

The Christian Home: Learning to Be at Home with Christ

Home Is Where Their Hearts Are

It has often been said that there is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of every person that can be filled only by God. However, we believe there is also a home-shaped vacuum in the heart of every child that can be filled only by a biblical, godly home. In the same way that we seek after God until we find him, children will seek after the kind of home and family life that they instinctively desire, even though they are too young to do anything about it. Every child bears the image of God, their Creator, in their soul. Since the ideal of a godly home and family was part of God's original creation before the Fall and an expression of his creative nature, we believe it is etched in every child's heart. Your child is made for and naturally longs for the home that you can provide. If a child finds that kind of home, the vacuum will be filled and they will be more likely to find contentment and fulfillment that will shape the rest of their lives; if they do not find it, they will be more likely to seek to fill that vacuum with substitutes and counterfeits, and that futile search will shape the rest of their restless lives.

There is a reason that Moses, before Israel crossed the Jordan to enter the Promised Land, exhorted all of the people (Deuteronomy 6:1-9) to love God with their whole beings, to have his commandments on their hearts, and to diligently teach them to their children at rest and at work, in the evening and in the morning. (In colloquial Hebrew, he meant everywhere and all the time.) There was a God- and home-shaped vacuum in the heart of every child in Israel that needed to be filled with God's reality and God's truth. That, and only that, would create a generation that would find its fulfillment and purpose in God. Moses was writing the prescription for the future health of Israel. Unfortunately, the people of Israel did not love God wholeheartedly or have his truth on their hearts, and they soon forgot Moses' admonition and even Joshua's "as for me and my household" challenge to serve God after they were in the land (Joshua 24:15). It should not be surprising that the next generation did not know God, forsook him, and served other gods (Judges 2:10-13). The vacuum was never filled in the hearts of their children, who grew up and filled them with substitutes and counterfeits.

We must not underestimate the importance of building a godly, Christian home. We are no different from the parents of Moses' day, and his exhortation is just as fresh for us today as it was for those undoubtedly well-meaning parents 3,500 years ago. Though we are not building a physical nation, we are nonetheless building a spiritual one, and the health of the future body of Christ and his kingdom will be affected by whether or not Christian parents heed the admonition of Moses concerning our children and of the Apostle Paul to "bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). We still must choose whom to serve and to build our homes for Christ.

Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

— Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (NASB)

...choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve...But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.

— Joshua 24:15

You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.

— St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430), Christian theologian and philosopher, from *Confessions*, ca. 397

Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it.

— Psalm 127:1a (NASB)

Parents! The work entrusted to us is holier than we know. The precious instrument, so delicate, so wonderfully made, so marred by sin already, and so exposed to its power, is of such inconceivable worth. To take charge of an immortal soul, to train a will for God and eternity, surely we ought to shrink from it. But we cannot. If we are parents, the duty is laid upon us. But, thank God! Sufficient grace is prepared and promised, too. If we do but give up our home and our life to God for Him to come in and rule, He will Himself take possession, and by the gentle influence of His Holy Spirit bow their will to Himself.

— Rev. Andrew Murray, *The Children for Christ*, 1887

It ought to be so, in every well-ordered home, that a child can find more pleasure at home than away from home...Wiser parents secure to their children such home amusements as cannot be indulged in to the same advantage outside of that home.

— H. Clay Trumbull, *Hints on Child-Training*, 1890

Three Priorities of a Christian Home

Every Christian parent will readily affirm that their children are being raised in a Christian home. Probe a little deeper, though, and you'll find that often what they really mean is that their children are being raised in a Christian culture. Let me state what should be obvious, but isn't: Christian activities and interests do not make a home Christian. A Christian home is never defined by what the children are doing; it is defined by what the parents are doing. Your child could study the Bible every day, listen only to Christian music, watch only Christian videos, read missionary biographies, know a zillion memory verses, and never miss Sunday School or Bible Club, yet still not live in a Christian home. Simply deciding as a Christian parent to homeschool your children does not mean they will be raised in a Christian home. You can bring your children home for the right reasons, but without the right biblical perspective you might be just adding another activity to their lives and to yours. As good as homeschooling can be, it's only part of the picture.

