

August 2014 • Volume 18, Issue 3

TEXAS HOME SCHOOL COALITION

REVIEW

KEEPING TEXAS FAMILIES FREE



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Matters Most**

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Bomb the SAT**

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Flounder and
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KEN PAXTON

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Paxton family, left to right: Tucker, Katie, Angela, Ken, Mattie, and Abby.

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REVIEW

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The articles in this magazine reflect the freedom of home educators in Texas to choose from a wide variety of home school philosophies and teaching methods. Opinions and attitudes expressed in articles do not necessarily reflect the beliefs of the Texas Home School Coalition. THSC does not endorse or advocate any one method or philosophy. The board encourages each home educator to seek God's will in determining what is best for him, his school, and his students.

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REVIEW

FROM THE PRESIDENT

TIM LAMBERT



“The fight for parental rights is a multifaceted battle, extending into the Texas Courts, statewide political races, and even individual student scholarships.”

THSC remains vigilant in protecting and supporting the precious freedoms and liberties of Texas families in all these areas. Over the past few months, we have witnessed several important victories across the state, while at the same time encountering new concerns and challenges.

The resignation of Judge Denise Pratt was one recent victory for home schoolers and other activists in the Houston area. Judge Pratt’s jurisdiction of the 311th District Family Court was rife with egregious actions, controversial rulings, and even alleged criminal behavior. As I wrote in this column earlier this year, Judge Pratt ordered a Houston mother to surrender her child for visitation to the child’s grandfather—even though there was no evidence warranting this decision.

Due to this ruling and other disgraceful actions by Judge Pratt, we officially listed her in THSC’s “Texas Judicial Wall of Shame.” Finally, in late March, Judge Pratt announced her resignation from the court. Following her resignation, one Houston parent told THSC, “My family and thousands of families in Harris County are breathing a sigh of relief. Our nightmare is over.”

The primary election results from earlier this year were also key victories for THSC and Texas home schoolers, as numerous conservative candidates defeated moderate challengers on March 4. Then, in the May 27 runoff elections, several conservative candidates running for statewide offices—including Sid Miller, Ken Paxton, and Dan Patrick soundly defeated their opponents. Though we certainly celebrate these important election victories, the upcoming months will bring further opportunities for conservative victories, especially in November’s general elections. Through candidate endorsements, our THSC Rangers program, and other political efforts, THSC will work hard to support candidates who will stand for family values.

On a smaller scale, I was recently encouraged when an apparent instance of discrimination against a home school student was reversed. Earlier this year, one of our member families informed us that Farmers Insurance had refused to award a home school student a “good student discount,” even though the student had a perfect 4.0 GPA and, thus, qualified for the discount. I wrote a letter to Farmer’s Insurance and urged them to not unfairly withhold insurance discounts

from this qualified home school student. A couple of weeks later, we were notified by the family that the insurance company had reversed its position and had awarded the student the discount.

Though THSC praises the Lord for these encouraging victories, we recognize that there are many challenges ahead. Some of these challenges affect individual families, while others have the potential to affect home schoolers across the state.

For example, the Tutt family in Dallas has still not been granted custody of all their children. Late last year, government officials wrongfully seized the Tutts’ seven children. Though four of the children are now safely back in the Tutts’ home, three have not yet been returned. Furthermore, the children under the Tutts’ custody have been ordered to attend public schools, and the judge in the case said she would have to decide on what was best for the kids’ next school year. Obviously, THSC is very concerned by this flagrant violation of the Tutts’ parental rights, and we are doing everything we can to represent and support this dear family in this terrible situation.

In another matter, THSC has joined other nonprofit advocacy organizations in a federal lawsuit against the Texas Ethics Commission (TEC). We intervened in the lawsuit to defend the rights of 501 (c) (4) organizations to participate in political speech, which is a freedom ensured by the recent *Citizens United* U.S. Supreme Court decision. The TEC has attempted to silence and intimidate grassroots organizations in years past, and THSC will fight to preserve and protect the legal right to free political speech.

In the multifaceted battle for freedom in Texas, THSC tirelessly defends the rights of families to home school their children. I encourage you to regularly visit our website, thsc.org, for articles, helpful information, and other resources for home school families. On the site, you can also read my blog and stay up-to-date with the latest issues and developments affecting home schoolers across the state and register for blogs and updates.

Thank you for your prayers and support in our ongoing battle to defend the fundamental constitutional right of parents to direct the care, control, and upbringing of their children!

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Evaluating What Matters Most

by Michael McHugh

Few home educators would deny that students should be evaluated, at least on an occasional basis, to determine whether they are making adequate academic progress. The reality, however, is that most students in a home schooling environment, just like children in traditional schools, are seldom evaluated in anything other than their academic development. It is as if the average home schooling parent believes that the only goal in a child's training that merits consistent monitoring is academic development. Nothing, of course, could be farther from the truth. In addition to basic academic skill assessment, students should also be regularly evaluated in the critical areas of their study habits, spiritual development, and personal stewardship skills.

A student with inconsistent or weak study habits may be difficult to identify, particularly if the student's overall academic performance is not dropping at an alarming rate. Each quarter during the school term, instructors should take the time to sit down with their students to determine the level of progress they are making in their routine study habits. Areas that can be examined include, but are not limited to, how well a student uses time, the status of a student's library or research skills, how consistently he follows directions, and his ability to work independently. These areas of examination can help parent educators ensure that their students are maturing properly in their study skills.

Christian home educators need little coaching to understand the importance of a regular examination of their children's spiritual development. In fact, parents who love the Lord may well wonder why they have not initiated this type of routine already! It just makes biblical sense for parents, preferably fathers, to sit down with their

children every few months in order to ascertain how well their students are progressing spiritually. One area of examination may include how faithful a child is in the area of personal Bible study and prayer. The examination might also cover how well the student responds to correction: whether he cheerfully shows respect for those in authority, and the extent to which he gets along with family members, as well as those from the outside world. Children will never be perfect, any more than parents will be. However, children, like parents, should at least be making steady progress toward becoming more Christ-like and mature in terms of being more and more under the control of the Holy Spirit.

In addition to academic and spiritual progress, students must also be developing well as human beings, for they are called to be ambassadors for Christ. Parents, therefore, should set aside time to evaluate how well their children are maturing in their personal stewardship skills and character. Some of the areas to be examined are how often a child shows godly initiative, how well he sets and reaches personal goals, and his ability to persevere under difficult circumstances. Other areas may include the student's level of commitment to being consistently honest and forthright, how often he shows compassion to others, and the way in which he uses his tongue, as well as his personal finances.

The ultimate purpose for parent educators to evaluate their children on a regular basis flows out of the biblical principle that "by their fruits you shall know them"—or, as the Bible also puts it, "Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right." (Proverbs 20:11) Christian parents are called to be fruit inspectors. They must know the estate of their households, and particularly of their children, during every season of family life. This call to parental stewardship—or to "inspect what we expect"—helps mothers and fathers to better ensure that the fruit of their household does not spoil on their watch. Another hidden benefit associated with the practice of periodic student evaluation is that these evaluations tend to jump-start meaningful communication between children and parents. Surely in our fast-paced world any practice that promotes quality dialogue between family members should be encouraged.

Starting now, home educators must schedule time to sit down with their children in order that they might begin, as never before, to evaluate what matters most in their children's education and ultimately in their lives.



For over thirty years, Michael McHugh has worked as a teacher, lecturer, home school program administrator, and textbook author/editor for the Christian Liberty Academy in Arlington Heights, Illinois. Mr. McHugh is also the founder and director of a publishing ministry known as Great Light Publications. Over the last three decades, he has written numerous articles that have appeared in newsletters and scholarly journals across the US and abroad.

Michael McHugh is a graduate of Whitefield College, and holds a BS degree in the field of Christian education.

As a home school father, Michael lives in the Chicago area with his wife and seven children. Mr. McHugh and his wife were married in 1984 and have been actively engaged in homeschooling their children since 1988.



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Why Smart Kids Bomb the SAT

by Jean Burk



It is not uncommon for smart students to bomb standardized tests. Even the most brilliant children can be bad test-takers. It's a phenomenon that occurs frequently among high school students. Fortunately, there is a cure for this pervasive problem.

"My child has a 4.0 GPA! He only takes AP and honors classes! How could he bomb the SAT? He must be a bad test-taker." Statements like these come all the time from frustrated parents, who are desperately trying to figure out the reason for an unreasonably low score. Obviously, their children are smart. If they are capable of making excellent grades in tough classes, they should be capable of scoring well on this exam.

What went wrong? For most bad test-takers, the problem is they just don't understand the test. Luckily for those students, the cure is simple: They need to learn the test. Many times students are given false information about standardized tests such as the SAT or PSAT. For example, many students are confused about what these tests are actually assessing; they have no idea what the test is really all about. Most of them go to the test expecting it to be like all other tests: an examination of their knowledge about a specific topic or facts they have learned. Thus, they prepare for the test with this in mind. However, as many disappointed students have discovered,

this method is simply incorrect. The SAT and PSAT are not knowledge-based tests at all; they are pure logic tests. Students who are preparing for the SAT and PSAT must prepare for them in a different way than regular school exams. Students who do not understand the test and thus do not study for the exam properly are almost guaranteed to do poorly. Therefore, it makes sense that their scores don't reflect their academic ability, because the test was assessing something entirely different. It's as if they filled out an essay test with algebraic equations. Although the equations and solutions may be correct, the student will still fail the test.

