

Time for Tea Reprint Book Volume 4

applied to tea leaves, or coffee, or hot chocolate, it becomes ready for our consumption...for use.

The flame of the fire represents life. Fire can consume and burn up. But it is also used in the refining process. Our life, as it goes through various triumphs, trials, and even tragedies is all a process of God drawing us to Himself. Our lives are what He uses to show the world Jesus. How we react to life is what others are looking at. Is it **“Christ in me, the hope of glory?”** If there is no fire underneath the tea-kettle, there is no hot water to be poured out to fill the cups of those He brings along our path.

Tea For Me...

I would like to encourage you to put what I call *“Tea for Me”* into your life. As a woman, I find myself so wanting to do for others. Many times because I like “to do,” I take on and go forth without really taking care of myself. Or better yet, I set forth trying to fill the cups of others without even asking the Lord if I am the one He wants to use to fill them.

You have heard it said many times, *“If mom (wife, woman) does not take care of herself, who will?”* Of course, they are referring to the physical and emotional side. I am referring to the spiritual side. *Tea for Me*, simply means that whatever time of day we may arise our thoughts are first focused on Him. My goal each day before I’m even out of the bed is to quote this Scripture verse, *“This is the day the Lord has made. I will rejoice and be glad in it.”* Then, I try to remember it is a present, a gift, to me. God wants for me to use it wisely. My thoughts are placed in the acknowledgment that God is in control.

In my journal I came across this quote (Unfortunately, I do not know who wrote it), *“This is the beginning of a new day. You have been given this day to use as you will. You can waste it or use it for good. What you do today is important because you are exchanging a day of your life for it. When tomorrow comes, this day will be gone forever; in its place is something that you have left behind...let it be something good.”*

Time For A Filling??

You and I are like tea-kettles. We all come in different sizes, shapes, and colors. We even have name brands, such as wife, mother, daughter, mentor, and friend. We need to be daily filled with the living water. This comes only by a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Ask God to give you a desire to know Him more. Read and study God’s Word. For some of us this sounds too easy, to be filled with the living water should require digging a well or fetching water from the creek, yet Jesus just tells us to come and He will give us the water.

I want to encourage you to incorporate *Tea for Me* into your morning routine. You might want to make a *Prayer Basket*. Be creative and decorate it with your specific tastes. Start with placing your Bible, a daily devotional, or a Bible Study Workbook in it. You might add a bunch of silk flowers, a small box of tissues, ink pen, and note cards. Of course, don’t forget our cup of tea or coffee, hot chocolate, or juice. Allow yourself to be filled with the living water.

When you fix your cup of tea, use your tea-kettle as a reminder to you, not just to be pouring, but also to be filled. Protect your moments alone with Him. Like the tea-kettle, you will be whistling like never before, and even boiling over. Yes, Lord, I’m ready, available, and willing to be a servant to fill the cups of others from *my* tea-kettle.

Happy steeping and blessings, Lady LauraC



Letters From The Fall 1999 Issue...

Dear Cindy,

Bless you for your book *Language Arts...The EASY Way!* Until June, we were going along in our homeschooling with the “school in a box” traditional approach. At our June homeschool convention, the Lord began to lead me to trust Him—not a curriculum. He used the Quine’s catalog greatly—after reading it, I *knew* that I must pursue this gentler way of Miss Mason’s methods. Another friend, who had heard my grumbling about lack of delight and joy in our learning, had been following Miss Mason’s recommendations, and praying for me for 2 years. When I came to her, she gave me some materials. Then, another homeschooling friend at church loaned me three books—one was your *very* helpful book on Language Arts. We began copybooks and nature books this August, but I was still uncertain about the “hows” of this new way. Your book was used greatly in my life-Praise God! Thank you for all of it. *Going a New Way!*

Hi Cindy,

I just wanted you to know that the Lord answered my prayer about how to get my son more interested in enjoying being outdoors for long periods of time. In your book *Nature Study...The Easy Way*, you mentioned that whatever our passion is, that will be our children's passion also. That hit the nail on the head for me. I have been sitting outside reading while my son was playing outside. But that wasn't enough. As I take a more active role in observing and enjoying nature, he will too. God bless you, *Found My Answer!*

Dear Cindy,

It's been a while since I've emailed you. Much change has taken place, mostly good. I've been battling with trying to maintain some sort of "normalcy" while homeschooling my almost 12 (Katie) and 9 (Abbey) yr old daughters, in the midst of Abbey's diabetes care and ADD symptoms. It's been wild but God is faithful. And we've moved from Canton, MS to Covington, LA (my parents home) in Feb., and then, from there to our own home, here, in Independence, LA in June.

Quite a while back, (I don't remember how long ago), I bought your book, *Language Arts... The Easy Way*. After reading it, I thought, "*this is too time consuming. I'll never be able to fit this in our schedule.*" So, instead of trying to do the copywork, I bought *Learning Language Arts Through Literature* and started Katie on it. We liked it OK but, somewhere along the way, I started feeling like we were just filling workbook pages. Sound familiar? This Charlotte Mason stuff, although it seemed right in theory, just didn't appeal to my teaching style right away. Meanwhile, Abbey, the ADD/diabetic, has been going through a series of SRA/McGraw Hill books, since she's learned how to read, to help her with her thinking/comprehension skills. She's made much progress with the workbooks, although the stories in the readers are really dumb! But it saddened me that she wasn't doing much creative writing or copywork.

Well, after praying about our homeschool recently, I felt impressed to "regroup", one more time. I prayed, "*Lord, you know what we're dealing with here. Show us the way to go AND how to make it work and fit in our schedule.*"

I took Katie off LLATL and started having her write short essays, choosing her own topics, which she absolutely loves to do. (She's been writing stories since she was 5.) And I started both girls on

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Simply Grammar, working through it together, orally. They've been enjoying that too. The latest change has been to start Abbey doing copywork, in addition to her SRA books. With her being ADD, she normally hates when I assign written work. I said, "God, you have to give me a plan that will cause her to enjoy her writing, keep her interest up, and cause her to work neatly and be proud of her work."

This is the plan that the Lord gave us for Abbey's copywork: Mon- Scripture; Tues-poetry (her favorite); Wed- prayers (from *Prayers That Avail Much*, on prayers for ADD children to pray); Thurs-literature passage or quote; Fri- Scripture

If I tell you she absolutely loves doing her copywork, it would be an understatement! Today she wanted to copy a passage from *The Wizard of Oz*, one of her favorite books. She copied a passage near the end of the story where Glinda tells Dorothy, "If you had known their power (Dorothy's silver shoes) you could have gone back to your Aunt Em the very first day you came to this country." Profound Scriptural principle!

Just wanted to share what changes we've made to date. Homeschooling is a never ending process, isn't it? We've been at it for 10 1/2 yrs now. I'm wondering if I should have Katie do copywork also or just let her continue with her essays?

Meanwhile, I'm reading through your book on Language Arts, AGAIN, and reading *Charlotte Mason's Companion*, for the first time. This is a new way for me to think about educating my children, teaching them how to learn as a lifestyle, actually enjoy learning! I don't know where we'll go from here, if this is something we can continue through "high school" level learning. I'm not real sure how to do record keeping with this style of learning. I fumble terribly with the record keeping, trying to figure out how to keep it simple. Is there a good book to use as a record keeping resource?

Please let me know if you have any other books written, what they're about and their cost. Also need to know how to subscribe to your newsletter and any others that would help us get going in this new lifestyle of learning.

We seem to find ourselves living in areas where all the homeschoolers are in the textbook mode. We had that problem in MS and still again here. It's so hard to stay encouraged with what we feel God is showing us to walk in. You are a blessing. *A Fellow Pilgrim*

From the Rushtons...

Hi! It is so wonderful to hear from you! Have you been busy or what? I am glad to see you getting settled in! I can't wait to see you again!

Thanks for sharing your story. I know that it will be a blessing for others. Yes, I KNOW that it seems to be harder to teach with a Simplified Approach to REAL Learning when you are first looking into it, but it gets easier as the habits are established. Not to mention, how faithful God is each step of the way to show you EXACTLY what you need to do and when! The hardest part is TRUSTING GOD, wouldn't you say?

You were asking about what to do with Katie's writing. It seems to me that she is ready to direct more of her own studies. This will ease her into Self-Education, which is the goal we all want for our children. You could encourage her to vary her writing to give a break...no one would want to write creative stories EVERY DAY. To become a great writer, one needs to write every day. On the days that she is drawing a blank, those are days for Copywork.

You were mentioning how well that Abbey has taken to Copywork and how dull that the SRA lessons were. One thing that we are finding is that Copywork and Read Alouds REALLY give them more INPUT to help with the OUTPUT needed for good writing. She sounds ready for REAL, living books. They will really challenge her to continue to think. There is no greater help for comprehension difficulties. Elisabeth is enjoying reading from the Bible each day. I really do believe that it is the greatest reader we can use with our little ones! Abbey's Copywork will probably help with her comprehension and delight in her studies as well. Elisabeth is now on the lookout for great quotes for her Copywork lessons. It is neat to see her take a delight in her work. All that plodding helped!

