on all of the back volumes that we were behind.

We are planning to compile the Volumes for each of our magazines by themes. Each

- Volume will feature articles along the way. If you prefer exploring a certain theme. For example, future Volumes of HSEW in the works include:
- ♥ High School: Wrapping It All Up!
- ♥ Homeschooling: Getting Back To God's Design for the Godly Homeschool!
- ♥ Homeschooling: 15 FUN and EASY Ideas for Making This The Best Year Yet!
- ♥ Discipleship! All Along The Way!

to see the articles and dates on our website, you can get Updates that will help you to know what is new on the site. Just go to our website to sign up for your preference

We began the New Year with a NEW website! I was completely blessed to overflowing to work with Heidi Kaether (see my link to her on my website—the links page!) to develop a completely new website for <http://www.cindyrushton.com>! Heidi graciously took her precious time to teach me the ins and outs of developing my own website. I have had a blast!

Now, we have a website with lots (HUNDREDS!) of articles, a new shopping cart (growing everyday!), our



Time for Tea also awaits set up of several fun volumes! We plan to take all of our addresses and add them into a database for periodic mail-outs of encouragement, but those may be *very* periodic—this is obviously a tough thing to get around to without a big staff. Soooo, can you help us a bit? We would love to stay in touch with you by email. You can either be added to our E-zines or to our Updates. The E-zines will receive the articles each week with updates

today or email us at cindy@cindyrushton.com with your request! We will take care of you immediately!

Speaking of the Website...

OH! Speaking of the website. I have forgotten to tell all of you about another reason for the delay of our magazine! Yep! Our website has been completely revamped! I mentioned how much I wish I had more TIME. But, I did not tell you about all of the great things that I *DID* squeeze into my schedule this year! ☺

magazines online, printable notebooking pages (hosted by us and ready for YOU to print each day for your homeschool!), ebook versions of our books, a mom-2-mom discussion board, plus much, much more! I have had sooo much fun making my home on the web into MY OWN home-on-the-web! Why not join me there today for TEA? Or a LATTE!

**On the Road...Oh, and...
NEW BOOKS TOO!**

OH! Yes! If that was not

<p>Homeschooling The Easy Way Magazine Volume Three</p> <p><i>Homeschooling The Easy Way Magazine</i> is published by:</p> <p>Rushton Family Ministries 1225 Christy Lane Tuscumbia, AL 35674 1-888-HSBOOKS Http://www.cindyrushton.com Cindy@cindyrushton.com</p>	<p>Editor: Cindy Rushton</p> <p>Copyright 2004 by Rushton Family Ministries. All rights reserved.</p> <p>Reproduction in whole or part without expressed written permission is strictly prohibited by law.</p> <p>Homeschooling The Easy Way Magazine is available by email subscriptions for FREE! For more information, please see details later in this issue.</p>	<p>Current <i>Homeschooling The Easy Way Magazine</i> articles are available for view FREE on our website: http://www.homeschoolingtheeasyway.com.</p> <p>Back issues for each volume are all available in combound reprint books. See our pricelist for more information!</p> <p>For more information about this magazine or our other products, please see our website found at http://www.cindyrushton.com or call our order line at 1-888-HSBOOKS.</p>
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Hearing God 101

By Barbara Edtl Shelton



I love my job



Whether we need it for homeschooling, a had in mind for "school", and we can certainly job, witnessing, or direction in life, every glean a few things from those in the pro-Christian wants to hear God. Not only is this a fessional teaching business, (and I do mean "a lofty desire, but it is the very most basic few"), but I do not ~ I repeat ~ I do NOT privilege of being a child of God. Indeed, it is a lieve that the so-called "educational experts" *must* if we are to not merely meander through are the final authority when it comes to defin-life, "hitting and missing" God's best, but if we ing *education*. *God* is! ... And therefore we are to become "fit for the Master's use," our need to hear HIS Voice above all the oth-ers! (I say "so-called educational experts" be-cause what they are is experts at "schooling" ~

I believe with all my heart that God has a not truly *educating* ~ the masses. This is unique plan for each one. There is a "river of not an insult to them; simply putting things living water" that He wants to release into and into what I believe is a correct perspective.) pour through each parent and each student as they seek His will for these vital years. And that "river of living water" is the Lord himself!

Contrary to popular assumption, we really *can* hear God's voice! It's actually a very basic aspect of being a Christian, not something just for the "spiritually advanced"! Jesus said, ***"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."*** (Jn.10:27)

Typically what happens is that we just get our Christianized curriculum and assume we are educating God's way. Unfortunately, it may take several years of pursuing the wrong thing, and discovering to our grief that we are not getting the fruit we had so desired to see in our children and our home when we first started out... This is because all we were really doing was just following a Christianized version of the world's methods; we never really sought God on what HIS plan for us is, or sought to hear His voice on "the way we should go."

And this isn't just for "religious" or "spiritual" stuff! If hearing God doesn't have to do with REAL LIFE, then it's pretty useless and pointless. But God is totally practical! If something is truly spiritual, then it is totally practical! The two are not exclusive of one another. And God wants to be an integral part of our daily lives, the homeschooling of our children; not just in our church activities.

