

whatever it takes to live for Christ. She will show you that the prize is worth the price!!

So, Beth, if we stay at home and aren't running to church or Bible studies, then how do we get "fed?" How do we stay motivated to be in the Word and to make the hard choices God asks of us? Well, I'm glad you asked that question!

There are a couple of answers. First and foremost, God will call you, motivate you and give you a hunger and a thirst for time with Him. He was faithful to do so in past generations and He'll be faithful to do so for you, because Scripture tells us that He is "no respecter of persons", meaning that God doesn't play favorites. Another answer may surprise you, but let me tell you about it through my own experience.

About a year or so after having made the choice to "de-involve", I was questioning God as to whether or not I had missed Him, been deceived, "led down the garden path," etc. I questioned the Lord about it one night and had gotten no firm answer before I went to sleep. The next morning, the Lord woke me up before my alarm went off. He told me, "Find Joyce Meyer." I knew He was talking about the TV, I knew who she was, but had no idea where to find her!

I got up and checked the digital schedule provided by our cable company, and there on Channel 48 it said, "Joyce Meyer"! I rejoiced that I had obviously heard the Lord correctly and found what I was supposed to find, and I got in with a minute or so to spare. During the course of the thirty minutes she was on the air, she said something which made the hair stand up all over me! She said that the place for women with children was in their homes! And she said that they have no business being gone all the time, even at church to "serve the Lord!!" They were not to run from Bible Study to Bible Study, but to stay at home with their kids! She said, "If you need Bible study, just study with me!" I KNEW that God had instructed her to say that AND waked me up just to hear the answer to my question from the night before! So, one part of my study at home is with Joyce Meyer. I have done so for three years, and will do so until the Lord gives me different instructions!

The most astonishing thing about this story is that for one full year I went to the digital TV schedule and it never again said, "Joyce Meyer;" it only said, "Paid Programming!" GOD put that there that day for me to hear the EXACT answer to my prayer! If you don't have cable or a way to do this and you feel led of God to do so, then purchase a package of video tapes and send to a family member who has TV and see if they'll tape her (or anyone else you choose) for you! When you've seen one tape, send it back and they can re-tape on it for you. While you are watching the first tape, they are filling the second, etc. I have done this for someone I disciple who hasn't any way to receive the broadcast.

A third way to have Bible study while at home is over the telephone with someone you know! This may sound odd, but you and a friend can decide to study a book or passage together and then get together and compare notes. The trick here is to set your time, stay on track and not let the phone eat your day. Set a kitchen timer and make an agreement that you will get off the phone when your timers ring, whether or not you are "finished".

A fourth way is to do the same thing through a weekly tea time. This works best if you have

children the same age as yours who can play together and help entertain each other giving you some grown-up time.

A fifth way (which could be incorporated into numbers three and four) is to get Bible study books like those by Kay Arthur similar to "God Are You There?", which my eldest daughter is now finishing. Kay Arthur teaches a Bible study methodology known as "Precept" which I highly recommend. Once you learn this, you can tear apart any Scripture and know that you know what it means. You will be MUCH more difficult to deceive and you have a wonderful assurance about the Word when you have "**studied to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.**" (2 Timothy 2:15)

If we're going to "de-involve", then what will that bring? Let's take a minute to look at how God taught the Jews to worship. After all, the Jews were not grafted into the Gentiles! Instead, we were grafted into the vine of Israel through Jesus, (Romans 11:17-18, Galatians 3:29) so the principles God laid for them are also for us!

I want to give you a picture of how God told the Jews to keep the Sabbath. I am not telling you to keep the Jewish Sabbath, though some families are being led of God to do so. For this article, I'm simply using this as an illustration to make a point.

We have some mistaken ideas about the Sabbath, the Temple in Jerusalem, the function of synagogues (there was a local one Jesus attended - Luke 4:16-30); we are virtually ignorant of the feasts of Israel, which were "a perpetual statute throughout your generations," so there is much in Scripture that we miss.

Have you ever heard Ray Boltz's song, "Watch the Lamb?" If so, then you've heard the story of a man and his sons taking the family lamb for Passover to the Temple for sacrifice. The streets are crowded on this holy day and the father instructs his sons to "watch the lamb" in the midst of the crowd. Along the way, they come across Jesus headed for the cross and the father realizes that HE is the ultimate Lamb of God and instructs his sons to "watch the Lamb." This is a picture of how the Temple, which was also the local synagogue for Jerusalem, worked in the life of the Jews. For those too far away from the Temple for it to be their synagogue, there were local synagogues where the men would gather to learn and debate the law. This was also where the boys would study the law in order to pass their Bar Mitzvah in order to "become a man" at age thirteen. (The girls had to pass a Bat Mitzvah at the same age, so both sexes had a "rite of passage" ceremony.)

But, when it came to the weekly worship, it was not done in the Temple or the local synagogue! It was done in the home!! That is why the first century Christians met from house to house because they were used to the home being the place the Sabbath was held! (Rent and watch Fiddler on the Roof. You'll see Golda running around, watching the sky for sunset, for all work had to be done before the beginning of Sabbath. You'll also see her light the Sabbath candle and say a prayer to begin the Sabbath.)