When preparing for tests like the SAT an overwhelming amount of knowledge on a subject won't help a student, since students can never really know what topics will be on the test before they take it. If students cannot study for the SAT and PSAT like their other tests, then how do they prepare for them? This is where SAT- and PSAT-specific test prep programs come in handy. These types of programs can teach students how to look at the answers logically and discern what the questions are actually asking.

While preparation is the key to doing well on the SAT or PSAT, not all preparation has equal value. Because the test is purely a logic-based

test, students should not waste their time on unnecessary studying. Every formula, definition, and solution needed to do well on the SAT will always be on the test. Students simply need to know how to use logic and reason to discern the answer. If the test prep company is requiring students to spend hours and hours learning concepts and studying content, there should be red flags in the mind of every parent. The SAT and PSAT are standardized assessment tests. This means that the College Board makes sure that every question follows a certain pattern—same rules and a consistent profile; this is what makes it standardized. It costs the College Board more than \$650,000 to create one SAT test. The board obviously goes to great lengths to make sure each test follows the same standard.

So-called “bad test-takers” must learn how to recognize recurring patterns that are used on the SAT and PSAT. This is fundamental for test success. The College Board uses a limited amount of concepts when they write their questions. This means that any test can be figured out once a student knows and understands the test and its questions. Students simply need to apply the same logical concepts to any question, regardless of how it’s phrased or what subject matter it addresses.

It doesn’t make sense that a good student somehow becomes a bad test-taker on just this one test. The problem is simply bad test-prep advice. Once students understand the test and the mindset of the College Board, their test-taking confidence will be boosted and their test scores will soar.



Jean Burk is the author of College Prep Genius and has published numerous articles about the SAT and PSAT tests, College Prep, and How to Get Free College. She has been featured as an SAT expert on Fox, CBS, NBC, TXA21 and The Homeschool Channel. She homeschooled both her children and they each received incredible scholarships because of their PSAT and SAT scores. Some of the benefits

included full tuition, room and board, unlimited laundry and lunchroom passes, free grad school, study abroad stipends, etc.

She currently travels and speaks about the importance of college preparation at conventions, book fairs, schools, libraries, etc. She has taught her Master the SAT Prep Class all over the United States and China. Her company also has a book series called VocabCafé that will help teenagers and younger children increase their knowledge of SAT level vocabulary words through fun and wholesome books. Her teaching is now on DVD and the highly acclaimed High School Prep Genius is now in several counties. Besides these accolades, in 2013 College Prep Genius earned the Excellence in Education Award, Homeschool Parent Seal of Approval and the Blue Ribbon Award as Favorite College Prep Resource.

She has been married to Jim Burk for 30 years; her daughter recently finished grad school, and her son is currently in law school.

An advertisement for College Prep Genius. At the top, the logo features a stylized flower-like icon next to the text "COLLEGEPREPGENIUS" and "THE NO BRAINER WAY TO SAT® SUCCESS". Below the logo, three young adults (two women and one man) are smiling and holding a large white sign. The sign has the number "15" in large red font, followed by "secrets to" in black, and "FREE College" in white text on a red background.

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Educational Philosophy of a Home School Soccer Mom

by Lynn Dean

For most of my kids' home schooling years I was a genuine soccer mom. (No similarity to the bad rap the term has acquired. Just the "white, suburban, middle-class Christian" part and the "love my kids" part.) I spent most spring and fall Saturdays cheering from the sidelines of the soccer field as my kiddos dribbled, passed, and dodged opposition. "Drive to the goal!" I urged. Goals are important, but it's hard to stay focused when you're bombarded by peripheral distractions.

It's even hard for parents to stay focused. Should we aim for academic excellence or godly character? Can we do both? When I considered my ultimate goals in raising children, I realized that I didn't want to raise children at all. My goal was to raise adults. I mean, doesn't the world already have enough chronologically advanced people who behave childishly? Children are the raw material with which God gives us to work. Our job is to coach our kids in such a way that they are prepared to take their positions on God's team and then cheer them on to score in life. It's surprising the difference a coaching perspective makes in educational philosophy.

Assume they know nothing coming in.

Have you ever watched a bunch of four-year-olds scramble after a soccer ball? It will be years before these kids play the game well. During those years they will build their knowledge and skills incrementally—sometimes with frustrating slowness. But each practice, each match, is part of the process. We urge them to learn and grow, but we do not expect instant perfection.

Don't penalize for mistakes.

Understanding the difference between excellence and perfection is important. Those of us who grew up in public school may tend to think in terms of a grading system where the goal is 100% perfection and every missed attempt is penalized. While it's true that in life we sometimes get just one shot—one opportunity to make a good first impression, wise decision, or winning presentation—it's also true that school is just the practice session for the "big game" of adult life. If we penalize kids every time they miss a shot, they'll eventually lack the confidence to even attempt to score. Grades and tests are not meant to shame students for "getting it wrong"; instead, they give us opportunities to analyze which skills still need more practice so our students can build the confidence to "get it right."

Give second chances.

In a home school environment, we can give unlimited "second" chances. For many years, I taught a co-op research paper class. At each phase of the process, students had ample time to try and try again. Most, unfortunately, just wanted to be done, but one young lady modeled a desire to master her skills. When I returned her first draft she corrected her errors and submitted a second . . . and a third . . . and a fourth. In all, I helped her improve

nine versions of her research paper. A friend who taught in public school was horrified. "You mean your students get as many chances as they want to get it right? How can that be fair?" School is not a tournament of champions. The competition comes later. Our job is to coach—to prepare them, as long as they're willing to try again.

Nobody plays every position.

On a team, some play offense, some play defense, and some guard the goal. It takes time to observe each player's skill set to see where he or she fits on the team. In life, some excel in math, some in science, and others in language arts, music, athletics, or social skills. Einstein was no Beethoven. Most kids are painfully aware of their shortcomings, and we all do need to acquire proficiency in a broad range of skills, but a good coach will help all players become confident of their strengths and learn to compensate for their weaknesses.

Acknowledge that there may be many routes to the same goal.

Most of us truly desire admiration, or at least approval. Some days we do our best, some days we are tired and discouraged, and some days we "make it up as we go along." You know what? "Making it up as we go" sometimes yields a fresh perspective or a hidden opportunity. The original plan may not always work. A "Hail Mary" decision of desperation may prove to be a workable choice in retrospect. Trust your God-given instincts. Give your kids grace, and give yourself some while you're at it. Teamwork many times trumps exquisite execution. It's usually fairly obvious

when we're headed in the wrong direction, but there are an infinite number of possible maneuvers that can get us to the goal we desire.

Be a good example.

It's hard to teach what you have not learned yourself. That's not to say that you have to be a pro or that you can never make mistakes, but if you ask your team to practice disciplines that you, yourself, do not practice, they will lose heart and you will lose their respect. The best coaches don't yell instructions from the grandstand. The best-loved coaches stay on the field, demonstrating what needs to be learned and helping their team find strength they didn't know they possessed.

As home schooling parents, we coach, we cheer, and for a few precious years we have the privilege of preparing our children for success in life so that they will be winners in the ways that count.



Lynn Dean was a reluctant historian. Bored with schoolbooks that chronicled battle dates and dead people, she feared inflicting mind-numbing data on her own students. Fortunately, she discovered the classic appeal of storytelling—adventure sagas about real people who struggled to overcome obstacles while pursuing their dreams. For more than a decade Lynn has combined unit studies, field trips, and quality literature to create unique and memorable experiences in discovery learning.

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How Does One Develop an Educational Philosophy?

by Holly Williams Urbach



I chose to home school as a reaction to situations occurring in my daughter's public school: little boys sitting in a chair with a sad face on it; a back-to-school night in first grade where I was told that the children would bring home papers with uncorrected, misspelled words, and that it was okay not to correct them; and a social worker who visited the classrooms with what seemed to be a social engineering agenda, among other things.

I didn't want my five-year-old son to go to school, sit in a sad chair, and think he was a bad person because he wasn't ready to sit down to do formal schoolwork. I didn't want my daughter to be allowed to cement poor spelling in her brain because "we don't worry about that until much later." I grew tired of deprogramming my daughter almost daily from concepts she learned that were at odds with our Christian beliefs.

I didn't have a big educational philosophy at that time, but I did have tiny little burgeoning buds of a philosophy that eventually bloomed into a full-grown set of principles. It is true indeed that from tiny acorns large oaks do grow.

We began our home schooling journey with a well-known textbook curriculum. It didn't take long before I realized that my students and I were bogged down with all those worksheets and activities that really weren't a good use of our time or the most natural way to teach. The activities taught learning objectives in isolation from other activities; I feel that learning happens more effectively as a necessary function rather than as a worksheet topic. For example, there are worksheets that teach how to address an envelope. It seems to me that if one is to learn to address an envelope, the best way is to write a letter (practicing handwriting and grammar skills) and address the envelope so one may send the letter that was just written.

I also think that if children have an interest in performing a certain skill or task, regardless of their age, I should allow them to try as long as it isn't harmful. My youngest son began reading at the age of four, while I was attempting to teach his six-year-old brother to read. Sawyer asked if he could try the blend ladders his brother was doing, so I said, "Sure!" My jaw dropped when he correctly read, "Ba, be, bi, bo, bu."

He wasn't on my lesson plans for that school year but he was obviously ready to read. I certainly wasn't going to hold him back until he was kindergarten age, so he joined his brother in kindergarten work.