You were asking about help for YOU as you are re-educating yourself about how to implement a

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Lifestyle of Learning in your home. There are so many wonderful resources. You may want to be on the lookout for writing by Charlotte Mason, Susan Schaeffer Macaulay, Sally Clarkson, Catherine Levison, Marilyn Howshall, and Barb Shelton...just to name a few! We try to write all of our books from this perspective, so our prayer is that our books/newsletter will also be a source you can turn to for help and encouragement!

Ohhh, for record keeping. Keep it simple! We use our children's Notebooks as our most detailed accounts of the learning that is taking place in our home. There are collections of their studies, narrations, sketches, original writing, etc. all contained in each of their Notebooks.

As for me, I keep a spiral bound journal with a daily log of what we do. Some of my friends keep a weekly log and find this much easier for them. I prefer a daily log because it is sooo easy to forget what we are doing!

We also keep a log of books read. I am praying that this will become more of a Notebook PER child as they get older. I would like for them to keep reviews of each of the books that they read. Wouldn't that be a treasure??

Whatever you do, make it YOURS! That is the only way to SIMPLIFY your homeschool so that you can follow God most effectively!

Well, take care and KEEP in touch! Love, Cindy

Dearest Cindy,

I love your *sweet* voice!!! Thank you for these tapes!! Your'e such a tremendous blessing!! May God strengthen you for the ministry first to your family and home and then to those of us who have been touched because you said, "Yes, LORD!!" ☺☺ Love you!

The Lord bless you and keep you and make His face to shine on you...and give you peace!

Cindy,

Thanks for sending *Language Arts...The Easy Way!* God knew all along that this book would be for our family. He is faithful!

From the day I emailed you I had not ceased to pray that God would continue to order my steps in this new way of teaching.

As the days passed God continued to confirm His will for us by placing the needed answers to questions that I had in my path. My excitement grew.

Every evening my husband would come in the door looking forward to me sharing with him about the new information I'd found. It was his desire to have us learn this way from the start. He just couldn't put a name to it. I wanted this in my spirit. but I didn't know where to start nor how to do it. The Lord answered our prayers.

I started to implement some of the new ideas. The children took to them like ducks to water! My husband has been so pleased with what he has seen. It's only a little. We're just starting, but we have *vision!*

The day finally came when your book arrived in the mail. I remember praying that particular morning. I talked to my Heavenly Father saying, "*Lord, You have provided me with the information that I've desired thus far. I am sure now that this is Your leading. I have only one more unanswered desire before You concerning this. You know Lord, it's Cindy Rushton's book. I know that You will answer this prayer also in Your perfect timing, when You are ready and when I am ready. Thank You for teaching me patience, Amen.*" I left home that day on an errand. I left hoping that God in His mercy would allow the book to arrive while I was away. I remember thinking, boy, this would be a good "*Mother's break in the bathtub*" treat for me tonight.

If you have not already guessed the answer to my ending, God sent the book! When I got home, my husband handed me a beautiful (even bitter things taste sweet to a hungry man ☺) brown envelope with the return address of Rushton Family Ministries! I thanked my Heavenly Father, carefully opened up the book, closed my eyes, said a humble "*Lord, let me know if this book is or is not for us,*" pulled out

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the book, opened it, and began to read.

It didn't take twenty minutes before I knew that God had ordained this time for our paths to cross. I knew that God meant for your book to become part of our household library and for the spirit of the book to become a part of our lives.

This book is meant for me! God is using your words for His glory! He is ministering to my spirit. I hear an overwhelming, "Yes, Lord" ringing in my soul. I hear myself saying, "Yes, Lord, I will, my children will, our family will... for Your glory."

May God continue to bless your family and your ministry for His glory. Pray for my success in this new way of teaching. *Seeking HIM!*

From the Rushtons...

As I read your letter, tears flooded over me! This is such an affirmation of where God wanted for us to be and His Work He has wanted to do in our family!

This year has already been a year of tremendous growth. Did I mention in my article that I tend to resist growth and change? This is ME!

I really appreciate your SEEING that God was the One Who controlled every aspect of bringing LAEW to you in your moment of need! He prepared YOU, your family, and took care of every minute of my days to bring it to you at the moment HE had an appointment with YOU! I love it!

Growth of our ministry has been hard! This is JUST a glimmer of what God is up to here! Yes, we have been busily working our fingers to the bone getting orders ready and out. There have been MANY days of limited rest...and our relationships were developed over comb-binding...not my ideal picture of relationships over TEA!

I am so grateful for those who God has brought beside me to teach me how we are to keep-on-keeping-on as we grow! Yes, orders are sadly taking longer during this season of our lives...the newsletter has had to grow to a quarterly...and we no longer return email/calls just checking on orders (we just check on them to BE sure we have them in the process! ☺). But, we are so thankful that God is faithfully showing us each day how we can balance this new colicky baby (the ministry that would LOVE to dominate our home!) into our already busy lives!

Thanks for letting me see a picture of how God is using the delays that tend to frustrate me and discourage my heart to teach YOU and others about waiting UPON HIM! Ohhh, if we ever depend upon a PERSON, they will fail us! I can't help but to fail you all! But, I know a GOD Who never fails and sincerely wants to draw you in to teach you all you will ever need to know about training your little treasures and discipling them for HIM! Continue to seek HIM in all! Wait upon HIM! You will never go wrong! Blessings!

Hi Cindy,

It was so good to talk to you. I'm excited that God is using the **Renewed Balance** to get your hormones balanced. I've enclosed two more books (small ones) that will encourage you. Nutrition has become a point of interest and learning around our home in the last 3 years...

I got my tapes and books. It was like Christmas. I found myself wanting to hide and read. I finished the Nature Study book and I'm half-way through the Language Arts book. They are great! I listened to tape #1 **Revival** (I missed the first and last session). I needed it. Earlier today God showed me that I needed to spend some one-on-one time with my oldest daughter, Melissa, who turned 8 years old in May. She has gotten a bad attitude about doing things when asked (always asking why me or why can't so and so do it) and fussing with her brothers and sisters. Any words of wisdom? On the tape, you talked about Elisabeth. This sounded like a good place to start.

Pray for me as I'm organizing our home and school year. Listening to your tapes and reading your books have been a blessing to me. Pray for our family as we seek a church home. We've been looking and visiting for several months.

I thank God for allowing us to be friends. You are heaven sent.

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Tell Matthew that I'm looking forward to reading his article on the Civil War.

When you have a minute, I would love to hear from you. How can I pray for you and your family? I'm praying God will bless you with an addition to your family. Relax—In His time all things are possible. *Under His Wings*

From The Rushtons...

Hi! Thanks for your note! I enjoyed our chat...as always! I hope you like the new format of Time for Tea! We will have lots of articles upcoming about nutrition and health! I am excited!

I have been praying for the books and tapes to be a blessing! Thanks for encouraging me!

It is funny to read back over your note and see how God is so faithful to meet us at the very point we surrender. He has been doing a great work in my relationship with Elisabeth. As I shared, she is NINE! So much like me...*so much* that I would like to HELP her avoid sooo much sorrow and frustrations along the way! ☺God began to convict me about developing a deeper relationship with her. He is so faithful to not just convict, but to show us the way all along the way! He has done just that. He showed me the importance of becoming her Chief Encourager. One way He showed me this was through Harold.

I was whining one day about my frustrations with Elisabeth. Harold told me that it was just because she was JUST like me. Then, he added that he liked her JUST like that! WOW! Conviction came all over me! I was trying to help her...but help her to become something she just simply is not. God used this to show me that my role is to encourage her AS SHE IS. Love her just like HE made her to be...not try to re-shape her into something that I wanted!

Another thing that God showed me was that Elisabeth needed great sympathy. She is right now the youngest of our family. Everyone else LOVES to read and write and learn. She was still struggling with these very things that she wanted so badly to do, yet was still having to learn. It is so hard to learn these "basics" that we have come to just KNOW. She needed more sympathy through these struggles that she was facing.

Another lesson that we learned not to long ago was that she was needing for us to have FAITH in her. We were at a conference one weekend. Harold wanted to go look at the local motorcycle dealership. He decided to take Elisabeth with him and leave Matthew with me. She got out in the hall, looked up at him and said, "*I know...I know what this means.*" Harold looked at her puzzled. She continued, "*I know...you are afraid that I won't behave...that I will get in trouble if you leave me...*" Harold told me this in tears. It really got to me as well. All children need to KNOW that we believe in them...that we can count on them...that we have FAITH in them! They will live out just exactly what we expect for them to become. If we think that they are stupid...they will act that way. If we think that they are priceless...they will have a completely different behaviour.

Just as much is expected of us as God calls us into this awesome role as a parent, so much can be expected of these precious treasures!