The Jews celebrated (and still celebrate) the Sabbath, called Shabbot, from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday. I have a friend who is a missionary in the Middle East. We were discussing this one day when she was in the U.S. and she was telling me how Shabbot is celebrated over there.

Friday night the family gathers together, has a special meal (similar to "Sunday dinner") and spends the evening worshipping God and studying His Word. On Saturday, they each get up and quietly have their own time with the Lord and then the rest of the day is spent as a family, resting. They might go to the beach at the Red Sea. They might do any family activity that includes a day of rest for the family. So, when we read in the New Testament that they "broke bread together," "meeting house to house" all of a sudden, it takes on a whole new meaning, doesn't it?!

The point I'm making is that we have been told that going to the building where believers meet and working there is "Godly Womanhood," when the Scripture and Jewish tradition based on Scripture show us otherwise! There are SO many beautiful things about doing this God's way instead of the way our tradition has taught us! It is summed up in one of Cindy's favorite Scriptures, Matthew 11:28-30. (read it in the Amplified Version!)

God's way of centering our worship and ministry in the home brings peace into our homes, reduces strife in our marriages and families, strengthens our bodies by allowing them to get enough rest and reducing the load of stress under which we live; it allows our husbands to assume the role God gave him of high priest of the home; it allows our family to work together in UNITY, a very powerful place which the "church" today, and we as families rarely achieve.

We CAN change the world just like the first century Christians did - from our homes IF we are willing to obey the Word of God and live according to Scripture. It IS the Master's plan.

"For My [God's] thoughts are not your thoughts. Neither are your ways My ways, declares the Lord." (Isaiah 55:8)

Home is the God designed center of ministry and once there, the opportunity to become a Godly woman by God's definition is there and much more easily obtained.

Letters We Love!

This issue we bring Matthew Rushton's Mailbag!!

Dear Matthew,

I am 14 and I just read your article "Purity The Only Way." I was very impressed that someone our age could put his feelings into words so well! I really loved your article and I liked your story about the gun (even though, yes, I did get a little lost! :)

I just have one question I wanted to ask you. How do you think that someone who doesn't date at all will find the perfect spouse that God has intended for them?

Sarah

Hi,

I just wanted to thank you for reading the article. I am very glad that you were as blessed reading it as I have been by researching this topic. I have done a lot of reading on this topic over the last few years and have learned that there is not much out there that really tells how God feels about this area of our lives.

I did not, for a lack of space, include in the article "Purity...The Only Way" my thoughts about your question in particular. Thanks for asking...

"How do you think that someone who doesn't date will find the perfect spouse that God has intended for them?"

Great question! I have been reflecting upon your question in particular and praying for some good advise from the Lord. I remembered to go to my favorite passages in the Bible regarding some of the couples that didn't date or even meet till the day of their wedding. I think that this may answer your question as we look back to their stories.

First, think about Isaac and Rebecca (*Genesis 24:1-66*). As you may have noticed, neither of them had anything to do with finding the other. Instead, God brought them together. God provided the perfect spouse. Also, God showed the standard for how we should ideally approach marriage.

Also, you may want to look at Adam and Eve. Neither one of them had to worry (date) to find the other. All they did was rest... wait on God...then, when God was ready, they just looked up and saw each other. Again, God provided for them...and, He will do the same for you!

If we can at stay pure for all this time, God will not just dump us in the end. He will completely provide for us.

As I read back over these two totally separate "marriage stories," I noticed they are so similar. God provided for both couples. They did not have to worry. They did not have to date. In the end, they had no regrets going into a great marriage!

I think if you trust God and wait for Him, you and your family will all realize when you have found your true spouse. Like I said if you trust God He won't let you down!

Keep on Trusting in Him...
and Merry Christmas!
Matthew Rushton
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What Counts? By Betty Dickerson

The other day, one of my dear children, very passionately proceeded to interrupt everything I was doing for several hours with, "Excuse me, Mama!" "Mama, Excuse me!!" Leah or my Mom could probably tell you who that was. It was so frustrating; I couldn't cook dinner, read our read-aloud book, or have a conversation with anybody else in the house. Although I listened to him, he never ran out of things to say. Finally, I raised my voice in frustration and sent him to his room in not the nicest way. I blew it.

I have a friend who shared that the most draining thing she does all day is to maintain her witness in front of her children. It *is* so draining to be loving, kind, gentle, patient, joyful, when you are bombarded with squabbles, requests, little rest, 24/7. But it is the "school" that God has chosen for me and if this doesn't develop the fruit of the Spirit in me, then nothing will!! For others what drains them may be trying to maintain their witness at work, or maintaining their witness when nobody else is looking. Yet, this is what God is has called us to.

When I was pregnant with the boys, Alyssa was 15 mos. old and into everything. I, on the other hand, was into sleeping. Between double the nausea, double the fatigue, and lying on my side 24 hrs. I could barely make it through the day. Jeff would ask me that forbidden question when he got home, "What have you done all day?" Finally, fed up, I told him, "For your information, I have been busy forming 2 placentas!" (He doesn't ask me this question anymore!). The most important things to God are things that are the hardest to measure, the things taking place within us.