We must be willing to come to the feet of Jesus, lay our ideas of "education" down there, and let all that we *think* we should be doing rest, or better yet, DIE there at His feet. He may very well give us back portions of what we

Do you want to learn how to hear God bet-ter? Then you are wanting a good thing, and it IS within your grasp! Not only is this a lofty desire, but it is the very most basic privilege of being a child of God. Indeed, it is a *must* if

we are to not merely meander through life, "hitting and missing" God's best, but if we are to become "fit for the Master's use," our "faculties trained." ... So let me ask you a few questions... And you can just answer these in your own heart and mind...

~ How well do you want to be able to hear God?

~ How well do you think you need to be able to hear Him as you raise your children and grow in the Lord?

~ How much easier do you think your life and homeschooling would be if you could hear Him well?

~ How much more peaceful would your home and your life be if you knew you were hearing Him on a regular basis?

Well, let me first assure you that "hearing God" is not an "all or nothing" thing. It's not a matter of "either you do or you don't"; it's something you *grow* in.

As I was reading in John 12 one day, verses 20-36, in particular, it jumped out at me that there were **three very clear and different levels of hearing God** going on in this passage...

The scene was at the time when Jesus' trial and death was approaching, and a few were gathered with Jesus. He had just said *something* ~ exactly *what* isn't relevant to the point I am making here, so I will skip right to what happened right *afterwards*. John 12: reads: *"and then a voice came from heaven saying 'I have glorified it and will glorify it again' The crowd standing by heard it and said that it had thundered. Others said 'An angel has spoken to him.'"*

You can read the whole passage for the whole story, but what I want to focus on here is the three different levels of hearing God. Did you catch them? Let me read that again: *"and then a voice came from heaven saying 'I have glorified it and will glorify it again' The crowd standing by heard it and said that it had thundered. Others said 'An angel has spoken to him.'"* Okay, let's take that apart...

What I see as being Level 1 was...

Level 1: THUNDER. The *lowest* level of hearing God was the **thunder**. These people heard *something*, but they had no idea that it was God's voice. The thunder they heard was neither good nor bad, only indiscernible and "noisy." (Sound a bit too familiar?)

Level 2: The next level I noticed was that of **recognizing that the voice was "heavenly."** These "level 2" people in the crowd thought an *angel* had spoken! They had more discernment than those who just heard the thunder in that they could tell it was something *good*, but they were still unable to perceive the specific words that were spoken. Definitely a step up from just hearing thunder, but still not the ultimate!

Level 3: And "the ultimate," of course, was **hearing the actual words** of the Father and recognizing that it was Him who had said them. It doesn't do a lot of good to hear words but not know whether it is Satan or God or "Self" speaking, right?!

So how do we get from the ever-so-common "Level 1" to the coveted "Level 3"? I believe it is by developing our "spiritual eardrums." An odd thought, I know, but a very true anal-

ogy. At "Level 1" we might say that we have spiritual eardrums the size of an ant's. Pretty small. At "Level 2" they are bigger, but not big enough to discern spiritual truth as specifically as we need. At "Level 3" we have reached more maturity and depth in the Lord. So, again, how do we get there? How do we learn to "hear God" and to discern His voice among the many voices speaking to us in the world?

I believe there are a few different methods ~ or tools ~ that God uses to teach us how to hear His voice. Of course, there are two very foundational elements to this, and they are both contained in this verse:

"If today you hear His voice, harden not your heart."

It starts with God calling. God is calling us. This is all through the word:

"Come let us reason together..."

Come to Me all who labor and are heavy-laden... and learn from Me...

Come to Me with your ears wide open..."

And then the other element, of course, is us *listening!* If we hear Him calling us ~ and, by the way, He always is ~ then we need to choose to listen! Even if we don't think we can hear Him very well. We start by obeying!

Would you like some ideas and tips for learning how to increase your ability to hear God? Here are ten things God has used in my life to help or to teach me how to hear His voice...

1) Read God's Word. Of course, you have to READ it for this one to work. "Thy word have I hid in my heart." Notice WHO is doing the hiding. YOU. This one is up to YOU. God will give you the interest and desire, if you lack either, and want ~ and ask ~

Him to give it to you, and He will give you the self-discipline, if you lack ~ and ask Him ~ for that. But YOU have to actually DO it.

2) Prayer. This is two-way conversation where we TALK with God; and practice LISTENING. (And that "listening" part, of course, is what we're working on honing here.) "Pour out your longings before Him, for He can help." (Psalms 62:8) Just as with the conversations we have with people, there are a few different angles to prayer. They are:

~ **Giving Thanks** - "I will enter His gates with thanksgiving in my heart..." Having a thankful heart actually opens up the way to getting into God's presence. It makes sense... When I have gone to a lot of trouble to give someone a gift (and I've done NOTHING compared to what GOD has done for us!), and the recipient thanks me for it, my heart immediately opens up to them! This pre-supposed that one's heart is already right with God. If it isn't, then the next angle is necessary, and should be taken care of first...

~ **Repentance** - In the Lord's Prayer it says: "Forgive us our sins..." Be specific as the Holy Spirit reminds you of what you need to ask forgiveness for. Consider this verse: "Who shall stand in God's holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart."