A Christian home is one in which the parents purposefully keep Jesus Christ at the center of every area of family life. You choose to build your house upon the rock of Christ and his words and then to bring up your children "in the training and instruction of the Lord." That is why this book is about much more than just homeschooling; it is about building a Christian home. Even though most of the book is about home education, you cannot really understand that priority without understanding it as one of the three biblical priorities that we believe define a Christian home: home nurture, home discipleship, and home education. Each of these three priorities builds upon the one before it and supports the one following it. Each is necessary if you are committed to becoming a Christian homeschooling family in a well-balanced Christian home. Each is critical for shepherding, shaping, and strengthening your child for God.

HOME NURTURE: Shepherding Your Child's Spirit to Long for God

Home nurture is bringing the life of Christ into your home. Many Christian parents mistakenly believe this is accomplished only by adopting a Christian lifestyle. While certainly part of the process, the heart of home nurture is bringing the living Christ into all that you do through the life of the Holy Spirit and through the living and active Word of God. A Christian lifestyle alone might cause your children to long for Christianity, but only regular exposure to the living God will cause them to long for Christ. When you understand the power of home nurture, you realize you are shepherding your children's hearts and planting seeds of longing for the living God. You are giving them life.

HOME DISCIPLESHIP: Shaping Your Child's Heart to Live for God

Home discipleship is the process of leading your children to follow and serve Christ as Lord. It is one thing to know the language and lifestyle of Christianity, but it is quite another to know Christ. Home discipleship is how you as a parent not only instruct your children about Christ but also model the life of Christ for them and lead them into a relationship and daily walk with him. You do that by studying Scripture together, reading and discussing inspiring and challenging Christian books, and getting involved in church and community ministry as a family. It is the process of walking with your children on God's path of life until they begin to walk that path on their own with God.

HOME EDUCATION: Strengthening Your Child’s Mind to Learn for God

Home education, then, is the natural outgrowth of home nurture and home discipleship. Your goal is not just an educated child, good SAT scores, and college or even a career with a good salary. Those may be fruits of your efforts, but your overriding goal should be to raise spiritually mature children who have both the will and the skill to learn and the desire and ability to keep learning. That is the goal of WholeHearted Learning. Your goal in home education should be to raise well-rounded, spiritually grounded, truth-founded Christian children whose goal in life is to make a difference for the kingdom of God, whatever life path they choose. You’re actually raising future Christian adults.

It’s important to understand, though, that there is no biblical formula for building a Christian home. We can define the principles that we believe provide the major building blocks of a Christian home, but like everything else in the Christian life, how you express and live out those principles is all by faith. At its simplest, it is really just a relational process of loving God and loving your children. In fact, like the Christian life, most of the process of building a Christian home is simply a matter of walking daily in the power of the Holy Spirit, praying for wisdom, and stepping out in faith. That is what will define your home as a Christian home—that you, the parents, with God’s help, are nurturing, discipling, and educating your children at home for Christ.

Home for Good, Home for God

When you decide to keep or bring your children home for good, you are saying two things: (1) that your home is where they should be and (2) that your home is a source of goodness in their lives. You don’t have to look very long or hard at the state of culture to see a rapid deterioration of truth, values, and morality. You rightly worry about so many negative influences that could lead your precious children away from God’s goodness and grace and even away from you. Home is a place, by God’s design, where you can shield them from those negative influences, protect their innocence, and preserve the good in their hearts and minds. Home is good, but that’s only half the solution.

When you also bring your children home for God, you are saying two more things: (1) that your home will give God the most undistracted access to their hearts and minds and (2) that your home will give you the greatest freedom to influence them for God for their entire childhood. When your children are home, they are in the best place to experience the presence of God in their lives, either directly in a childlike-faith kind of way under your guidance or indirectly through watching, listening to, and learning from your own relationship with God. You can limit negative and unnecessary influences that would distract them from God, and you have complete freedom to speak God’s love, grace, and truth into their lives without competition from voices that do not share your convictions. Bringing your children home for good keeps out the negative influences that could lead them away from God’s path of life, and bringing them home for God puts in the positive influences that will keep them on the path of life with God.

This book is mostly about home education. But we want to help you see that the home life you are seeking is also about home nurture and home discipleship. When all three of those priorities come together in one place in your home, you’ll be able to say with confidence that you brought your children home for good and home for God.

Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

— Ephesians 6:4

How many parents there are...who are readier to provide playthings for their children than to share the delights of their children with those playthings; readier to set their children at knowledge-seeking, than to have a part in their children’s surprises and enjoyments of knowledge-attaining; readier to make good, as far as they can, all losses to their children, than to grieve with their children over those losses. And what a loss of power to those parents as parents, is this lack of sympathy with their children as children.