Matthew was telling me about a child he was playing with the other day. He said that the little boy was glued to his side every step of the way. He really admired him. As they were playing, the little boy said, "*I wish my mom COULD trust me with guns and knives like she does YOU.*" He had such a disappointment...and he lived like it as well!

We decided that we never wanted for ANY of our children to think that we did not have faith in them with ANY aspect of life. This has been making a REAL difference in Elisabeth's countenance!

One last thing that we have been doing that is showing fruit is really taking time one-on-one with each of our children. We are BOTH doing this! Yes, we homeschool...and have homeschooled for Eight Years...but, we are finding that it is way to easy to get into the same old patterns with little time one-on-one for REAL deep conversations. I am not talking about some set time of the week for a "date" with our children...I am talking about taking little moments *eye to eye* all along the way for REAL conversation...for REAL eye-contact...for REAL heart-to-heart! It may be while peeling potatoes in the kitchen...or while grilling the burgers outside...or while waiting on everyone to get to the dinner table...or while getting dressed. These moments snagged here and there REALLY make a difference. They are

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little moments that really communicate, “*I love you and WANT to know you!*”

I have been praying for you...you can count on continued prayers! You were asking me about our need for prayer. YES! KEEP PRAYING FOR US! We are continuing to travel and need your prayers as we are on the road AND for our conferences. Pray that God will be there as our Teacher and that He will work in each and every life and heart! I REALLY appreciate your intercession! I have ended up dividing my book, *Homeschooling...YES! You CAN Do It*, that I have been working on into THREE BOOKS! We have used the part on REAL Education in our book *A Charlotte Mason Primer* and we will be finishing the other two over our Winter Break! PLEASE, pray as I finish them!

Oh, hope you enjoy Matthew’s section this month. He has more to come in upcoming issues. He was hoping that this would bless you! Enjoy!

Letters From The Winter 2000 Issue...

Dear Cindy,

My 6yo is practicing handwriting with a workbook that uses Scripture. We are soon going to start putting words to a book she is illustrating. She is very gifted in drawing. Do you use the lined paper that has the typical solid/dotted paper or worksheets? Also, when they are beginning to learn to write do you follow all of the handwriting rules of technique? I want to jump into copywork but I need to teach her how to write first! What did you do with your children?

Next, did you use a specific curriculum to teach reading? Would love your thoughts!

Hi!

I SURE hope that this is not too late in coming. One of the greatest things about Copywork is that you CAN teach your children how to write while they begin their collections of great Bible verses and quotes.

When we began teaching our children at home, I had no idea that there was such a simple way to teach handwriting or language. We bought the entire *Italic Handwriting Series*. While it had lots of help, I found that my children could write beautifully in the workbooks, but could not take that skill into their work or play. The greatest improvement came when I threw away the workbooks and began the simple discipline of Copywork. Since I already had a teacher's manual for teaching Italic Handwriting, we just refer to it when we have questions...such as how to form a letter or join letters, etc.

Since you are beginning to teach your blessing, you will be learning any way that you choose to go. Why not use the teacher's manual to help you with your letter formation, then copy the passage for her the way you want for it to be copied. Then, she can make a nice copy of something meaningful for her notebook while she is learning the basics of penmanship.

When making books, I would highly suggest letting her illustrate her book by drawing or painting on cardstock white paper. You can let her write out her passage for each page on lined paper. Yes, I do let my children write their passage on paper appropriate for their age. I prefer original work to textbooks simply because it means so much more to them. Now, in the early years, so much is mechanical because they do not understand what they are writing. Because of this, I do not believe that you will make a BIG mistake by using a Handwriting Curriculum...but, you may want to consider whether your child might enjoy making their "own" notebooks full of collections of their favorite quotes, Bible Verses, or poems even while they are that young.

Back to what we do for our books....When my children copy their work, we cut out their words with our Scrapbooking scissors and templates. Then, they glue those words onto the page with their illustrations.

The reason that we do this is because it is soooo frustrating for children to work real hard on a page writing their best work to only mess up with their illustration...or to mess up their writing on a page that they are proud of illustrating. By cutting out the words just like we do for Scrapbooking, we can let them use their best art for their best printing. LESS STRESS!

After we finish all of our pages, we keep the original and make color copies for grandparents and friends. We have the copies comb bound to make the books much like "Mommy's." You can have this done at your local Office Max/Office Depot. There are no words to express how special it is for a child to give their grandparents THEIR OWN book!

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You mentioned that you wanted to jump into Copywork, but you need to teach her to write first. I did want to share with you that up until just recently children were taught how to write *through* Copywork. Even the handwriting books that are available have Copywork as their means for teaching letter formation. The difference that you will find is WHAT is copied. Just a row of letters or a motto? Just a new number or a verse? I would recommend buying a good teacher's manual to help you with the formation of letters, but do not be afraid of trusting Copywork to give them the practice that they need to learn to write correctly.

As for teaching reading, my greatest help for both of my children has been in the books by Ruth Beechick. She really helped me to understand HOW to teach my children to read. As I have hit the snags along the way, her books have proven indispensable. So, if you could buy only one thing this year, her books would be my choice. As for curriculum, hummmm...that is the toughest decision in homeschooling as far as I am concerned. It is tough because it all depends upon the child and their learning style. You can find basic instruction in any curriculum, but you will find difficulties in them dependent upon your specific child (or YOU!). For example, I have read for years that *Teach Your Child to Read in 100 Easy Lessons* is the favorite phonics curriculum of many mothers. My son learned how to read very easily with this curriculum, but he was not a good speller AND he was frustrated because he wanted to know the rules for all of the exceptions. He would spend most of his daily lesson just thinking of what made the word different from other times. WHEW! I was wore out by the time he learned to read! The second year we used the basic *Pathway* Reading Program to review (it had the rules!) and to practice his reading. This filled in the gaps left by *Teaching Your Child to Read in 100 Easy Lessons*.

When I began teaching Elisabeth to read, I knew that this would not work for her. I simply did not have as much time as I had when I worked with Matthew only. At this time, I was teaching an older child and my second one. Those lessons that had been written for a classroom seemed much too impractical for our family. I found *Alphaphonics*, which seemed perfect for us because it had very little fluff and great instructions. I would highly recommend it, but it is now only available in a very expensive program. *Alphaphonics* did great to give Elisabeth a good foundation. It was very easy for me to teach too. However, she had a more difficult time learning to read than we expected. We found that after a while, she just needed to move on to a new book to build her fluency and keep reviewing the different sounds...I am sure that we could have gone through it one more time and been fine but Elisabeth equated that book with her "baby" work and really wanted a "big-girl" book!

About that time, we found *Simply Phonics*. Elisabeth loved this book and it gave her a fresh new look at her lessons. I found that it also helped to find some problem areas that needed to be remediated.

Since then, she has enjoyed Barb Shelton's book *Make My OWN Phonics Book*. She is adapting the ideas by making her own phonics notebook. Who knows, we may have to print up instructions for others to make their own Phonics Notebook as well. You could use any curriculum to make up your own. All you need is to find the rules for phonics and let them collect (copy) words on each page that follow those rules. Elisabeth loves to illustrate her pages, so you may want to try this with your young preschoolers so they can do their "own" notebook during table time.

As they get older, this could grow into a spelling or grammar notebook (this is what we are working on with Matthew!) As you can see, Notebooking can begin as soon as they can color...and well, I am not going to disclose how old I am, but I still keep notebooks on topics that I am learning about as I continue my lifestyle of real education! ☺

Cindy,

I need help in the area of table time. We still are not getting our Math done because he doesn't know his multiplication tables. What do you suggest? Should I just spend that time drilling him on his multiplication so he can do his table time in adequate time? I AM SO FRUSTRATED! I think he is lazy too.

Frustrated Mama!

Hi!

I giggle as I read this...not to make fun of you...just because you seem to be going through soooo much of what we have gone through as we have went through the wilderness toward this promised land!

I thought I would have to KILL Matthew over multiplication tables. Now, this is the same child that wakes up in the morning to let the whole family know that “*Today is someone’s birthday...guess who??*” We always look at each other...no, no, no. Then, he will pop out a birthday of some dead person’s (general!) daughter! My mind is just too overloaded to remember these vast facts...much less, why? They are DEAD! hehe!

If this is not enough, then you should also know that this child also memorizes Scripture that can make your head swim...only NOT by verse...by chapter! ☺

Soooo, tell me WHY he could not memorize the multiplication tables that we ALL memorized...well, didn’t we?

I have absolutely NO idea why. It simply does not compute. BUT before I killed him and then confessed my sin to God, I read about the greatest idea of all! Again, those wonderful books by Ruth Beechick (Did I say that if you buy ONE thing this year, you need her books? ha!). I don’t know why it took so long before I thought to pull them out! She suggested letting the children make a multiplication chart to use while they worked through their problems. Do you remember making a chart when you were in school? I drew the grid with enough space for him to write the answers. Then, I gave him several days to work out the answers with manipulatives.