~ **Petition** - This is probably the most common form of

prayer. Even non-Christians do it! This is because our human nature is inclined to ~ and adept at ~ ASKING for things! Here's how you can pray another portion of the Lord's Prayer: "Give us [me] this day our [my] daily bread" ~ which is whatever needs You, Lord, see that I have spiritually, emotionally, physically, health-wise, time-wise, etc." We also pray for family, friends - saved and unsaved - the Body of Christ, etc. as Jesus prayed in the garden: "Keep them from the evil one... May God's joy be fulfilled in them... Keep them in God's Name... Sanctify them in the Truth." Pray favorite Scripture verses over them.

(These ideas are borrowed from my "Commune With Me" Guide.)

3) Worship. This could be considered another aspect of "Prayer," but it's so important that it merits its own separate listing. Worship involves focusing on GOD, not on us. True worship involves both SPIRIT and TRUTH. True worship is getting our eyes OFF of ourselves and ONTO God. And there is something transforming about this!

"But we know this, that when He appears, we will be like Him, for we will see Him as He really is."

(I John 3:2-3)

Notice it is the very *looking* at God that changes us?!?!?! The converse of this is that it's actually a principle that holds true in a negative way. The more we look at ~ and listen to ~

worldly music, television, books, etc. the more we will become like those. So even our seemingly "neutral" choices greatly affect our ability to hear God!

4) Obedience. Think of your own children for a moment... How likely is it that you will be inclined to tell your child something else to do if they haven't followed through on the last thing you asked them to do? John 4:34 reads:

"My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to accomplish His work."

(John 4:34)

Doing God's will is not only very satisfying, it is also FOOD ~ and is nourishment to our "spirit man" ~ which includes our spiritual eardrums!

5) Mentoring/Discipling/Study/Reading. Reading books is actually "mentoring" on a one-way basis. When you read a book, you are actually studying under the person who wrote it. Discipling is mentoring on a two-way basis. Unfortunately, though, we have a great need for mentors. You can be in a church or support group without one person who understands where you're at with homeschooling or your walk with God. This is not a pride thing; it is a pure and simple matter of "like-mindedness." If you do not have a person in your life with whom you can mentor ~ and it can go both ways ~ then God will provide what you need in another way. It may be that He doesn't even want you to have contact with people. After Paul was knocked off his horse with the blinding light, it says

that he "did not confer with flesh and blood" for quite some time.

6) Die to Self. There is some "old" stuff in you ~ in your thinking, your heart, your belief system, your attitudes ~ that God just plain wants to deal a death blow to, but "old" seldom dies a quick, easy death! It takes time. You may need to allow God to take you through a season of drawing close to Him for the purpose of letting Him do the needed work (surgery) in your heart. And THAT is the exact purpose behind my Season of Re-education and Renewing of the Mind!

7) Rest in the Lord. This is a hard one for those who are the "take charge" type, yet it's where the most power lies, and where the most work will be done in us! A perfect example (and the very first one we have from a human) is: How did Adam "hear God" on who he should marry? He went to SLEEP! He didn't look at all! He just slept, and "while he was sleeping God formed the woman... and brought her to him." This "resting" also involves just "resting our case" before the Lord ~ so that He is free(er) to have His way.

8) Delight yourself in the Lord. How does THIS one help hone your ability to hear God?!?! It is where our HEART gets lined up with God's HEART. And it is in this alignment that we are the most receptive to ~ and able to hear ~God's voice. Our worldly desires not only distract us, they also dull our ability to hear God, because they pull our attention and focus away from Him. (Are you beginning to see how much of "hearing God"

has to do with "clearing the path" ~ so that He has a place to access our hearts and lives?!? Or we could use the analogy of "clearing the runway so He has a place to land.)

9) Walk in and by the Spirit. This has to do with not only what we DO and SAY, but how we RESPOND and THINK. It is our connectedness to the Holy Spirit that affects that first response, not just repenting over and over for the same thing. Yes, repenting is good, but walking in and by the Holy Spirit changes us from the inside out. We need to grow up into the full stature of the Lord, not just stay on milk all our lives. (See Marilyn Howshall's article "Walking by the Spirit" for much more in-depth study of this!)

10) Adverse Circumstances. I can pretty much guess that this is the LEAST favorite means of learning to hear God, yet it is one of the most effective! Of course, this isn't something we DO, it's something we YIELD to, and walk with God through. Because this one is SO important, and yet probably the most misunderstood and least talked about in Christianity today, I'm going to camp here for a bit... How you see and respond to this could actually be the very thing that will bring a breakthrough in your ability to hear God...

The idea of God allowing suffering or bringing "negative judgment" upon our lives raises questions that go far beyond the realm of homeschooling. It is not a popular topic within the church today, as suffering is often associated with God's judgment, and we much prefer to live in "grace," me included! But we need to remember this:

"Know then in your heart that, as a man disciplines his son, the Lord your God disciplines you."

(Deut. 8:5)

There are times that an erring child will do as he/she wishes, and the parent will allow him or her to suffer the natural consequences of their choice (s).

But there are other times when this isn't appropriate, and specific action - which I'm sure my child would interpret as "negative judgment" - is necessary. It is actually grace that I do this because allowing the error to continue uncorrected would result down the road in much more serious consequences than merely my "negative judgment" now.