Likewise, I strongly believe that exposing children to the arts and foreign languages is necessary for a well-rounded education. In our home school I made sure that we were reading poems, viewing art prints, listening to classical music, and learning bits of French and Spanish.

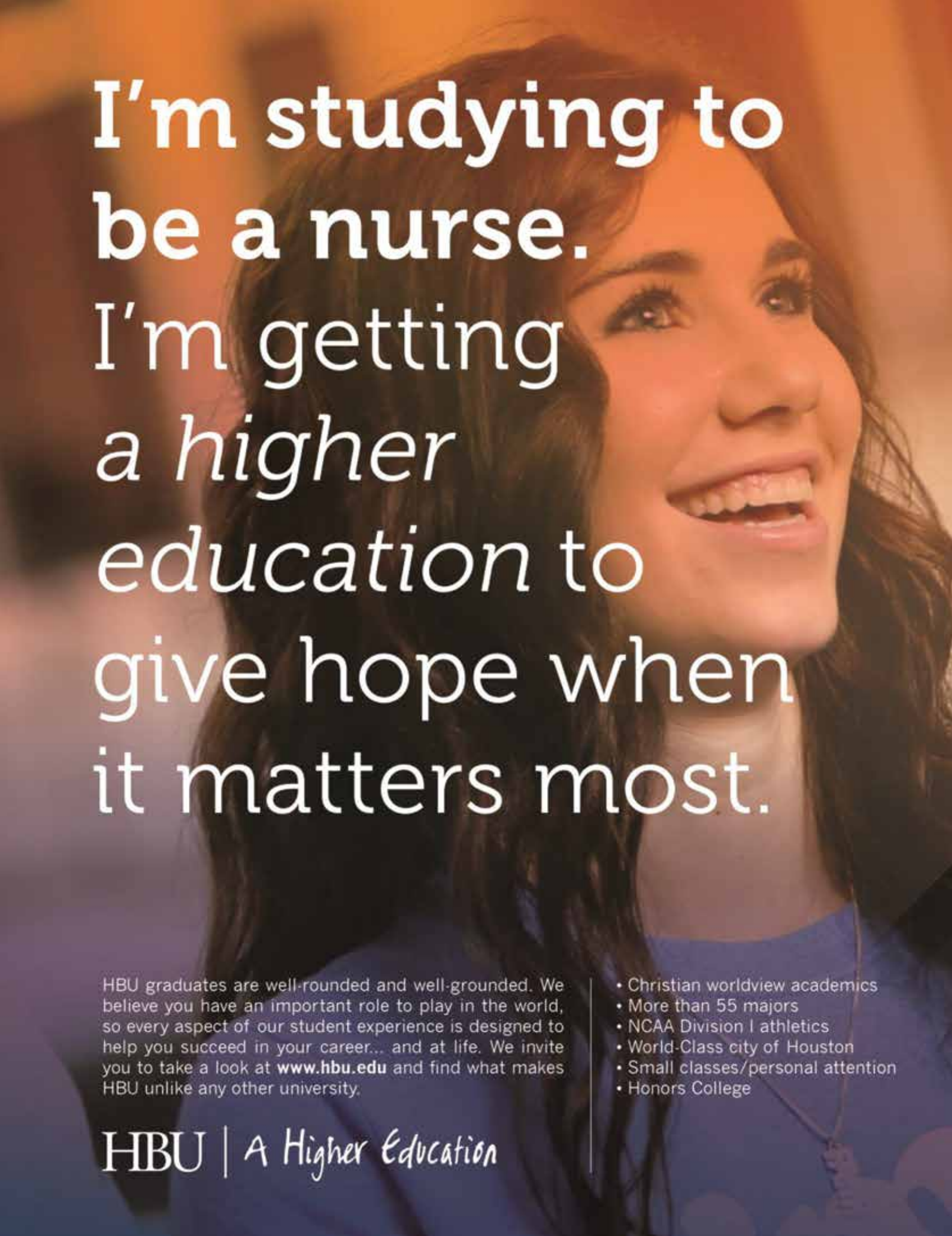
As my educational philosophy became more developed, I found myself changing curriculum. We went from a textbook-based curriculum to a unit study curriculum and finally ended up aligning closely with the Charlotte Mason method. All this change took place over approximately five years. It takes time to develop and implement a philosophy.

Charlotte Mason's ideas very much encompassed and expanded upon my ideas about how to teach children. I found her methodology so exciting that I read each of the six books in her Original Homeschooling Series. After reading these informative and instructive books, I was pleased to discover that many of the curriculum choices I made dovetailed nicely with her principles. If you are not familiar with Charlotte Mason, I encourage you to check out the Simply Charlotte Mason web site (<http://simplycharlottemason.com/what-is-the-charlotte-mason-method/>). Of course, Ms. Mason's approach is just one of many excellent teaching philosophies to explore.

If you are just beginning your home schooling journey and do not yet have an educational philosophy, please don't stress about it. Read everything you can before beginning to home school. Then, as you begin teaching your children at home, you will develop your ideas about how and what to teach. Before too long, you will have your own educational philosophy at your fingertips!



Holly Williams Urbach home schooled her five children from 1993-2013 and now works as the director of a small home school enrichment academy in central Texas. Holly enjoys writing on a variety of topics in her spare time and welcomes visitors to her blog, Whollyholly, at <http://thewhollyholly.blogspot.com>.



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The Importance of Staying Encouraged

by Roxanne Parks

It is easy for a child to dream of growing up, marrying a soul mate, having wonderful children, landing a great job, and living a happy life. Most of us know that is all easier said than done. A great preacher and theologian was once interviewed about the most important thing he did in his ministry. He answered, "I keep myself encouraged in those things that the Lord has called me to do."

A wise woman places herself in environments that encourage her in the areas to which God has called her. First is being married to her husband. Second is being the mother to her children. After that come things like being a home educator or serving in ministry. Sometimes we can get these things out of order; it is easy to do.

In today's busy world it is easy to put our marriages on the back burner. Unlike our children or our home school, we assume that our spouses can take care of themselves. It is a lie that a good marriage will simply remain good. If two sinners are married to each other, there will be marriage problems.

Before we got married my husband and I knew that we would have to work on our marriage. We could work on it when it was good or we could work on it when it was bad. Either way, we would have to work on it! We anticipated that it would be easier to work on our marriage when it was good, so we established a habit of retreating annually to refocus. Such a habit is likely the most important thing you could do for your family and for your home school. Our children are watching; it is such an important work.

How sad would it be to be great at teaching math but not be an example of what a great marriage looks like? Annually take intentional time to regroup and reevaluate with your spouse. It doesn't have to cost money. It just has to be done. Your relationship with your spouse affects everything else in your life. Be wise. Encourage yourself in your marriage.

Other areas of needed encouragement are in our parenting and home schooling. Why is it women constantly put themselves on the back burner? If we are to "love our neighbor as we love ourselves," there is an implication to actually love ourselves. We only seem to take care of ourselves after we've attended to everyone in our households. We need to find rest and encouragement for our "mother-bear heart." We need retreat time just for ourselves.

Then there is parenting. What a humbling job! How could we possibly know how to parent all the different personalities of each one of our children when we have only experienced our own family backgrounds? It has become so important to me to study healthy families, read great books on parenting, and surround myself with a community of solid families.

Strong families don't just happen. They are planned for and take vision and determination. As an architect designs a building before it is built, early in our marriage my husband and I prayerfully designed a plan for our family. We called it our family mission statement, and we used it as the basis for determining our family decisions.

Since we know that the enemy comes to "rob, kill, and destroy," it is certain he will attack your sweet family. Just look around at the clear attack on the family in America today. You must equip yourself with the truths and promises of the Word of God to overcome these attacks. You must stand on the solid ground of Scripture. Raising a godly family takes wisdom beyond yourself. It is a work of the Holy Spirit.

It is imperative that we seek outside counsel and encouragement for the job of parenting and home schooling. We are much too emotionally involved sometimes to see the forest for the trees. That is where wise and elder counsel is so profitable. Scripture can offer encouragement in your daily walk and provide inspiration and strength as you cope with life's challenges. Gather with "women of purpose" for personal encouragement. There are events and retreats that can rekindle your spirit. Don't underestimate the power of keeping yourself encouraged in those things that God has given you to do.



Roxanne is the author of Are You Enough? Encouragement for Overwhelmed and Exhausted Home school Moms (see Amazon.com). She is President and founder of Winter Summit Ministries, Inc., which hosts unique annual retreats to encourage home school moms. She has finished home schooling her four children. She lives with her husband in Edmond, Oklahoma.

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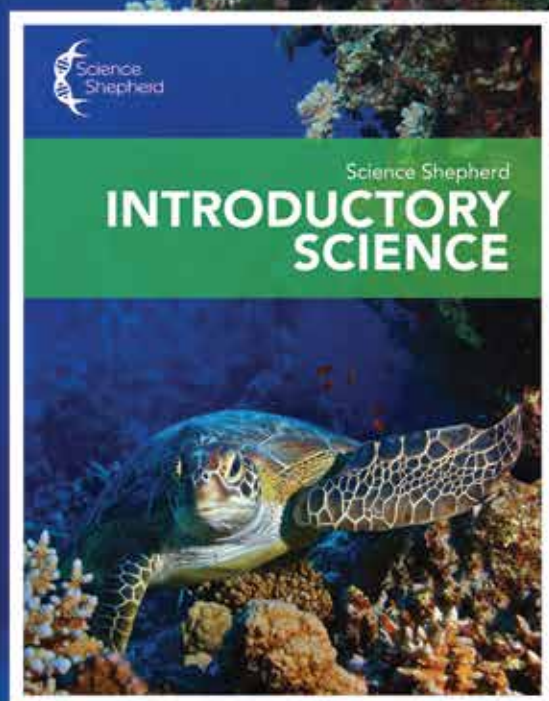
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Scott Hardin holds a Bachelor of Science degree, with honors, from the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, as well as a Medical Doctor degree from the Medical College of Wisconsin. He has been practicing medicine in Wisconsin since 1997.



