

# TIME FOR HOMESCHOOLING

F O R M O T H E R S



Anne Elliott



Learn  
**how to recognize  
what is important**

I have more understanding than all my teachers, for  
Your testimonies are my meditation.

Psalms 119:99

HOMESCHOOLINGTORAH.COM





# Contents

0 1 page 1

## INTRODUCTION

0 2 page 3

## UNLESS YHVH BUILDS THE HOUSE

0 3

## THINGS THAT STEAL MY JOY

0 4 page 10

## MONEY WOES

0 5 page 18

## THE CURRICULUM CAROUSEL

0 6 page 22

## HOMESCHOOLING WITH LITTLE ONES

0 7 page 28

## USING THE BIBLE TO TEACH

0 8 page 39

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



# 01

## INTRODUCTION

In my book *The Organized Homeschool*, I wrote about a phenomenon called “Bush Panic.”

*I heard this week that when someone is lost in the woods, his first inclination is denial. Then he starts to realize he really is lost, and starts to move faster. It’s called “Bush Panic.” Instead of stopping to evaluate his situation (like, where could I sleep tonight, or what will I eat, or how could I contact someone?), he uses all his energy, often running in circles... until the sun sets and he’s now in a real pickle.*

*As a busy mother, I’ve often felt “bush panic” at home. My to-do list gets longer, and I start to realize that there is NO WAY I can possibly get it all done – yet I realize that it MUST get done... there will be consequences if I don’t... and others try to help, but they just do it wrong and create even more work for me to do...*

*And the panic rises inside of me. I get mad at those around me... or I cry... or I keep going faster and faster, staying up later and later...*

*Until I collapse.<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>The Organized Homeschool, by Anne Elliott (Perry, MI: Foundations Press, 2020), p. 46.



Judging by the emails I've received, it seems this struck a chord. I'm not the only mother who has experienced "bush panic." It seems to hit homeschooling mothers hardest in the fall (about November, when a plethora of doctors' appointments, after-school activities, and field trips derail her summer's good intentions) and in the late winter (about February, when dreary days, house-bound children, and a week of the stomach flu make her feel a little crazy).

At moments like these, we think we have lost our minds! As I told my daughter once, "If I have one more thing on my plate, I'm going to sprout green hair!"

What can be done about the craziness that hits all homeschooling moms at one time or another? How can we regain our

perspective, get control of our time, and keep a calm and peaceful spirit in the midst of trying circumstances?

It felt like a good time to write another book. If no one else reads, I at least need it!

*~Anne*

P.S. I've tried to make this book easy to read, filled with practical forms and lists so you can implement it right away. However, I strongly urge you to set aside some time to read it in peace and quiet, with a pencil in hand, so you can think. How about tonight, after the children are in bed? Make a cup of tea...



A photograph of a Black couple with their hands clasped in prayer, looking down. The woman is on the left, wearing a light-colored long-sleeved shirt, and the man is on the right, wearing a light-colored sweater over a collared shirt. They are in a room with a window in the background.

# 02

## UNLESS YHVH BUILDS THE HOUSE

I think YHVH gave women a special radar that helps us hone in on circumstances around us and diagnose problems. We seem to understand when things aren't quite right, but sometimes we don't have the ability to fix things in our own strength.

One of the reasons we have a special sense of what's going on is that God created us to be our husband's helper.

"YHVH Elohim said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him'" (Genesis 2:18).

Adam was created in the image of

Elohim, yet he wasn't complete without a woman created in *his* image, specifically designed to complete him and complement him.

When we work with our husbands toward common goals, we feel a great fulfillment that I believe was part of what YHVH intended for us.

However, as a result of Adam and Eve's sin and the curse, sometimes we women try to exalt ourselves over our husbands. We reason that since our husbands badly need us, we must be better than they are.

Sometimes we try to take on too much, trying to do our own jobs plus our



husband's jobs. "Anything he can do, I can do better" becomes our motto.

Maybe we don't try to steal work from our husbands, but rather we pamper our children by not requiring enough from them.

Or maybe we allow all the extracurricular activities available to influence us too much, saying "yes" to too many things.

Or maybe we plan too much for our homeschooling year, not being realistic about our abilities and strength.

Maybe we've been honest in our marriage and parenting, but we can't say "no" at our congregation or to our friends.

Maybe we see real needs in the community around us, but we forget that we can't meet all the needs ourselves.

Maybe none of these problems has affected us, but sickness has hit our home, throwing a monkey wrench into our plans.

Maybe a financial problem that no one foresaw is causing concern and extra exertion.

"Unless YHWH builds the house,  
They labor in vain who build it;  
Unless YHWH guards the city,  
The watchman stays awake in vain.  
It is vain for you to rise up early,  
To sit up late,  
To eat the bread of sorrows;  
For so He gives His beloved sleep"  
(Psalm 127:1-2).

Whatever the mess you're in, YHWH's Word has an answer. His answers are

always characterized by peace, a peace "which surpasses all understanding" (Philippians 4:7). This kind of peace can only come from Him, but He promises to guard your heart and mind with it.

Before you can find this peace, even in the midst of a storm, you must:

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God" (Philippians 4:6).

What things are causing chaos in your home today?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Now, go back and put a ✓ by each one after you've prayed about it. Spend some serious time doing this, telling Abba Father that you understand that unless He builds your house, all your labor and effort will be in vain. Ask Him to "guard your city" and to grant you sleep and peace, no matter the circumstances.



# 03

## THINGS THAT STEAL MY JOY

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13).

Have you lost your joy in homeschooling? Have things gotten hard? Has your heart gotten hard?

This verse tells that YHVH is a God of hope. Hope is His specialty!

Think about it. Starting with Adam’s sin, YHVH immediately offered hope as He covered their sin and nakedness with the sacrifice of an animal. Then He promised a Messiah who would restore

everything that sin had stolen. What hope!

