

A Sampling of the Ideas In Notebooking.. Yes! You CAN Be a Binder Queen Too!

By Cindy Rushton

*Ohhh, I cannot keep it to myself. We have thought and thought about what should be included in this issue as a "taste" of our newest book **NOTEBOOKING! YES! YOU CAN BE A BINDER QUEEN.** Well, here is **JUST** a bit. This, how-to's for creating History Timeline Notebooks, is actually taken from the section of the book that is filled with several hundred ideas for creating Notebooks that are bound to interest your most reluctant writer! This book is filled to overflowing with ideas in the ideas **PLUS...much, much more! Sooo, without further ado...here are some tips for making those Timeline Notebooks. ENJOY!***

Timeline Notebook...

I have no idea if my enthusiasm is showing yet, but if you have had any doubt, this is where my enthusiasm **WILL** have to show! Very few things seem to pull all of life together, but timelines pull all of our life and all of our studies together and into perspective! Sure, our timelines are great for giving an overview of history, but they are much more indispensable. They show continuity and interrelation of History. With timelines all of those subjects weave together for one great big picture.

If you are not sold yet, think about how versatile a **Timeline Notebook** is. **ANYONE** can use them, regardless of curriculum being used...or difficulty normally presented in documenting a study...or age, interest, or abilities of the student.

Ohhhh, and think of what a great teacher a timeline becomes. Those difficult dates become easy to review and remember. Those chains of events finally make sense. The children see real people and real events in perspective. Not only do they begin to treasure the past, but they are encouraged to treasure **TODAY** and **TODAY'S EVENTS!**

Soooo, why a notebook for a timeline?? Ohhhh, space, that commodity more precious than gold, is saved best by timelines being kept in a notebook. Not to mention, if the timeline is kept in a notebook, it can go **ANYWHERE** you go!

Ready? What is included? How do ya do it? Again, your imagination is the only limit! Anything goes inside a timeline: dates...pictures/drawings of people... explorations... discoveries... art prints... books written... inventions... religious events... church history... battles... wars... key events such as elections, battles, births, deaths, marriages...

settlements such as Plymouth, etc.... maps... weapons... modes of travel... clothing/jewelry/ headdresses/ shoes... dishes... date discovered... states/capitals... musical instruments... current events... food... family history...samples of songs, poems, art prints, narrations, quotes, covers of books...on and on!

All you need to make your own are the same supplies as for any other notebook. Simply design your pages. We have included a blank reproducible that we use with our timelines. We begin at Creation with a page for events beginning with Scripture. We use 50 years for each page, making the two page spread cover an entire century, until we get to 1400 AD. At that point each page cover 25 years, with the two page spread covering 50 years, until we get to 1700 AD. At that point, we only cover 25 years per two page spread up until present day.

Our pages are designed on 110lb. white cardstock, so they will be most durable. The cardstock is also better for adding glue/paint/or pressed specimens. We use a 110lb. cardstock in our children's favorite colors for dividing pages, such as at the beginning of the notebook, between BC and AD, and for extra sections such as maps, family tree, narrations, articles, books read, diagrams...

All of our pages are slid into plastic sheet protectors and kept in 3-ring binders. We use a variety of figures for placing on our timelines. We began our first timeline when using KONOS unit studies. We LOVE those figures. They are laminated, so they seem to last FOREVER! We have also found other great resources with figures that work nicely in our notebooks such as...Lessons from History, Geography Matters, Old Encyclopedias, Old books and textbooks, library books (just make copies... we reduce ours to fit our timelines more nicely), computer encyclopedias, Websites, ETC.! Be on the lookout!

Want some quick tips for making your Timeline Notebooks??

- 1. Use large 3-ring binders.** They are expandable...and believe it or not, you will NEED to expand in no time at all!
- 2. Work as a family!** YOU make one too! You will LOVE it!
- 3. Use while you read and study through every subject!** Use as you study the Bible, travel, research! Mark authors, events, people! At the most bring your notebooks out each week to add new entries. We copy pictures, reducing them to a tiny size that is perfect for our pages.
- 4. Bring in YOUR style!** EVERY notebook WILL look different! Soooo, make it work for you! We glue in pictures, write a bit about the person or event, etc. See ideas in MY email 1-2-01 11: 17 AM
- 5. Try a little Scrapbooking!** You may want to add "frames" of bright colors

behind the pictures of the people...or cut out the pictures with paper-edgers...or use neat pens for special emphasis...etc.! Once you begin, you WILL be hooked!

6. **Have a special spot** for your children to keep their binders. If you want your children to use any of their notebooks, especially their Timeline Notebooks, they need to have easy access to the notebooks and supplies. Plus, IF there is a spot to keep their notebooks, it will be easier to keep the notebook nice and neat. Ohhhh, and if there is a special spot for the notebooks, the children can rest assured that their hard work will be safe from younger siblings and pets.
7. **Oh...Don't sweat the divisions!** There will always be an exception. Some time periods may actually become such a delight to study that your family needs to develop an entire notebook just for that study. Don't worry...just GO for it!

Need some other ideas to fit your needs? There are as many variations for timeline notebooks as there are people! Here are some to consider...

- ♥ "My Country Timeline"
- ♥ "My State History Timeline"
- ♥ ----(Unit Study) Timeline...Space Exploration, Westward Expansion, The Vikings, Composers, American Artists...
- ♥ ----(Person) Timeline...Robert E. Lee, Thomas Edison...
- ♥ ----(Time Period) Timeline...American Revolution, Egyptian, Greek, Romans, Middle Ages...
- ♥ "My Family Timeline"
- ♥ "Famous Men of---"...Civil War, American Revolution...
- ♥ "Battles of---" The American Revolution, The Civil War, World War I, World War II, The Vietnam War, Desert Storm...

Need Great Resources to Build Those Notebooks???

One of the things we try to specialize in with our traveling bookstore and mail order division of Rushton Family Ministries are resources that are perfect for building notebooks. The following are some that we recommend. At the time of this printing, all are in print and available through Rushton Family Ministries.

Color the Classics

A friend of mine introduced me to these great books several years ago, but did not seem to communicate HOW WONDERFUL they are! We have LOVED these books for our Music Notebooks. These books come with great Copywork about the

composers, the history behind the songs, and even lyrics from songs your children **MUST KNOW!** In addition, they are packed with pages that are nice for coloring, but don't read this wrong. My high school freshman **LOVES** these pages! These books grow with you and your Homeschool. There are four books with tapes covering Hymn Writers, Christmas Songs, Patriotic Songs, and Classical Composers.

Hymn Writers...\$14.25

Christmas Songs...\$14.25

Patriotic Songs...\$14.25

Classical Composers...\$14.25

God and the History of Art by Barry Stebbing

This is **THE** resource for teaching Art and Picture Studies. For years I have had to dig up information about artists, their art, and the different periods of art. Of all the things I have done, this has been some of the hardest research, especially since I would prefer to **KNOW** the "stuff" behind the scenes from a Christian Worldview. This resource has all of that **PLUS** more! This massive volume has great quotes and neat narratives about the artists (that are great copywork), their prints, and all of the art periods. If that is not enough, it is also full of tips for teaching drawing to your children (or yourself!). We have found the volume to be irreplaceable in our home. If you would like a smaller version of this book, Barry has also produced a version **God and Christian Artists** with the same information but in a condensed version covering only the Christian Artists.

\$65.00

Inspiring Our Children Toward Greatness Using Great Literature: Using Literature Based Learning As The Foundation of Your Homeschool by Cindy Rushton

Want some help teaching all of the subjects through great literature and real life??? This is the perfect book! Not to mention, combined with this book, you have **MORE** than enough help to make Homeschooling **EASY!**

\$12.00

Lab Science: The How, Why, What, Who, 'n' Where Book by Barbara Edtl Shelton

Great for all ages. **ESPECIALLY** for those High School years when you are tempted to swap the **EASY** way for those texts. Full of great recommendations for books to read and **FORMS** (typical of Barb Shelton) that are perfect for building those notebooks. Two of my favorite parts was her help on how to make good lab drawings and how to evaluate their studies most effectively.

\$11.95

Language Arts...The EASY Way! by Cindy Rushton

Do words like Copywork, Narration, Dictation, and Scrapbooking make NO sense to you? Need some help with practical and EASY application? This is the book that promises to help you! Combine these two books and you are sure to have a program for Language Arts that encourages your young writers from Pre-school through High School.

\$20.00

Lessons from History by Gail Shultz

These are our newest treasures! Great for reading aloud...or those Copywork/Dictation exercises, these books cover history from Creation to present day. Complete with pictures that are great for timelines or History Notebooks and reading lists ready for when you want to dig deeper. A MUST!

Creation to 100 BC...\$19.95

100 BC to 1300 AD...\$19.95

1400's to 1700's...\$19.95

The 1800's...\$19.95

The 1900's...\$19.95

Make Your Own Phonics Book by Barbara Edtl Shelton

Another one of those great resources perfect for those Phonics Notebooks. Actually we began our first Phonics Notebook because Elisabeth had more words for each sound than could fit in the section in the little book. The rest is now history...well, our Phonics Notebook. This is THE BEST and most complete resource for Phonics Rules that we have found yet.

\$8.95

Nature Study...The Easy Way! by Cindy Rushton

Want MORE ideas for Nature Studies and Nature Notebooks??? This is YOUR BOOK! Full of suggestions for Nature Studies, teaching Science through Nature and Great Literature, and pages upon pages of great Copywork for those Nature Notebooks; this resource will be well-used in your home!

\$25.00

Student's Guide to Keeping an Art Journal by Barry Stebbing

A few years ago I attended a week-long seminar by Barry Stebbing, actually my children were the students, but I learned the most! I sat in the back DROOLING over his personal art journals, filled with AWESOME quotes and gorgeous sketches. The next best thing is THIS BOOK! In this book, you can be assured that either you or your child (or both!) will be inspired to keep notebooks/journals. Not only is this book filled with neat quotes, but it is also overflowing with ideas for drawing and journaling! One of our favorites!

\$12.95

The Booklet Building Book by Barbara Edtl Shelton

Is there something that happens between the ages of 5—9??? What child does not LOVE to make their own books? Especially at these ages? This book has ideas for the mom with NO idea where to begin. One of our favorite resources!

\$8.50

Need Forms for Your Notebooks??? Look Into These Resources Available Through Rushton Family Ministries...

(Don't forget to see the back of this book for OUR new MAKE YOUR OWN SERIES!)

Educating the Wholehearted Child by Sally Clarkson \$20.95

Garden Patch of Reproducibles Book \$24.95 or CD \$29.95

Hands-On Geography by Maggie Hogan \$14.95

Senior High: A Home-Designed Form+U+la by Barbara Edtl Shelton \$28.95

Student's History Notebook of America by Maggie Hogan \$12.95

The Ultimate Geography and Timeline Guide by Maggie Hogan and Cindy Wiggers
\$34.95

Rushton Family Ministries...

Make Your Own Notebook Series...

History Timeline...\$18.95

English from the Roots Up Notebook...\$10.00

Keep your eyes posted for MORE resources for Notebooks being published by Rushton Family Ministries!

Let Us Strive For the Gold *By Alexa Chisholm*

As we go about our homeschool journey we will encounter many opportunities to participate in all sorts of activities and lessons. People will invite us to go this way and that way. At first impression it would seem good to fill our plates with all sorts of these delicacies. Somewhere along the way we may have learned that more is better and that variety increases who we are. These activities will call out to us all on their own and they will have faces of promising futures. LET US BE WISE AND DISCERNING and stop to think.

Where are we going? Why are we doing what we are doing? Is more really better? In our busy lives we may have little time to stop and think. Little time to meditate and make short and long-term goals. It is simply crucial that we MAKE the time. We need it or we will become dull and unable to fill the tanks of our families and others. We NEED this time so that we can make those important daily decisions that will bit by bit impact our lives and those around us.

Easier said than done, I know. Nevertheless it is important that we do it. If you see this as an impossibility, pray about it. God WILL provide. He'll provide exactly what YOU need, but you need to trust that He will. Diligently ask for His assistance.

Where are we going? Do we know why we are participating in the things we participate in? It is important that to have a map of where we are going so that the stops that we make along the way encourage and uphold what we ultimately want to achieve. Why are we doing what we are doing? It is easy to fall in the trap of participating in things just for the sake of participating or just because "it looks good". Not everything that shines is gold.

We need to STOP and see our inner beings. Are we stressed out? How are our children behaving? These can be little thermometers or indicators of how outside activities are affecting us. Is more really better? In the society in which we live there is the prevalent thought that more is better. Is this true? Is quantity better than quality? So many things can get lost if we get into an over activity mode...

1. We loose sight of those quiet and gentle moments where we can teach things of lasting value.
2. We exchange family time for "one more thing".
3. Our ears become deaf to God's voice as we surround ourselves by other voices.
4. We get tired and worn out and wonder how it is that we got that way.

5. We can't keep up with our daily tasks because we "don't have time".

We only have our children for a little while. Let us try to participate in things that will have lasting value. Let us look beyond the exterior and feed their inner beings. That we may walk in the beauty of God's light. Let us STRIVE FOR THE GOLD!

Betty's Bits... Lessons from Our Toddlers

By Betty Dickerson

She doesn't know that I am doing this. I am very proud of how God is using her heart and her pen to communicate God's truths to his people, but especially to the ladies. You made her day when you told her how much you liked her last "Betty's Bits" Attached are a few others for you to read. I am sending you this because you 2 are very much alike and have your hearts in the same place. There are not many here like that. I hope you enjoy them as much as I have. If you have trouble getting these to come through let me know and I will try something else. By my count there should be 6. (I'm sorry if it's too much) They can be one-a-day.

Blessings, Jeff Dickerson, Miami

Jeff, before we turn Betty loose here, I have to tell you how much these "BITS" blessed me! I ran across them MONTHS after you sent them, but I believe that God had a plan for them to bless me the very day I found them. Yes, I MUST share them here in the pages of Time for Tea. Thanks! (Oh, and Harold and I BOTH feel the same about you and Betty...what a precious couple you are. There are no "qualifications" for writing as powerful as a husband recommending the words of his own wife. Truly, Betty is a powerful woman of God. Both of you are blessed to have one another. Blessings!

Oh, and Betty...thanks for once again pouring forth your heart on paper to bless us all! How's the potty-training???

Has the year 2001 started out a little rough for you? I can't believe all that has happened in 31 short days! In our life, Jeff lost his job, and has started a new one. We celebrated the boys' 3rd birthday with an indestructible piñata. We started homeschooling Alyssa and we are both learning so much! She is now reading 3 letter words! She also lost her first tooth, and Stephen had his first trip to the E.R. for stitches while Jeff was out of town. At one point the 3 kids were comparing boo-boo's at the dinner table; this should have alerted me. We have all had the bronchitis bug and are struggling to get over it. We have cried and prayed with dear friends, and will continue to pray and cry with them. It has been a hard month.

Many times I thought I had everything under control, as I checked off items on my "to do" list. It was as if I had to prove to myself that I could do all this: be the wife, mother, homemaker, homeschooler, friend, nurse, and be a faithful, ever-strong Christian. I set myself up for a fall. God had a plan to show me that to use me, I had to depend on Him and keep looking to Him whether or not those items got checked off. You'll never guess what that plan involved. It's called "potty-training."

Matthew announced one Monday that he wanted to go "peep in the potty." I thought that was great, at first! All plans were set aside as I set the timer for every 20 minutes. The timer always went off at the worst time. I had to chase Matthew to get him to the bathroom. Then, when we got there, no "peep"! He got so nervous and excited that he just couldn't go! So, I sat on the floor next to him with a stack of books and read

and sang to him. Somewhere in the middle of the sixth book, Jeff came home for a phone interview. Then the bug spray man showed up as well as a dear friend with her baby! I excused myself from everybody and kept reading. The bug spray man walked into the bathroom and sprayed around us as if this was the most normal scene he had witnessed. At some point, I gave up and put Matthew's shorts back on. Within two minutes he was standing in a puddle and giggling. He is still trying to figure it all out (so pray for us!), as I'm trying to homeschool and maintain some normalcy to our day. Potty training is not a major trial, but just a part of life. Then, why was I struggling so much? What was God trying to teach me?

One thing God made clear to me was the need for a "teacher" to be "teachable". What I impart to my children is a fraction of what God can impart to them as I let Him work on me. And my attitude and example (even through potty training) impart far more than my words do. I need to view interruptions as opportunities, and let God rule my day.

This month I also appreciated the importance of prayer—of having a good heart-to-heart talk with my Father, even when I can't understand what He's doing. God has used the time I spend with Him to soften my heart so that I can receive the grace I need for whatever my day holds. I pray often during the day for wisdom, strength, and especially for forgiveness. While I pray, I like to look at a framed sketch I have of Jesus holding a lamb close to His heart. Sometimes my prayer times are just like that; I let the Lord hold me when I don't have the words or strength to pray. You can definitely tell the days I've taken that time with the Lord from the days I haven't. It makes a big difference in how I respond and react at home.

I'm also learning about identifying with the Lord, after all He is our parent and patiently waits for us to grow and mature. He even helps us clean up when we have accidents. He is familiar with our trials and pain. Our worst pain is incomparable to what God suffered watching His Son on the cross. Nothing we are called to do is as hard as God having to unleash the fury of His wrath for sin on Jesus, His innocent Son. And He did it to save the very people who nailed Jesus there. No pain is too deep for His love to heal; He fills the void of our lives with more of His presence, if we let Him. To Him the process is just as important as the product.

Every pain we suffer helps us to identify with the Lord more closely. If we are identifying more with His suffering, how much more will we be able to share in His glory when He wipes every tear from our eyes and receives us into His kingdom. No, I didn't learn all this from potty training only, but from watching those I love persevere in their faith in the midst of their trials. But I do want others to see that if God can use potty training to speak to me, then He can use anything anybody is going through. He doesn't waste anything and His fingerprints are on the most minute details of our lives. I'm so

thankful that God chooses to work through the weak and simple.

One night, on my way to bed, I overheard Matthew singing to himself, "I have decided to follow Jesus...no turning back, no turning back...the world behind me, the cross before me, no turning back, no turning back." I pray that my life lives out this song for him, and that this will be the prayer of all of my children. That's really what it's all about, following Jesus in the darkness, not turning back when we are afraid, trusting in His goodness when we are hurting, standing when we can't take another step, and letting Him hold us when our legs finally fail us. May we live a life worthy of our calling because we don't know the souls that are depending on our example.

Betty's Bits... Trials or Stepping Stones *By Betty Dickerson*

I've recently been faced with some challenges in addition to my normal everyday life. For me, it's so easy to become overwhelmed by challenges and drown in them, but God has been working on me, ever slowly at times. This has made a difference in how I am trying to view these new challenges.

A lot of my inspiration comes from my daily Bible reading times and also from a woman author by the name of Elizabeth Prentiss. She lived in the 1800s and had such an intimate walk with the Lord that it exudes from every page she writes. In a recent book I've been reading of hers, *THE FLOWER OF THE FAMILY*, a father gives his daughter some wonderful advice.

"Do you see that vine climbing up there by the wall? It lays hold of the stones and sticks for support, and makes them help it. Just so you must make your daily tasks and cares help you. Take fast hold of them and climb up by their means."

"That would be very hard, Father."

"Yes; I know it. But it is the only way. And God will help you."

"Instead of being a help, they have been a hindrance all day," said Lucy.

"That is owing to your not looking at them in their true light. You may be sure of one thing; God Himself has placed you in your present circumstances, and it is He who appoints for you your daily task. Now, is it possible to conceive that a Being of so much wisdom and goodness would place you amid duties whose tendency is to draw you away from, rather than towards Himself?"

Just as a vine uses hard, cold rocks as stepping stones to reach higher, so must we use our present circumstances to help us climb higher to our Father. Sometimes it's easier to view a big trial in this light and we fail to see the little trials we face daily as God's tools in our shaping. Because being a mother and wife is what consumes me right now, this is the experience that I speak out of. But if God can use changing diapers, and folding clothes, and doing dishes, and kissing boo-boos, and breaking up arguing children, and being tired through it all, as tools in His hands then He can use work deadlines, working with difficult people, living in a difficult marriage, and dealing with health concerns just the same.

In another book, *URBANE AND HIS FRIENDS*, E. Prentiss writes,

"God bless mothers, especially young mothers, who are in the thick of the affray. They are ashamed to rank their daily difficulties, disappointments, fatigues, and responsibilities where they ought to rank, or carry these trivial details to Christ. But that which helps to form character, is not trivial in His sight, and these innumerable battle-fields are under His loving charge."

The Lord also uses the vine as an illustration in John 15. In this chapter the Lord teaches us the key to being able to rise above our trials. The Lord refers to Himself as the vine and to us as the branches. In order to be a healthy branch and bear fruit, we must stay connected to the vine. It's hard to stay connected to the vine when our nourishment consists of once a week feedings and occasional S.O.S. prayers. Jesus goes so far as to say, "*Apart from me you can do nothing.*" But the Lord makes staying connected to Him such a wonderful, filling experience how can we not rush to meet Him every morning. He has promised to exchange our pain for comfort, despair for peace, and weakness for strength. He will also give us the ability to view our daily lives through His loving eyes. Even when we fail, it is His kindness that ushers us back to restore our fellowship with Him and start over. Jesus Himself was referred to either a cornerstone to those who accept Him and a stumbling block to those who reject Him. The difference in the type of relationship is all in our viewpoint or the condition of our hearts.

Don't wait any longer. Make time for the Lord in your everyday life and He will help you see the jewels in your duties.

Ministry at Home...A Ministry of Rest! *By Beth Holland*

Several years ago, the Lord began a series of events, which have dramatically changed my life and the life of my family for the better.

It began with the Lord leading us to leave our local church. I had been heavily involved in the fine arts ministry there and my oldest daughter (then 12) had worked in both Sunday school and church for over two years. As a family, all four of us were burned out and dried up.

The Lord's instruction to us was to go to a church, which was an hour away and for our children to stay with us during the service. This turned out to be a tremendous blessing! We were able to worship as a family, a new thing for us, and we were too far away to get heavily involved which prevented us from continuing burnout.

This church's greatest asset was that the pulpit was continually opened to great men and women of God to speak. We had a glorious time being refilled, refreshed, and refined by the Lord.

After months of attending, people began to urge us to move to that city, but the Lord had spoken to us that we were there for "a season". So, we held our ground and attended as God had led us.

Another blessing was the hour drive. We had more time to read as a family! As my husband would drive, I would read aloud. It was a great time of family togetherness about which my children still speak.

Once we had been there for about six months, I began to be urged by some of the women I had met to become more involved. At eight months, our church had a big Camp Meeting, an annual event like a revival/homecoming. There was a big push from the pulpit to attend. I got similar messages from the women I knew. Yet, my husband told me that I could not go. He couldn't attend with us each night and did not want us traveling a long, deserted stretch of highway late at night without him. Still, I felt the pressure from these women to "conform" to the direction of the pastor. When I went to the Lord, His response to me was, "Stay home" which I did.

During that week, the Lord told me to study Titus 2:3-5, "*Older women likewise are to*

be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips, nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, that they may encourage the younger women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be dishonored.” (NAS)

As I studied this scripture, word for word, out of the Strong's Concordance, I found something amazing! I found that the phrase *"workers at home"* (translated *"keepers at home"* in the KJV) literally meant "stayers at home"! God confirmed His and my husband's counsel to me about this situation! He also showed me that I was to obey my OWN husband, not the pastor, who was someone else's husband!

Who do most women look to for their leadership in spiritual matters? The pastor! But no where in Scripture are we told to obey the pastor! We are told to obey (be subject to) our OWN husbands. In looking to the pastor, we undermine the role God has ordained for our husband; that of high priest of the home.

Do we want our husbands to be the spiritual leader of our home? Then we must obey what God has put in His word! We must look to OUR OWN husband for leadership! We must subject ourselves to THEIR counsel, not the counsel of other men, no matter who they are or how spiritual we may think them to be!

The other verse God told me to do a word study on during this week was Hebrews 10:25, *"forsaking not the assembling of yourselves together...."* This was another astonishing verse as I found that this simply means "a complete number". If Scripture interprets Scripture, as I have been taught, then what did Jesus say constituted a complete number? *"For where two or three have gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst."* (Matthew 18:20) This was certainly a different picture of this verse than I had ever heard before!

A Change for the BETTER!

The Lord was telling us that our season in that church had come to an end. Little did we know how wonderful and what a blessing this time would be for our family!

Throughout this journey, there have been some wonderful things, which have happen to me. First, I have **TIME** to spend with God, even while home schooling! I have TIME to sit at His feet and to hear what HE is saying, instead of me doing all the talking! I have TIME and ENERGY to pour into my children. Last year, while planning school, the Lord told me to lay down what I was planning. His focus for my schooling was my children, not their academics, and He wanted me to make my girls my priority until they graduated. My eldest was then 15 and my youngest 12. These are the years to pass on SOOO much to

them about just BEING a woman of God!

That's another thing God has taught me during this time - that I am a human BEING *NOT* a human "doing"! The entire word of God is about our *relationship* with our Lord! Somehow I had gotten the idea that my relationship with God was all about doing something for Him, some kind of "ministry" work. Instead, He just wants to spend time with ME! Can you believe that Almighty God, the Creator of all *wants* to spend time with *me??* This constantly blows me away!

So, now I have **time to hear** what He has to say. I have learned more at His feet than I ever did warming the pew of a church. Am I saying you shouldn't attend church? NO. All I am saying is that you will get more from what YOU experience as first hand knowledge direct from God to you, than you ever will secondhand from someone else's experience.

Cindy is famous for quoting Matthew 11:28-30. *"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy-laden and over burdened, and I will cause you to rest - I will ease and relieve and refresh your souls. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am gentle (meek) and humble (lowly) in heart, and you will find rest - relief, ease and refreshment and recreation and blessed quiet - for your souls. For My yoke is wholesome (useful, good) - not harsh, hard, sharp or pressing, but comfortable, gracious and pleasant; and My burden is light and easy to be borne."*

The **yoke of Christ** shouldn't make us fractured as a family, nor should it pit us against our husbands, nor should it leave us stressed, weary and worn. It should be easily borne and produce joy, for *"the joy of the Lord is your strength"*.(Nehemiah 8:10) If you have been home schooling for any amount of time, you KNOW how important that strength of God is AND how important it is to keep your joy!

What About You???

How restful is your Sabbath? Do you take a day to worship God and to rest the temple in which is Holy Spirit dwells? Or has this become a day of ceaseless activity and demand to "serve God"?

I believe there is a time for involvement. Ecclesiastes is clear that there are seasons in life. My question is this, "Is it the Lord who is saying that the season of church service for you is NOW, while you have a working husband who needs a day of rest; while you have children at home? What does God's word say is a Godly woman's first priority of "ministry"? Her family and home. If this is true, then WHY are we doing what we are doing? WHY are we living in ceaseless activity? Because we think God has changed His mind and expects it of us, or because we have fallen to the demands of others, who wish for our time at the expense of our family? Because we think by doing this, we are

pleasing God?

What I have learned over the course of the last three years is that God didn't require this of me. He really WANTS me to put Him, my husband and children ahead of ministry outside of my home!

If you are seeking a place of rest, I urge you to go to God and ask Him where that place is for you. "Oh Lord, what would you have ME to do?" If He leads you in a different way, perhaps my story will encourage you that "different" can be the very thing God will use to answer your prayer! Wherever He leads you, just follow Him and He will take you to that place of peace and rest - that place of blessed quiet for which we all long.

Letters We LOVE!

What DO I DO With These Toddlers???

Hi Cindy,

I don't mean to add to your list of emails, but I could use some insight. I have not homeschooled consistently (more than 2-3 times a week if that) for 5 weeks and I can't get back on track. I had my father-in-law with us for 4 weeks and we did a lot of neat field trips. Then we discovered that there is some probs with our AC and some roof leaks (leftover from Hurricane Andrew) causing a lot of mold to grow in our house (walls, ceiling, bedroom baseboards and under the carpet). We've had a horrible time with allergies, so we were glad to discover this. We've been doing most of the work ourselves up till now, and I don't have a problem with any of this, it's just I can't seem to get back into a routine. I feel like God is leading me to add some quiet time in our day (besides nap time) and some time for chores and maybe an outing (visiting the elderly or the park) during the week, but I am at a loss for where to start.

When things don't go as normal I start to get fidgety and insecure. I also can't seem to get on top of my day and I feel like I'm playing catch up all day and failing at everything including keeping up with the house, dinner, homeschooling and I'm impatient and confused the whole time!!!! I've been so unproductive this way, spinning so many plates at once without a plan. I have been homeschooling Alyssa while the boys nap and hoping that I can have some time to cool off in the evening and maybe read or plan for the next day, but I fall asleep as soon as I sit down. I'm thinking that maybe I need to do as much as I can with all three kids together, so that when the boys nap, I have just a little to do with Alyssa and then she can have some free time and I can too. We do have somewhat of a table time or oatmeal time where I read their devotion and then we color a picture and I've been trying to get Alyssa to do some of her FIAR activities (nothing major) during this time. The problem is the boys. I run t of things for them to do or color (they can color a page in a few seconds) then today I spent toooo long searching for alphabet coloring pages on the Internet. Meanwhile, they bickered and made a mess, and I yelled.

I am so sin-sick of myself, my laziness, my tiredness, my pride and comparing myself, my grumbling, my jealousy, my impatience, etc... I could go on. I prayed that God would help me see His face again, if I can just see His face and look into His eyes, I know that would steady me. But He tells me, ***"Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe."*** I tell Him, I don't know where to start. What is my *Next Thing??* I don't have an answer to that yet, really. I've felt Him wanting me to send a card to someone, email a few high school girls who've quit coming to youth group, visit an elderly widower, but I just don't know when to do it. I just can't seem to fit it in. I also feel convicted to exercise on my exercise bike just to improve my health, but I don't know when I would do

it. I don't do a lot outside the home. During the week I go to Bible Study Fellowship on Wed. a.m. and Wed. night church (Jeff teaches) and I go grocery shopping once. I've decided to make Wed. my free day and catch up with the house between BSF and church.

I still feel like I've failed God and my family. If I could just retain the inspiration and peace I feel when I read my Bible in the morning through the day, I'd be fine. But I lose it as soon as I close my Bible.

I know I've given you a lot to read. I feel like I'm in transition a little as we re-formulate our routine, and in the meantime I'm going nuts! Just keeping up with the house and doing a few things with Alyssa as far as homeschooling, I feel like I am fried by evening time and have nothing left. The homeschooling is not the overwhelming part but my 3 yr. old twin boys and what to do with them is, as well as the never-ending laundry. What am I not seeing? Where am I going wrong? If God blesses you with some insight about this, I'd love to hear it. I thought about you alot today and it's given me hope to see how God's worked in your life.

Thanks so much Cindy, Lots of Love!

HI! As I read through your letter, I felt myself drift back years. As matter of fact, I shared it with Harold to remind him of how WONDERFUL I am (just by remembering AIIIIIIII the things I did when the children were little!)...AND that we survived!

Oh, beloved, I am IN AWE of you! As I look at your heart AND all that you are doing in a day, I have no words to describe my feelings except that I am in awe. Do you wonder why God loves women? Look at all women do to carry the load so their husbands are free to work and minister for the Lord. Then, look at the foundation that is being laid in the home...in the lives of these little ones that we are discipling. WHEW!

The days of High School are soooo EASY for me now. However, as I went back to the days of little ones who finished their work too fast (YES! Pre-schoolers are simply brilliant!)...then, had to go potty...then, snuck-in time to smear Vaseline all over the house while the 5-year-old practiced his reading...then, were hungry...and thirsty...hummmmm... the days just went on and on much longer than I could hang in there too.

These days are fleeting. On those particularly lonnggggg days, you may never believe it, but you are already doing the *Next Thing*. Oh, with Pre-schoolers life demands the *next thing*. It gets a little less demanding with High Schoolers (Down-side to that is you REALLY have to listen close to hear the plans!), but it is in these early years that you are laying the foundation for ALL that you will build into their lives.

Teach Who YOU ARE!

What to do?? Oh, first I would say, don't be so hard on yourself. Being a godly wife and mother IS the main thing! The greatest lessons you will teach come from you just being YOU! We flew to Washington State for the State Convention back in June. Our seat was right in front of a busy little two-year-old. I love to hear that age talk with their mommies. Sooo, you have got it, I eavesdropped.

The mother was not a homeschooler. Had no lesson plans. In fact, she did not even journal what she did on that flight. She was a mommy. She read books...one of them several times during that 5 ½ hour flight! ☺ As her little girl talked to her, she helped her to better pronounce words that were just a little too big for her at that time. When she sneezed, she encouraged her to cover her mouth and say, "Excuse me." (Which she did better than my 14-year-old!) She answered hundreds of questions. In short, she was a mother...a mother doing what she did best...mothering!

I know that it is sooo hard when days turn into weeks, only to find that less is done than we expect. I believe that is why Jesus said the following...

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

Notice that phrase, "*LEARN OF ME???*" As I sat at the feet of Jesus learning phrase-by-phrase what that passage meant, I decided to do a study on how Jesus ministered. Your letter reminded me of Him. Good huh? Yes, Jesus was constantly discipling just as you are constantly discipling your little ones. They WILL learn those lessons you are teaching, but the ones that are eternal are those they learn from your life...your heart in action.

Sure, Jesus taught His disciples and followers much about the world, but what changed their lives? It was what He had on His heart. If you are like me, Algebra is DEFINITELY NOT on my heart. But, it is in my little lesson plans to teach them so they will have dominion and subdue the world before them. BUT, what is the priority? Would it be those lessons? No, I believe it is vital to take all of the time that is necessary to sit at the feet of Jesus so what is on my heart is acceptable to be placed on their tender hearts. I believe it is that nap that we feel soooo guilty for taking...but, that helps to refresh our spirits so we can minister to the hearts of our husbands and children.

Back to the thought of how Jesus ministered and how YOU remind me of Him...think back to His days. As a LOVER of strange things like grammar and the words like "*And then...*" "*After...*" "*When...*" "*Now when...*" I noticed something incredible about Jesus' ministry. Now, keep in mind that this is a "pencil" interpretation of Scripture...but from Matthew 8 until Matthew 10, we see a "Day in the Life of Jesus." Actually it is possible that this day began in Matthew 5 with the infamous **Sermon on the Mount**. I say this because it appears to continue throughout an entire day. Soooo, what did He do "in a day???"

Preached a 3-book sermon...

Ministered to multitudes who were following Him...
Cleansed a leper...
Healed the Centurion's Servant from palsy...
Healed Peter's Mother-in-Law...
Taught the disciples a lesson as they traveled "to the OTHER side" to minister (OH, on a sail boat...IN a storm!)...
Calmed the storm...
Cast out demons (on the OTHER side—that place NO ONE wanted to go minister!)
Healed a man crippled by palsy...
Called a disciple to mentor...
Taught a lesson on fasting...
Raised a Ruler's daughter from the dead...
Tired yet?? There is more!
Healed the woman with the issue of blood...
Healed the blind...
Cast out demons...
THEN! You will love this...Taught a lesson on the need for MORE laborers! ☺

Don't you LOVE this? Let me share with you what God spoke to me through this passage! We KNOW that Jesus did ONLY what the Father told Him to do...soooo we know through this that He **was** sticking to THE MAIN THING. But...what about those distractions???. As we learn from Jesus, we find that THE DISTRACTIONS WERE THE MAIN THING! Distractions were not hindrances...they were opportunities for ministry and greater discipleship.

I believe God is THE best Writer. Nothing is by accident. There are jewels hidden away in Scripture. We must search for the jewels as we would for the most valuable treasure! The jewel here is that there are MANY things that CAN be done...but the greatest work is to seize opportunities as they come our way.

Home...The PERFECT Classroom!

I believe this is why our homes are the perfect place to teach children. NOT because we can decorate them with more color than the best-funded Kindergarten in the country...OR because each student can have one-on-one tutoring...OR because our children can each have their own computers...OR because we can use the very best books. I believe that the home is the perfect classroom because it IS real life. I believe that if our children could just speak their hearts, they would say, "*Oh Mommy...I want a HOME not a HOMESCHOOL.*" Oh, beloved! Hear God and DON'T be frightened or weary as you go along the way.

Sit at His Feet!

You are sooo right. These are days that you are learning MUCH. We would not be

where we are today if we had not had those moments in the early years of seeking the face of God. I would challenge you to sit at His feet and REFUSE to get up until you hear Him say, "This way beloved..."

Search for what HE sees in your children. Get to know them. He sees them at the end of the journey...can you trust Him? Can you follow faithfully even when you cannot see the way? Oh, KNOW that God sees the way and will not lead you astray. However, His voice is not the loudest...or the most boisterous. His voice is gentle, humble, meek, and lowly. Only His sheep know His voice...those that have listened and are seeking to follow Him each step of the way now.

Schedule PLEEEEEEEASSEEE!

What about those a decent schedule?? I will tell you how we determine our schedule THE EASY WAY! Ready?

- ♥ **Look at your life...**What is going on? What is your husband's schedule? What are each of your children needing? How much CAN you balance and still be effective? What is most important for each and every day—to meet your goals, to teach the most needed studies, to balance teaching each of your children?
- ♥ **What are your goals...**What is most important for your family? Where do you want to be next—potty training? Obedience? Reading? Writing without tears? Multiplication tables? What do you need to help you reach your goals?
- ♥ **What does EACH child need?** To learn to read? Write? Play? Chores? Let this be the "main thing" until they "get it."
- ♥ **What needs to be done each day?** Think through and possibly discuss with your husband what YOUR family "should" get done in a day. Harold and I decided that our priority was for the following to be done EVERY DAY: Quiet-times, Chores, Table-time, Family time, Free time to pursue interests, Ministry/Business/Apprenticeships, and Read Alouds. Having a general idea of what we found to be MOST important helped us to relax when we had "interruptions" and "distractions" that are inevitable in a real home. On those WONDERFUL days (don't think there are MANY of those in one year!), we can get up earlier and get all done early in the day, allowing more time for Family Time and Free Time. On those days that the morning is shorter than desired, we can roll into the basic frame work without stress and frustration throwing us off. Oh! We also have our family schedule flexible in consideration to our traveling schedule and Harold's always changing work schedule. Look at what needs to be done and how it can RELIABLY be accomplished in a day. SCHEDULE in those naps...plenty of play time...and your quiet time!

It's HOT These Years...MORE Manna Please?

Earlier in this issue, I wrote about the need for manna. Your note reminded me of a point that I want to reinforce. These are incredibly demanding days. The HEAT is on! I remember feeling like I constantly blew it. I think it was because my expectations were soooo great. I was following in the footsteps of my mom. She always kept a PERFECT house. Of course, she sent us to school before 7 every morning and we did not get home until after 4 in the afternoon! She served three meals a day, plus snacks for ALL the kids in the neighborhood. Of course, she did not have any lesson plans looming over her head and could spend abundant time in the kitchen.

My mother's legacy followed me right into my home. I about had a heart attack the first morning after our honey-moon when I found Harold's undees in the bathroom floor!!! (He wants me to note that he learned better after 15 years of marriage and much disgust over the genetic housekeeping techniques of his children!!) I got used to picking up undees *"as unto the Lord."* But, REAL stress came as we began to homeschool! Making it 20 years with a bubbly, child-filled house is much, much, much more difficult than it first appears.

Enjoy the Journey

I remember the day that God spoke to my heart about my expectations in this area. His Word to me was, *"Cindy...Enjoy the Journey."* Not overly profound, but very necessary. I could not enjoy the journey for all of the distractions, which DID include my children...my husband...and those little ministry opportunities that came my way each day in the form of elderly, the hurting, the new mother at church, the weary workers at the local coffee shop, etc.

How can we do all of this? I believe the key is making enough time in our day to access more of God when we need a refill! On those days when the heat is really on, it may mean wearing a head-set with really up-beat praise and worship music (Sure beats wearing an apron over your head like Susannah Wesley and seems to work better for me!). It may mean slipping away to your restroom with your Bible for a little refreshing in the middle of the day (or morning!). It may mean memorizing one of your favorite "promise" verses with your little ones.

Whatever it takes, don't feel like you are a failure. Fill your cup back up. KNOW that you are a history maker right there in your home with your little ones. What you are doing influences the lives of all who come within your life. Your enemy knows that. He is going to hit you because IF he gets you, he believes he has your family.

Soooo, treasure these days. Let the STUFF pass by. Keep your focus on the Lord. Continue to hear Him each step of the way. And...your legacy? Take a peek at Proverbs 31. Not at the "busy stuff" but at the end...

"Her children rise up and call her blessed (happy, fortunate, and to be

envied); and her husband boasts of and praises her, [saying], Many daughters have done virtuously, nobly, and well [with the strength of character that is steadfast in goodness], but YOU EXCEL THEM ALL."

You, my dear sister, DO excel them all. Stay the course. It is worth it! AND know...you are never alone! We are right there with you to cheer you on! Love, Cindy

Wrapping It Up...It CAN Be Easy Too!

Dear Cindy,

Thank you for giving me your book *Inspiring Our Children Toward Greatness Using Great Literature*. You may be JUST the resource I need to give me a long-needed "boost." I get overwhelmed by over-zealous programs from apparent super-homeschoolers.

I get the impression that its OK to fail—even in a big way sometimes. God always takes us from where we are now, wraps us in forgiveness and love and let's us move on without having to look back. Your philosophy seems so DO-ABLE. I will get some of your tapes to allow me to soak up more.

I am very much into "tea" and would like to incorporate some of your ideas into our school.

I have been homeschooling for 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ years. My two oldest are in their 3rd year of High School. I have a 12-year-old and a 6-year-old (that you met Friday night). High School has been only minimally successful. My fervor is growing and resolve is high to have a great year this year.

I work part time as a nurse. I want to be 100% stay and home, but can't—not now. Thank you for coming to our conference and book fair. Here is some bread I baked yesterday. In Christ...

Hi!

What a treat your note and bread were as I opened your sweet gift bag! Thanks! There is nothing quite like the ministry that so many of you share with us when we are away from the comforts of home. Truly God will bless you richly as you minister to His servants that come along your way.

I always pray that our books will encourage all of you as you pour into your families, while prayerfully presenting ideas that ARE DO-ABLE in a busy home. I guess you figured out REAL quick that we are a very REAL family...my only genuine qualification for ministry: BEING REAL! I believe that far too often the conventions and seminars seem to leave parents feeling more overwhelmed because we are given the impression that fellow homeschoolers DO IT ALL. My dear friend, we have had a few days that we have done it all...but, only a fraction of the time we have homeschooled. Let down? I pray not! I pray that you are encouraged to let God lead you each and every day. Then, and only then, will you find true success in homeschooling. God is not a taskmaster. He wants to give us success, but we can only have it as we hear Him for each and every one of our days.

Just WHAT Is Success???

It sounds to me as if you are well on your journey. Wondering if I read your letter