Why HOME IS THE BEST PLACE TO LEARN

Review of Debra Bell's Writings

by Lori Hatcher

“A school setting is not conducive to human development and self-esteem.”

Debra Bell, Ph.D., AP English teacher, home schooling veteran, and author of *The Ultimate Guide to Homeschooling*, is convinced of this statement, and she has research to back it up. As she pursued a Ph.D. in educational psychology, she researched why, how, and when home schooling worked. She also explored how non-credentialed, non-professional home schooling parents are motivating their children to learn and getting results, debunking the opinion that the most effective teachers are professionals and the best learning environment is an institution.

“God designed us to learn in a family,” she states, “and kids who learn in a home school environment almost always have a lifelong love of learning.”

Bell has identified three components of a home schooling environment that facilitate learning:

A home provides a great environment for a child to experiment and investigate.

“Imagine what would happen,” she says, “if you left a child in a playpen all the time. School is a restrictive, confining environment that doesn’t allow natural curiosity to flourish.”

A home, in contrast, allows freedom for a child to be directed by his God-given curiosity. “Children are born with the gift of curiosity and a desire to engage and explore their environment,” she says. The home schooling mother, because she is intimately acquainted with her children, can match a child’s needs to his or her interests and abilities. The dynamic of a mom in tune with her child, Bell says, allows a mother to adapt and modify her teaching plan to best meet her student’s needs.

To encourage children to interact with their environment, home schooling parents can offer learning opportunities while setting age-appropriate freedoms, options, and choices. While basic restrictions

are necessary for a child's safety and well-being, Bell says, "Don't restrict them if it's not necessary."

She recommends allowing younger children to make choices between pre-selected options. Ask them, "Which book would you like to read?" As children mature, give them increasing freedom to make their own choices within certain parameters. As an example of how to teach time management, she suggests that instead of scheduling every minute of a child's school day, say instead, "Here's what you need to do by lunch. You choose when to do it." By not being over-scheduled or under-structured, a child learns responsibility and self-government.

Home is also a place to celebrate and develop differences. "There is a broad span of normal," Bell points out. "When our children are young," she says, "we understand that. We enjoy watching our children develop and recognize that the timetable is pre-designed.

We don't panic if our children don't crawl at four months or walk at nine. In the same way we treat the wide range of physical development as normative, we should also recognize this to be true of cognitive development." It is only when we send them to school that they are squeezed into a standardized formula that determines what's "normal." Because teachers are dealing with 25 or 30 kids, they determine what average is, and teach to it.

When children become adults these developmental differences don't matter. "Whether we learned to read at 4 or at 8," Bell says, "we all became functional adults. Standardizing is only necessary when we are mass educating." She reminds parents to trust that God has placed their children on a normal timetable. Let your children's development determine what your goals are for the school year.

"God loves diversity and differences," she says, "but the enemy has drawn us into the lie that sameness is validating." We pass this mindset along to our children. "Their self-worth and identity is caught up in how they compare with their peers. If they measure themselves and find themselves better," she observes, "that breeds pride. If they measure up worse, they feel as though they are not qualified. If they're average, they decide, there's nothing special about me." A home environment can reinforce the fact that God made them the way they are, and their differences delight Him.

Older siblings are the best role models.

The interaction between siblings is a significant factor in the effectiveness of the home school environment. "Older siblings are experts at the skills the younger ones are trying to master," Bell points out. Encouraging an older child to instruct and interact with the younger reinforces both students' learning.

Articulating the information in a way a younger child can understand further develops older children's brains and forces them to practice their communication skills. The younger child is empowered by learning from the older sibling because he realizes that the older student also

had to learn the same material at one time. This gives him hope and inspiration.

Relationships are critical to learning.

"Think back to a class you loved in high school," Bell invites. "Without a doubt, I bet you loved the teacher, and felt like the teacher cared about you." Because human beings are social creatures, learning is a social endeavor. Children need to feel connected to the people with whom they're collaborating. "They need to get feedback from someone who values them, rather than from demotivating classrooms and teachers. They need to be accepted by their peers and in an environment with people who are personally invested in them," she says. This environment is found most often in a home, where parents and siblings are fully vested in a child's life.

To facilitate learning even further, Bell identifies three elements that should be present in any learning environment:

Accurate, timely feedback. She defines this as "coaching." Because home schooling parents have fewer children in their "classroom," they can and should deliver feedback in real time, when it is most helpful. Resist the temptation to put off grading lessons and papers.

Positive affirmation.

"We must invest our energy in affirmation," Bell says. "We must consistently say, 'You are going to master this. You are going to learn. All we have to do is keep practicing.'"

Affirmation must be pointed and specific.

"Kids know when they're being praised falsely. Research shows when teachers are overly positive without timely feedback or are not specific, it actually undermines a student's confidence."

Support.

"We want to provide the training wheels that support their learning," Bell says. "Don't throw them in the deep end if they can't swim. Work up to a sophisticated task. Always make the goal just a little beyond where they are."

Because home is a place where children are free to explore their interests, celebrate their differences, interact with parents and siblings who are partners in their learning, and spend their days in secure and loving social relationships, home schooled students are thriving. Debra Bell isn't surprised. "God designed us to learn in a family. He's given you the most powerful teaching tools, and you can have joy in your soul knowing God has designed learning to happen this way."



Lori Hatcher is the author of Joy in the Journey - Encouragement for Homeschooling Moms and the blog, Hungry for God; Starving for Time <http://www.lorihatcher.com>

COLLEGE FOR GIRLS?

by Lynne Tagawa



"I want my son to go to college, but not my daughters," I overheard. I was shocked. I had a lot of respect for this godly young father, but he seemed so closed-minded. *Perhaps he will eventually change his mind, I thought.*

But later, I had to think through my own assumptions. After all, I was college-educated myself, and my opinions were surely biased in that direction. Over the years I have pondered this question: *how shall we educate our daughters, especially after high school?*

I know that many parents fear the immorality that pervades college campuses today. They are right to be concerned. When one of our sons attended a university in a small Midwestern town, we found a "men's only" dormitory and figured he was reasonably safe. He lived in the dorms only one year but came home with stories to tell. I'm thankful that instead of giving in to immorality he merely complained about his roommate.

So living in a dorm on campus is morally dangerous for both young men and young women. But that doesn't exclude a college education. For many, decent schools are a short commute away. And for others, there are alternatives to dormitories: living with a relative or with a Christian family willing to keep the student spiritually accountable.

What about an ungodly worldview? Parents complain that children run off to college and forsake their professions of faith. Granted, facing this aspect of evil on campus can be a challenge, but it can actually strengthen a true Christian. I remember feeling like a Christian in Rome back in my days on campus. Believers banded together, had prayer meetings and Bible studies, and did just fine. The college campus was our mission field. Even "Christian" colleges can present a challenge, as not all views espoused by professors will correspond to your own. Young men and women need to know how to compare Scripture with Scripture.

One thing that has changed since my time is the plethora of opportunities online. Liberty University, a Christian college, offers many degree programs in this way. In addition, there are ways to learn a trade that don't involve a typical four-year university. There are one to three year programs in health care taught by community colleges and even the hospitals themselves.

Girls—and young men—can learn without leaving home.

But does my daughter really need that education? She wants to be a wife and mother! That is one common question. And there is no easy answer. But after many years as a Christian educator and home schooler, I have come to some conclusions.

First, women are the primary educators of their children. This is true whether they home school or not. Having a high view of motherhood implies a high view of the training needed for the job—and it's not just practical skills that she needs. She needs to know the Scriptures. And she needs what used to be called a good "liberal arts" education: knowing how to read, write, and think. Of course, she can obtain these things without formal schooling, but we all know the feeling of "hitting the wall" as parents—how can I teach that which I haven't mastered myself? A good Christian college with an online program may fit the bill for some.

Second, she may need a trade. One mother I know calls it a "tent-making" skill. She may not marry for quite a while. And even becoming a wife and mother does not insure that she will never need to work outside the home. The Proverbs 31 woman engaged in business outside the home, and brought income into the family. Most women have contributed "egg money" or the equivalent to the family income in agricultural times; only with the advent of the industrial age and suburbia did earning money require leaving hearth and home. Today, as a more flexible information age provides different kinds of opportunities, women have more choices. Having marketable skills does not necessarily imply a "career" mindset.

I have always suggested to my female students that they consider teaching or nursing as possible trades. Both professions develop skills that will help a young lady in her later roles as wife and mother. In addition, some types of business degrees, which include things like web design, can enable a mother to earn part-time money from home.



But in the end, maybe "College for Girls?" is not the right question. I propose that "Education for Girls?" can always be answered with a "Yes!"

Lynne Tagawa is a wife and mother of four sons. The author of Sam Houston's Republic, she is a secondary science teacher with experience in private schools and in homeschooling her own sons. Presently she tutors and teaches homeschool co-op classes.