— H. Clay Trumbull, *Hints on Child-Training*, 1890

Your statutes are wonderful; therefore I obey them. The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple. I open my mouth and pant, longing for your commands. Turn to me and have mercy on me, as you always do to those who love your name. Direct my footsteps according to your word; let no sin rule over me. Redeem me from the oppression of men, that I may obey your precepts. Make your face shine upon your servant and teach me your decrees. Streams of tears flow from my eyes, for your law is not obeyed.

— Psalm 119:129-136

For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

— Hebrews 4:12-13

Homeschooling by the Book

As *Educating the WholeHearted Child* grew from workshop and seminar notes into its first incarnation in 1994, it became clear to us very early on that this was not going to be a “passionate defense of homeschooling as an alternative education” kind of book. We were never driven by the need to marshal all the evidence to prove that homeschooling is a valid educational alternative or to argue why it is more desirable than its public and private counterparts. Frankly, many other writers have done a much better job of making those kinds of arguments than we can or will. We simply assumed the validity and desirability of homeschooling from the beginning. We realized that what we were writing was not just about why to choose homeschooling over other more conventional educational options but even more about why to choose homeschooling because it is the fullest expression of a biblical Christian family lifestyle. Rather than being the discovery of something new, we saw homeschooling as the recovery of something old—the recovery of the biblical home as God had designed it to be his primary institution for spreading his righteousness from one generation to the next. Rather than writing about homeschooling by the numbers, as though there were some simple formula for success, we were writing about homeschooling by the Book and the challenge to live by faith by the biblical design, principles, and vision of a wholehearted Christian home.

You will find some content in this chapter and throughout the book that sounds like a defense of homeschooling, but in reality it is there to provide insight and perspective that you can use to gain confidence as a Christian homeschooling parent that what you are doing is God’s will for your family and is a sound biblical choice for building a Christian home. If you think all you need is a simple pro/con analysis of homeschooling, public schooling, and private schooling so you can pick the one with the most plus marks or the highest score, then this book might be somewhat frustrating unless you’re willing to add all the biblical and spiritual arguments into your analysis chart. We wrote this book to give Christian homeschooling families not just a reasoned justification for their choice for bringing their children home but a truly biblical vision and foundation for it. We are convinced that homeschooling is a movement of God in our times, and our heart is to spread that vision for Christian homeschooling to other families.

It is not our intention to suggest that there is a definable or defensible doctrine or theology of homeschooling in the Bible. However, Scripture is filled with principles and truths that inform, undergird, suggest, reflect, and reinforce homeschooling beliefs and practices. What it teaches, admonishes, and illustrates about children, parents, home, and family is consistent with biblically based expressions of Christian homeschooling, such as the WholeHearted Learning model. When all of the relevant scriptures are taken as a whole and taken seriously, it is difficult to deny their affirmation of Christian home education as a major component of the fullest expression of a Christian home.

The rest of this chapter is a suggestive, but certainly not exhaustive, collection of scriptures you can consider as confirmations of your choice to homeschool your children. Each page represents a different perspective on why homeschooling is a biblical choice for your family. You can study each page individually or discuss it as a couple or family. Some of the scriptures are specific, others more general. Let the Word of God direct your heart as you consider making homeschooling a part of your Christian home.

Ten Good Biblical Reasons for Homeschooling

1. Homeschooling best reflects the Old Testament model for family that is closest to God's original design.

Deuteronomy 5:16, 6:4-9; Psalm 78:1-8; Psalm 127:3-5

2. Homeschooling best reflects the New Testament principles of Christian home and family roles and relationships.

Ephesians 6:1-4; Titus 2:3-5; 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12

3. Homeschooling allows the greatest opportunity for emphasizing the Word of God in a child's life.

2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12-13; 1 Thessalonians 2:13

4. Homeschooling allows the greatest opportunity for building wisdom and discernment in a child's life.

Proverbs 1:1-9; Matthew 7:24-27; James 1:5-8

5. Homeschooling allows the greatest opportunity for strategic discipleship influence in a child's life.

Luke 6:40; Matthew 28:18-20; Colossians 2:6-7; 2 Timothy 2:2

6. Homeschooling provides the best setting for personalized learning through natural, biblical relationships.

Philippians 4:8-9; 2 Timothy 3:14-15; 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12

7. Homeschooling provides the best setting for self-motivated learning through reading and real books.

Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1; 2 Timothy 4:13

8. Homeschooling provides the best setting for dynamic learning through exposure to real-life experiences.

James 1:2-4, 19-27; Proverbs

9. Homeschooling provides the best setting for discovering and developing spiritual gifts and personal skills and talents.

1 Peter 4:10-11; Colossians 3:17; 2 Timothy 1:6-7

10. Homeschooling is the best way to live out the biblical picture of walking with your children on God's path of life until they walk it on their own.

Proverbs 4:1-19, 22:6; John 14:6; Ephesians 5:1-2

NOTE: The scriptures listed for the ten points are meant to be suggestive only, not exhaustive. There are many more scriptures that could be added to each point.

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

— 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

— John 12:24-26

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.

— Matthew 16:24-27

Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying, "This fellow began to build and was not able to finish." Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.

— Luke 14:28-33

Counting the Cost Before You Begin

Christianity is not neutral. Neither is Christian home education. There is always a cost to accepting the cross, whether it is in your career, marriage, lifestyle, family, or your homeschool. If you decide to keep or bring your children home, you will have to make some sacrifices—there will be a cost. However, the temporal and eternal benefits in your family's life will be worth the sacrifices you will make.

Home education is a ministry of discipleship with much the same concerns as Jesus addressed. You are building your child into a disciple, so you must be committed to finishing what you start. You are heading into a battle, so you must be prepared to face and fight that battle wisely. Whether building or battling, you are taking up the cross for the sake of your children, and the cross always has a cost. Before you take the step into Christian home education, be sure you have honestly counted the cost.

The Cost of Ministry (John 12:24-26)

Am I willing to minister to my children...to become a servant like Jesus, giving up my own life for my children?

Christian home education is a ministry of discipleship and education to your children. It is a powerful biblical way for you to "bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord." For ministry-minded Christian parents, home education is not simply an educational alternative. Rather, it is an issue of obedience and submission to God's will for their family. Home education is the natural and logical extension of what God, from the beginning, designed the family to be and to do.

The Cost of Lifestyle (Matthew 16:24-27)

Am I willing to accept, along with the joys and blessings, the limitations and sacrifices of the homeschooling lifestyle?

Home education will change your life...literally. The good news is that you will be blessed because of it. The not-so-good news is that you will have to make sacrifices. To be a successful home-educating family, you must be ready to continually, and sometimes radically, adjust your lifestyle to the realities of home education. It will impact every area of your life: home life, church involvement, leisure time, income, adult social life, your children's friendships, housekeeping, and more. It is not small change.

The Cost of Commitment (Luke 14:28-33)

Am I willing to take a step of faith, trusting God to provide and intending in my heart to persevere in that decision?

Home education is not something you casually fit into your calendar or make room for in your schedule. It is a commitment you make to God and to your family that will require perseverance, energy, and patience. You cannot buy a homeschooling kit that will make you instantly and easily successful. It is a long-term learning process, both for you and for your children. Only a prayerful, deliberate commitment before God will sustain you through the difficulties and challenges you will face in that process.

Be Sure It Is God's Will for Your Family

If you have counted the cost, then you are ready to decide if Christian home education is God's will for your family. Be sure that your decision is a matter of conviction that has come from earnestly seeking God and hearing him speak to your heart through his Word. If home education is not a matter of faith for you, then you very likely will not last as a Christian home educator. If it is a matter of God's will for you, then step out in faith, without doubting, and do it (James 1:2-8). God will honor your faith and enable you to do his will.

The pages that follow contain some selected scriptures to help you gain biblical perspective and insight as you seek to discern God's will concerning home education for you and your family. Listen to and carefully consider what God has to say to you about your children's Christian training, home life, and education. If you're not sure about what it means to know God's will for your life, first take some time to consider the scriptures in the sidebar and the biblical insights below.

God's will is not something hidden that needs to be found; it is something revealed that waits to be done.

The Holy Spirit — The first step in knowing God's will is to know Christ as your personal Savior and to be filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives us the mind of Christ. You cannot know and do God's will if you are walking in the flesh. You must walk in the Spirit. (Romans 8:5-8; 1 Corinthians 2:11-16; Galatians 5:16; 1 Peter 4:6)

Stewardship — In the case of home education, God's will is mostly a matter of stewardship: What is the best stewardship of the home and children that God has entrusted to you? Regardless of your feelings or circumstances, Scripture calls you to be a good steward or manager of all God has entrusted to your care. Your home and children are certainly among your most valuable possessions in this life. (Romans 12:1-2; 1 Timothy 6:17-19)