We have hope because He is with us each day, as well as hope for the world to come.

As we meditate on the hope YHVH has given us, He begins to fill our hearts with joy and peace.

When we’ve started to lose our peace over our circumstances, trusting in the God of hope turns our tears to laughter—yes, even if the circumstances haven’t changed at all.

When we’ve started to lose our joy because of worry, trusting in the God of hope chases fear away and floods us



with peace—yes, even though others won't be able to explain the sudden change in us.

The best thing is that joy and peace cause us to “overflow with hope” ourselves. We become like YHVH, because His Spirit moves in mighty power in our lives.

So I have to ask myself, “What could cause His power to stop flowing in my life?”

Two kinds of sin cause the Spirit of God to be “quenched” and “grieved,” so that we won't overflow with hope anymore.

## *Fear*

“Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Messiah Yeshua concerning you. Quench not the Spirit” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-19, KJV).

Fear steals our joy because it tells YHVH that we don't trust Him. We think that if we were arranging our circumstances, we could do a better job than He does.

Of course, we really are powerless to control anything. Meanwhile, we lose sleep, trying to run the universe. Wham! There goes our joy!

On the other hand, if we really do trust that the circumstances of our lives are “the will of God concerning you,” it will be evidenced by the following:

- **Rejoicing “evermore.”** I like this King-James word, because it shows that I will rejoice, then I'll rejoice a little more, then even more, and ever more and more.
- **Praying “without ceasing.”** I think this means that as the doubtful thoughts start to creep back in, I immediately take my anxieties to the throne of YHVH. I'm only human, so I'll probably have to do this “without ceasing.”
- **Give thanks in everything.** It's an abundant cycle as I pray, then I give God thanks for what I'm trusting Him to do, rejoicing because He is trustworthy. Then I pray again, over and over.

A passage of Scripture that has been helpful to me is this one:

“Though the fig tree may not blossom,  
Nor fruit be on the vines;  
Though the labor of the olive may fail,  
And the fields yield no food;  
Though the flock may be cut off from the fold,  
And there be no herd in the stalls—  
Yet I will rejoice in YHVH,  
I will joy in the God of my salvation.  
YHVH God is my strength;  
He will make my feet like deer's feet,  
And He will make me walk on my high hills” (Habakkuk 3:17-19).

# Anger

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Messiah God forgave you” (Ephesians 4:29-32).

How easy it is for us moms to let our tongues control us! However, when angry words rule, the Holy Spirit is grieved and stops filling us with joy.

These verses tell us that only wholesome talk should come out of our mouths. This is defined as “only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”

What a great guideline this is! Before I open my mouth, I need to ask if my words are “helpful” to others.

As I am unselfish, thinking of the needs of others before my own, I am in effect telling YHWH that I know He can take care of my own needs, so I am therefore free to care for others.

I easily get upset at the bad behavior of others. I see their evil, and I am filled with bitterness, maybe because of the

wrong they’ve done to me personally. My heart is filled with rage, then anger spills out of me. I start to fight and slander, and I plot evil against them.

Just as with fear, when I am angry I am telling YHWH that I am more fit than He to run the universe!

So I fume and fuss, and wham! My joy is gone!

The Psalmist had much the same problem. I can relate to what he was feeling in the following:

“But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled;  
My steps had nearly slipped.  
For I was envious of the boastful,  
When I saw the prosperity of the wicked.  
For there are no pangs in their death,  
But their strength is firm.  
They are not in trouble as other men,  
Nor are they plagued like other men.  
Therefore pride serves as their necklace;  
Violence covers them like a garment.  
Their eyes bulge with abundance;  
They have more than heart could wish.  
They scoff and speak wickedly concerning oppression;  
They speak loftily.  
They set their mouth against the heavens,  
And their tongue walks through the earth.  
Therefore his people return here,



And waters of a full cup are drained  
by them.

And they say, ***"How does God  
know?"***

***And is there knowledge in the Most  
High?"***

Behold, these are the ungodly,  
Who are always at ease;  
They increase in riches.  
Surely I have cleansed my heart in  
vain,  
And washed my hands in innocence.  
For all day long I have been plagued,  
And chastened every morning.  
If I had said, "I will speak thus,"  
Behold, I would have been untrue to  
the generation of Your children.  
When I thought how to understand  
this,  
It was too painful for me..." (Psalm  
73:2-16).

Do you see the end result of his anger?  
"It was oppressive to me."

This heavy oppression robs us of our  
joy, our energy, and even our desire to  
live.

"All day long I have been plagued," the  
Psalmist moaned. "I have been punished  
every morning."

Thankfully, the Psalmist found a way  
to get a new perspective, and we can,  
too!

"When I thought how to understand  
this,

It was too painful for me—

***Until I went into the sanctuary of  
God;***

Then I understood their end.

Surely You set them in slippery  
places;

You cast them down to destruction.

Oh, how they are brought to desola-  
tion, as in a moment!

They are utterly consumed with  
terrors.

As a dream when one awakes,

So, YHWH, when You awake,

You shall despise their image.

Thus my heart was grieved,

And I was vexed in my mind.

I was so foolish and ignorant;

I was like a beast before You.

Nevertheless I am continually with  
You;

You hold me by my right hand.

You will guide me with Your counsel,

And afterward receive me to glory.

Whom have I in heaven but You?

And there is none upon earth that I  
desire besides You.

My flesh and my heart fail;

But God is the strength of my heart  
and my portion forever.

For indeed, those who are far from  
You shall perish;

You have destroyed all those who  
desert You for harlotry.

But it is good for me to draw near to  
God;

I have put my trust in YHWH God,

That I may declare all Your works"  
(Psalm 73:16-28).