I AM APOLOGIA SCIENCE

"Since high school, I have been involved in multiple research projects. My scientific pursuits have ranged from biofuels work in Denmark to computer simulations in New York. I've presented at multiple conferences, including one at Stanford University. This past summer, I participated in a Department of Energy-sponsored nuclear chemistry program at Brookhaven National Lab. Through all these experiences, my basic knowledge and passion stems from my education with Apologia Science."

Kyle Hancock
College student



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The Sweet Side of Cornbread

Helping Our Children (and Ourselves) With Perfectionism.

by Rachael Salterelli

put to the test. Our friends were coming over for a shared school day. I spent the morning trying to whip my house into shape as well as whip a few snacks together.

I handcrafted a big batch of cornbread, gluten-free, with all sorts of specialty ingredients, baked in heavy cast iron so it would come out crusty, yet fluffy. Soft, creamy, honey butter was poised for slathering.

Just at the moment I was expecting a knock at the door my husband asked if something was burning. I ran pell-mell through the house to the kitchen to find that, sure enough, the cornbread was as black as that pan. I began to cry and yell, "How could I burn the cornbread?! What was I thinking?" And yes, it was on the tip of my tongue to say, "Everything is ruined!" But before I could get the words out, my husband started singing to the tune of "Skip to my Lou."

*"Mama burned the cornbread 1-2-3,
Ain't no cornbread for you and me,
Better not laugh because it ain't funneeeeee,
Mama burned the cornbread 1-2-3!"*

I heard yelling from across the house. "I hate math! I don't ever want to be a veterinarian," sobbed my 14-year-old, whose dream it was to be the very thing she was swearing off forever. We had just the day before discussed what math obstacles lay ahead on the road to becoming a vet, including college algebra. I wondered how to help her.

I knew the answer started with me, my beam before her speck. I have struggled my whole life with perfectionism. I have been known for commenting on occasion, "Now everything is ruined." As in, "Dinner is ruined. Vacation is ruined." You get the picture. But God is growing me. Nowadays, I find myself laughing along with my family as they tease me. Last year one of the kids took a bite of the rolls before we prayed at Thanksgiving. My husband joked, "Oh, now you've done it. You've ruined the next three Thanksgivings."

So I'm sharing with my daughter what God is sharing with me about perfectionism. For starters, failure is not final. "Pressing on" (Philippians 3:12) is a choice. There is always much to be salvaged, even gained, from failures. I haven't failed until I quit trying.

Examining expectations is also helpful. Perfectionism has the goal of being "the best." But God never asks me to be the best, but to do my best. He doesn't expect perfection from me. James 1:17 reminds me that I am not a creator of perfect—only God is: "Every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of Lights. How many times have I held back because of fear of not being good enough? Paul taught in 2 Corinthians 12: 9-10, "Most gladly I will boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

The day did come when my new attitude towards perfectionism was

Dear reader, if you can imagine a six-foot Italian dancing like a Russian with arms crossed over his chest and legs flailing up in each direction as he sang, then you know what I was looking at.

Chuckles began to escape from my frown. I asked myself, "Is this really worth ruining the morning over? Does cornbread really matter so much?"

As I was contemplating the eternal value of cornbread, my kids had joined in with Daddy, linking arms and swinging around square-dance style as they belted out with amazing countrified accents, "Mama burned the cornbread 1-2-3."

It was in that moment that all anger and frustration vanished. I was standing in front of a wonderful family who loved me enough to put on theatrical foolishness just to save me from myself. And I was about to be visited by amazing friends who didn't give a lick if I served them burned cornbread. Why do I waste precious moments on life's imperfections when I have so much goodness in front of me?

I got a sweet taste of wisdom that day: If it weren't for weakness, I would never see God's strength. If it wasn't for dependence, I would never see God's sufficiency. And if it wasn't for burned cornbread, I would never see my husband dance a jig.



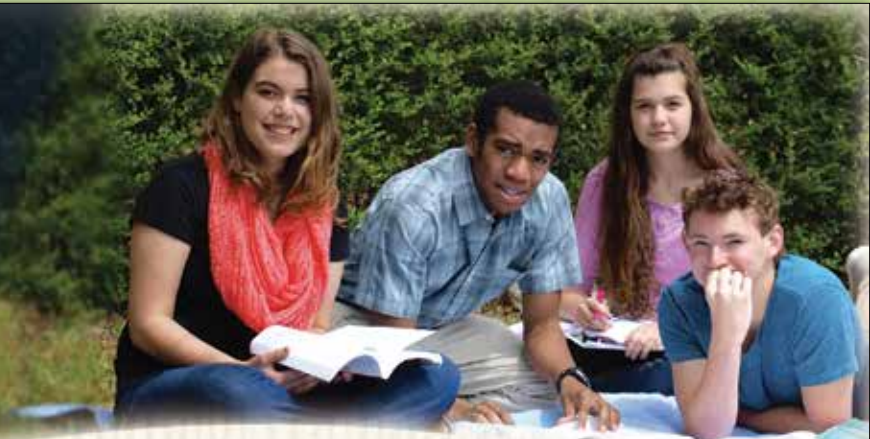
Rachael Salterelli lives in Montgomery and has 4 kids, the oldest just graduated. I am a Biblical NANC certified (National Association of Nouthetic Counseling) counselor. I write and speak occasionally when I can. I love to teach and I love my kids. So how awesome that everyday I get to do my favorite thing with my favorite people!

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These results were replicated across the state as the votes trickled in on election night. With our victories from the runoff behind us, the Rangers are looking ahead to the general election with ambitions and expectations running high.

**For more information about the THSC Rangers, visit our website at THSC.org/rangers.
Contact Amy Williams at 281-992-7596 or amy.williams@thsc.org**

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Ken Paxton, *Attorney General*
Dan Patrick, *Lieutenant Governor*
Sid Miller, *Agriculture Commissioner*
Nathan Hecht, *Supreme Court Chief Justice*
Jeff Brown, *Supreme Court Place 6*
Phil Johnson, *Supreme Court Place 8*
Bert Richardson, *Court of Criminal Appeals Place 3*
Kevin Yeary, *Court of Criminal Appeals Place 4*
David Newell, *Court of Criminal Appeals Place 9*

Congressional Elections ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Louie Gohmert, <i>District 1</i>	Randy Webber, <i>District 14</i>
Ted Poe, <i>District 2</i>	Bill Flores, <i>District 17</i>
Sam Johnson, <i>District 3</i>	Randy Neugebauer, <i>District 19</i>
Jeb Hensarling, <i>District 5</i>	Lamar Smith, <i>District 21</i>
Joe Barton, <i>District 6</i>	Pete Olson, <i>District 22</i>
John Culberson, <i>District 7</i>	Kenny Marchant, <i>District 24</i>
Kevin Brady, <i>District 8</i>	Roger Williams, <i>District 25</i>
Michael McCaul, <i>District 10</i>	Michael Burgess, <i>District 26</i>
Michael Conaway, <i>District 11</i>	Blake Farenthold, <i>District 27</i>
Kay Granger, <i>District 12</i>	John Carter, <i>District 31</i>
Mac Thornberry, <i>District 13</i>	

Judicial Elections ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

John Schmude, *Judge, 247th District Court*
Crystal Chandler, *Judge, Bexar County Court at Law 13*
Russ Casey, *Justice of the Peace, Tarrant County, Precinct 3*
Alicia Franklin, *Judge, 311th District Court, Harris County*
Russell Lloyd, *Justice, First District Court of Appeals, Seat 3*
Jesse Nevarez, *Judge, 231st District Court*
Timothy Menikos, *Judge, 332nd District Court*
Randy McDonald, *Judge, Van Zandt County Court at Law*
Ruben Gonzalez, *Judge, 432nd Criminal Court*
Matt Hayes, *Justice of the Peace, Tarrant County, Precinct 7*
Charles Vanover, *Judge, Tarrant County Criminal Court, Seat 8*

State Board of Education ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

David Bradley, *District 7*

Local Elections ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Anthony Wilder, *Carrollton City Council, Place 2*
Sharen Wilson, *District Attorney, Tarrant County*

Texas Senate ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Bob Hall, <i>District 2</i>	Konni Burton, <i>District 10</i>
Robert Nichols, <i>District 3</i>	Don Huffines, <i>District 16</i>
Paul Bettencourt, <i>District 7</i>	Donna Campbell, <i>District 25</i>
Van Taylor, <i>District 8</i>	Craig Estes, <i>District 30</i>

Texas House of Representatives ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dan Flynn, <i>District 2</i>	Drew Springer, <i>District 68</i>
Stuart Spitzer, <i>District 4</i>	James Frank, <i>District 69</i>
Bryon Hughes, <i>District 5</i>	Charles Perry, <i>District 83</i>
Matt Schaefer, <i>District 6</i>	Jodie Laubenberg, <i>District 89</i>
David Simpson, <i>District 7</i>	Stephanie Klick, <i>District 91</i>
Mark Keough, <i>District 15</i>	Jonathan Strickland, <i>District 92</i>
Tim Kleinschmidt, <i>District 17</i>	Matt Krause, <i>District 93</i>
James White, <i>District 19</i>	Tony Tinderholt, <i>District 94</i>
Wayne Faircloth, <i>District 23</i>	Bill Zedler, <i>District 96</i>
Rick Miller, <i>District 26</i>	Giovanni Capriglione, <i>District 98</i>
Scott Turner, <i>District 33</i>	Rodney Anderson, <i>District 105</i>
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Paul Workman, <i>District 47</i>	Cindy Burkett, <i>District 113</i>
Molly White, <i>District 55</i>	Matt Rinaldi, <i>District 115</i>
Phil King, <i>District 61</i>	Dan Huberty, <i>District 127</i>
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Ten Things I'd Do if I Had a Home School Do-Over

by Marilyn Rockett



Can we finish home educating our children without regret for things we didn't do? Probably not. We are human and we fail at times. There is no opportunity for a do-over (a sobering thought), but we can adjust again when we frequently examine what is important. In my imaginary do-over, I would pay attention to these things more often:

10. I would go to bed when I was sick or overly tired instead of pretending the world would end if my children missed a day of lessons.
9. I would invite friends over to dinner more often and concentrate more on relationships rather than on how the house looks. My children need hospitality experience.
8. I would listen with my children to my parents' and grandparents' stories from their youths and ask more questions about their lives to give my children a heritage and a look at the past generations of our family.
7. I would cherish all nine months of pregnancy rather than trying to wish them away. I would realize that God has given me (and all parents) the privilege of participating in His amazing miracle.
6. I would not fret when the kids or the floor get dirty. Mud, dirt, and grass stains mean that they are learning and having fun. Things clean up and are temporary; lessons last forever.
5. I would compare less the curriculum/material I'm using with what others are using and look more at what is best for my children. I would read aloud more without worrying if the book matches what we are studying at the moment. And I would not worry about finishing anything particular by the end of the year!
4. I would slow down and limit more the activity outside our home to make time for more responsibility in real life skills and learning.
3. I would talk less and listen more to my children's hearts. I would allow my children to fail; children (and all of us) learn valuable lessons through failure.
2. When I'm busy and my children spontaneously stop me for a hug and kiss, I would never say, "Not now—later. Go wash up for dinner (or clean your room or whatever)." That also means more I love you's and I'm sorry's.
1. But above all else, if I had the chance to live my home education days over again, I would try daily to see every minute of the precious time with my children as important and worthy of my investment, without fretting about small things. I would not worry about what others thought of our home education or how they thought my children compared to other children their ages. I would not place my worth in home schooling but rather in the Lord alone. I would seize each day as though it might be our last. I would laugh more, worry less about things that I'm not teaching my children, and concentrate on the important things: character, relationships, and life.

We are not perfect parents, but God is perfectly able to make us adequate to raise and teach the children He has given us. No matter our children's learning styles or our teaching styles, if we teach our children to love God, love others, and love to learn, we have done what He has called us to do. That is a job well done by an imperfect parent.

Marilyn Rockett is a veteran home school mom of four grown sons and Mimi to six grandsons, one granddaughter, and three great-grandsons, with new twin grandchildren on the way. She has worked in local, state, and national home education efforts for more than 30 years and is formerly editor-in-chief of Homeschooling Today magazine. Her book, Homeschooling at the Speed of Life, provides organizational helps and encouragement, and she has contributed to several other books and written numerous articles as well as spoken at numerous conferences. Contact her at Marilyn@MarilynRockett.com



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Bro-Hugged

"Hey Dad, that guy just 'bro-hugged' me!" my startled son, True (14), exclaimed. Normally, I'd be really concerned if a strange man hugged my son in a city park. But not today—I didn't call 9-1-1 or take anybody down. Instead, I rejoiced. You see, hugs were a sign our family had fulfilled Christ's purpose on a sunny day in the park.

We were out on the Tuesday evening before Easter Sunday, giving away gift boxes our church staff had assembled with water bottles, pretzels, chocolate, and a flowering plant. The gift boxes were a symbol of Jesus' love, just as He had given His life and love as a free gift. Due to my fears, I've always struggled with sharing the Gospel of Jesus with strangers, yet giving out gift boxes of good stuff seemed a simple, safe way of showing Christ's love. I want my kids to overcome self-centered fear of sharing the Gospel, so my wife and I took them along to teach them how simple and wonderful it is to obey the Lord in this area.

My wife Belinda is sensitive to the Lord's leading, so she directed us to a park near our church where parents brought their kids to baseball practice. As parents exited their cars, Belinda approached them, chatted with them, gave them a box, and wisely encouraged them to eat the chocolate before it melted.

Being big and scary, I didn't want to startle folks into calling 9-1-1 themselves to report the "creepy man giving away candy in the park." So I stayed at the truck and supplied my non-threatening wife and sons with boxes.

My son, Ever (10), was sweet and brave as he spoke to strangers and gave away boxes. Folks were responsive to his sincere words and childlike countenance. I could tell, as I saw strange women lean over and hug him.

True showed he has no fear of approaching people with the Gospel and a box. The Lord had arranged for True to meet a lady who had visited our church the previous week for a job fair. She connected the gift box with the job fair, then told True his church was "sweet and amazing" and pronounced she would visit his church on Easter Sunday!

Make your disciples by taking them with you.

by Pat Harrell

There are 1,071 verses in the Book of Matthew. (Please don't be too impressed; I looked up that number,) In the closing three verses, Jesus specified what His followers were to do until He returned: make disciples and teach them to observe His teachings. He even gave us dads our own set of disciples: those little people who eat our food, wreck our cars, and spill grape juice on our wife's carpet.

My kids don't see me preaching sermons, debating atheists, or conducting street evangelism. They do join me in hosting visitors, inviting friends and strangers to our home, delivering pies and cookies to the neighbors, helping neighbors clean up after storms hit their homes, starting conversations while standing in lines, and giving \$5 bills to strangers who ask for "a little help" at the gas station. All of this given in Jesus' name as a practical way of demonstrating His love. All of this to disciple my children to observe Christ's teachings.

It was my hope on that evening in the park that my sons would see how Jesus honored their efforts to serve others in His name. He more than honored—he astonished my sons with smiles, hugs, and grateful words.

When we first loaded the gift boxes into our car, I could see the hesitation on Ever's face. He wasn't quite sure what he was getting into. Yet he trusted his parents (amazing!). Truth is, I was hesitant and fearful too. Not sure what I was afraid of, but my fears are rarely based on logic and reason.

That night True and Ever told us how they saw delight on people's faces as they received the free gift. Ever told me his "fear" disappeared once he handed over the first box to an appreciative mom and got hugged. True said he wanted to do this again, and soon! So I bro-hugged him.

*If you have a moment, please send an email to
ImperfectFather@Gmail.com.
I'd love to read how you are discipling your family.*



Pat and Belinda Harrell have home schooled since 1995. They have five jolly children—and the loudest house on the block. Please send your thoughts on this article to Pat at ImperfectFather@Gmail.com. He promises to write back. Read more about being an Imperfect Father at

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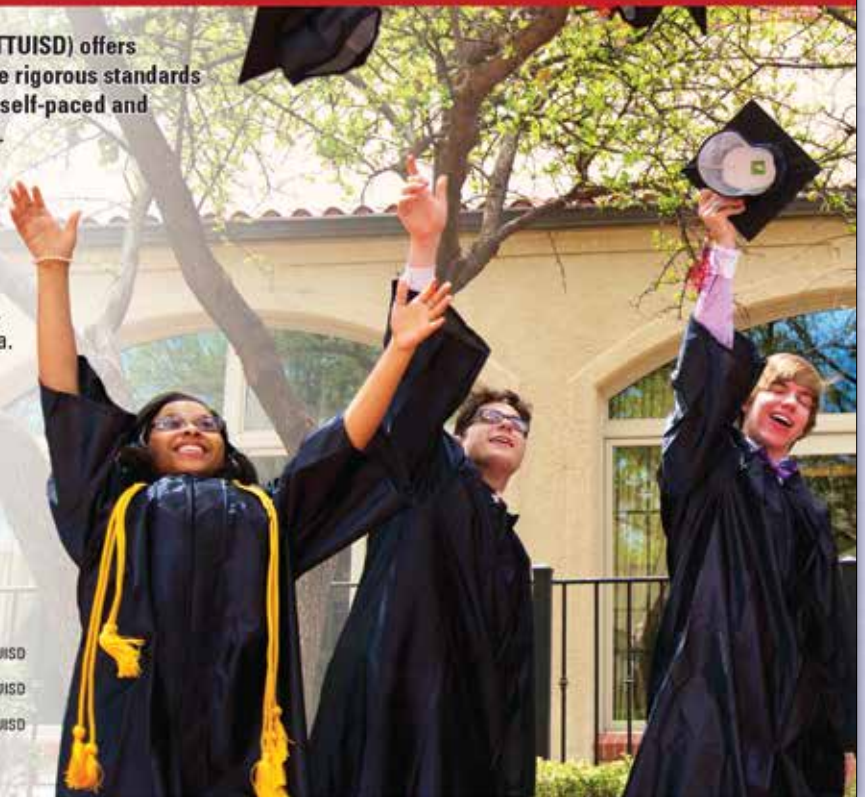
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When Philosophies Flounder and Dreams Shatter

by Shelia Campbell



“The corn is up,” my husband announced as he walked through the door. “I’m watering right here by the house if you and the boys want to come out.”

“Hey guys, let’s get shoes on and go outside with Daddy,” I called to our three boys. “The corn is coming up, and Daddy’s watering it. Let’s go look at the new corn.”

“What do you think will float down the rows of corn?” I asked as I helped my two-year-old with his shoes.

“Sticks will float, and so do feathers,” Justin, who was five at the time, declared with confidence as he worked to tie his sneakers.

“What about rocks? Do you think rocks float?” I asked as we headed out the door into the bright spring sunshine.