Obedience — What is God saying to you through his Word? Are you sensing the conviction of the Holy Spirit in the area of becoming a more godly parent? Are there direct commands of Scripture concerning your children that you need to obey? If you sense God's leading in your life, it will become an issue of obedience. (John 14:15-17)

Discernment — Determining God's will is primarily the exercise of godly discernment concerning the choices and decisions you make. God's Word and his Spirit are his means to help you develop spiritual discernment and wisdom. The more you study the Word of God and walk in the Spirit, the more discerning you will become. (Philippians 1:9-10)

Prayer — Doing God's will always involves persistent prayer—asking God for wisdom, discernment, and direction. As God speaks to you through his Word, you speak to him in prayer about what he is saying to you. That ongoing prayer relationship is essential to the process of decision making. (Philippians 4:6-7)

Wise Counsel — God will often speak through other godly, wise Christians to make his will clear to you—to clarify confusion, affirm a conviction, or confirm a decision you have made. Seek out the insights of trusted friends, godly homeschoolers, and wise counselors. Ask them to pray for you. Listen to their counsel. (Proverbs 15:22)

If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.

— James 1:5-6

Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

— Ephesians 5:15-17

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

— Proverbs 3:5-6

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

— Matthew 6:33-34

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

— Romans 12:2

Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.

— Matthew 7:24-25

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

— Galatians 6:7-9

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

— Matthew 6:19-21

I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

— Philippians 4:11-13

Biblical Principles to Consider

Renew your mind. (Romans 12:1-2)

Most people's thinking about education is influenced and shaped by, and often conformed to, the philosophies and thinking of the world. Despite many successful alternative approaches, public education is still the default standard by which any educational models or materials are evaluated. But God commands us to be transformed by renewing our minds with his truth so we can think like he thinks. He doesn't want us thinking about anything by default. And that includes our thinking about parenting and education.

Build on truth. (Matthew 7:24-27)

Some very dangerous cultural storms are looming on the horizon. You will face some as a home-educating parent, and your children will face them as adults. These storms will tear apart many families who are unprepared. You and your children, though, can stand strong and stay faithful in the face of them if you build your house on the secure foundation of God and his Word. Any foundation other than God's truth will be sandy ground that will wash away in the storms and floods of life. Your house wouldn't stand a chance. But God's truth is solid rock. Build the house of your family on truth and stand.

Sow for the Spirit. (Galatians 6:7-9)

You will reap in your children's lives exactly what you sow in them as a parent. If you want to reap secure, mature adults, you must sow by the Spirit the seeds of time, togetherness, and training. If you want to reap a godly heritage, you must sow by the Spirit the seeds of godly influence. If you want to reap godly character, you must sow by the Spirit the seeds of a good example. You can no longer sow to please your own desires, but to please Christ. Only he can cause your seed to grow and produce a harvest of blessing. You are sowing for temporal fruit with eternity in mind.

Value the eternal. (Matthew 6:19-24)

Your children are your most valuable assets. They are priceless, eternal treasures entrusted to you by God. They are yours for a short time, after which you will present them back to God. He has given them to you to invest for eternity. If you treasure those young lives, that is where your heart will be—reproduced in their hearts. If you treasure the things of this world, though, you will have missed the opportunity to touch their hearts for God. You must decide what, or who, is going to matter most to you this side of eternity. For "where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." In other words, the designs of your mind will define the desires of your heart.

Be content in Christ. (Philippians 4:10-13)

A decision to homeschool is also a decision to accept limitations on your life. Your expectations of adult life will be greatly limited by the realities of home education. The more you resist those limitations, the less content you will be. Contentedness grows as you learn to submit to those limitations. God has promised that you can do everything through Christ, who gives you strength. You can sacrifice, serve, and learn to be content with whatever lifestyle God has for you. You can be content as a home educator.

Specific Scriptures to Consider

About Parenting

Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21 — How can I make sure that I am obeying God’s commands to raise my children for him and to train them in righteousness?

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 — How can I make sure that my children’s training in righteousness is consistent and continuous and that it is a whole-life, “everywhere, all the time” process?

Psalms 78:1-7 — How can I make sure that I pass on a godly and righteous heritage to my children and to their children and that nothing of eternal value is hidden from them?

Psalms 127:3-5 — How can I make sure that my children know they are valued blessings in my house, not burdens, and that they are arrows of God’s truth to the world?

1 Timothy 3:4; Titus 1:6 — How can I make sure that my household is managed well and my children are “under control” as a testimony of my maturity?