A verse in Isaiah startled and unsettled me when I first read it, and I just chalked it up to "Old Testament thinking." It is Isaiah 30:20, and it starts out: "And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity and water of affliction..." Woah! The Lord gives adversity and affliction?! This certainly didn't fit in with my view of God!

But that's not all! It even goes so far as to call adversity bread, and affliction water! Bread and water! - the two most basic necessities of life, aside from air! Is this verse saying that without adversity and affliction, we will not grow or experience life?! As I have come to know God a little better, it seems to be so to me. However it was the last thing I would have preferred as my flesh cringes at suffering of any kind!

But let's continue on with this verse,

because it does get better: "(And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity and water of affliction,) yet your Teacher will not hide himself anymore, but your eyes shall see your Teacher. And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it' when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left."

Do you realize what this verse is saying?! Are you wanting to hear God more in the day-to-day education of your children, wanting Him to speak clearly to you, telling you which way to turn? According to this verse, this wonderful ability is the end result of having walked through adversity and afflictions!

And this is not merely "old covenant" thinking. God seems to believe in administering appropriate consequences where needed. Look at this verse in 2 Thes.:10: "If anyone will not work, let him not eat." Wow, seems awfully severe - not even allowing someone to eat! And their only sin to was idleness! Fairly "negative judgment," wouldn't you say?

Look at James 1:2-3: "Do not be surprised at the fiery trials (or in another translation it says "Count it all joy when you meet the) fiery trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness." God's goal is not our comfort; it is making sure that we become "perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." (James 1:4) Including an ability to hear His voice.

Before going on, let's define what we mean by "adversity" and "affliction." A few example are: Illness, accidents,

jobs being lost, your house burning down, a child dying, a parent losing their memory or ability to function. The attacks on 9-11. War. ... There is nothing that can happen to me that God does not allow. Look at Job ~ Satan had to get permission from God before he could do anything...

There are also "sin situations" that are extremely painful and difficult to go through... Like a spouse having an affair, living in known sin (like pornography), or wanting a divorce. Or being victimized by crime, such as your home being burglarized, a rape, etc. These were obviously not governed by God. He has given us a free will, and therefore we are all free to sin or walk righteously. But if you are the victim of such a circumstance, God has not abandoned you; He wants to *carry you through it!*

While I believe that God causes affliction, I know it is only for good reason; never to tear us down. We know that "God cannot be tempted with evil and He himself tempts no one..." But this does not say He doesn't bring affliction. In fact, the Word indicates that He does indeed do so! What we all too often fail to understand is that *God's discipline is always out of a heart of pure love for us; never out of exasperation or retaliation..*

I don't think that God causes every "bummer" that comes into our lives, but at the same time I am confident that no matter *what* comes my way, and no matter whose hand it came from ~ God's, the world's (persecution), or my own ~ it is all under God's ultimate direction. Again... *there is nothing that*

can happen to me that He does not allow.

A major aspect of "hearing God's voice" is the ability to recognize who is speaking. "What the enemy intends for evil, God will turn for good" is all I need to know. I just need to walk in relationship with Him! The joy of it - the absolute thrill - is that the more we walk with God through all the hard stuff, and the more we yield to Him on every point and every time He "points out anything He finds in us that makes Him sad," the more capable of hearing discerning His voice we will become!

IN CONCLUSION

It is actually simple: if we just press in to God, get to know Him in the Word, become intimate with Him in worship, obey whatever we hear Him say (entire books have been written on each of these!), we WILL grow in our ability to hear His voice. Simple, though not easy if our "flesh man" is still ruling our lives. THAT ~ dying to our SELF ~ is the hard part, but after that decision is made, it only gets better! Once we "taste and see that the Lord is good" ~ and that hearing and OBEYing His voice is good, the pull toward going back to the world lessens. "More of Jesus; less of me"!

So the best thing I can do is to let God do His work in me, no matter what I go through. He is trustworthy! I really don't have to know *who* is causing *what* in my life, other than to repent from my own sin as the Holy Spirit reveals it. And we can be certain that Satan will not ever convict of sin, but he does play the role of "accuser of the brethren" quite well. So we have to be able to discern whether it is *conviction* or *condemnation* we are experiencing.

"What the enemy intends for evil, God will

turn for good" is all I need to know. I just on every point and every time He "points out; need to walk in relationship with Him! The joy anything He finds in us that makes Him sad," of it - the absolute thrill - is that the more we the more capable of discerning His voice we walk with God through all the good stuff and will become! the hard stuff, and the more we yield to Him



About Barb...



The Shelton's operate a home-based ministry to homeschoolers from their home in Longview, WA, primarily through the books that Barb has written. All of Barb's speaking and writing is on topics of vital interest to burning-out as well as brand new and wanna-be homeschoolers. Barb's resources reflect her "lite" approach to homeschooling that is based on the verse in Matt. 28:11 in which Jesus says, "My yoke is easy, my burden light." With vulnerability, humor, God's Word, Barb's heart is to inspire parents to pursue God's unique plan for the education of their children, and she offers much practical help in doing so. You'll be challenged, irritated, and moved to laugh, cry, think and re-think your views about education, and best of all, get set free or freer) in Jesus! They may be contacted via their website:

<http://www.homeschooloasis.com>



Cindy, Once again, you have packed a lot of encouragement and help into this issue. Thanks for all your efforts to obey God and encourage all of us. I so appreciate you and your work. It has blessed me, helped me, encouraged me and lit a fire under me (that was probably the Holy Spirit, but your words helped it along) more than I can express. This, and I haven't even read the entire thing. I pray for you, your family and the ministry that God has given you often asking him to give back many times the blessing and encouragement that you so freely give to others. Thanks, Brenda



Cindy, I received your package of Homeschooling the Easy Way, and it is just wonderful! In fact, I canceled the kids lessons that day just because I couldn't wait to read it! :) It is so huge that I have barely begun reading it, but it has all been fabulous! Thank you so much for everything you do. You are very generous to bless us all this way. I pray that God has special blessings for you and your family. :) Sandra



Oh and thank you soooooooooooooo much Cindy for the wonderful magazine. I don't know if you planned it this way, but it's a wonderful Christmas present. What a blessing you are and I pray our LORD's richest blessings for you and yours.

Redeem the TIME to Make This Year Tops!

By Cindy Rushton



Ready for a new year? Want to make the most of every minute this year? That is what this article is all about! Here are some quick tips for making the most of every second with your children so you can make this year tops! Here goes...

♥ **SET UP YOUR DAILY LESSONS AROUND YOUR FAMILY LIFE.**

You do not have to imitate a classroom setting in your home. Rather, set up your daily lessons around the way your family functions best. Get to know your children, your own teaching style, and your lifestyle. How can learning be the most natural? What are the best hours for lessons? What environment do your children need to learn best? What type of environment do you need to teach most effectively? Set up your lessons around how your family functions best!

♥ **LEARN AS A FAMILY!**

It is not all up to you! One of the greatest resources that you and I have at our disposal is the interests and relationships within our own families. For example, Matthew is our "history buff." Just sitting around talking as a family can set the atmosphere for the very best history lessons, especially if we pick Matthew's brain. Actually, he loves history so much that if we will just listen to him, we can learn what he knows. No lesson plans. No teacher's manuals. No lesson

preparation. Just relationships! Then, we come to Elisabeth, our walking Science and Art manual! What about your family? Be a family. Take the pressure off of yourself. Get rid of artificial education. Use your greatest resource—the one that God designed from the beginning to provide a REAL education. Learn from one another.

♥ **TAKE TIME NOW TO PLAN...**

Ok. I know! Seem like too much work? Seem to take too much time now? Oh! But the benefits are immeasurable! You can scope out the year to see how much needs to be covered and how you can get it all done. Your children will know what to expect for each day and each subject. You and your children will know when you reach your goals. Sooo, why not take time now to plan out your year. Plan out your goals for this year. Plan out how to implement the various curriculum you want to use. Plan out your daily schedule. Plan out events and studies for the year. You won't be sorry!

♥ **CONSIDER TEACHING ALL-YEAR ROUND.**

From the very beginning, we found that our children just thrived from working steadfastly all year long on lessons. Now, this does not mean that we do not change the pace up throughout the year. In fact, we tend to make fall a time for deep academic pursuits and research along with nature walks (that time of the

year BEGS for us to get out and enjoy the beautiful weather!). Winter begs for more cuddly reading time. Spring demands that we change our pace to include outdoor activities. Summer offers us great field trips and book-time (on the road). Homeschooling all year long gives us the freedom to make use of every season and not let life go by while we focus on merely academics. Instead, we can give our children a full education, making the most of every minute and not losing even one minute!

♥ **BRAINSTORM FOR WAYS TO WORK IN THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS.**

In the early years, I really loved reading aloud to our children. My greatest battle was with the interruptions from life. Inevitably, when I would sit down with a great book and child in each arm, the phone would ring...someone would be at the front door...or an animal would even need something! I really wanted to bring in great literature, but there was a battle waging against that precious time. By accident, we found that the best time for us to read... and read...and read was right before bedtime. Not only were those interruptions under control, but also the children were captive! Think through those things that you want to include in your day. Is there a way to insure success? Brainstorm ways and see if you can find a way to make this year the best!

♥ **SIMPLIFY MEALS...** The toughest thing for me to balance with homeschooling even all of these years later is meal planning and preparation. I have a tendency to get engulfed in cooking OR lessons, but seldom BOTH at the same time. Now, I have no problem with multi-tasking. But, I realized early in our homeschool journey that I could spend all day every day homeschooling and I could spend all day every day in

the kitchen. What I needed was balance. How do ya balance two fulltime jobs? First, simplifying lessons. But, that is not enough. Also, we have to simplify meals. Our way of simplifying meals was to make a plan for easy meals! Here are five things that we do to make meals easy:

Cook in bulk. Actually I call my plan, "Serve and Store." The first years of homeschooling I had a home business of sewing for the public. I would sew one day, cook one day. On the sewing days, we would have leftovers from my cooking day. In other words, I would cook and SERVE on one day...and sew and eat the food that we had STORED on the next day! It was a nice balance, which enabled me to operate a successful sewing business while homeschooling and homemaking! From this, I developed a habit of cooking in bulk that has continued till today. It is easy to just buy double ingredients... usually it is cheaper! I just double my recipes and freeze the extra dish. Yesterday, I had the "fruit" of my labors as we had Lasagna already prepared last week that only needed to be popped in the oven and served with our fresh bread. You can be prepared at all times for those dropping in if you freeze a variety of foods as you cook them! Bulk Cooking redeems the time so you can stay busy with the important things in life...relationships!