As soon as the Psalmist put his focus  
back on God – and off people – God  
immediately strengthened his heart

again. His joy returned, so much so that he couldn't help but brag of God's deeds to anyone who would listen.

Joy returned.

If you've lost your joy this homeschooling year, check for these two heart sins.

- **Are you afraid?** Take your worries to God, then rejoice in Him, thanking Him for your circumstances.
- **Are you angry?** Take the sins of others to God, then draw near to God and allow Him to take care of others in His own timing.

Let's repeat our verse one more time:

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13).





# 04

## MONEY WOES

Our town is struggling with economic recession. A major factory in town has just announced that it is laying off workers. Jobs are scarce, and those low-paying jobs that are available are being sought by workers needing a second or third job. Debt is high. The number of families living under the poverty level is increasing. Job skills are lacking. Education is poor. It's discouraging!

Maybe money is one of the reasons why life has gotten so overwhelming for you lately. I've been there, too! I know what it's like to have a plan that is derailed because of unexpected circumstances.

In those times, I've known that I should trust YHVH—but it's really hard!

This is why God's Word is so comforting.

"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. The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light.

But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

"No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 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 6:19-34).

So the strategy that we who belong to God's Kingdom must adopt is to constantly evaluate **how** we are seeking God's kingdom. Seeking His kingdom must occupy my every thought, my every priority, and my every energy. He has promised to provide all these other things. What job security! What peace!

***How can I seek His Kingdom today?***

I can't answer that for anyone else, but for me, I wonder if the answer lies in what James wrote:

"What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, 'Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead" (James 2:14-17).

The world is hurting. How can I take God's Kingdom to those who have concrete, physical needs?

I enjoy reading thoughts from my online friend Jenny, whose family has not only adopted numerous children from Africa but also intentionally lives in a poverty-stricken area of a city, so that



they can spread the gospel and care for the hurting.

“When they had finished eating, Yeshua said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?’

‘Yes, Master,’ he said, ‘you know that I love you.’

Yeshua said, ‘Feed my lambs.’

Again Yeshua said, ‘Simon son of John, do you truly love me?’

He answered, ‘Yes, Master, you know that I love you.’

Yeshuasaid, ‘Take care of my sheep.’

The third time he said to him, ‘Simon son of John, do you love me?’

Peter was hurt because Yeshua asked him the third time, ‘Do you love me?’ He said, ‘Master, you know all things; you know that I love you.’

Yeshua said, ‘Feed my sheep.’ (John 21:15-17)

As a homeschooling mother, we have some very special “sheep” that we are asked to feed each day. However, since we’re spending our days at home as mothers and teachers, we have very few hours to devote to earning money to pay the bills. Those who must work a second job usually struggle with mind-numbing fatigue.

I’m hoping to encourage you today that YHVH knows your need! As Yeshua said,

“Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:33).

I’ve written elsewhere about how to afford healthy food, especially when times are tight, but I thought that the advice I’ve given there might help you if you’re having trouble affording homeschooling, a house payment, or life in general.

I’ve been trying not to get too concerned, but it really does seem like the American economy is getting worse. It can seem overwhelming. In fact, from my research and from talking with many people, it seems that this is one of the top reasons why mothers start to feel panicked and overwhelmed.

What can be done?

*He always provides.*

YHVH has promised to supply our every need.

“My God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Messiah Yeshua” (Philippians 4:19).

This can sound like a “pat answer,” especially when my own checking account is empty and I’m not sure what we’re going to do.

However, I must remember that this verse isn't an isolated quote; it exists in a context that takes it out of the realm of pat answers and makes it very practical.

Paul wrote to the congregation in the city of Philippi,

"I rejoice greatly in YHVH that at last you have renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you have been concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. 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.

"Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need. Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account. I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable

sacrifice, pleasing to God. *And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Messiah Yeshua*" (Philippians 4:10-19).

Paul was confident that YHVH would supply the needs of the Philippians because they had been obedient to Him first. They had backed up their belief in YHVH with action toward others.

Before YHVH promises to meet our needs, He asks us to follow His principles for sound financial management.

First, are you giving back the first fruits of all that you have to Him? While we have no Temple to which we can take our offerings, Torah still supports giving the first of all we have to Him. In the first century, the apostles applied this principle to giving to the elders of our congregations, to being hospitable, and to helping the poor, the widows, and the orphans—even in the dispersion.

Giving takes discipline. We have to choose to set this money aside first, before worry creeps in and tempts us to spend it on our own needs.

Secondly, do you spend your money on your "lusts"? James 4:1-3 says that we can ask the Father for anything we need, but it warns us not to ask "amiss," that we may "consume it on our lusts."

If you sincerely ask YHVH to give you wisdom in your spending, being willing to confess any areas of sin that He reveals to you, He will surely answer.

Finally, determine what your budget is and decide that you'll stick to it.



*Satan steals, kills,  
and destroys.*

Yeshua said,

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:10).

Satan truly desires to steal from you, to kill you, and to destroy your health and all other good things that are yours.

This simple principle has been so helpful to me as I shop. When I see a processed food that might be cheaper than an organic alternative, I ask myself this question: “Would this rob me of my health?” If so, I know it is of the enemy and that YHVH wants to protect me from this.

On the other hand, maybe I’m deciding between two good choices, one of which claims to be better but is out of my budget. Again, the devil wants to steal.

Can I be content with the less expensive, yet healthful, choice?

*Work is what I was  
made for.*

Work is good for us! It might not seem like it, but YHVH gave Adam the job of tending the garden before the fall and before the curse.

Yes, the curse has made work much harder and more difficult. But work is

still good, and our attitudes can make all the difference.

It also helps to think of the fun we can have while working in our home. With small children in the kitchen, it is fun to put an apron on each of you, pull up stools or chairs so they can see what you’re doing, and even whistle while you work. You will be training them in good character and righteousness, and they will be thrilled to eat what they have had a part in making.