Prior to making the chart, he DID understand the process of multiplication. He just lacked the “reason” for memorizing the facts that would help to make basic problem solving faster each lesson. Do make sure that your son has a good basic understanding of the process. If not, let him have plenty of TIME to think and solve the problems in real life situations. Charlotte Mason recommended letting them have real life objects to SEE the operations. I have found that this has really helped our children because this was a basic premise of *Making Math Meaningful*, which is the curriculum we have used to teach Math in an orderly fashion.

When we were at the point of just needing speed, the multiplication chart really helped! I KNOW...the common question is, “*Isn’t that cheating?*” I don’t think that it is cheating any more than memorizing the facts IS cheating??? The objective is for them to keep practicing...and this helps in their practice so they do not get all bogged down and discouraged.

Another question is, “*How do they ever learn those multiplication facts??*” Well, this brings us to THIS year! Yes, Matthew has had his chart since third grade. This year (seventh grade) he shocked me as he said one morning, “*I don’t know why I have 7 X 3 on the chart...everyone KNOWS that 7 X 3 is 21!*” Then, he went on to murmur a whole list of facts that he had indeed *finally* memorized as he turned to the chart over and over through the years. Yes, it has become his...just a little differently than we were accustomed to learning. But, with the state of affairs in education today, that is really ok with me for my children to learn a different way!

Before I go, I do want to mention something about the last thing that you wrote, “*I think he’s lazy, too.*” I know that this year has been a tremendous year of growth for your entire family. You may be seeing this differently since you wrote me. I am not sure that all of our problems with our children are always related to their habits or character. Often, much is related to their heart. As you will see later in this issue, this is a heart matter for me. I know that my articles is on the funny side, but I can only share those things out of my OWN mistakes from time to time with my children. Children desperately need for us to minister to their heart! (*This is one reason I have just written our new book **Ministering to the Heart of Your Child** AND shared our message in workshop—we have a tape available on this topic for \$4 plus shipping OR you can get this message in our retreat set **Just For Mom...Ministering to YOUR Heart**. See our list of resources!*)

Your darling son has come home after having his heart absolutely broken to pieces in the public schools. He has felt like a failure just because he is an individual who learns at HIS OWN pace...just like EVERYONE ELSE! This year, the greatest thing that you are doing is what we find in Jeremiah 1:

10...

“See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms (your family...your homeschool), to root out, to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.”

Your call this year is much more than to just teach your children in a different place...you are called to bring healing in their lives. The technique for bringing healing is for you to take a look at what is hindering your children from being all that God wants for them to be...get rid of those hindrances...then rebuild on the foundation. Build their skills for learning. Plant seeds in their lives that will encourage them to love learning.

If your child appears to be lazy, perhaps it is just a symptom of the need for *more* healing. His greatest need is for you to *minister to his heart*. This is the most important aspect of training your children. As matter of fact, this is one of the greatest callings we have as women. It is more important than teaching volumes of knowledge to them. This is because until they open their heart to us, we are not able to teach them anything. For this reason, take time to tie strings between your heart and his. Encourage him each step of the way. Learn WITH him...so you truly begin to see his difficulties and his delights. Most of all, get to know this precious blessing...really *know* him.

As you minister to his heart, you will soon find that what appeared as laziness in the beginning, may have been a lack of skills that was wearing away at his confidence...or a lack of habit which just takes time and lots of encouragement...or dependence upon the system of institutional schooling that is only remediated by freedom to pursue individual delights to the fullest.

By now, you are probably having much fruit, but I do want to encourage you to keep pressing on. This month the Lord gave me a wonderful encouragement to keep on, keeping on through it all. In Jeremiah 51: 33, we find...

“For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; the daughter of Babylon is like a threshingfloor, it is time to thresh her: yet a little while, and the time of harvest shall come.”

During the seasons of our homeschooling, there is a strong likelihood that we will get tired and weary. I have not met any homeschooling mother that does not find herself tired and weary...and at times on the verge of finding the nearest bus stop! It is easy to get to feeling so discouraged that we begin to wonder just WHEN are our children going to become those model homeschoolers that get into college with full scholarships at 13...write books before twenty...and learn to spell AND dress in something other than camouflage!???

Yet, we find in this verse that God, the LORD of hosts Who has absolute power and authority, says that dear friend, it is **“yet a little while,”** just a little more longer until you will find that the time of “harvest SHALL come.”

Just as we expect that our garden will take the necessary time to grow to maturity, we can rest knowing that our tender plants that we tend with great care will soon blossom into the godly men and women that God plans for them to be! Yet, it is just a little while until that harvest...and WHAT a harvest we shall have!! Yes dear mother, **“Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over...with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.”** Luke 6: 38 Enjoy the journey!

Dear Cindy,

Hello. I feel blessed to have heard you speak. When I awoke Saturday, I decided not to attend the conference. But something or someone was gnawing at me to go. Well, I finally decided to go listen to your time only. I don't know why. I have never heard of you before. I now feel it was meant to be. I have had so much happen since my first son was born. I was working full time when I stopped to have

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him. Then, I put him in day care when he was 8 weeks old only to find him on his death bed at 12 weeks old with a respiratory infection. Just as my son fought to live and has been fighting every since. He's being "labeled." He has a life-long disease as a result of the original infection. It is called R.A.D (respiratory airway disease). The doctors said that NO day care environment was allowed. That meant no work. My husband's shift is like your husband's. I have been tossing homeschooling around for a couple of years for fear of letting the boys go to school.

I read the *Time for Tea* Fall 1999 this morning. ALL OF IT! I felt lost but very hopeful. When I read your son's section: *Commitments of a Homeschool Pre-teen*, his helped me to know there is the word love, truth, faith and knowledge from the Word, AND blessings of accepting and following the Word and prayers. And he—your son is 12! That is true conviction!

I am glad your path has led to where it has so that I was able to listen to you and then read your son's words. I need much. I know I should and will begin with prayer. As a matter of fact, right before this letter, I made a prayer journal as a beginning.

My mother did not take us to church. She would make us get on a church bus for Sunday School without her. I want so much to have a Christian life, loving, and giving family, children who behave well and want to learn. I too want to continue learning. I LOVE books! We did not have them growing up. So I mostly read children's books. What are whole or living books?

I also love playing with the children, sewing, and crafts. My first passion is reading. We live at our library. The boys bring home at least 40 books a week. I let them get whatever pleases them—unless it is spooky or inappropriate. I would also like to know more about past newsletters. I read inside the back cover and I don't "get it" I don't know what to teach. I feel every day life, reading and social skills outside of home at the store or library is learning, as well as getting messy with art and mud, bugs and "stuff"

Thinking about all that can be done is exciting, but I am not sure where to begin or what kind of records need to be kept and at what age it needs to be done. Is there someone who has to test the child?

I hope that you will have time to get back to me. My son is approaching kindergarten age. I don't want him to attend public school but I don't want to get in trouble with the law. We have a VERY limited income so I must restrain from extra expenses.

Take care, God bless you and your family and all of the work that your family is doing to help others. Your friend

Hi!

What a blessing to see how God so worked in your life to bring our paths together! When I think of how He did not let go of you that day until you decided to come join us, my eyes well up in tears. Oh, dear precious friend, God has an awesome plan for you and your family!

I want to share with you from my quiet time journal from just this week. (I think it is wonderful that your first step was your prayer journal!) This look into MY heart may surprise you since you are seeing the fruit of what God CAN do when you have a heart for Him. I want for you to know that just as you have a heart for the Lord building your home, this was MY desire! Coming from a home broken by the pain of divorce, I only dreamed of having a small portion of the joy that God has given me in my home.

I almost forgot the shame and heartache of my youth. Between your letter AND my quiet time, I have been able to take a good look at the hand of the Lord in my life! WOW! I sure hope that you enjoy this! This is an entry from my journal that I believe God wants for you to read...