About Your Children

Proverbs 2:11-12, 22:6 — How can I make sure that my children are disciplined to go in the way they should go so that they will not be misled off the path of righteousness?

Matthew 18:5-6 — How can I make sure that I am not putting my children in situations where they will be tempted to sin, or even worse, which will cause them to sin?

Proverbs 13:20; 1 Corinthians 15:33 — How can I make sure that my children walk with “the wise” and do not become harmed as the “companion of fools”?

2 Corinthians 6:14 — How can I make sure that my children do not become spiritually, emotionally, or socially “yoked together with unbelievers” as light with darkness?

2 Timothy 2:16-19 — How can I make sure that my children are not under the authority and influence of false teachers or false teaching that would lead them to ungodliness?

About the Christian Life

Romans 12:1-2 — How can I make sure that my children do not become conformed to the world (its ways of thinking), but are transformed by the renewing of their minds?

1 John 2:15-17 — How can I make sure that my children are taught to love God and to do his will and are not taught to love the world or anything in the world?

Proverbs 4:23 — How can I make sure that I am guarding my children’s hearts against all ungodly influences that can adversely shape their beliefs and attitudes?

Ephesians 5:11-12 — How can I make sure that my children are not enticed by the “fruitless deeds of darkness” or exposed to those things God calls “shameful”?

Philippians 4:8 — How can I make sure that my children’s minds are filled with and trained to think about only those things that God considers excellent and worthy of praise?

Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.

— Colossians 3:20-21

We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done.

— Psalm 78:4

My son, do not reject the discipline of the LORD or loathe His reproof, for whom the Lord loves He reproveth, even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights.

— Proverbs 2:11-12 (NASB)

Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.

— Proverbs 22:6 (NASB)

So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. For in just a very little while, "He who is coming will come and will not delay. But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him." But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, of those who believe and are saved.

— Hebrews 10:35-39

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see...And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

— Hebrews 11:1, 6

All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own...Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

— Hebrews 11:13-14, 16b

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

— Hebrews 12:1-3

Be Ready to Live by Faith

There are many reasoned and rational arguments you can make to justify and defend homeschooling. There's only one, though, that closes off debate: "We searched the Scriptures, prayed about it, and determined it is God's will for our family to homeschool." At that point, it is no longer an opinion but an issue of conviction, obedience, and faith. Good arguments alone will not carry you very far as a home educator. When you're up to your eyeballs with children, housework, home business, activities, responsibilities, bills, broken appliances, car problems, and you-don't-know-the-troubles-I've-seen circumstances, those nicely reasoned arguments will ring pretty hollow. When you're pushed to the limits, only a tested and seasoned faith will take you beyond.

That was where many Jews found themselves as new Christians after being scattered throughout Israel in the persecution that followed Stephen's martyrdom. For a time, they lived by their newfound faith, holding on to the apostles' teachings. But then they began to grow weary and to shrink back from the life of faith. There probably will come a time when you, too, will be tempted to shrink back from what God has called you to do in your family. If that happens, read Hebrews 10-12 and then come back to this page to do this study so you can hear God say to you, as he said to those first Christians: "So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised."

Hebrews 10:35-39 — Perseverance: The Mark of Faith

What could cause you to want to throw away your confidence in God's presence and work in your life? In what ways do you need to persevere in doing the will of God? How does the promise of Christ's return and his rewards affect your faith?

Hebrews 11:1, 6 — Belief: The Proof of Faith

What do you hope for with a surety that affects how you live? What spiritual realities are you certain about even though you do not see them? When is your faith enough to please God? Do you really believe that God exists? How, exactly, do you seek him?

Hebrews 11:1-38 — Faithfulness: The Example of Faith

Which examples of living by faith mentioned in this chapter touch your spirit? Why? What can you learn from them? What would you want to be said about you?

Hebrews 11:39-40 — Hope: The Promise of Faith

What was the promise that kept all those mentioned in chapter 11 living by faith (see verses 1, 2, 9, 10, 13-16)? What does that promise mean to you? How does it affect the way you live? Do your children know what the promise means to you?

Hebrews 12:1-3 — Endurance: The Strength of Faith

Are you encouraged by the testimonies of the great cloud of witnesses in chapter 11? What hindrances slow you down in your race? What sins, big or little, entangle you and trip you up? Do you fix your eyes on Jesus or on the distractions around you? Do you think about him when you grow weary and lose heart? Fix your eyes on Jesus!