“Rocks don’t float,” my three-year-old said assertively. I winked at him and smiled, and off we went to see new corn sprouts, to learn more about how things grow, to explore the buoyancy of sticks, string, old corn cobs, feathers, and whatever else young boys find to toss into the running water.

That was the spring of 1992—long before I had ever heard the term “educational philosophy” or “worldview” or knew of any methods of education other than standard workbooks and textbooks and the classroom style of education used by public schools. Home schooling was still gaining popularity, and the only thing I considered to be

“school” was the two or three hours of kindergarten work I did with my five-year-old while his brothers napped. My public school mentality separated daily life and formal education. It wasn’t until years later, when I read *A Charlotte Mason Companion* by Karen Andreola, that I realized how many of the daily activities I considered to be outside of “school” were in line with her educational philosophy.

I loved teaching my children. Exploring the wonders of the world outside our door and the wonders of the written word were my two primary means of educating my boys. Almost daily we would take walks down country roads and examine the wonders of nature up close. I wanted them to see life reflected in nature, just as I always had, and to glean glimpses of their Heavenly Father reflected in His creation. I wanted them to love words—unique reflections of the image of God in man. I not only read to them at bedtime but also enjoyed story time any time I had a few minutes to read; we practiced scripture memory and recited poems while they helped me with housework.

I may not have been following a purposeful educational philosophy, but I believed my children were gifts from God and it was my responsibility to teach them about life. I thought the best way was to simply enjoy living life together with them, walking with them, talking with them, teaching them, and learning with them. By the time my oldest turned five, I had decided to home school not only because I wanted to give him a biblical education but also because I did not want to be parted from him all day.

In that spring any philosophies I might have held and any dreams of implementing them were shattered when Justin was left severely brain damaged as a tragic complication of open-heart surgery. He spent four months in the hospital, and as the new school year approached, instead of organizing school supplies, we were arranging our home to accommodate a hospital bed and medical supplies; instead of buying crayons and curriculum, we were looking at wheelchairs and incontinence supplies. Our world was turned upside down, and it would be years before we were once more able to enjoy books read aloud, or to take walks down dusty country roads to enjoy the wonders of nature. When my other two boys started school, we used consumable workbooks—gone were the nature walks, and story time was almost nonexistent. Caring for Justin and a new little sister took every ounce of strength I had and left very little for home schooling. For a season, home schooling, teaching, and even mothering looked very different than what I thought or hoped it would be.

Sometimes life circumstances create a gap between our educational philosophy and the implementation of our ideals. And while our philosophy of education may not change, our dreams of implementing what we view are the ideal methods for teaching our children are crushed. A family member falls ill and needs daily assistance, jobs change; financial difficulties arise, mom must work outside the home, a move is necessary—life changes, and suddenly it is difficult or impossible to continue a method of education that is no longer compatible. It may not always be a major life-changing event, but simply a different season of life; or the accumulation of several smaller changes that make a method of education that once worked now unsuitable.

Having a clear educational philosophy—goals, a vision, and a plan for implementing that philosophy and achieving those goals is important, our children are worth our best efforts. Home schooling is a sacrifice of time, energy, and resources. There will be seasons that are far more difficult than others. Yet, sometimes we may find ourselves faced with what appear to be insurmountable mountains forcing us to alter course. I believe God uses those impassable mountains to mature our philosophies, refine our characters, and direct our paths. While our educational philosophies may mature or even change, and our methods and the way we teach our children may change, God's love for us and our children remains the same. He knows the plans He has for us and the paths that lie ahead, and He uses circumstances we may not understand to guide our steps. When our philosophies flounder and our dreams of an ideal educational environment for our children are shattered, it is a comfort to know that God is still there in the circumstances of our lives working all things for our good and His glory. (Romans 8:28)



Sheila Campbell began home schooling in 1991, continuing as a single parent after the death of her husband in 2001. She also cared for her special needs child until his death in 2004. Now that her children are all grown, Sheila works as a substitute mail carrier and continues to pursue her writing. She recently released her first book, My Journey With Justin, a touching story about the life of her handicapped son, now available on Amazon (see pg. 24). Sheila resides in Hale Center where she pens her thoughts at www.pausingtopraise.com.

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The Family

Vision

by Lisa Pennington

Like many home schoolers, we often get stopped by strangers. They ask questions like: do we take tests and how do we socialize. I always dread when they look right into my children's eyes and start quizzing them. What if one of my precious children gives away one of my deep, dark secrets? What if I am about to be exposed for not getting school done last week?!

It's so important that the kids understand the vision behind our decisions. If they know why we home school, then not only can they answer the occasional stranger's questions, but they can also carry the vision into the future.

One day when we were taking a tour of a local attraction, the guide asked my son, "Do you like home schooling?" I froze. What would he tell the man? I was pleasantly surprised by his eight-year-old answer: "Yes, sir. I mostly like that we get to learn about God and how He takes care of us."

I let their conversation go on, listening as my son told the man all about our belief that teaching children at home is the very best way for them to learn. He explained that he gets to spend time with his parents and that he felt so sad for his friends who had to go away all day. He shared how he gets time every morning to practice his yodeling (his interest at that time), and he and the guide did a little yodeling together. This man seemed charmed by their discussion, and I really didn't know until that moment that my son really understood our vision for our family.

We purposely spend time teaching our children about our vision and from where it comes. It doesn't have to be a heavy load to share. We just sprinkle it into our everyday discussions. For example, each morning the kids and I talk for a few minutes about the day ahead and what we have planned. We go over each activity, appointment, and goal. Then we might talk a little about why we are doing each thing. Does it fit into our goals for health, finances, character building, etc.?

As decisions come up we always go back to the vision first before getting too far into a discussion. For example, if one of the kids asks to

take piano lessons, we discuss how that fits into our family goals. It would need to be a part of how we want to spend our time, our money, and our individual goals for that child. We weigh it all and add in some prayer before making a final decision. Having these types of talks with your children, and not just in private between Mom and Dad, helps them feel a part of the process and better understand how those decisions are made. If the answer is no, they will be able to see the purpose. If the answer is yes, they will appreciate the value of the sacrifices.

It's important that Mom and Dad talk privately when creating the vision. You should be unified in purpose before talking with the kids about it. Writing it down and keeping it where you can read it often helps keep it fresh in your mind and heart. I know I need a refresher at least once a week; my memory isn't what it used to be. We have life goals that are broad (glorify God, be debt free, etc.), annual goals that are more specific (pay off that credit card, meet the neighbors, lose 20 pounds), and monthly and weekly goals. Our children know our breakdown and they participate in helping us meet those goals as a family. Then they make their own personal goals from there.

Now that same little yodeling boy is a grown man and he is carrying the vision into his own future. He is firmly planted in the knowledge of how to form his own vision based on God's Word. It is what we taught him his whole life, and watching him (and all of our children) find his path to his future is pure joy.

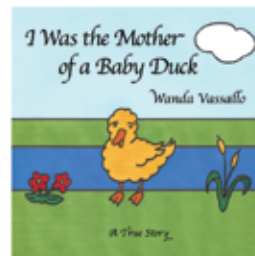
I just wish that attraction guide could see him now.



Lisa and her husband James live on a family farm outside a little Texas town with their nine kids and a whole herd of animals with which they have no idea what to do. It's an adventure they never expected, filled with moments of greatness and moments of wondering why no one can remember to put their shoes away. In addition to home schooling and doing laundry, Lisa runs an Etsy shop with her daughters and blogs about it all at ThePenningtonPoint.com.



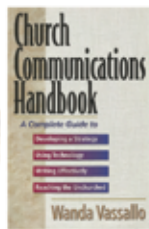
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INDESCRIBABLE

by Shelli Simons



When I first encountered *Indescribable: Encountering the Glory of God in the Beauty of the Universe* by Louie Giglio and Matt Redman, I was reading a black-and-white Kindle version. I thought, “This is just incredible! My husband would love it in color!” My husband is an artist who appreciates design in some of the most unexpected places. I must say that God’s creation is far from unexpected! After all, David proclaimed, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork. . . . There is no speech or language, where their voice is not heard.” (Psalm 19:1,3)

I felt compelled to give the actual book to my husband on the first legitimate occasion—a birthday, as I recall. I was right in my assumption: color certainly does reveal the majesty of His glory!

As YouTube describes the book at www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_kfH2ZkdX4, “Putting this powerful message into print for the first time, visionary pastor Louie Giglio and songwriter Matt Redman team up to write a heart-stirring book about the mysteries of God’s creation. *Indescribable* takes readers on a journey through the vastness of outer space and into the depths of the soul.”

I started reading this book one night while my husband was having his late-night computer time. The more I read, the more I had to interrupt him with, “Did you know . . .?” questions. There were several observations that I *knew*, but hadn’t seen proved. For instance, did you know that when scientists probed deep into the universe, trying to find intelligent life, they found musical stars? (Tapping and humming) . . .

“Tell Me, if you have understanding . . . who laid [the earth’s] cornerstone when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?”
(Job 38:4, 6-7)

***“Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary:
praise him in the firmament of his power.
Praise him for his mighty acts:
praise him according to his excellent greatness.
Praise him with the sound of the trumpet:
praise him with the psaltery and harp.
Praise him with the timbrel and dance:
praise him with stringed instruments and organs.
Praise him upon the loud cymbals:
praise him upon the high sounding cymbals.
Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord.
Praise ye the Lord.”***
(Psalm 150:1-6)

Indescribable is filled with photos of phenomena that man has observed throughout recorded history, with personal reflections of both authors, and with quotations from scientists and theologians. Did you know that our sun, great in size, is a lightweight when comparing “suns” in other constellations? The authors illustrate this fact with a chart comparing many, many heavenly bodies. In addition, there are pictures of solar systems, galaxies, constellations, nebulae, etc., viewed with high-power telescopes. If your family is fascinated by our solar system, you might want to complement textbook studies with this awe-inspiring book of facts, photos, and commentaries to guide students through ways in which

science and the Bible are not exclusive of one another when one is pursuing the truth.