Make Your Own Freezer Meals. Same concept, except go ahead and put together a full meal on a microwave dish and freeze for those quick moments that you may need a full meal, but not have time to prepare the whole thing. OH! This also works nice for families with special diets, picky eaters, or

even for those wanting to prepare meals for shut-ins or others needing a touch of ministry.

Crock-pot Cooking. My crock-pot is one of the most priceless treasures in my kitchen. Besides providing meals that are packed with nutrition, my crock-pot allows me to prepare the ingredients quickly in the morning, turn on the crock-pot and leave it going, then end my evening with a great meal!

Nothing beats that! I cook anything in my crock-pot—from my soups and stews to many of my main dishes. Invest in a crock-pot and begin collecting great recipes. You will find a great way to balance homeschooling with managing your busy home.

Make Your Own Monthly Menu. I have a very good friend that has THE BEST plan I have ever seen for planning out her menus. She has ONE monthly menu that she has put together. Everyone knows exactly what to expect for each day of the week for the whole month. Can you imagine how much stress this alleviates in her life—not to mention, how she is building a legacy in her home. Her children KNOW what to expect. Plus, they can easily help Mommy get the meals together, because they know what she does for each meal! Yep! I have decided to simplify my own plans to make

things a bit easier in our home too. Not only does this save our BRAIN, but it also makes things so much easier for shopping (only ONE shopping list—she prepared hers on her computer ONCE and now only goes through checking off what she needs!)...and storage (She only stores what they are eating regularly—she can buy in bulk, but she is not buying anything that is not used each and every week!!!!). See our form in this issue for our Monthly Menu Planner. Of course, you can choose any system that works for you!

Don't forget EASY Meals!

Probably everyone can benefit from this! One thing that has helped me for those inevitable tights that I face almost on a daily basis—at least for one meal—was when I developed a list of our favorite EASY foods. I try to keep all of the

basic ingredients needed for these "quick meals." All I did to develop this was brainstorm through what we choose over and over again. Then, I grouped ours by mealtimes, although we LOVE eating a full breakfast with all of the goodies—biscuits, scrambled eggs with cheese, sausage, ham, bacon, honey—for occasional evening meals! After that, I made a list of what I needed to be sure to keep on hand. Then, I posted the list on the refrigerator and kept a copy in my Meal Management Notebook. All we do now is look at the list, grab the ingredients and devour! EASY! Why not make your



own list too?

What do you think? Easy? Yep, make it easy! Choose whichever ideas will help you to make EASY meals while leaving you time to homeschool the EASY way! Not only will you enjoy meal preparation much, much more, but you will also have more time to enjoy your homeschool journey!

- ♥ **COOP WITH FRIENDS!** One of the best ways to make the most of your time while sharing the burdens of teaching tough subjects with others is to coop. Now, don't skip this point. Coops can bring to mind many different memories because coops are set up so many different ways. Some are set up like Private Schools. Others are just two moms sharing resources, ideas, plans, and abilities. Make it easy. If you have a local support group with great coop activities, make use of the classes. If there is an area of difficulty for you, be sure to use those activities and classes. If you have gifts, consider sharing with your friends who struggle in that area. Share the work with others. You will make the best use of your time while blessing others.
- ♥ **COMBINE SUBJECTS!** Most subjects just come to life when they are taught in the midst of a thematic study. Instead of trying to set aside time in each day or even each week to teach each and every subject, why not learn about those subjects

while learning about a topic? Why not read literature in the midst of your history study? Why not also learn geography while studying that topic? What about finding any copywork or making a homemade book so you cover Language Arts while studying your topic? What about tracing journeys on a map? Adding figures to your timeline? Things will become SO much more do-able if we can find ways to simplify our lessons. Combine those "subjects" into great studies!

- ♥ **THINK OUTSIDE OF THE BOX.** Education is not just at a desk...or at a table. Count everything! Count activities. Count games. Count projects. Count family life. Learning is more than just what is studied in our books during table time. Actually most of what our children retain from their education is taught after the table time is over each day. Think outside of the box—away from the desk!
- ♥ **KEEP LEARNING FRESH AND FUN!** Take "school" outside. Let them build a "fort" and dress up like Davy Crockett. Go for a hike hunting for tracks. Make a tent in the living room. Fill it with cuddly blankets and read a fun book. Get out those instructions for a fun project and make a mess! Take a week to make a cute lapbook using all of those booklets your children have been saving. Don't wait one more day—take time to make learning fresh and fun!



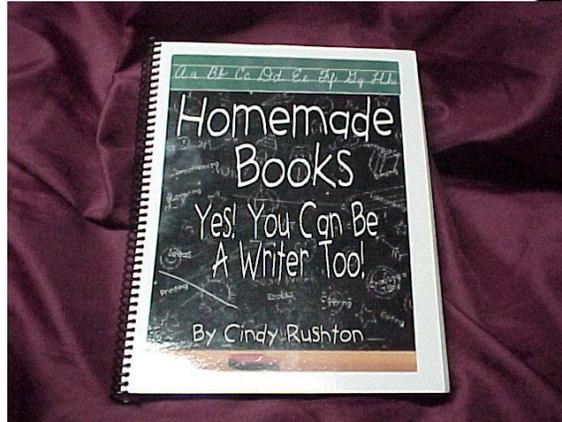
God's plans, like lilies pure and white, unfold.
We must not tear the closed-shut leaves apart.
Time will reveal the calyxes of gold.