***“Isaiah 54: 1-4...Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord. Enlarge the place of your tent; stretch out the curtains of your dwellings, spare not; lengthen your cords, and strengthen your pegs. For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left. And your descendents will possess nations, and they will resettle the desolate cities. Fear not, for you will not be put to shame; neither feel humiliated, for you will not be disgraced; BUT YOU WILL FORGET THE SHAME OF YOUR YOUTH.*”**

Godly women will get tired and weary! Making a home is tough work. Often this is the

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*Lord, how powerful this is! As a young girl, the greatest shame was the embarrassment caused by the sin of my parents—drinking, smoking, cussing, fighting, mental disorders, adultery, divorce—what a heritage! YET, You have already brought such **wholeness, restoration, and life** into my life that I **HAVE** forgotten so much pain!*

*Truly, You are to be praised for giving me my heart's desire for a happy, loving, Christian home. What a challenge to pour even more of **ME** into my home...into my precious family...and those You bring into our tent—my spiritual children! Show me **how** I am to enlarge my tent **YOUR** way—I would mess up on my own by either spreading too far or being too afraid to spread far enough.*

*Stretch forth my curtains so others can see inside to see You and Your hope as the center of our lives and also see the **real** me!*

***Spare not!** Woe! Oh Lord, I am so frugal—well, uh...cheap! Help me to move out as **YOUR** child, with **YOUR** full vision of greatness. This will help me to remember that You have all provision for those who place their perfect trust in You!*

*Lengthen your cords...Wow! It is time to give a little more length to the cords between me and my children. Lord, You know how difficult this is to balance! Our tendency is to hold too close or shove too far! Help me to know how much to let them totter on out there on their own here and there. I thank You that as I lengthen those cords, You are there to strengthen them so they can continue to offer strength and support to our family home. What would I do without these precious blessings? What would I do without **YOU** working in their lives? Oh Lord, help me to trust You to lead me day by day to do Your perfect will. Help me to trust You as we prepare to send these arrows forth in the far too soon future! I love that You say here that this tent will spread abroad—**BEFORE** they go out to possess the nations. What a perfect training ground as they **SEE** Christianity in motion through our own family lifestyle! I wish I had been given such a heritage. I feel so much like a pioneer on overgrown terrain...cutting out the way...blasting out mountains (high places)...building bridges...uprooting...cutting away thorns...burning away thorns/unproductive growth...laying rails for new life—good life—the life of promise and purpose in You.*

*Lord, it is truly a miracle that You can take small, insignificant, unworthy, unlikely people and **use them!** I mean, so far above what we think you **could OR should** do! I am so blessed and so thankful that You saw beneath all of me to the hidden person who could be a willing vessel for You! I will not fear, nor feel humiliated—I will wait upon all You have in store for me and my family. Use us Lord! Use us to spread the hope of your life for all. Use us to possess those nations—even those far away that You are giving to us! Use us to resettle those desolate (dead, ruins, forsaken...) cities. Yes, enlarge the place of our tents!"*

I share this quiet time, with fear and trepidation. This gets REAL personal...into the depths of my heart! ☺ However, I really do want for you to peak into my heart and see where God has brought us. In no way do I want to share any of this to humiliate or dishonor my precious parents, but I have to share with you some things that have been on my heart lately that I believe may minister to you since you shared how lost you are as you step forth to commit your home to be a godly home.

I have been working on our upcoming retreat here in North Alabama. I will be sharing a workshop called, **Hidden Woman: Fulfilling Your MANY Roles of Womanhood**. As I have dug out my old notebooks that I have compiled over the last 14 years of marriage, one thing has really been popping up over and over again. Then, in my quiet time, I read this passage I have loved for years of my infertility in a new way! Now, as I read through your letter, I know that this must be shared with you!

The thought that has just kept coming to my mind over and over was the moment that I sat in a seminar on Biblical Womanhood in those early months of marriage with the depth of realization that **I,**

and making none any to shame. Shall therefore, naming your tents set upon

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yes I, was completely unprepared for marriage. It was during that seminar that I first heard the words submission, something that was never lived out in our home the way that this teacher was sharing it directly from Scripture, and helpmeet. It was during that seminar that God first called me into this wonderful ministry that is just now coming into its fullness! I knew then that our culture desperately needed for the true happiness of God's plan to be shared.

As I poured through this passage, I saw all of my life pass before me. It was the first time in a long, long time that I thought about the shame and disgrace that I had faced as a young teen when my parents divorced and all of the horrible sins that were hidden became public domain. I had forgotten the judgment that I had faced as a young finance because my parents did not make it in their marriage. I also had forgotten that entry from 17 years ago in my diary of my heart's desire from my precious Lord to just have a godly, committed, Christian family. I just wanted one day in a truly happy Christian family. I was almost militant in my pursuit of this desire that I could only have as a blessing from my Heavenly Father. Now, I have so much to be grateful for as God has given me a glimpse into what He has done to answer this deep desire of my heart!

Why do I share this? Your sweet note reminds me of where I was as I turned to the Lord for HIS plan for my life. I wanted so much just a PORTION of what I have now. I take so much for granted. Yet, this brings me to praise of my Heavenly Father Who wanted to give me exceedingly abundantly MORE than I could have ever imagined! He wants to do the same for you!

Do not look at the crisis situations in your life as a hindrance...but rather as a stepping stone! They are the very things that God has used to "narrow" your path toward His calling for your life!

Yes! You CAN homeschool! Homeschooling is legal in all 50 states. As far as requirements, I am not real sure about your state. I would recommend getting in touch with a homeschool leader with experience. I say with experience because you will find that in most cases they will share MUCH wisdom that will help you to find freedom and ease in your journey. They can show you the basics of how to get started and what is really required by your state. DO be careful to ask around about this though because I have found many people who are very confused about the REAL requirements of each state. For example, EVEN in Alabama where the only thing needed is a statement of where your child is in attendance for their education (in other words, a Church School Enrollment Form). With their declaration to teach at home, they have complete freedom to select any materials...choose their course of study...select hours for their study...all without any intrusion in the form of reporting, home visits, or testing. In other words, COMPLETE FREEDOM to homeschool. The only problems I have seen in our state have been the excessive requirements of cover schools (who send in the enrollment forms to the state). Some go so far as to GRADE the penmanship of the parents in the journals that they are forced to keep (YES! This is above and beyond the law...nothing wrong with journaling the journey...just being GRADED (???) on the work! This is like going back to Egypt looking for manna!).

In our state, you might call ME or you might call someone who has been under the requirements of such a cover thinking that the state law required such. You can only imagine the difference in what you would be told! Soooo, DO ask around. Try to find someone who understands the law AND the beauty of God's plan for the home! You won't go wrong!

I also shared my journal because I wanted for you to know how much your letter affirmed God's direction for me with my children. You are so right! Matthew does write with such conviction...you certainly cannot look down upon him because of his age! I know why Paul wrote repeatedly about this with Timothy...those taught from infancy are too profound to take lightly!

It is so easy for us to think about the areas of that our children need to grow and therefore miss their wealth of conviction that can bless those looking into our home. Yes, this passage really spoke to me about pulling back the curtains to let others see inside our family even more than we already do. There are moments that I certainly want to scream...but there are times that I know we are on the right track because I am beginning to see them blossom into the godly men and women that God has planned for them to be. It is at these times that God has to remind me that they will only be strong as I lengthen those cords...not CUTTING the cords...but giving them the space to become the strong servants that God plans for them to be EVEN today as they serve under our care.

~~and making none any to shame. Shame therefore, making your sins get about~~

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I am so honored that the words that so touched me as a mother, could touch you as well! I have to share that fewer things can bring more delight than to read the heart commitments and convictions of my own child. Yes! They are tremendous! Thanks!

Getting Started on the Right Track...

As for getting started on the right track...I have a few suggestions that have made ALL the difference in the world to me as we have been homeschooling all of these years. Here are some thoughts...

Go to God...

Pour out your fears, frustrations, hopes, dreams, limitations. Listen to Him. He will pour into the depths of your soul His vision for your children. He REALLY cares more for your children and their future than YOU do...which should tell you of His deep interest in each step that you take. He will be faithful to give you step-by-step guidance for your IMMEDIATE needs and for needs that you will not even know you had until they are taken care of! If you are afraid that you will miss something, just trust in Him. He will not only lead you just *some* way...He will lead you step by step through HIS scope and sequence for your child. Just trust Him for today AND for long-term!

Purify...

The only requirement a mom must meet in order to have vision and step-by-step guidance in homeschooling is cleansing and commitment to the call. We find the key to KNOWING God's vision and direction as we look at Romans 12: 1-2 (Amplified)...

"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]."

Isn't God's Word sooo specific? If we want to KNOW exactly what we need to teach our children...when they are ready for more...and how to teach it all with the limitations that we face in our own lives, then we must present ourselves to God as a complete sacrifice. He knows our own limitations...fears...frustration (levels!)...as well as those of our children. Yet, as we present ourselves...marred and unworthy...as living sacrifices, then we begin the process that enables God to direct our steps.

He cannot do so with a willful, self-managed person. He wants a vessel that He can shape into conformity of the image of Christ. Only as we come before the Lord as a sacrifice, do we find that we are less inclined to conform to the world's standards, the world's ways, and of course, the world's bondage! There is perhaps no other more obvious area of our spiritual lives that we could conform to the world than education.

Very few of us consider that our view of education is based upon a worldly institution that cannot stand because its foundation is built on sinking sand. Unless we enter into a season of re-education—renewing our mind to prove what is good, acceptable, and perfectly in the will of God with the education of our children—we will find ourselves burdened under a yoke of bondage in areas such as comparison, equivalency, aptitude, grades, pursuit of college, on and on! Taking the time and committing to the process of purification will bring us into freedom, joy, delight, ease, and step-by-step direction!

~~and making none any to shame. Shame therefore, making your sins get above~~

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Do your homework!