God says this about the excellent wife of Proverbs 31:

“She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness” (Proverbs 31:27).

Here are some more characteristics of this wise woman:

- She works willingly with her hands (v. 13).
- She is like the merchants’ ships, bringing her food from afar (v. 14).
- She provides food for her household (v. 15).
- She plants a vineyard (v. 16).
- She has a high standard of excellence (v. 18).
- She works with all her might (v. 19).
- She helps the poor (v. 20).
- She has planned ahead for the winter (v. 21).

In Matthew 25:14-30, we read about a master who entrusted sums of money to three of his servants, according to the

abilities that he knew they had. Then he left on a journey.

Two of the servants were wise with the money, reinvesting it and making it grow. The third servant was afraid of the responsibility he'd been given, so he ignored it.

Wouldn't you have loved to have been one of the wise servants, to have heard your master applaud you?

"Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

*"Well done, good and faithful servant."*

What better words could a wife and mother hear?

*"Good job, Mom! You were faithful with the little jobs around your house, your hands were gentle and caring toward others, and you worked with all your heart."*

It is very encouraging to know that when we are faithful in the small ways of a household, in the little things that no one sees, YHVH will reward us with responsibility over greater things.

1 Timothy 5:14 says that younger women are to "marry, bear children, manage the house," so that the enemy will have no opportunity to slander believers.

The words, "manage the house," are one word in Greek: *oikodespoteō*. This word means to rule a house, and to rule

means to have dominion over and absolute authority.

We know that as women, we don't really have absolute authority. We have delegated-absolute authority. First, our husbands often delegate much of the everyday running of the house to us. But more so, our Heavenly Father has delegated this arena to us.

"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground'" (Genesis 1:26).

YHVH created us in His own image, and He also has a dominion, a kingdom. He rules, but He has delegated the authority for His earthly creation to men and women.

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27).

"When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,  
The moon and the stars, which You have ordained,  
What is man that You are mindful of him,  
And the son of man that You visit him?

For You have made him a little lower than the angels,

And You have crowned him with glory and honor.

***You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands;***

You have put all things under his feet..." (Psalm 8:3-6).

Do you ever feel that changing diapers and doing dishes is just drudgery and has no eternal meaning at all? Do you wish you could do something that really mattered, something important for God's kingdom?

It's normal to feel that way, for before you were born, God "set eternity in the hearts of men" (Ecclesiastes 3:11). You were made to long for eternity, to do something big for God.

What you need to realize is that the small task God has given to you today really is something big for God. He has given you "dominion" over a tiny kingdom, and He's watching to see if you'll be a "good and faithful servant."

Interestingly, our verse from Proverbs 31 says that we do this by not eating the bread of idleness.

Just as the third servant displeased his master by simply trying to avoid the task set before him, we often procrastinate on the unpleasant things. We reason that there is something more important to do.

But God wants us to rule well over our households, to be wise and faithful in everything He has delegated to our authority.

Someday we'll stand before our King, in His holy city, and we want to hear Him

say, "Good job, Momma. You weren't lazy. Instead you were industrious and caring and fruitful. I have big plans for my new world, so I set aside a nation of kings (and queens) and priests (1 Peter 2:9). Would you please be Queen of \_\_\_ for me? I know you'll do a great job!"

"As it is written:

'No eye has seen,  
no ear has heard,  
no mind has conceived  
what God has prepared for those  
who love him'" (1 Corinthians 2:9).

You go, Queen! Throw laziness out of your heart! You've got a kingdom to rule!  
"Give of your best to the Master!"

*Learn to be content  
with simple things.*

This step has saved us the most money. Don't think that you must eat fancy food, have expensive homeschooling curriculum, or own the newest technology. Be thankful instead for the simple things YHWH has already provided for you, and be content.

When you bless YHWH for the food before you pray, do you really mean it? Are you truly thankful? If you had been in the crowd of 5,000 who came to listen to Yeshua, would you have been content with fish and bread?

"For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is



sanctified by the word of God and prayer" (I Timothy 4:4-5).

I should also remind you not to compare your spending ability with those you see around you. Satan would love to plant seeds of discontent in your mind. Rather than worrying or grumbling, resolve to let thankfulness rule in your home and your heart.

## *Good, better, best.*

As you go through your homeschooling year, you may begin to see problems with the curriculum choices you made last summer. When this happens, you may be tempted to spend more than you have.

Don't be fooled! Don't allow Satan to steal from you! Pay cash only, and be

patient as you build your skills, your library, and your teaching supplies.

In the meantime, purchase the best quality supplies you can afford, and be content. Do not over-extend yourself to get the best until God provides the money for it.

(Of course, you can bring your requests with confidence before Him!)

Can't afford something you're needing? Search online for a free option that will hold you over until you can afford "the best." You may find later that the free choice really was YHVH's best for you after all, saving you a lot of money.

Learn to be content, and learn to accept the bounty YHVH has given you, always waiting expectantly for Him to provide all good things to you.







# 05

## THE CURRICULUM CAROUSEL: ROUND AND ROUND WE GO...

Ask any veteran homeschooler about burn-out, and she'll quickly get to the topic of curriculum. What mother hasn't sincerely purchased piles of curriculum only to discover later that her choices were a terrible fit for her family?

If you're already partway into your homeschooling year, yet you're worried about the curriculum choices you've made, you probably don't have the money to just throw it all away and start over. Still, you might be starting to worry that the whole year is a waste!

I'm going to give you some general reasons why you should not change your curriculum plans, but I'm also going

to give you some specific recommendations for some simple things you can do for each subject to supplement your curriculum if you still need help.

*Don't compare to others.*

The Apostle Paul gives some good advice that he tried to follow in his own ministry:

"We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they mea-

sure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise" (2 Corinthians 10:12).