Jesus tried to relay a similar message to his apostles when He said, "Do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven" Luke 10:20. Oswald Chambers comments, "Jesus is saying here, 'Don't rejoice in your successful service for Me, but rejoice because of your right relationship with Me.'" The trap we fall into is rejoicing because of all the things we do for God. Yet, God can do so much more *through* us, in ways that can't be measured, if we would keep a right relationship with Him. Chambers goes on, "If you keep a right relationship with Him, then regardless of your circumstances or whoever you encounter each day, He will continue to pour 'rivers of living water' through you (Jn. 7:38). And it will actually be by His mercy that He doesn't let you know it."

So the emphasis needs to be off our service and on our relationship with God. God does call us to be servants, but our service will not have effectiveness or joy if it is not the result of the overflow of God's rivers within us. Now, we may be overflowing, but it isn't always with His life-giving rivers. Amen? More often, our rivers are filled with the stench of frustration, impatience, anger, resentment, bitterness, selfishness, doubt, etc... Yes, these rivers can still get something/someone wet, but they will not nourish and produce fruit. We can get so busy with service that we never address the issues and sins of our heart that God is trying to deal with.

"Once you have the right relationship with God through salvation and sanctification, remember

that whatever your circumstances may be, you have been placed in them by God. And God uses the *reaction* of your life to your circumstances to fulfill His purpose, as long as you continue to 'walk in the light as He is in the light' (1Jn. 1:7)." Sanctification means to be separated from the sinful and made holy. Often my reactions are not sanctified. Reactions are difficult to control, but if I am yielded under the Spirit's control, my reactions will be Spirit-controlled as well. Our reactions clue us in to the condition of our hearts, and alert us that something is not right. There are some "services" that we can't drop like being a spouse and parent, and other activities that keep us too busy. We need God's help to discern when our relationship with Him is suffering. For me, that means getting up before the children to meet with the Lord, spending more time in my "secret place", and cutting out excess activity and clutter. Somewhere along the way, God made a right turn and I kept going. Notice Chambers says that *once* our relationship is right with God, we can trust that we have been placed in our circumstances by God. Until then, we get ourselves into a lot of messes, none that He can't fix, though. "God has called us to serve, but He never called us to drown" (Freddi Woodford.) Yet, it's so easy to do.

The season we're in is so special. Thanksgiving and Christmas allow us to interrupt the hustle and bussle and take time to truly reflect on what God is doing in our lives and in history. It is a wonderful time to disciple our children and minister to others. But we will miss it if we get our priorities out of order. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God" (Matt. 6:33), is saying seek to let God rule and to make His kingdom *first* in your heart and then in your circumstances. Cultivate His righteousness in your life. Pursue this first—He'll take care of the rest. Then your effectiveness and ministry won't be limited to something that occurs at church. He will make everything you do, even your example, a ministry. Awesome!! I **struggle** daily to make this a reality in my life (even as I type!), may God bless our efforts!!

Some Quick Homemaking Ideas From the Rushton House!

- ♥ **Utilize your help...**Have a set chore time. Put everyone to work! You will have more time to enjoy your family and your home won't distract you along the way. Plus, everyone will learn how to serve others!
- ♥ **Guard Your Time...** Expect the unexpected...illnesses, bad days, delays, interruptions! Learn to say no so you will have more time for keeping homemaking simple! Turn off the TV--the best way to keep your little ones productive! Plan for free time--IT IS OK!
- ♥ **Limit Your Time Spent on Cleaning!** Let's face it, our homes will never stay spotless, so redeem the time to spend with our eternal treasures! Have "clutter-drills" during the day where the children pick up as much as possible in 5 minutes. Set a timer. In just five minutes most of the house can be cleaned back up! IT WORKS! Do semi-annual cleanout...fall and spring. This will help to get things back in order...to re-organize those places things are to be put...and to de-clutter. Then, the children can help you maintain the home IF THEY ARE TRAINED to help and not become part of the mess. Purchase servants for making your job easier—bread mixer...crock pots...blenders...dishwasher! These will save hours of time and do the job better as well!
- ♥ **Keep meals simple...**Use *easy meals* (Easy dishes like-tacos, burritos, enchiladas, nachos, salads, spaghetti, chicken pot pie, burgers, lasagna, granola and yogurt, shakes, muffins) or *big meals* that you can reheat or serve in a hurry (Soups, breads, casseroles).
- ♥ **Find great helps for homemaking...**

Looking Well To The Ways of Your Household: Practical Help for the Domestically Challenged
by Mary Carney

Kitchen Management for the Domestically Challenged
by Mary Carney

How Will I Ever Get It ALL Done? Homemaking, Mothering, and Homeschooling for 21st Century Women by
Mary Carney

Sue Gregg Cookbooks (our favorites for healthy AND easy meals that TASTE GOOD!)