Mary Riley Smith

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You will not believe how much is included in this book! Everything...I MEAN EVERYTHING that Cindy knows about creating books is included in this book! Over FIFTY chapters packed FULL of information! There is something here for every writer—student, parent, or professional! Whether your child is a toddler or teen. You will love this

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CHAPTERS INCLUDE...

Come Write with Me; Homemade Books! Yes! YOU Can Be a Writer Too; Why Write Books; 20 Reasons Why YOU (as a Student) Would LOVE Creating Your Own Homemade Books; Ok...But FIRST...I Am

Dealing with a Reluctant, Frustrated, Wore-Out, Extremely Resistant Writer; Slow and Steady!

Understanding the Process of Learning; Where Do I Begin; Step-by-Step From Start to Setup to Selling; Choosing the Perfect Topic; Ideas To Get You Started; Oh! The Final Choice! The Topic For THIS Book; Get a Vision...The Cure for Writer's Block; Let's Try Outlining; Writing Your Heart Out; Making It Great by Proofreading; Taking a Look at Great Books for Ideas; The Parts of a Book—What To Include in a Book; An Easy Guide to Binding Options; What About Illustrations? Ideas To Get You Started; Get Ready to Publish...Creating Your Own Book; Make a Mock Up; Time



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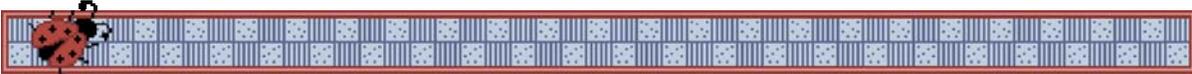
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Quick Tips For the Perpetually Late, Disorganized, Stressed Out Mom!

By Cindy Rushton



Does this SPEAK to you? Nothing is more frustrating than great intentions but failure with the time management, organization, and gentle spirit thing! So, what can REALLY help? Need a bit of hope? Practical ideas? Well, beloved, here are a few tips that have made a world of difference for me:

- ♥ **Be sure to slow down and have a quiet time EACH DAY!** Take time for God to fill YOUR cup each day. Let Him give you HIS peace, order, and best of all, schedule! Take time to hear HIS plans for your day. Throughout the day, listen to His gentle direction. Be sure that you are willing to let go of the things that God wants to prune away. Without this, all else is only a band-aid!
- ♥ **Invest in a Planner!** I am the world's worst at trying to do it all while trying desperately to remember those incredible details that are doomed to slip my brain! I decided to take a long, honest look at the things that were creating chaos. Most often, the biggest culprit was overcommitment or an underestimate of time involved with commitments. Writing down ALL commitments, along with an honest look at the time commitment involved (even going and coming OR planning the details around that commit-

ment!), has made an indescribable impact on my life! Not to mention, another breeder of chaos in my life was constantly looking for information that needed to be in a dependable place like phone numbers, ordering information, etc. Keeping ONE binder with my information included eliminates the chaos, but it does even more! It gives my brain a rest!

- ♥ **Evaluate to find the BEST that God has designed for YOU to do!** Sure, there are many "little things" that must be done to manage our homes, but if you are really struggling with balance, discipline yourself to write down everything that you are doing for a little while. Pray over the importance of each and every thing. Time is so very precious. God gives us everything that we need to do all that He has designed for us to do, but He will not anoint those things that will choke out His best for our lives. So, really pray through...think through...weigh out everything. Listen to God for HIS goals for you. Prune those things that are not in line with His goals for you. Get rid of any time wasters. Prioritize every activity, every day! Combine activities that can be done together to make the most of time. Delegate those things that others can do to help you be a good steward of your

time. Then, make the most of your time doing the very best things that God has designed for you to do!

- ♥ **Write IT down!** Yep! Give your brain a break! This may seem to compound your problem, but trust me this will help more than you know! It is NOT another thing to do! Rather, once things are written down, the work is done FOR you! For example, keeping a calendar of events in your planner will help to alleviate conflicts in your schedule. Blocking off plenty of time for each entry will help you to give yourself enough margin left over for LIFE! I may live less than five miles from downtown, but if there is an appointment there, I KNOW to give myself 30 minutes to get there! Also, I cannot tell you how much my lists from years ago are beginning to really help me! I have lists for school lessons, shopping, traveling, producing the magazines, speaking, etc. I may have to add to my generic list, but I cannot tell you how many times my lists have helped me to be sure that NOTHING was left out or forgotten. Plus, now the planning process is simplified. I just pull out my list, go over the list, add anything that is missing, and get busy! Several of my lists are typed into my computer, ready to print. Talk about EASY planning! Find ways that you can simplify what you are doing—writing it down will probably be one of your first steps too!
- ♥ **Keep your STUFF ready to use!** Whether your planner or your purse or even your Bible/journal for church, get things together and in their special spot, ready to go. I have a tote that includes all of the things that I need for Church. I keep it together, ready to go. Our school books stay in a milk

crate (one for each child), ready to use at the table or to grab for our trips with the business. Everything that we need is ready at all times. My planner stays at my chair, ready to grab to leave the house. So on. Decide on what you need for planning, church, homeschooling, or your business. Get everything together. Find its very best spot for it to be easy to use, but not in the way or forgotten. You will be surprised at how much stress this will alleviate!