Yes! Homeschooling is easy, but it will not be easy unless you prepare yourself for the call. Take all of the time that is necessary to get on the right track. The fruit of your efforts will prove this to be well-worth the time and effort you put into the preparation. If you are presently at home with little ones needing to be taught NOW, then *simplify* what you are doing so they can be busy learning while you take a season to develop your philosophy of education and to “hear” God’s plan for each child. You have NO reason to be in a hurry...that applies to those with Highschoolers as well! ☺

The time that you take will lay the rails, much like those laid before a train may proceed with its journey. These “rails” are crucial for a smooth journey. Take time to seek God’s vision for your children. Look at WHO He says they are. This will begin by searching His Word for what He has created children to be. Once you understand the child you are working with, then the plan for moving them toward God’s purpose becomes simple and easy!

Time planning and thinking...getting a vision of God’s plan for your child will not be any more wasted than if you were laying the rails for a train. Much hardship and frustration will be saved because you will be able to set goals that are manageable and obtainable because they will be moving towards God’s purpose for each child, rather than working toward goals of a government institution. You will also find that there are easier ways to teach and move toward that vision. This time is a time that brings abundant fruit.

So, make this a time to...

- ◇ **Read widely...**A wise person has a multitude of counselors.
- ◇ **Develop skills of learning YOURSELF...**It is easier to teach your children how to read, research, write, work basic math, speak, and serve IF you KNOW how!
- ◇ **Develop YOUR way of teaching...**The best way is through finding YOUR way of learning and teaching that way to your child! Trust me it WILL work!
- ◇ **Learn ideas from others to make things easier or troubleshoot problem areas!**

This is better preparation than YEARS of time spent in a college! You will find your own niche. Best of all, you will find that your children will grow to love learning since it will be a LIFESTYLE in your home!

Use What You Have...Teach WHO YOU ARE!

It is natural for parents to want for their children to have and know EVERYTHING. However, this is simply impossible! Only God can have this kind of wisdom. Our world still does not realize the limitation on humans. Just as in the garden, man fell because of his desire to know as God knows, we find that the greatest desire of many in our world. The pursuit of knowledge apart from God will never be blessed. God wants for our knowledge to bring Him glory and honor. Only when we learn the things that He has designed for us to learn can be come to depth in learning. This is where we find the difference in God’s plan from the world’s plan.

In Scripture, we find that God NEVER has generic callings for people. In the Old Testament, it can be seen as early as Genesis that people were created with gifts, talents, and bents in different areas. Just taking a look at Genesis 4 and 10, we see many different fields of profession...craftsmen of musical instruments, farmers, hunters, builders. In the New Testament, we find that over and over the BODY of Christ is discussed. For the body to work to its optimum, all parts must fulfil their role... “their” role not being the SAME and “their” role being necessary for the body to work to its optimum.

The only way that this is possible is for our children to be brought up by God’s plan and for His purpose...

~~and making sure that to share. Share therefore, making your words get about~~

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“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.” Proverbs 22:6

This is impossible unless we forsake the common, ignoble plan of child “schooling” that our culture deems as important. We must come to the point that we can trust God for His very different way. God’s way is the only way that our children will begin to really have dominion over the world. This dominion only comes as we take knowledge further by the process of real education. The process of real education does not stop at knowledge of bits of information. It goes on to UNDERSTAND the topics introduced...then to apply God’s Word to those topics so our children can have WISDOM. This takes time and cannot be a quick process devoid of ideas...deep thinking...questioning...researching more...continuing this process sometimes for YEARS!

If we are REAL honest, we have to admit that there is not one topic that can be learned completely to its full depth and breadth. This is because life is full of things for us all to learn for an entire lifetime. When we realize this, we come to true freedom in education. True freedom comes only when we realize that *our role* as teachers can be summed up as teaching our children how to learn...opening doors for them to learn in new areas...encouraging them to LOVE learning and life...and walking alongside them to disciple them. We can never teach them all...but we can teach them the greatest lesson...that learning is a lifetime pursuit of those that want to know God more deeply!

It saddens me that even with the realization of HOW much could be learned, few parents realize that there is simply NOT a system to what has been chosen by those setting “standards” in schools. The choices represent a potpourri of information, which is not learned with any system or with any depth. The fruit of such a system of education is boredom, lack of purpose, inability to think and reason, dependence upon others rather than self-initiative or self-motivation, no intimacies in learning, plus much, much more!

So, what SHOULD be taught to every child? What would make a standard of “completion” for all children?? I would say that Deuteronomy 6: 4-9 gives us a beautiful picture of God’s plan. God wants for us to teach WHO WE ARE. We are to teach what is on our heart! What WE know! We are to teach them at all times and using all opportunities. Our whole purpose in life is to wholeheartedly know and love God. We are to use all of our gifts, talents, and bents for the Lord. If we are doing that, then God can use us to train our children to follow after us in service to Him. So, the question of what to teach goes back to WHO we are. God makes no mistakes in placing our specific children in our homes. He places them there to prepare for their calling. No mistakes. No need to find someone else to teach our children something that we do not know ourselves. God’s plan is for our children to be prepared for their calling by parents who pass on WHO they are!

Center All Around The Family

In our culture, this is very rare. Even our churches have gotten off track in this area as families are commonly separated off from one another for 3-5 or more times a week. There are few days (or hours!) that the family can even be home at one time, much less develop some sense of family identity and center all around the family.

What we are finding in our culture today is that fathers are having to make tough stands with even the church in order to preserve their families. Many are facing persecution in the church and sadly to say, even in relationships with their wives as they make stands to center all around the family as God leads them.

Centering all around family means that those activities that separate and pull the family apart must be eliminated. Centering all around the family means a slower pace...focus on only doing that which builds the family and family name and family ministry...learning together as a family...time at home in a godly Christian atmosphere...and freedom to pursue God’s call for the family. Commitment to family will bring the fruit in your home that you so desire!

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Breathe Life Into Your Homeschool!

Wondering when I was going to write anything about teaching the children their lessons? If you will look back over the last areas, you will see that the most important lessons are taught naturally. They are taught as you naturally disciple your children through your example. The only things left to teach, believe it or not, is HOW to learn and to LOVE learning! These lessons can be taught very easily through the lifestyle of your home. This is the only way to keep on, keeping on! If lessons are taught as SCHOOL in the home, they will frustrate the children because they will not understand their purpose or why time is “wasted” away learning those lessons instead of “getting to REAL life!” If those same lessons are taught as life disciplines that we use in real life, then they become a natural part of our homelife and a natural part of living.

The only way to bring a lifestyle such as this is to first model this as a lifestyle yourself and then balance your day so that table time is only a small part of each and every day. It is more important that your children see YOU continue learning as part of your lifestyle than for you to teach them any formal lesson. In our home, our children have never known anything besides that WE read...WE write...WE think...WE discuss great ideas...WE learn from great people...WE learn new things...this is WHO WE are! We are lifelong learners. Because of this, we have never had to force our children to learn...they just learn as part of their lifestyle. Learning is as natural as getting baths...or eating...or playing. Our children have MORE times than I am willing to admit have answered the question, “*What are you learning in School?*” with “*We DON'T DO School!*” In their minds there is no separation between learning and life because our lifestyle is one of constant lessons in all areas of life.

Even when our children sit down for their table time, they do not find this time to be artificial. It is a time that they use their skills of learning to pursue areas of deep interest for them. We use this time to teach our children skills needed to learn in all areas of life and to practice those skills so they become proficient. What skills are we talking about??? Reading, writing, researching, problem solving. These need to be taught based on readiness, not grade levels. These skills also need to be practiced daily so they become natural parts of the child’s lifestyle...not subjects to pass or fail each year. Don’t consider these lessons as any more or less important than any other aspect of your day. Also, don’t consider those lessons any more important than the time that your children spend playing in that mud or watching a bug for the day! The greatest lessons are in the most odd places!

You are already on the right track as you encourage your children to play and pour through those wonderful real, living books from your library! You are already teaching them the very things that they need to learn and you have not been thinking about it! This is because homeschooling does not have to be unnatural...it can be very, very easy! I would love to challenge you to keep on doing those things that are natural and easy for you...those things that are part of your REAL LIFE. This will breathe life into your homeschool.

Your question about what you should be teaching your children is an excellent question. I know that it is so scary when you really think about WHAT do they need to know??? Does it HAVE to cost a fortune???

In those early years, the greatest thing you can do is let them PLAY and READ to them! Ohh, real, living books are just like they sound. They are books that come from the real person bringing their life to you through the miles and through the years. They are truly timeless. They speak to all generations furnishing us with the understanding in the lives of others as if we have “been there!” They are the books that challenge us to new and better paths. They refresh our souls. They become friends that we get to know and carry with us in our hearts for all of our lives. You are on the right track as you use these resources because they are the best the world has to offer AND they can be free! You can find them at your local library OR swap with friends who are book lovers! As you save money, you can build your library at home. We began homeschooling with a scrappy library—pretty much full of silly little children’s read alouds. I was overwhelmed until I began to watch God provide great books for our library through odd means. We found grandparents cleaning out their shelves to bless us with books that they thought our children simply MUST read. We found books for .10 each at our local library book

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sale! We have received books for gifts. The children even use their work money to buy MORE books! Not to mention, as I have saved money by not having to buy costly curriculum, I have been able to find wonderful books for our nightly read alouds at homeschool conventions. This has helped us to build a library in spite of our limitations in our budget. This has been God's provision for us as it seems to be for you and your family.

What might seem as a limitation because of money appears to be a stepping stone God has used to direct your path toward a great, vast education at the feet of the greatest minds of all time! Keep on putting your children in touch with real people through books and real life. Take time to enjoy the little things like those bugs...mud...the bright sunshine. Keep things simple and easy. You will find that homeschooling is as easy as you have found mothering to be! Have fun and enjoy the journey! Love, Cindy

Thanks for all of the wonderful letters! If you have written to us and we have not answered, keep looking in the next issue of Time for Tea! We will have MORE next month!

Keep those letters coming!

Letters From The Spring/ Summer MEGA Issue!

Dear Cindy,

Hi! I just have to write and tell you what the Lord has done and is doing in my life as a result of the wonderful tapes and tea-time articles I have been pouring through the last few weeks.

My name is ----. My husband ---- and I met you and your precious family in Louisville last summer. (and I pray we'll see you in July) (*YES! WE WILL BE THERE!!!!*)

First of all, the deeply touching way you share your heart and all the tender places that you've touched in mine are an answer to prayer. I've asked God to show me and model to me through others what a Titus 2 woman looks like—how she lives.

One area I struggled with was my husband's hours—it took longer than I like to think about for me to accept them. He farms and milks cows...that means that he works 80+ hours a week and there isn't usually a time to look forward to him being off—that isn't until I let the Lord have control. Since I've moved out of the way, our brother-in-law has taken a new interest in farming with ----, ----'s sister, and his parents. Now, our son is helping daily and it is now becoming a family vocation and even though I've always been glad we farm, I am more content in God's complete will. I've learned that unless I am completely yielded, I am not yielded at all! Anyway, when I read your article about praying—really praying—for our husband's, I wept. I had really missed out on so much here. I wrote him a letter in my journal and asked him to read it, he loved it. I could see a new confidence and purpose in his eyes.

Then, last night, while nursing ---- (I have to flip to whatever page I can get to with one hand), your article was about how you apologized to Harold for not coming to him first—whammy—(you help us by opening yourself up and sharing your deepest self.) Again, I had to confess to John the times I've gone to others. Even Christian friends have not always pointed me in the area of submission. This is so necessary, I feel, in having the godly marriages that are necessary for the atmosphere of our homes to be what they should for us to have our children's hearts.

I want to say, also, how immensely I enjoyed your CM Study Group tapes. My husband wakes me at 5 as he is leaving for the barn. I look forward to my treadmill time now as I listen to those tapes or your others and the time flies. It's so much more bearable—downright fun now!

The most special time—and I know the Lord worked it this way—was in my quiet time one morning. I still had the tape going as I was “settling in” and the discussion was so meaningful. I cried with you all and felt like you were here with me. I feel as though I know the ladies as they speak clearly and honestly about the Mars Hill School, the auto accident, being ready later (when some of the children are grown), etc. I especially appreciate the way that everyone makes spiritual insights so clear. No one ever wastes time—like I do at times—taking too long talking about too much to get to the point. I'm always disappointed when the tape clicks off!

Thank you for letting the tape run at the end of the rich sessions for group time. It means so much to so many. I am sure.

I just wanted to tell you how much knowing you and your ministry means to me.

I said last summer that you were like Marilyn Howshall, Emilie Barnes, Charlotte Mason—all wrapped up into one. But, since I've come to know your heart better through your newsletters and tapes and your openness—I realize just how special you are—Cindy!

You have taken some beautiful things these ladies have brought out and added to or explained them to me. But, more than that, you've shown me how to dig deeper in the Word and how God can show me

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deep things of His heart if I spend time with Him. You have affirmed so much of what He is telling me!

Thank you for sharing of yourself—and for being Cindy Rushton. Be encouraged, as you encourage others. Lord willing, we'll see you in July. In Christ

“He who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.” Proverbs 11: 25

My dear, dear friend,

Sniff, sniff! Yes, this is so dear to me! I have kept this note in my purse since you sent it. I shared it with those who have been such an integral part of our ministry...Sonshine Audio (Those providing our taping equipment...they cried too!), our local homeschooling moms, and now to those here with *Time for Tea*. This letter so affirmed MY heartbeat. Thanks!

Yes, as I write this note, we are getting ready for Kentucky. I am soooooo excited about seeing you again. Won't it be a treat to hug your neck again??

I appreciate your sweet encouragement. You definitely refreshed the depths of my soul. I love that you are being blessed by me just being ME. That is really all of the expertise that I have. I am in the trenches with each of you. Yes, I DO scream at my precious family, when I DO and DO NOT want to! Yes, I DO think a stuff bomb goes off in our house in the middle of the night...EVERY night! Yes, I DO find myself on the floor in the bathroom (my prayer closet!) whining, grumbling, and bitterly repenting MORE than I find myself cooking! But, I have all of you to thank for letting me be just ME...no facades...no unreasonable expectations...no pedestals...just ME!

Yes, it is soooo hard and takes soooo long for us to step heavenward. We are listening to the audio version of the book by Elizabeth Prentiss, *Stepping Heavenward*. I think that the reason that I love this book is because Katie IS ME! (HAS someone stolen my childhood diary and put it into print???) Well, at the beginning (I could only pray I become the godly saint that she becomes!). I find myself resolving to do better. Feeling crummy when I fail. Begging for forgiveness. Trying with all I have to surrender, crucify SELF only to find that it is a day-by-day battle!

Our husbands are so precious. They really do enliven as we crucify “self” and commit to our high-call to minister to them. OUCH!

I giggled as I typed this into the magazine. My darling husband has just been promoted!! (YEA!) What normalcy we DID have NO longer exists! We already had a rotating off-day schedule (off M-T this week...T-W next...W, T, F next...on and on). Now, we have no set-day-by-day schedule. Sometimes he is going in for day-shift...sometimes afternoon...sometimes mid-nights. PLUS, now he is ALWAYS on call! EEEEEKKKK!

I am so grateful that we had already wrapped our lifestyle around him. We are still having balance because our focus on our family life is the foundation of all that we do. Of course, I DO think that you should know that I pouted for a few days feeling UTTERLY lonely when I found that some of our travel plans were changed to me traveling without him.

Harold was so funny. He looked at me, knowing I was MORE than disappointed, and told me to hang in there, it would be better soon. AND it is!

The great news is that often we are only in a tough season. When things start to fall into place, there always seems to be change around the corner.

I love how God has orchestrated your change! All is working toward his perfect plan for you and your family. Isn't it worth ALL the wait?

We have had lots of change in the last 6 months in our home. I have to agree with you that the blessings seem to rain down upon us more as I move out of the way. BUT, that is never easy. It is a constant walk in the Spirit. I have seen so much growth in my husband in this season of our life. What a joy as he has taken over our wholesale division and scheduling of our ministry that was getting too big for its britches!! Now, that has not been easy...in fact, there have been times that I have not been too sure that I wanted for him to stay in charge of those areas. He has been much stricter, organized, AND

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he has grown our company in every way possible. Talk about enlarging our borders!

I love what you wrote about YIELDING! This is powerful! When I think of yielding, I think back to those days that I nursed my little ones. It was so frustrating to try to help them when they would fret, cry, and flail instead of snuggling up close. As I think of the times that I fret and flail instead of yielding all to snuggle up close during the journey, I wonder how my precious Lord and my precious husband can bear with me! (I guess that this is hard evidence of just how wonderful they are!)

Harold told me a few months ago something that was profound. I was struggling with a situation in my life. He watched me struggle. Finally, one night he cuddled up in bed and told me that he wished that I would bring ALL to him instead of my friends or just toughing it on my own. He wanted for me to trust him with what is on my heart. He wanted for me to talk to him when I needed a friend. He wanted to BE my best friend!

Now, you know my heart. I cherish my relationship with my husband, but I had to seriously evaluate my friendships AND my willingness to open my entire heart completely to him. Going through grief and suffering had taught me to let God fulfill ALL my needs. Yet, now God was showing me how to allow Him to use Harold to minister to me in the deepest of earthly friendships...my marriage.

Now, my tendency in the past was to look to Harold first. You can imagine how broken-hearted and bitter I became as I went through some of the toughest days of my life to learn that Harold was my husband and friend NOT my Lord, God. God never lets us set anything or anyone before Him. They will eventually become a "plague" until we learn that our sufficiency comes from God and God Alone. As we turn our hearts back toward God, He begins to plant and build good relationships. So good that it is worth the tough lessons!