Bread for Life Cookbooks by Beth Holland

Bread for Life Audio Tape by Beth Holland

Bread for Life Class Video by Beth Holland

Basic Bread Making Video by Beth Holland

Advanced Bread Making Video by Beth Holland

Some Funnies Gist to Lighten Your Heart

...He who has a glad heart has a continual feast [regardless of circumstances]. Proverbs 15: 15



A Diet We MIGHT Can Do...

This is a specially formulated diet designed to help women cope with the stress that builds up during the day.

BREAKFAST:

1 grapefruit
1 slice whole wheat toast
1 cup skim milk

LUNCH:

1 small portion lean,
steamed chicken with a cup of spinach
1 cup herbal tea
1 Hershey Kiss

AFTERNOON TEA:

The rest of the Kisses in the bag
1 tub of Hagen Daas Ice Cream with Choc-chip topping

DINNER:

2 loaves Garlic bread
1 family size Supreme Pizza
3 Snickers Bars

LATE NIGHT SNACK:

1 whole frozen Sarah Lee cheesecake (eaten
directly from the freezer)

Remember: STRESSED SPELLED BACKWARDS IS 'DESSERTS'



Assorted Non-Sense Here To Give You A Giggle!

- ♥ The early bird gets the worm...but the second mouse gets the cheese.
- ♥ Ok...so, what is the speed of dark?
- ♥ How do you tell when you are out of invisible ink?

- ♥ If everything seems to be going well, you have obviously overlooked something.
- ♥ Support bacteria—they are the only culture that some people have.
- ♥ Depression is only anger without enthusiasm.
- ♥ When everything's coming your way, you are in the wrong lane.
- ♥ Hard work pays off in the future...but, laziness pays off now.
- ♥ Shin: part of your body used to find furniture in the dark.
- ♥ Many people quit looking for work when they find a job.
- ♥ If Barbie is so popular, why do you have to buy her friends???
- ♥ If I worked as much as others, I would do as little as they.
- ♥ When I am not in my right mind, my left mind gets pretty crowded.



TRIVIAL WORD STUDIES...

From The Brighter Side of Life

Committee: A body that keeps minutes but wastes hours

Gossip: A person who will never tell a lie if the truth
will do more damage.

Secret: Something you tell one person at a time.

Tomorrow: One of today's greatest labor-saving devices.



REAL Excuse Notes Written By Parents!

" John has been absent because he had two teeth
taken out of his face."

"My son is under doctor's care and should not take gym class today. Please execute him."

"Please excuse Jennifer for missing school yesterday. We forgot to get the Sunday paper off of
the porch, and when we found it on Monday, we thought it was Sunday."

"I kept Billie home because she had to go Christmas shopping because I do not know what size she
wears."

"Dear School: Please excuse John being absent on
January 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, and also 33."



*"He who has a glad heart has a continual feast [regardless of circumstances]."
Proverbs 15:15*



"Laughter is the medicine intended to cure the disease of self-importance. It's hard to puff

yourself up to weather balloon size if you can deflate yourself with a good prick of self-directed humor. How many laughs are you having--some at your own expense? Have you, as a couple, claimed the promise, "He will yet fill your mouth with laughter, and your lips with shouting." (Job 8:21) Before the wedding ceremony, many couples need to have a bold objective for their first year of marriage: Over the next year, we will be found guilty of having too much fun rather than too little fun. That is not a bad objective for any year of marriage."

Dennis and Barbara Rainey, *Starting Your Marriage Right*

Just Too Busy!

By Cindy Rushton

"Through skillful and godly wisdom is a house (a life, a home, a family) built, and by understanding it is established [on a sound and good foundation], and by knowledge shall its chambers [of every area] be filled with all precious and pleasant riches." Proverbs 24: 3-4

Isn't this our heart? We want to BUILD a godly home...but, oh, uh, we are just SO busy! How do we slow down in a very busy world? How do we save more time so we can truly build into our family? Here are some ideas that I pray will help you in this VERY busy season!

Too Much In A Day...

Yep! This is one of my greatest struggles. I am one of those people who hopelessly plan too much into a life! I want to DO IT ALL! And, the sad thing is that I try to! J This past summer one of my personal studies has been (don't laugh!), "How to Manage My Time." Why? Well, because I want to eliminate any possible hindrance so I can do MORE!! Hehe! I know motives may not necessarily be great here. Actually, they may signal a blaring warning that tells you that this is one area that I personally struggle in NOW. True, but I have to share some of what I am finding (and applying) in my study. Who knows? It may help you to tame your schedule so you can busy doing the things that God has called you to do too!

For one thing, it really helps to sit down and really look at your day. What DOES get done in a typical day? I have found that I do get a lot done in a day. I will never be accused of being idle. In fact, I am writing this article while my husband runs errands (see the next section of this article about that!). I really do seize every moment I can. But, at the end of most days, I still have the same complaint, "I need MORE hours in my day!"