- ♥ **Put limits on your day!** For years, I battled the different aspects of my day that tend to become monsters! Funny thing, I have never seen my family life ever become one of those monsters. My sweetheart and my children are so much more patient than my nasty kitchen! Memories will always wait for schoolwork to be completed. Laughter will always let the business monster rant and rage! The best (but most difficult) lesson of my life to date was that if I wanted the legacy that God had planned for me, then I had to diligently guard the different aspects of life. I had to consciously purpose to make memories and build relationships with those I love much, much more than a clean house or thriving business or successful homeschool. A whole day can zoom by just on the internet with the business...or working through our lessons...or even reorganizing a closet. Plus, those things wear me down till I am completely zapped! Oh, and then, I am not the nicest person on earth! (ouch—confessions hurt!) While these things are precious and wonderful in their boundaries, I have to CONSTANTLY place limits to insure that we have a balanced life that makes the most of each day AND builds a legacy.



HSEW is an amazing resource. I was so pleasantly surprised when I received mine. I was showing my family and gushing about it. Thanks so much Cindy! You are amazing! Julie

Let's Set Goals...

By Cindy Rushton



Does this "goal setting" seem too vast...too overwhelming...too formidable to even begin??? Let's make it easy as A, B, C! Ready?

- ♥ **Determine what is your purpose?** What are YOU really called by God to do? Why ARE you homeschooling? What compels you to homeschool your children? God has equipped us to complete all that we are called to do, but He does not commit Himself to anything that He has not called us to do. There are many reasons to homeschool. However, there are many reasons to homeschool that are based on the world's system and not on God's design for the godly homeschool. Want success in this call? Take a good look at your call—your heart's desires—your purpose. Then, you will be ready to set goals that can help you move step-by-step toward the mark. Of course, we cannot even set a goal if we are not aware of our calling or life purpose. Seek the Lord for clarity about what you are here for and why you are to homeschool. Then set goals to reach toward the mark!
- ♥ **Decide which goals need to be set to help move toward your purpose?** Goals actually put you on the path toward reaching your purpose! Goals are the steps we take to work toward the call. The best

way to set goals is to discern the following: What can help you to get where you are going? This year? This month? This week? Today? Pray through these goals. We can use goals to reach toward our purpose and consistently work toward our goals! Does this make any difference? Sure it does! As we continue our journey, we can monitor our progress much easier! When things get a bit frustrating, we can re-evaluate to see if our goals are—reasonable and helping us to reach toward our purpose OR if our goals are just a bit too unreasonable. Goals are the stepping stones toward the high call!

- ♥ **Look at all existing goals.** Are your existing goals helping you reach toward your purpose? How was last year? What have you reached? What can continue to help you? Are there things that need to be eliminated or pruned back to help you reach toward the mark? Are there things that you have been doing that are REALLY helping you more than ever? Keep those things that work and eliminate those things that are a hindrance!

- ♥ **Set goals for this year.** It is NOT too late! So often it is easy to just sail by without making goals OR to think it is TOO late to set goals. Goals must be constantly evaluated and monitored so they can help

us work toward our purpose. I set a priority to look at my goals and keep them in check on a monthly basis (at minimum!). Looking at our goals on a regular basis is the very best way to hear God all along the way! How are you doing at this? Look back over last year...How did you do? Did you meet your goals? Have you set any goals for this year? What are YOUR goals this year? How would you like to grow? What would you like to see or where would you like to be at the end of this year?

♥ **How are you doing this year?** Are you on track? Meeting your goals? What one thing could help you to reach toward your goals? How much more do you want to stretch?

Are you reasonable in your expectations and plans? What works? What doesn't?

♥ **Are you monitoring yourself along the way?** Goals are most commonly missed simply because of not following up! So, how are you doing at this time? Are you where you want to be? If not, how can you make up? Do you even NEED to make up? Have you met your goals? (YEAH!) If so, want higher goals?

Ready? Look at your purpose! Set goals to

help you reach toward your life purpose and GO FOR IT! This journey is full of abundance and life! ENJOY IT all along the way!



Don't know which way to go? Stay snuggled up! Listen to Him! He already had a plan for your child from the foundation of this world. He sees your child completely complete...IN CHRIST! He already sees the end of the journey. But, you must know that He does not want to keep this all to Himself. He wants to share His vision for your child with you. He wants to pour into you a passion for where He is going to take your child and what He is going to do with your child. As you snuggle up to listen to



His plan, His way, He will give you His step-by-step guidance for each and everyone of your needs and each and everyone of the needs of your child. Yes, come to the Father. Snuggle up to Him. Cling to His every Word! Take each step in His way. Let Him carry the burdens. Let Him give you a light and easy burden...rest!

Cindy Rushton
Homeschooling,,,Digging Into All of the Options

My Goals For This Year:



Spiritual Goals:

Academic Goals:

Relationship Goals:

Financial Goals:

Physical Goals:
