

Memories...

What is it that we treasure from our own childhood? What is it that we do not like from our childhood? It is the memories! I remember Mama busy at her sewing machine sewing for me. I remember Daddy holding me close nibbling on my ear and tickling me! I remember the wonderful smells of homemade cookies and goodies that were common in Mama's kitchen. I remember Daddy holding me by my ankles to let me walk on the ceiling! I remember that special morning of my wedding day when I got in the bed with Mama much too nervous with excitement to sleep but needing those last few moments as Mama's little girl. I remember that look on Daddy's face right before he took me down the aisle to become Mrs. Harold E. Rushton. That look of love and "I can't believe my baby's grown up!"

There are so many more wonderful memories with my parents, but also there are those from my relationship with Harold, my dear husband. Memories like the moment our eyes first met...our first date with the flat tire on "Old Bay," the road EVERYONE "cruised!" There was that very first meal that Harold cooked for me, hamburgers and water... completely precious! The memory of those sunsets we watched...eating Skittles by the spillway...the night Harold asked me to be his wife...our wedding day when we pledged ourselves to one another for the rest of our lives...our honeymoon when we got so sunburned on the beach that we couldn't hug each other without pain for weeks...the day we had the terrific news that we would be parents of a precious baby...the day we gave birth to our precious Matthew...the precious hours I spent nursing my gift from God. Oh, the memories of our wars to see whose name Matthew would say first...the days of holding that tiny hand as he tried to walk... Matthew's second birthday when I cried all afternoon because my baby was getting to be a big boy...the day when we did that home pregnancy test, which let us know that Elisabeth was on her way...that first moment of looking into her precious face...hearing Elisabeth's little giggles...watching Matthew "baby-sit" his little sissy in the big rocking chair while Mommy vacuumed or did dishes...watching the children have "adventures" during times when Matthew would have been in public school... our family catching our first goats (which should have been filmed for television!!)... the simple tea times...the holidays...the picnics...our "cuddle-cuddle times" (time cuddled up reading books)...our evening walks...our game nights...our bike rides...on and on... These are our special memories, the gifts that we are giving not only to ourselves, but also to our children.

Oh...that I could keep my perspective clear of the clutter and worry that steals and kills our time that could be devoted to making special memories. The little things **are** what really count. Yes, the little things like the smells of the busy kitchen...the moments of giggles...the adventures of travels far and wide together through great literature...the traditions...every minute of life together!

The simple lesson that God keeps sending me is to take time to enjoy family...to create memories of home which are precious, special, and, most of all, full of happiness. The

memories build our homes God's way. God intends for our homes to be different from the homes of the world where children are an inconvenience, Mom and Dad are too busy to take time with the kids or even one another, where there is continual strife, and, worst of all, where there are more sad memories than good, happy memories.

Even in my home, I struggle with the urgent versus the important. The urgent telephone versus the important time with my family. The urgent scope and sequence versus the important teachable moments. The urgent errands versus the slow pace children flourish in. The urgent list of "To Do's" versus the important time to do what GOD WILLS! The urgent press from the world versus the important gift of building memories.

As we see our children are growing up so quickly, I want to be sure that I am really savoring each moment. I want to be sure that their thoughts of home will bring back many, many memories of happy days...of lots of love...of joy throughout our family life. I want for them to carry into their own homes a precious gift from Mom and Dad. What is it that precious gift that I want to give to my family? It is the gift of great memories!

Evaluation...What Can Make Homeschooling Great?

We all began homeschooling with high-hopes. Now since we are in the midst of all of the busy demands of teaching and training our treasures, we need to take an occasional look back. Check to see what has been done, what is yet to be done, what can help us get there, and what must be eliminated in order to help us reach our goals. From the many years of selling homeschool curriculum, I can assure you that there are several peak times for changes in the homeschool. Often, those changes are not really as a result of the curriculum or approach not working. It is often from several other factors. Let's take a look at some of these factors and some solutions for keeping us on track...

Double-mindedness...

Double-mindedness... Last year, our family traveled to several homeschool conventions selling curriculum for another homeschool family. We were in a lull because the families were listening to one of the keynote addresses, so I was walking around. I love to drool over books at the curriculum fairs. Normally I spend my profits from selling books on my always very LONG wish list!

I came back to my table and told my husband that this was the first time I had ever walked around and NOT felt that I wanted anything. NOW, he said it was because I already have one of each! Hehe! But, it was not that at all. I knew from the bottom of my heart that what we were actually doing was working in all areas of learning...it was all fitting together. I was not enticed in the least by the latest and newest "best product." I could in faith focus on what God was leading me to do with my children without feeling any pull from the world!

It is here that many moms find a lot of confusion as they go to curriculum fairs or as they talk with their friends! Even if they know what they really want, they are afraid that they will miss something wonderful that their children will just need to know in life! If this is you, then RELAX! God knew what He was doing when He blessed you with your children! He knew your gifts, talents, and interests! Likewise, He blessed you with children who needed to be disciplined by only you! Follow Him and all will fit together! You simply cannot be following Him and the world at the same time!

Peer Pressure...

Ever went to a Curriculum Fair or Support Group meeting and watched what happens among the moms? I noticed as we sold curriculum that many moms would be real open and listen as I shared our purpose, goals, and how we meet those using our curriculum. They would share that their purpose and goals were the same. BUT, something happened with many of them. They would go get their friends. Their friends would listen and look. Then, they would most of the time say something about what everybody else in their area

was doing this year! ???? The poor moms would wilt and turn away from what they liked! Is this not adult peer pressure?

My challenge to all of you is for you to do what you do because God leads you. Listen to His gentle, quiet voice. Listen to your husband and the direction that God gives him! Chances are that God's Will for your family will not come packaged in a big, splashy curriculum designed to fit all your needs and answer all your problems. God wants us to pull apart and look at where He is leading our children. To let His goals become our goals. To follow Him in spite of what the crowd does. As we look to God alone, all will begin to work together and we will be able to have that same peace about our Homeschools that we feel in other areas of our lives.

Structure...

Structure...This is a biggy with homeschool moms. They are constantly looking to their curriculum or their children to give structure when there is a much bigger problem at hand. There is first of all no way that our children will learn structure and discipline without our training them in this area! We must BE what we want them to BECOME. As for the curriculum, it is really funny that we also want our tools to make us something that we are not!

We must do several things in order to have real structure in our homes. The first is to set our goals according to the goals that God has for our family ALONE! We need to get a vision of which way He wants each of our children to go! To get a vision of what God wants in the lives of our children will take much prayer and really taking a good look at the natural gifts and bents of our children. Once we get a vision of what God wants for each of our children, then we can set worthy goals for getting there! Then, we can choose our curriculum, our schedule, and our lifestyle for reaching those goals! This is what gives real structure to the home! Until we do this soul searching, we will be wavering around on the whims of all the differing opinions!

The next way to really have structure is the most difficult! It is going to require that we actually do some pruning. It seems that everywhere I turn right now I am learning more and more about how vital it is to prune in our lives instead of only cutting back! We may cut back in our life to just the best, but in order to produce a bigger, more beautiful fruit we must prune. I read recently that satan would love for us to be busy doing lots of good things. The reason is that they are distracting us from doing the very best thing...God's purpose for our lives! Real pruning will hurt! It will hurt because it involves cutting back some of the fruit we are producing in order to get a better, bigger, greater fruit in the end. Yes...most of what we do IS great and IS producing fruit for the Kingdom of God, but what could be PRUNED to bear a better, bigger, greater fruit for the Kingdom of God? Could it be that Bible study that you go to each week, that curriculum that we love, that lesson you run to each week, those extra trips to town, leading that support group or Sunday School Class? If we are to really produce the fruit that is God's best, we must prune those areas that are just producing lots of second best fruit.

Another way to have the structure that we so desire is to enter into a lifestyle that is slow and easy. Remember that Scripture in Genesis 33:13-14 where Jacob and Esau met. This is a beautiful Scripture to me. I often get to thinking while I evaluate our home life about this as my measuring stick for what I do. Jacob represents walking in the Spirit and Esau represents walking in the Flesh. This Scripture is where the Flesh and the Spirit meet. Of course, Jacob was offered a walk with the flesh...the world, what did he do? His response should be the response of the homeschooling parent...here it is, "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 unto Seir."

What about you? Are you choosing to go along with the world or are you letting the world go on while you lead softly? Is your pace one in which the children will endure...or better yet, blossom into better, bigger, greater fruit? No curriculum can give this to you...it takes having God's vision, pruning away the good for the best, and dedicating yourself to a slow and easy lifestyle!

Need for Change...

Need for Change...This is another biggy. When I said that this was the biggy, it was because so many moms mistake the need for a change of pace for a need to change their whole approach to life or schooling. Notice this hazard and realize your need for a change of pace!

What we really need is actually a change of pace. Every year we begin very structured with lots of emphasis on the 3R's...this shifts pace in the winter when we loosen up for more time cuddled up with read alouds. This does not stop the 3R's...it just eases up because the structure is set. Most of the work during this time of year begins to move into practice mode...so we do not have to spend as much effort explaining things and we can move right on in to the fun part...the READING! My spirit actually needs this change of pace. It seems like the change of pace actually does correspond with the seasons of the year. Winter seems just perfect for lots of read alouds. Spring is great for nature studies and reading out of doors at the park or on hikes. As we begin our schoolwork during those terribly hot days of Summer, we tend to find ourselves busy in the house canning foods away for the rest of the year and focusing on all of our busy school work when not much can be done comfortably outside. Fall always brings us into a creative time when we put down many of the books to create gifts and gear up for the holidays. The seasons seem to give the needed change of pace that we need without the insecurity of changing our entire lifestyle or approach to learning!

This Season of Evaluation...

During this time of evaluation, take a good look at your home. See if you are going the direction that God wants. Turn your heart to developing relationships in your homeschool. Slow down. Enjoy these days of training your treasures. As you do, you will find real delight in homeschooling!

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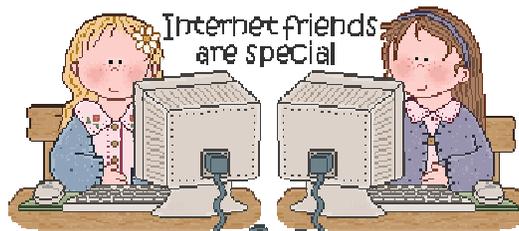
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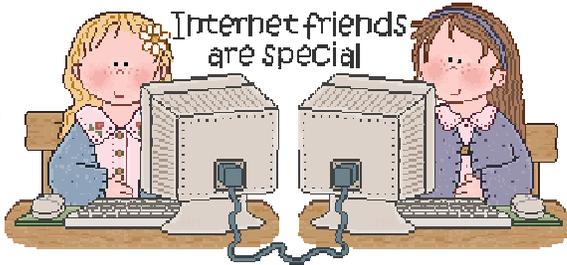
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With Love, The Rushtons

Time For Tea Reprint Book Articles From Volumes 1 and 2

Welcome to *Time for Tea Magazine!* *Time for Tea* features articles written for the purpose of ministering to YOUR heart! Articles range from topics covering developing a closer walk with the Heavenly Father to ministering to the heart of your husband to discipling our children with a Godly heritage to ideas for homemaking from the heart to homeschooling in the easy Charlotte Mason Style to becoming a vessel that God can use! Each issue is jam-packed with timely articles that are designed to give you a time for renewing your mind and refreshing your spirit during your Time for Tea!

Time for Tea Magazine is published by Rushton Family Ministries. The Rushtons are a Christian Family with a contagious passion for God. Cindy-- Christian wife, mother, writer and speaker--combines this passion with her gifts of encouragement and Biblical teaching that are SURE to minister to you all throughout this book

As you devour this volume, you will see why Cindy has become such a favorite speaker and writer of so many. Her sincerity and enthusiasm have been used by God at mom's meetings, women's conferences, retreats, and conventions across our country. Her practical writing has appeared in her own periodicals, *Time for Tea* (now in its eighth year) and *Homeschooling The Easy Way*, countless newsletters around the world, and numerous magazines such as *Homeschool Digest*, *Teaching Home Magazine*, *Homeschooling Today*, *Coming Home Magazine*, *Good Life and Good Literature*, *Homeschool Gazette*, and *Sarah's Promise*.

Cindy is the best selling author of books such as *Ministering to the Heart of Your Child*, *The Hidden Woman of the Heart Bible Study*, *A Cup of Tea???*, *Inspiring Your Children Toward Greatness Using Great Literature*, *Language Arts... The Easy Way*, *Notebooking! YES! You Can Be A Binder Queen Too*, *Nature Study... The Easy Way*, *CHRIST-Centered Christmas*, *A Charlotte Mason Primer*, *The Never-ending Rushton Reading List*, *Homeschooling... Digging Into ALL of the Options*, *Step by Step Through Daniel*, *Homeschooling... YES! You Can Do It*, and *Homeschooling... The Easy Way*.



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