We are only allotted 24 hours a day. One prayer request that we can be sure WON'T be answered is the request for 85 hours in a day! Why? Because it would still not be enough for people like me! So, how do we make more hours in our day? Make that list of what IS being done in a day. Make another list of what you would REALLY like to see included that you are not getting around to. See if what you are doing and if what you would like to do fits into what God has placed on your heart as your priorities. Make sure that they help you to reach toward the "mark." For me, when we began homeschooling I struggled for a while with distractions and hindrances that are so common in a busy home. After, well, a whole year (I am very slow on some things!) the Lord showed me the value in looking over my typical day to see how I could fit in the things that were most important and those little things that are always going to pop up. I found that there were categories that most everything could fit into: Quiet Times, Chores, Table Time, Family Time, Productive Free Time, Ministry/Business, and Family Read Alouds. Actually this is the basic order for every day. It is possible at home. It is possible on the road. It is possible when we have company. It is possible when things go a bit hay-wire! These are the priorities for the day, but there are still

things even with ME that never seem to get done unless they are part of the schedule for the day. For example, this past summer, my doctor prescribed that I go to the Wellness Center for exercise daily. I had wanted more time to actually get around to exercising. But, it just seemed that if I had another 55 hours in my day that then I could have time to devote to exercise!

Making a List, Checking it Twice (or FIFTEEN TIMES!)...

I made my list. Then, it was easier to see the holes in my life that were not being filled. Sure, I was accomplishing a lot with my children, our ministry, and even my marriage relationship. But, there were still glaring holes beaming out at me and plaguing me with guilt and condemnation! Yes, I wanted to exercise. I have stacks of wonderful audio tapes that I would love to hear. I want more time to sit back and relax, even if it is occasionally! I wanted more time to make memories with the children. Of course, I also wanted to be more productive. Those are the things that seem to give me the "feeling" that I am not accomplishing as much in my day as I really wanted. Of course, I was accomplishing the "work" in each day. On many days that was ALL that was accomplished. No wonder there was a feeling of frustration! We are geared to do more than just work day-in-day-out. So, what to do?

Look At Your Typical Day...

First, I had to take an honest look at all those things that were included in a typical day. Many were right down the line with the vision God has placed in my heart. Yet, there were still things that God had placed on my heart that were not ever making it into my days. Plus, there were other things that were very questionable. I had to look at every single thing in my day to see if there were things that could be combined so I could accomplish more tasks at one time, that delegated to others so I could have more time for things that only I could do, or eliminated because they were really not that essential to what we were about. This has helped tremendously!

Combine Tasks...

It may help you too. See if there can be things that can be combined. For me, exercise and listening to those teaching tapes gets two things done. Neither fit into my schedule before because I felt that exercise was just frivolous (looking at this body OBVIOUSLY shows I was not right!). Listening to my teaching tapes seemed to always not fit in—I had to concentrate when I write or answer email, my family did not really appreciate hearing my tapes, and there was really no time other than that! However, fitting them together is the perfect answer! That 30 minutes a day is life-giving. It makes the other 23 hours and 30 minutes a whole lot better! Another thing that I decided to continue doing, but expand was my morning breakfast with my husband. For the last two years, Harold and I have been getting up earlier than the children to go to breakfast, have a devotion, and pow-wow. We kept this time in our day, but also added planning for our ministry and business (We are making a transition to bring him home from working for the State, but it takes much planning and fore-thought to be sure we are completely ready for the change.) this helps to actually work in yet another thing that seemed to never have a special time in the schedule. There were many other adjustments and changes. Not too easy, but definitely helpful! Things like cooking in the crockpot overnight so we are at home while it is cooking, but not having to stand over a stove during the day...going through the mail as we walk back from the mailbox and

dumping the junk-mail into the trash before we walk in the house (our can is right outside the door!) rather than do a big clean-out during the year... Doing more things at one time really helps to use the time to the fullest!

Delegate! OUCH!

Delegate! Yep! That is another toughie for me! The first time I ever delegated stands out in my mind as a turning point for me. My children were 7 and 4 at the time. We were living in our camper in Selma, AL while Harold was in the State Trooper Academy there. Living in the camper was probably one of my most life-changing experiences because I learned how much of my life at that time was "fluff" and wasted. Living in the camper forced me to only have my most essential belongings with me. (still have not unpacked many of the boxes we had stored away—now 10 years ago!!!) We made more memories than ever. Each day we had plenty of time for me to just mother, keep my home, homeschool, and even play games at the end of the day! Life was simple. Homemaking was easy. I made easy meals. Cleanup of the whole camper was usually 5-10 minutes or at most 25 minutes (big change from my 10-12 hour cleaning days before!)! The hardest part was the small space and taking laundry OUT to the laundrymat every few days. The good part was that in Selma the laundrymat was AT THE POOL! The children could play and I could enjoy watching over them while I read, did laundry AND tanned! (had the best tan and read more than 6 months than ever in my life!) However, in the midst of this EASIER life there were STILL struggles!

How could it be? Well, I could clean up, but while I was cleaning my children were idle—arguing (yep, these PERFECT children were acting like other children!), messing up the other side of the room (EEK!), and dirtying up their clothes (EVERY DAY!).