Because homeschooling curriculum is my business, I receive several emails a day from various authors and companies who want me to review their books, products, curriculum, and gadgets for the homeschooling community. I understand the valuable service reviewers offer us, but I sometimes wonder if all this "commending" of ourselves causes us to "measure ourselves by ourselves and compare ourselves with ourselves." We hear of something better, and we immediately feel discontent with the choices we already made.

Paul says that when we do this, we "are not wise."

Of course, this doesn't only happen online. It also happens among moms at our congregations, at our local homeschooling co-ops, and at our summer conventions.

Did you and your husband pray about the curriculum choices you made last summer? (If not, why not set aside an evening or a day to pray now?)

Once you've asked for wisdom from YHVH, then stick with the wisdom He gave you.

"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. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does" (James 1:5-8).

Comparing yourself, your circumstances, and your children to others is never acting in the wisdom of God. It only results in instability, making you feel like you are being "blown and tossed by the wind."

Comparison is never a good reason to switch curriculum.

What are some good reasons, though?

- You're collapsing of fatigue because you've been doing school for more than 8 hours a day... and you're still not getting it all done.
- Your child is just not "getting it," is crying daily because of frustration, or has lost all interest in learning. (Note: This should be more than just a one-time occurrence or passing phase. Verify that it's truly a lack of understanding, rather than a lack of good character.)
- You are concerned about the vast amount of secular influence in your children's books. (Note: This should be more than an occasional reference, which can provide you with excellent opportunities for discussion. We're talking instead about such pervasive humanism that you just can't counter its effects.)



- You don't have a plan at all; rather, you're making it up each day as you go. Actually, it's more like you hardly ever have school at all because in reality, you're totally overwhelmed.
- Your husband thinks you should change something! Listening to your husband should always be a high priority of yours. (So often we listen to everyone else first...)

So what can you do if a change is needed?

## Reading

- Are you being consistent with your teaching of phonics? Reading takes practice.
- Take a break for a while, and just read to your child twice a day. Put your finger under each word as you read. Come back to phonics later, after his brain has had more time to mature.

## Spelling

- If your child is either an excellent speller (who doesn't need curriculum) or an awful speller (who isn't helped by any curriculum), consider dropping this subject entirely and simply keeping a journal of words misspelled in everyday copywork or writing.

## Writing

- Before teaching writing, teach handwriting skills. If your child just doesn't have the physical coordination for handwriting, keep trying but also teach typing.
- Before teaching writing, teach how to "tell back" what your child has learned from his reading, from television viewing, from sermons, and from everyday life. Let him do this orally.
- Before teaching writing, a child needs plenty of life experiences. Reading is much more important in the earlier years. Discussion with you is also more important.

## Math

- If your younger child isn't understanding basic math concepts, spend more time playing. Legos are wonderful, as is time spent in the kitchen cooking (and talking) with you.
- Manipulatives will only take you so far. Eventually, your child simply must memorize basic math facts. Set the curriculum aside for a time, head to a discount store, and get inexpensive packs of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division flashcards. Learn the facts, then all the rest of math will come easier.
- If your older child is entering math

subjects that are over your own ability (or time available), don't hesitate to use a tutor, use a DVD or online curriculum, or enroll him at a local community college. A free option is <https://www.khanacademy.org/>.

- Simply read a chapter from the Bible aloud each day and discuss it together.

## *Science*

- It seems to me that most of my mistakes in science happen when I buy expensive curriculum (with experiment kits included), then we just run out of time and energy in a day to complete all the many things suggested. If you're having trouble with science, try simplifying.

## *History*

- The best way, I think, to learn history is to grab a good book, gather your children around you, then read aloud to them. After a chapter or two, stop and discuss it.

## *Bible*

- Don't forget that your children need to "put first things first" in their lives, too, so try to always include Scripture in your homeschooling day, no matter what else you do or don't get done.



# 06

## HOMESCHOOLING WITH LITTLE ONES

Are you a busy homeschooling mom with even busier toddlers and pre-schoolers? Are you wondering how you will ever get through a long list of school subjects when your youngest children also need your attention?

Have hope! We've been there! Here are our best ideas for homeschooling with little ones.

*Why?*

Homeschooling when you have little toddlers or preschoolers around is a challenge, to say the least. One of the most challenging parts of being a mom,

in fact, is learning how to juggle the multitude of responsibilities that faces you in a day, from parenting various ages of children to handling all the different aspects of a home, sometimes while also maintaining a job or ministry.

Sometimes I wonder if one of the reasons YHWH asks me to "be fruitful and multiply" is so that I'll learn valuable "have dominion over the earth" skills (Genesis 1:28).

What kingdom responsibilities will He give me in eternity? How is today a preparation for then? How unprepared would I have been if He had not blessed me with all these little ones?



Your children also need to learn eternal lessons. **One of the lessons they need to learn at your knee is obedience to authority.** Just as Jesus submitted to His heavenly Father, we must also teach our children to submit to our God-given authority. The Bible says that we are to teach them with “the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4)—but teach them we must! The Bible says this is best done when “you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up” (Deuteronomy 6:7). It also says you are to teach them “diligently,” which means constantly, attentively, persistently, and with persevering attention.

**Another eternal lesson your children need you to teach them is what their heavenly Father is like.** Just this week, someone remarked that one of the reasons she loved YHWH so much was “because I know He cares and loves me even with the most horrible things.” Yes, He does, but He also disciplines those He loves so that they won’t continue doing those “horriblest” things and reaping the deadly consequences (Proverbs 13:24, Hebrews 12:6). So to be an accurate picture of our Heavenly Father, we must put up with the unlovely things that a preschooler is prone to do, while never neglecting the diligent training that will spare him from a lifetime of evil consequences.