Now that I see Harold's place...God's place...my children's place...my friends' place...and my place, I can now enjoy the deep relationships that God intended as special gifts JUST for me!

You were talking about the "new confidence and purpose in his eyes." I am seeing some new things in our relationship as well. It seems that now he enjoys being around me even more than ever before. He is taking an even more active role in OUR life. Just the last few months, I have watched him REALLY take great care of me as though I were HIS tender, precious vessel that he must guard and protect. (I AM, you know??? I Peter 3: 7) In fact, he seems to be flourishing more and more as I take more and more of a back-seat. He keeps getting rid of ALL hindrances in my life that battle for my time and focus. I don't know about you, but I am soaking up the dotting of love, protection, and adoration. I am walking in a new sphere of our relationship learning how wonderful it is to release Harold to be my protector in all areas of my life! Not to mention, I believe that Harold is enjoying being my confidant, my best friend!

Actually this has affected every area of our lives. I have slowed down even more than normal. We have had MORE midnight chats in our family, even with our children. We have set more limits on each and every day so we can take time to have more fun. We have even stolen away more. In fact, we bought a bigger boat perfect for camping on the great Tennessee River!

Harold wanted a sailboat that would be big enough that I could comfortably carry my laptop and baskets full of books for a few days away to work on my manuscripts. There are no words to express the preciousness of this time away. It is so nice to pull away to build memories...to get closer to God's creation...to snuggle up while the bugs buzz and chirp in the background...and to pray in the peace and quiet.

I love the balance that this brings to my life. Not only are the sunsets VERY romantic, but the wee hours of the morning are perfect for quiet times! Not only do we have time to tell stories and "narrate" books (ha!), but we also have time to learn more about one another! The housework waits. The email waits. The phone waits. All gets back to the basics, to the most important thing in my life...relationships with God, Harold, Matthew, and Elisabeth.

You wrote about God affirming you...well, you affirmed the direction that we felt God leading us. We plan to continue taping the sessions of our meetings. This year, we will be taping The Charlotte Mason Study Group. It has been moved to Huntsville, Alabama. Some of the early sessions that were

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not taped will be taped now for those wanting to get to know Charlotte Mason's ideas more deeply. I know it will be a big blessing for you.

Not to mention, we will be changing the study in our area to a Bible Study. Our CM moms are well on their way, they now want to dig EVEN deeper in the Word of God. We are going to take as long as necessary to dig into the book of Exodus from a "Mommy" perspective. These sessions will be taped and available in a series called *Stepping Up To The Call...Lessons from Exodus*. I expect this to be GOOOOD!

I am so glad that you are enjoying the tapes! We are continuing to tape all workshops, conferences, and retreats. I LOVE these! My favorite part is when others join in to share their hearts! It is truly special to grow together...re-listening months later shows just how much God is working in all of our lives! Keep an eye open for lots more! Actually we already have A LOT of new tape sets...they are detailed in the back of this issue.

I thank you for such an awesome compliment of mentioning me in a sentence with such precious vessels of God such as Marilyn Howshall, Emilie Barnes, and Charlotte Mason. They are certainly vessels to emulate! When I get bigger..... (ha!)

You are certainly gracious to love me "warts and all!" I appreciate that I am able to share what I am learning all along the way. I also love that you are all so supportive of ME as I grow and learn. It is certainly a more delightful journey when there are so many dear pilgrims to go with me along the way! Love ya! (See ya very, very SOON!)

Hi!

My name is Linda. I was inspired by you when you came to speak to a few of us in College Station, Texas a few weeks ago. I had planned to go to the Houston fair the day after, but after listening to you, I felt no reason to.

I posted a question on your e-group list that I hope will get a few responses. Please, if you can help me in words of encouragement, please do. I need them. I have this anxiety about "teaching" any subjects as opposed to allowing my children to be delight directed.

I really love your book *Language Arts...The Easy Way* and Marilyn Howshall's *Wisdom's Way of Learning*.

The good Lord has instilled the truth about this method of learning in me. I need people like you to pray for me to let go and just trust in the Lord and do it.

Dear Linda,

I guess that I should begin by first letting you know that it is STILL a daily process for me each and every day as I bring ALL that I am before the Lord. I have ideas... plans... fears... frustrations... dreams... passions... techniques... preferences, but ALL must be brought to the Father daily as a living sacrifice.

Now, this is TOUGH! When I think of all of the areas of our life, I know that it is EASY to trust the Lord in areas that I am seeing fruit. The areas that I am currently struggling with are no greater than those I struggled with years ago, which include this decision of whether a child should be taught by subjects or by delight. The key is in not in a method, but in stepping out to Homeschool, step-by-step listening to still, small voice of our Shepherd Who wants us to walk in all areas of our life by-faith!

This reminds me of a quote that I just read in Joyce Meyer's book *Be Anxious For Nothing*. She writes, "*We must realize what we do to overcome one crisis may not be what we are to do to handle the next crisis that arises. The reason it may not work the second time is that the solution to the problem is NOT IN THE PROCEDURE, it is in the POWER—which God gives us to accomplish what He directs us to do. God uses different methods for different people, and in different situations. One time Jesus healed a blind man by spitting on his eyes and then laying hands on Him twice (Mark 8: 22-25). Another time He healed a man blind from birth by spitting on the ground and making mud which He rubbed on the man's eyes and sent him to wash in the Pool of Siloam (John 9: 1-7). On another occasion He*

healed a blind man by simply speaking a word (Mark 10: 46-52). It was not ANY of the methods Jesus used that opened the eyes of these men so they could see. The thing that brought their healing was THE POWER OF GOD flowing through Jesus. The different methods were simply the different means used by Jesus to release the faith within each person to whom He ministered. The KEY TO UNLEASHING the power of God is FAITH!"

Isn't that SO good? I could not say it any better! It is not our method or our curriculum or our ideas or our lack of any of the above that makes or breaks our Homeschools. I believe that it is our faith or lack of faith that determines our success in Homeschooling. God wants for us to TRUST HIM. This means that our trust cannot be in anything or anyone other than Him. But this does not just happen. It takes a daily surrender of ALL we are and ALL that we may want in every area of our life, including the education of our children. It takes a commitment to conform to Christ and Christ Alone, not anyone or anything in the world. It takes a daily renewal of our mind, which only comes from sitting daily at the feet of Jesus letting Him feed us with the manna that truly fills our deepest hunger. (Romans 12: 1-2)

About your concerns with delight-directed learning verses teaching subjects, I really do believe that we all have to look to the Lord for direction that specific for our children. I write with fear and trepidation because your misgivings may be as a result of the Lord trying to lead in a different direction. Only you and your husband will know which direction He is leading for your family. Now, with that said, if your concern is more with trusting that leading...Yes, you CAN relax and trust the Lord!

Think back to most of our world-changers. I am talking about the movers and shakers all throughout History. Most of them were given the skills to learn...then, set free to pursue their areas of delight. There are a few things that I believe that parents need to know about delight...

...Delight IS given by God.

...Delight is individual!

...Delight leads to a lifestyle of learning for all of life.

...Delight in studies brings meaning and purpose.

...Delight moves the child toward their life purpose (which IS delightful!).

Can you trust a child to cover "subjects" that are needed if they are spending a vast amount of time with just ONE delight? This is the most common question that we all face. Only time can show us HOW MUCH more is taught just by having ONE great intimacy.

Charlotte Mason spoke about this as much as 100 years ago. She wrote, *"Unless our method of education allows the children the opportunity to establish relations with many different things, a gallon of teaching will result in only an ounce of learning."* You probably know how true this is. Unless our children develop an intimacy with what they are studying, we will find ourselves pouring into the child information that will not really produce true learning.

Another quote by Miss Mason found in *Home Education* reminds me of my son and his passion for Robert E. Lee, *"Let him...linger pleasantly over the history of a single man, a short period, until he thinks the thoughts of that man, is at home in the ways of that period. Though he is reading and thinking of the lifetime of a single man, he is really getting intimately acquainted with the history of a whole nation, for a whole age. Let him spend a year of intimacy with Alfred, 'the truth-teller,' with the Conqueror, with Richard and Saladin, or with Henry V.—Shakespeare's Henry V.—and his victorious army. Let him know the great people and the common people, the ways of the court and of the crowd. Let him know what other nations were doing while we were at home doing thus and thus. If he comes to think that the people of another age were truer, larger-hearted, simpler-minded than ourselves, that the people of some other land were, at one time, at any rate, better than we, why, so much the better for him."*

My son, Matthew, has developed such an intimacy with Robert E. Lee through great literature that he KNOWS him as a dear friend. He knows the time period as if he were living it today when he curls up with a great book or goes out to play. He even knows the birthdays of those in Robert E. Lee's family!!! If this were not enough, since he spent years with this man, he has now branched off into the lives of others from the same time period...the art from that time period and about that time period...the music