One day in particular, a Monday (Could I find a better word to give you a "picture" of this scene?) to be completely accurate, I had so much pressing in that day. I was standing at my 1 ft X 1ft X 4inch deep sink (it still felt like Mt. Everest!) full of dishes. The children were behind me just finishing their breakfast. And, they had the audacity to begin fussing over WHO could watch their movie (and WE homeschool!). The quarreling was getting ON MY NERVES—the really touchy ones! There I was...washing dishes...the laundry was there needing for me to fold it...the toilets needed cleaning...we needed to begin our lessons for the day...my husband was gone for another week at the academy, leaving me with my PERFECT little morons, I mean children, lambs, beloved little ones...and here they were ARGUING! I snapped. I admit it! I simply snapped. I told them, actually screamed at them, to stop arguing and just fold those clothes if they had that much energy. Still washing my dishes...silence permeated the room for several minutes until giggly-giggles took over. I turned around to find that almost ALL of the laundry was folded and they were LIKING IT! Tears filled my eyes. The Lord spoke to my heart. I did not have to do it all myself! MY children COULD help me!

Oh yea! And so can your children! What CAN be delegated? Anything! Everything, well, there are a few things that only YOU can do. Find them and delegate the rest! Oh, it may not immediately be the same standard that you do things yourself, but who looks in the dresser anyway? (only sick people, if you ask me!) Plus, think of how valuable it is for children to learn from an early age to pitch in and be a "part" of the family. So, take a look at your list of things that YOU are doing each day. Look at what can be delegated. Then, delegate to your little ones!

Eliminate!!

Finally, go back to your trusty list. What can be eliminated? This is where you may experience anxiety. But, really look at all you do in a day. Are those things really important? Can they be done in another way that can give you more time? Let me take you home with me again. I love to have healthy, homemade meals. But, reality says that if I want to save time, this was one of those areas that really could be simplified down so much that much of the time spent in the kitchen on a daily basis could actually be eliminated. Gasping? Well, so did I...at first!

I took an honest look at our meals. We could eliminate so much that I could gain HOURS each week. How? Well, I decided to do more bulk cooking, buy more "ready-made" meals, like Lasagna from Sam's, Baked Chicken (heat and serve) from Sam's, Pizza (yep, and my children LOVE it!), and even Heavenly Ham! Yep, Heavenly Ham (should be getting a percentage here, huh?). What may seem like an extravagance is really a great way to save precious TIME and have great meals whether using the Ham as the meat for a meal or as sandwich meat. One big ham lasts our family for several weeks. In addition to tasting great and saving me time cooking and preparing the ham, we also cut at least an hour of cooking each day for lunch for those two weeks. All I have to do is add vegetables (we have a freezer full of vegetables from the garden that just have to be defrosted and warmed!) and bread! A typical meal can come together in 15-30 minutes! We can also use food like the Heavenly Ham for lunch. We just make sandwiches and either eat just the sandwich or have a sandwich and homemade soup, that also can be made in a big pot! Easy. Saves time for other more important things in my schedule—like enjoying the family I am feeding!!

Now, you may not feel that cooking can be eliminated in your daily schedule. Each of our families are so very different. This is where only God can help you to decide what can be combined, delegated, eliminated OR done by you each day! Hear HIM and He is guaranteed not to fail you!

Too Much Going...

Hummm...well, here we get a little personal, huh? This is an area that God RESTRICTED for me. It was just not as clear-cut as DO, COMBINE, DELEGATE, OR ELIMINATE. Instead, my "going" has to be a daily time with God. Each instance must be thrown up on that altar for God to classify for us! What about you? What are we to do? Beloved, first slow down! Watch out for too much going! Oh, it may not even be for "bad" stuff! It just keeps us from having what we really want! Think about it...Is this a hindrance for you? Let's get a little more personal. Do you go so much (even for good things) that you sometimes find that you cannot truly enjoy your home? When was the last time you had TIME to leisurely relax and enjoy your home? For me, this is a constant struggle. A daily struggle! There are so many "to-do's" that press in that I get too busy, going too many directions before I even know it!

Testing...

I have had a test for years that I periodically do to evaluate my lifestyle and schedule. I ask myself, "Can I spend one entire week at home without feeling as though I am not getting to do all I need to do?" (Yep, I am wiggling a bit here too!) "Is my home supplied well enough that I can stay home without having to "run" to get more things that I "need" to cook, teach my children, manage

my home?" (Gasp! EEK!) "Is a quiet, peaceful homelife impossible because I am too busy going to activities?" (OUCH!) "Are all those activities truly God's will?" (Sniff, sniff!) "Would all those same activities go on just as well without ME?" (Well, uh, how would I know if I am not there?) "What CAN I eliminate to give us more time at home as a family?" (Ok...Ok!) "Does my husband feel that all I am doing is essential? God's will?" (Well, uh...)

It is amazing how much CAN GO! Just last week, Harold and I got a great big laugh when we both shared what had been on our hearts, at the same time! I had noticed that we were losing time with errands on almost a daily basis. Oh, and almost the SAME errands every single day! My reasons were simple, I wanted for to be a good steward of the money, not buying anything that could go to waste. But, as a result, our time was being wasted...gas going and coming was being wasted...I was not as prepared for each day as I could have been...and the atmosphere of our home was interrupted every day with "to-do's."

This is not the only area that gets out of control easy at our home. Our schedule is just as wild! I must manage our outside activities or very quickly we become THEIR servants!

Oh! But This is GOOD!

We travel on a weekly basis throughout the whole year. Because of this, as we decided to travel this much, we had to eliminate many GOOD things from our schedule. Naturally, I am just as much of a "clutter-bug" with our TIME as I am with books, papers, etc.! Loosening my grip on those good things is so, SO hard! Yet, there is no way to truly do exactly what God has called us to do, except to prune! Oh, yea! That hard word!

Cutting back. Slowing down. Getting back to the core. Keeping only what is bearing fruit, so all of the nutrients (energy) can go into bearing MORE fruit! Truly, the person was "right on" who said that if satan can't get us to do WRONG things, then he will keep us busy doing a lot of GOOD things which ultimately hinder us from doing God's VERY BEST. That person must have been JUST like me! What about you?

Too busy "going" to BUILD your home? Slow down. Slow down to enjoy your home. Slow down to make your home special, a fortress.

But! How *DO* Ya Slow Down???

Have no idea how to begin slowing down? Have no idea what you could let go? Is it just too confusing? Afraid you or your family will miss something? Go to God with your schedule. Place all activities on the altar. Wait on Him. Share your heart with your husband. Let your husband set your schedule. Look over activities very carefully, evaluating them honestly. Do they work toward the call that God has for your family? Are they necessary? Do they compete for "down-time" that your family really needs to fellowship, rest, and develop a lifestyle of learning? Commit to finding God's plan for your day! Listen to your sweet husband. Look objectively at those tempting activities! Reach for the very, very best use of your day! Then, you will find God pulling you back into a pace that you can continue the journey till the end!

Just Busy...

I know that I am writing this (and you should read this now) during the holiday season, the busiest season of the entire year. But, I write this knowing that we are not just busy at this time of the year alone! We are busy all of the time! How do we guard against "BUSYness" all throughout the year? Well, let's take a look at Proverbs 29:18... "Where there is no vision the people perish." You know, I have one problem with this verse. My problem is that this is not something you get ONCE and for all! We must constantly guard our home. We must constantly evaluate whether our homes are in conformity with the vision God has given us for our family. We must constantly check our "gardens" and uproot any weeds or overgrown plants that hinder the growth of our most precious "plants," our children! We have to constantly make sure to have time with God, time with our husbands, time with our children, time within our homes, time to minister to those within our sphere of influence, and time left so we can take care of ourselves!

The Bible says that there are works set from the foundation of the world. Be faithful in YOUR works! Seek God's wisdom for EVEN your lifestyle and schedule! Don't let the enemy distract you by what is "out there" somewhere! Don't feel guilty about letting great things go! Do ALL you can to preserve that home atmosphere from ALL distractions that are out there! Don't get too busy *to build your home* for truly you have much to look forward to—just look again at Proverbs 24: 3-4:

"Through skillful and godly wisdom is a house (a life, a home, a family) built, and by understanding it is established [on a sound and good foundation], and by knowledge shall its chambers [of every area] be filled with all precious and pleasant riches." Proverbs 24: 3-4

Have a great year!

Teach Me Lord, That I May Teach

By Cindy Rushton

Excerpted From **Homeschooling The EASY Way Magazine**

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

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

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

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

Come to Me...

I will cause you to rest...

Take My yoke...

Learn of Me...

Take my yoke...

You will find rest!

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

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

So, how about it? What about taking a journey back in time to learn of the Master Teacher? How about taking a detailed look at His methods of teaching? What about a look at His ideas of "essential" lessons? Oh, buckle up for a bit, we are going to teach YOU, so you may teach!

Jesus was Focused...

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

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

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

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

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

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

- ⇒ Preached a 3-book sermon...
- ⇒ Ministered to multitudes who were following Him...
- ⇒ Cleansed a leper...
- ⇒ Healed the Centurion's Servant from palsy...
- ⇒ Healed Peter's Mother-in-Law...
- ⇒ 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. He was FOCUSED on the main thing! Soooo we know through this that He was sticking to THE MAIN THING. But...what about those distractions???

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

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

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

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

I believe God is THE best Writer. Nothing is by accident. There are jewels hidden away in Scripture. We must search for the jewels as we would for the most valuable treasure! The jewel here is that there are MANY things that CAN be done...but the greatest work is to seize opportunities as they come our way while we are reaching for the "prize before us!" Only as we learn from our Master Teacher how to keep our FOCUS and how to use the distractions, interruptions, and delays as a ministry and as REAL LIFE curriculum along the way, will we find true discipleship—true education! Only then will we find "rest, ease, relief, refreshment, gentleness, recreation and blessed quiet." Simply awesome huh?

Jesus Taught All Along The Way!

This time of year, we naturally turn back to precious carols, that remind us of the Name of God, Immanuel! We see cards reminding us that we celebrate Immanuel! We read Scriptures, reminding us of the prophecies foretelling the advent of Immanuel AND the Scriptures that detail the life

of Immanuel! I LOVE this Name! Immanuel! Immanuel actually comes from two words meaning God with us.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- ♥ **He taught along the way!** No desks. No chalkboards. Not even those big, fancy projectors we see at conferences! Those things would have hindered the teachable moment. Instead, as we go back in time to see His classroom, we find that it is rarely even within walls. He took His students with Him everywhere (Well, except when He had to go apart for renewal—more on that in a bit), teaching them all along the way as lessons IN LIFE came up! This brings me to the next point...
- ♥ **He taught what HE KNEW!** As the "Ultimate Teacher," can you imagine His lessons? Yet, as we look back over His ministry, we must take into consideration that His lessons did not allow for Him to depend upon teacher's manuals or even texts to teach. Instead, He taught what was on His heart. He taught WHO He was! He used what He KNEW as the examples of the information He taught His students! And the impact? Well, it has yet to be matched in 2000

years! I think I will take that method!

- ♥ **He used the practical to teach deep Spiritual insights.** The lessons were not taught for knowledge sake or even understanding's sake. The lessons were for wisdom—for spiritual wisdom! So much in education makes no sense for the student—and teacher, if truth were told! Oh, but we need not have this type of void in the education of our children! Rather, we CAN teach our children and it CAN bring meaning and purpose to their lives! We can teach them so they can truly "subdue and have dominion" over ALL areas of learning within their reach! We don't have to have the same struggles in education as others—we can truly have an excellent education for our children that uses the practical areas of life to teach deep Spiritual truths, give purpose, and point them back to God! Just think of the difference! Learning History to get a credit toward graduation...or "just because!" OR learning History, the practical information. Then, letting that information open up a book of the Bible like Daniel or Revelation that is merely puzzling without a proper understanding and working knowledge of History! There is a big difference! I had a great education. I earned my diploma. Yet, I had only gained credits and passed the tests in courses that I took "just because" I was SUPPOSED to! Years later, studying Ancient History as an adult alongside of my study of the Book of Daniel, revealed that the only reason that History never made sense was the same reason that Bible Prophecy never made sense—they were never MESHED together. I had never learned the "practical areas" in conjunction with the "spiritual areas," much less learned the practical information so I could learn deep spiritual truths! It really made a difference! So, consider learning from the Master Teacher—it WILL make a difference!
- ♥ **His focus was on faith—not on a method.** One thing that has always intrigued me about the miracles of Jesus was how He did it. Now, let me get real honest here! If *I* were Jesus, I would have a "set way" that you could ALWAYS depend upon for any "set need." You know, like IF you needed to be healed of blindness, I would say that you COULD be healed IF you promised to spend 7 years as an indentured servant in my kitchen! Good idea huh? Or, for those with Leprosy—I would say that they would need to go bathe at a nude beach! I bet then everyone would run fast and get dressed—then, we could solve TWO problems in one blow! You know? Well, Jesus just blew ALL ideas of consistency! He would heal one blind man by speaking a word commanding that he be healed...another, He would "spit on the ground" (REALLY!) and make mud to rub on the guys eyes. Upon washing it off, he would no longer be blind. One thing that you COULD depend upon, you could not depend upon a METHOD for healing, just FAITH! We need to learn this from Jesus as well! In a movement as full of methods and curriculum as there are families homeschooling, there is a quiet desperation of so many moms to find the PERFECT curriculum...the PERFECT approach...the PERFECT method! Well, it is not always fun to be the prophet with a tough word, but there IS NOT going to ever be a perfect curriculum, approach, or method for ALL of us. Even in saying, look at Jesus' WAY—His EASY WAY, I am not promoting a special approach that you can place your faith upon! Rather, I am promoting the SAME Jesus and HIS EASY WAY that will reflect the same diversity of methods for education as we find in His healing methods. He has not changed! However, His focus has never been upon the METHOD, but instead His focus was on FAITH! He has faithfully extended His hand to us, as those in the past He offered healing to, to simply have FAITH in HIM and HIS methods for helping us individually with our "needs." So, if we want to learn of HIM, we must move from homeschooling methods to homeschooling

faith. Then, we will find homeschooling to be easy!

Jesus LOVED Children!

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

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

Isn't this precious? Can you picture this scene in your mind? Perhaps you may be like me and be able to easily envision this scene! Others in the background here were much like those in our society today—children, in their eyes, were distractions, hindrances to the "plan of the day," a "duty," a "displeasure," an "inconvenience!"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

No where in the world can our children get a better preparation for their calling than with us. If we will dedicate ourselves to discipling them along the way and training them to use their gifts and talents each and every day, then we can be sure that they will have the perfect preparation for their calling. All it takes is learning of Jesus, getting to know our children (their spiritual gifts and natural interests), teaching who we are, and becoming the family that God wants for us to be. Then, not only is Homeschooling easy, but the burden is truly light!

Jesus Had FUN!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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