Henry "Fritz" Schaefer, Graham Perdue professor of chemistry and director of the Center for Computational Quantum Physics at the University of Georgia, is quoted, "The significance and joy in my science comes in those occasional moments of discovering something new and saying to myself, 'So that's how God did it.'"

From Frances Collins, director of the National Institutes of Health and former director of the Human Genome Project: "By investigating God's majestic and awesome creation, science can actually be a means of worship."

Augustine: "The very order, disposition, beauty, change, and motion of the world and all visible things silently proclaim that it could only have been made by God."

The authors are in awe of our God and all His indescribable creation. As I approached the possibility of writing a review of this book, the question arose in my mind: Curriculum review or book report? I find that it is both. It is a wonderful devotional book and also a great resource to accompany any science curriculum.

Please consider the words to the chorus of *Indescribable*, sung by Chris Tomlin:

**"Indescribable, uncontainable, You place the stars in the sky and You know Them by name, You are amazing God
All powerful, untamable, awestruck we fall to our knees as we humbly Proclaim, You are amazing God"**

When my children were young, our family went on a road trip to visit my grandparents and to see the sights along the way. It was a great field trip opportunity. As we drove up the California coast, I kept commenting about how insignificant we humans are in the grand scheme of things—I had no idea. My finite mind could only process so much. What an amazing, indescribable God!

Indescribable would be great resource to use for introducing your family to God's awesome glory!



Shelli and her husband Ron have been married since 1975 and live in Lubbock; they have two adult sons—Benjamin and Jonathan—both now married. They are also blessed with three grandchildren, two boys and a girl. Ron and Shelli began home-schooling Benjamin's second grade year and continued until both sons graduated. Shelli now serves THSC as associate editor for the THSC REVIEW magazine.

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THSC

News and Notes



Keeping Texas Families Free

This past quarter THSC has been very active gearing up for convention, serving home school group leaders, advocating for Texas home schoolers, and keeping close watch on key cases that have the potential to impact home schooling for years to come.

This year THSC is proud to offer its annual leaders conference in conjunction with the State Convention in The Woodlands. The THSC Pre-Convention Leadership Seminar will be held on Thursday, July 24th. It will be followed by what is lining up to be the best home school convention ever. This year's convention will feature a host of talented speakers, including returning speakers John Erickson, author of *Hank the Cowdog*, and artist and author Todd Wilson. Like every convention, this one will have new speakers and presentations that will invigorate

parents, entertain children, and inspire all. New speakers this year include Jeff Myers and appearances by the Duggar family. Also, for the first year ever, our convention registration is going to be limited. This means that on-site registration may not be available. Be sure to go to thsc.org and click on events >> convention to get the latest information and register to reserve your spot.

In addition to gearing up for convention, THSC has been very busy in the political arena. There is no question that Texas families scored big in both the primary and runoff elections this year. After battling hundreds of thousands of dollars from the liberal establishment and rebutting false accusations from left leaning "conservatives," traditional values and parental rights finally emerged victorious when the results poured in.

There is no question that Texas families scored big in both the primary and runoff elections this year.

New Leadership

THSC came strong out of the elections with six out of seven THSC-endorsed statewide executive candidates; either winning outright or else advancing into the runoff, where three out of four THSC-endorsed statewide candidates scored huge victories. In light of the home school history in Texas, when at one time parents were jailed for choosing to educate their children privately in the home, the victories seen this election year are encouraging. Conservatives solidified a win for Sid Miller (Agricultural Commissioner), Ken Paxton (Attorney General), and Dan Patrick (Lieutenant Governor). With these home school champions leading the way for Texas' future, home schoolers can be sure that they will be afforded their full independence and protection under the law.

The lieutenant governor, who will oversee the Texas senate and exercise enormous control over the flow of legislation, including acting as the Education Committee Chairman in the Texas senate.

Lt. Gov Dan Patrick will be a huge asset to the home schooling community in past legislative sessions. The 84th Texas Legislature may be the most home school-friendly that Texans has seen in recent history.

This victory, in conjunction with the unseating of two of the Texas senate's most liberal members and the addition of three home school advocates to the chamber, provides home schoolers with solid support in a typically liberal body of legislators. Seven staunch conservatives joined the ranks from the primary and the sound defeat of three establishment challengers in their attempt to oust conservative home school champions from the Texas House. The election results reinforced the fact that every vote counts. Five of the victories were won by less than 2% of the vote. Without the participation of the home schooling community, these candidates would not have won their elections.

Judicial Landslide

With four out of six THSC-endorsed judges winning their elections, some by margins as high as 55%, judges across Texas are all too aware of the grassroots activists ready to hold them accountable in defense of their parental rights. Alicia Franklin (311th District Court) ousted Texas Judicial Wall of Shame Judge Denise Pratt. As home schoolers become more and more involved politically, judges become increasingly aware of the dangers of violating parental rights. In counties across Texas, other groups now look to home schoolers for recommendations on judicial candidates because of their reputation for being uncompromising on their defense of

traditional values and the application of the law in the courtroom.

Taking the momentum from victories from the primary and runoff elections, THSC is already preparing for the general election in November. THSC is expanding its THSC Rangers program, which will continue to educate and inspire young home school students to make an impact on political and legislative processes in local and state elections. It is an approach that is working, because the 2014 November elections proved to be an historic landslide victory for traditional values and parental rights.

Taking the momentum in victories in the primary and runoff elections, THSC is already preparing for the general election in November.

The Tutt Case

No one is more aware of the stakes when it comes to parental rights and misuse of judicial powers than the Tutt family in North Texas. After five months the State still maintains control of the Tutt's children, even though the presiding judge ruled in January that the removal was not justified, as the children were removed from the home without evidence of abuse or neglect. Based on the recommendation of a CPS-contracted psychologist, the judge in the April 30 hearing ruled that the Tutts must submit to monthly, unannounced CPS visits; family counseling; and psychiatric evaluation of both parents by a CPS-approved psychiatrist. The judge also heard testimony from public school officials subpoenaed by the assistant district attorney. The four children who have been returned to the Tutt family are still not allowed to be home schooled but must continue with their court-mandated public educations. There was no decision made in regard to the other children, who have not yet been returned. The judge said that she would decide on what was best for the next school year at a hearing in June. In spite of the fact that the removal of

the children was ruled unjustified, CPS sent a letter to THSC claiming they had conducted an investigation of the caseworker assigned to the Tutt case and purportedly found no misconduct.

A THSC attorney representing the family is pursuing a writ of mandamus to an appellate court. The purpose of this action is to restore the family's right to their own children based on the prior ruling that the initial removal of the children by CPS was unjustified. The court has thus far refused to provide the transcript of the decisive January hearing to the Tutts' attorney, even though the law requires that an attorney representing a client be granted a transcript. The court clerk stated the judge must give permission for the Tutts' attorney to receive the transcript, which would entail an additional hearing that would not be possible before July 18! In March the judge ruled that THSC could obtain a redacted transcript, but so far THSC has seen no action in compliance with that ruling.



Advocacy

In addition to THSC Association's activities with the Tutt family, they are continuing to serve their members across the state with advocacy and education about home schooling. Most recently, Tim Lambert wrote a letter on behalf of the Association to Mardel bookstore in order to clarify some issues on home schooling, documentation, and curriculum and bring to light the need for proper employee training regarding home schooling rules and requirements. As a primary source for home school curriculum and education supplies in Texas, Mardel can be a strong resource for Texas home schoolers.

The staff at Texas Home School Coalition is proud to serve the thriving home school community of Texas. They are working hard every day to fulfill their mission and provide home schoolers with resources that will enable their success. In the many aspects of THSC's work, they always remember that at the center of what they do is a caring passion to preserve and defend home schooling in the state of Texas, support home school members, and tenaciously defend the right of all parents to direct the education and upbringing of their children. Continued prayer and support enables THSC to fulfill its commitment to pursuing the protection of Texas families.

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*see Warning! Driver Education can Kill Your Teenager by Patrick Barrett

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UPCOMING EVENTS

May 7-9, 2015 ~ Arlington
 THSC Convention - Arlington
 Texas Home School Coalition (THSC)
thsc.org/convention

July 23-25, 2015 ~ The Woodlands
 THSC Convention - The Woodlands
 Texas Home School Coalition (THSC)
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The Texas Home School Coalition (THSC) is a 501(c)(3) educational organization that is supported by tax-deductible donations. THSC is dedicated to serving the home school community; it promotes home education in Texas by educating the public, the home school community, and officials about home schooling.

THSC Association, a 501(c)(4) advocacy organization dedicated to serving and protecting the home school community of Texas, is supported by membership fees (not tax-deductible) and sales of resources. The Association now offers legal assistance in regard to home education issues as a benefit to its members, along with several other benefits and discounts.

The work of the THSC PAC (Political Action Committee) - endorsing and supporting pro-home schooling candidates - is supported by donations that are not tax-deductible. See thscpac.org for more information.



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