**Finally, both you and your children all need to learn how to “love your neighbor as yourself”** (Leviticus 19:18, Matthew 22:39, Mark 12:31). True love for

YHWH is always manifested in love for others. What better place is there to learn this than at home? If you’re anything like me, you find it easy to love the world and difficult to love a brood of loud children. Never forget that your Father is working on your heart, and that you’re in eternal training yourself. However, this does not negate the importance of training your children how to love each other, even when it’s a lesson you’re still learning yourself.

Dominion and management of the home, order in the home, submission to authority, loving the unlovely, sharing, diligent training. These words all describe the goals of the mother of toddlers and preschoolers. Why not write down the ones you especially need to focus on this year?

## *What?*

When you’re working with your older children or catching up on the bread-baking, you need to come up with activities for your little one.

You could put him in front of the television or leave him to completely get into things play on his own. However, he’s not going to learn much or develop properly. He has needs, too, and your goal is to meet the needs of *all* your children.

**His first need is for order in the home.** Order is shown in the actual running of the house and also in the line of command that is present in your home. For

instance,

- He needs to be taught to obey.
- He loves to know what is next in his day. You can make a simple chart with pictures that tells him what is next. (See sample at <http://www.anneshomeyplace.com/kidsroutine.pdf>.)
- He needs his meals, snacks, and nap at a consistent time each day.
- He needs to be reminded to use the bathroom.
- He needs to know that his toys belong in a certain spot and should be put away when he's done playing with them.

**His second need is to learn to care about the needs of others** (Leviticus 19:18, Matthew 22:39, Mark 12:31), rather than just himself. For instance,

- He needs to learn that he is not the center of the universe.
- He needs to learn patience and how not to complain or scream when he wants something.
- He needs to learn how to interrupt properly.
- He needs to learn how to share his toys.
- He needs to learn how to play quietly sometimes, so that older children can concentrate on their studies.

**His third need is to learn how to pay attention and concentrate**, so that his mind is prepared for learning. (Of course, we know that there is no offi-

cial day when learning starts. Attention skills are vitally needed even now!) For instance,

- If he has a time (30-45 minutes) each day when he plays quietly by himself, he will have time to concentrate on just one play thing. He will learn to pay attention to it. This is often called "room time" (or "playpen time" for the very little ones).
- Table time is also valuable for learning to pay attention. While you're "doing school" with the older children, your youngest ones can also "do school." Help him develop his attention skills with coloring (learn to stay in the lines), cutting and pasting, play dough.
- I find it is helpful to set a timer so that I don't forget my child is playing alone. I need to be careful not to frustrate my child or take advantage of him.

**His fourth need is the example of a godly mother.** Little children need time to play, since play is their most important work. But do you remember hearing stories of one-room schools in America? Much of what the students learned was absorbed by "osmosis," from listening to the older children recite or from watching the behavior of the teacher. It's the same at home. For example,

- Your child needs time by your side, to observe you. (You can also be observing him, and quickly cor-

recting an improper attitude or an unkind word. “A child left to himself brings his mother to shame” (Proverbs 29:15.)

- Your child needs time one-on-one with mom (story time, walk, coloring, play with paper dolls). Your older children should not take all your time, nor should your housework.
- Your child needs time side-by-side with mom, working in the kitchen, folding laundry, cleaning the bathroom, making beds, dusting, and grocery shopping. Remember that the Bible says this is when you’ll have your best teaching opportunities (Deuteronomy 6:7), to say nothing of wonderful memories.

## *How?*

Unless you’re a supermom (and I know that none of us are, even though we wish we were), you’ll need a schedule.

There, I said the terrible S word! ***Schedule, schedule, schedule!***

Okay, you’ve recovered now, so let’s talk about why you need one.

Back when I only had a couple children, I could manage my life with just a routine. (The R word was bad enough!) I was wishing life could just be “all natural” and “simple,” and that I wouldn’t even need a routine.

But as I’ve gotten older, I’ve begun to realize that it’s too hard to be inten-

tional about everything YHWH wants me to do—and still remember everything that is supposed to be done in a week! A schedule becomes necessary.

Did you notice that I said “week”?

“Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work” (Exodus 20:9).

On Sabbath, I rest and have my “free” day where no schedule reigns, except for the time when we gather with other believers (and oh, I love it!).

For the other days of a week, I have to make a list of everything that needs to be done and slowly make a plan of attack for accomplishing it.

Your preschooler also needs a schedule.

- You’ll want to begin by planning his schedule around meals and naptimes first. These are rather fixed times in your day (or at least, they should be), so it’s easy to plot them on paper.
- You can plan to do the most intense school time with your older children during naps.
- Don’t forget that mealtime chores should be delegated, for training and sanity’s sake, to your older children as well.
- Finally, if your child is potty training, schedule plenty of reminders for Mommy on your schedule as well.
- YHWH’s Word should have a top priority in your day, so schedule a half hour or so each morn-



ing for teaching the Bible to your children, either alone or with your husband, as he gives you permission. Your toddler can learn to sit quietly as you read, on your lap or in his highchair with Cheerios or a blanket. Your preschooler can learn to color quietly or draw on some blank paper. All children can memorize Scripture together to their own abilities. All can learn to pray.

- To teach attention skills, schedule half an hour for quiet playtime alone.
- To teach skills of love and sharing, older children (ages 4 and up) should have a scheduled time for playing with their siblings one-on-one, crawling babies and older. Depending on how many children you have, this can take a good part of your morning and free you to do quite a bit of teaching with your other children. Assign them to a safe place, with earshot, and teach them safety and kindness rules. Set a timer so that you remember to rotate playing partners.
- If you have leftover time in your morning, seat your young child next to you, either on the floor on a blanket or at the table with you. Have a list of activities ready for your reference. You can plan time with art supplies, preschool workbooks, games, puzzles, cutting and gluing, magnets, rubber

stamping, play dough, sponge painting, looking at photo albums, water color painting, and more.

- You can also have a formal “school time” with your preschooler. Half an hour is plenty. Teach letter sounds, numbers, and colors. Don’t forget to teach the days of the week, the months, how to use calendars, weather, manners, and more.

Some other “half hours” you could put in your schedule include:

- listening to audio books in a corner of the living room.
- watching a good video (limit this!)
- doing chores with Mom.
- read-aloud time. (My children enjoy Legos or coloring while I read aloud.)

## *To Sum Up*

Now that you have lots of ideas, I recommend that you take a piece of paper and divide it into half hours.

Pencil in activities such as a morning shower or your quiet time with God for those times of the day when your little ones are probably sleeping. But for now, just schedule out the part of the day that affects them.

**Remember, start with meals and naps.** Next, plan for Bible time. You’ll include alone playtimes and sibling playtimes. Pencil in when you’ll teach the most intense school subjects with your

older children. Don't forget chores and snuggle times with Mom.

Finish out your planning by making sure that toys are neat and organized. Check that all the supplies you'll need each day are in an easy-to-reach place (easy to reach and easy to put away).

Use a timer to help keep in on track each day.

All set? I think you're going to have a great school year with your little ones!

**"A Formidable List of Attainments for a Child of Six"**

A reprint of a curriculum outline from a school in the 1890's.

from Summer 1993 *Parents Review*, by Karen Andreola

1. To recite, beautifully, 6 easy poems and hymns.
2. To recite, perfectly and beautifully, a parable and a psalm.
3. To add and subtract numbers up to 10, with dominoes or counters.
4. To read—what and how much, will depend on what we are told of the child.
5. To copy in print-hand from a book.
6. To know the points of the compass with relation to their own home, where the sun rises and sets, and the way the wind blows.
7. To describe the boundaries of their own home.
8. To describe any lake, river, pond, island etc. within easy reach.
9. To tell quite accurately (however shortly) 3 stories from Bible history, 3 from early English, and 3 from early Roman history.
10. To be able to describe 3 walks and 3 views.
11. To mount in a scrapbook a dozen common wildflowers, with leaves (one every week); to name these, describe them in their own words, and say where they found them.
12. To do the same with leaves and flowers of 6 forest trees.
13. To know 6 birds by song, colour and shape.
14. To make certain Kindergarten or other handiwork, as directed.
15. To tell three stories about their own "pets"—rabbit, dog or cat.
16. To name 20 common objects in French, and say a dozen little sentences.
17. To sing one hymn, one French song, and one English song.
18. To keep a caterpillar and tell the life-story of a butterfly from his own observations.

(Anne says: "If I were updating this list to today, I would teach Hebrew in place of French, and I'd add even more Bible! What changes would you make?")



# 07

## USING THE BIBLE TO TEACH

I have spent a lot of time over the years talking about how to use the Bible as a guide for success in homeschooling.

One of my favorite verses is

“His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness” (2 Peter 1:3, NIV).

One of my goals is to train my children for life and godliness, and this says I do that by increasing their knowledge of Him. It’s so comforting to know that He called us by His own glory and good-

ness, isn’t it? To know I was chosen in Him before the foundation of the world? HalleluYah!

And YHVH doesn’t ever call us without equipping us for the task. His Word is how we gain knowledge of Him, and His divine power will flow through us to give us everything we need. Amen?

### *Homeschooling Goals*

Okay, let’s start with some goals for homeschooling. I’ve got some familiar verses to start with. These aren’t just good goals for homeschoolers; these are good goals for all parents!



## **1. We're raising up good workmen.**

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15, KJV).

We want our children to have a good, working knowledge of YHVH's Word, so that they can go out into a lost world, capable of sharing His light to people, protected from the wiles of the devil because they are filled to overflowing with Scripture. They're capable contractors, hammering and sawing with the best of materials, building up the body of Messiah.

That's one of the reasons why we even have children in the first place. Malachi 2:15 says God is seeking godly offspring. He wants us to reproduce ourselves... no, multiply ourselves... through our children.

## **2. We're making ready a people that are prepared for YHVH.**

"And he will go on before YHVH, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for YHVH" (Luke 1:17).

One of the purposes of John the Baptist's ministry was to go before Yeshua, in the spirit and power of Elijah.

Who was Elijah? He was the prophet

who went before wicked King Ahab, and before the rebellious, idolatrous people of Israel, and he confronted them on their sin and told them to repent. Only when they were willing to repent of their sin and turn to the true God were their hearts prepared and ready for God to come and heal their land.

Well, your job as a parent is to do the same thing. You can't force your children to walk in Yeshua's footsteps. It's a personal decision that they have to make. They have to personally repent and turn to Yeshua.

But here's what you can do. You can prepare their hearts. God wants to turn the hearts of fathers and mothers to their children. He wants those parents to show disobedient children (which they all are!) the wisdom of the righteous—that's the Bible, right?

Why? To "make ready a people prepared for YHVH." You can prepare your children to be righteous by teaching them "the wisdom of the righteous."

To help prepare the soil of your children's hearts, so that they are "good soil" that will produce fruit, as Matthew 13 describes—this is one of the loftiest goals of homeschooling, of parenting!

Our goal is to prepare their hearts, so that YHVH's Word is implanted into good soil, so that they grow up to become workmen that don't need to be ashamed, workmen that go on to do great things for YHVH in this world!

Practically speaking, this means that in the youngest years, I do the most soil preparation. Those are the years to hide

Scripture in their hearts so that they will not sin against Him.

As they grow, I need to begin reproducing myself in them, so that by the time they're grown, they will have the skills and abilities they'll need to share the gospel.

Can you see how this will affect what things will be taught to them day in and day out?

So where do we begin? What methods do we use to achieve these goals?

## *Methods*

The Bible very clearly tells us where to begin. Don't you love when the Bible is black and white?

"The fear of YHWH is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline." (Proverbs 1:7, NIV).

Our first job is to teach our children the fear of YHWH. Whatever methods we use, this is our first job. This is the "beginning of knowledge."

I decided to look up "the fear of YHWH" in the book of Proverbs, the Bible's own parenting manual, to see if I could find some guidance on exactly how to teach this. Here are some things I found:

### **Methods to Avoid**

"The fear of YHWH is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline." (Proverbs 1:7, NIV).

This is our very first verse, and it goes on to say that fools despise wisdom and discipline. So we can see here which methods to avoid. We should avoid any methods that despise wisdom or discipline.

In fact, if you start at the very first verse of Proverbs, you'll find out that the purpose of the book was to teach wisdom and discipline to the young:

The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel:  
for attaining wisdom and discipline;  
for understanding words of insight;  
for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life,  
doing what is right and just and fair;  
for giving prudence to the simple,  
knowledge and discretion to the young—  
let the wise listen and add to their learning,  
and let the discerning get guidance—  
for understanding proverbs and parables,  
the sayings and riddles of the wise.  
The fear of YHWH is the beginning of knowledge,  
but fools despise wisdom and discipline.

So I want to avoid methods that despise wisdom and discipline, wisdom and discipline are found in God's Word, so I want to avoid methods that despise YHWH's Word.

A lot of secular companies are cater-

ing to the homeschooling market. Be very cautious!

“A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher” (Luke 6:40, NIV).

Any method or curriculum that you use is invited into your home by you. It becomes a teacher in your school. Everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher! If the curriculum in your home makes a mockery of YHWH or His Word, avoid it.

### **Other Things to Avoid**

“To fear YHWH is to hate evil;  
I hate pride and arrogance,  
evil behavior and perverse speech”  
(Proverbs 8:13, NIV).

We need to avoid any method of homeschooling that promotes pride, arrogance, evil behavior or perverse speech. These principles can even guide you as you choose reading materials, families to partner with in co-ops, or future career paths for your children.

“Do not be wise in your own eyes;  
fear YHWH and shun evil”  
(Proverbs 3:7, NIV).

This is an easy thing to watch for in our children’s behavior. Are they being wise in their own eyes?

The Bible says that our children are born with a sin nature. That means that it’s the natural thing for them to do

wrong. It’s the easy thing. It’s the thing they’re naturally bent toward.

Many people quote the verse,

“Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it” (Proverbs 22:6, NIV).

Well, each child has a natural bent, it’s true. Yes, we need to know our children’s own unique personalities and giftedness.

But the Bible says the way that they **want** to go is toward evil. They are wise in their own eyes. If we use methods that always let the child make all the decisions, the child will naturally make bad decisions.

So I avoid methods that lean too much toward child-centeredness. My child’s heart is already bent toward foolishness. Only with correction from the Word will I be able to drive that foolishness far from him.

So if authors of books, methods, and curriculum believe that children are basically good, or they’re just blank slates made bad only by their environment, rather than saying what the Bible says, that “all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God,” then I try to avoid listening too heavily to those authors. They might have a few good ideas that I can take and adapt, but I need to get most of my advice from those who honor God’s Word.



## Methods to Emphasize

On the positive side, we want to choose homeschooling methods that teach our children how to study to show themselves approved unto God, workmen that don't need to be ashamed, that can rightly divide the word of truth.

Proverbs goes on to tell us exactly how to do that.

"My son, if you accept my words  
and store up my commands within  
you,  
turning your ear to wisdom  
and applying your heart to understanding,  
and if you call out for insight  
and cry aloud for understanding,  
and if you look for it as for silver  
and search for it as for hidden treasure,  
then you will understand the fear of  
YHVH  
and find the knowledge of God.  
For YHVH gives wisdom,  
and from his mouth come knowledge  
and understanding"  
(Proverbs 2:1-6, NIV).

So in my daily homeschooling, I want to choose methods that teach my children how to

- accept my instruction
- store up God's commands
- turn their ears to wisdom
- apply their hearts to understanding

- how to search for understanding and insight as for hidden treasure

It is very important to teach my children how to pay attention to instruction. Did you know that this is a skill? Yes, it takes practice! It can be taught!

I also need to teach my children how to store up information. I like to use notebooks to store up information. Other moms use lapbooks, or narration, or... you name it! But I need to be sure that my method of homeschooling provides a way to store up God's commands.

Often this is even through lots of memorization. I would also note that there are some homeschooling methods that make fun of memorization and storing up information. I personally try to avoid those methods.

I need to help my children apply what they're learning to daily life. There are lots of methods for doing this. Maybe we read a book together where the main characters have to apply God's Word to life. This is a great teaching tool, especially if we as a family take the time to discuss each chapter as we read it.

I also need a method that teaches my children how to search for information. We live in the Information Age, but if we don't know how to search for information, what good is it?

I want a method that teaches my children strong skills of reading and studying, so that they can learn how to search for hidden and valuable treasure in God's Word.

These skills all take practice.

“This has been my practice: I obey your precepts” (Psalm 119:56).

I am looking for a method that gives my children plenty of practice in obeying God. Practice makes perfect!

Practice is not a bad thing. It’s how we learn to cook. It’s how we learn to type. It’s how we learn to ride a horse. It’s how we learn the times tables. It’s how we learn to be an effective workman for God in the world. So I look for methods that use plenty of practice in our homeschool.

You know, here’s a really neat verse with a promise that I found:

“Humility and the fear of YHVH bring wealth and honor and life” (Proverbs 22:4, NIV).

Aren’t those some amazing goals for homeschooling? I thought so!

## *Curriculum Styles*

- Textbooks – preplanned and put into order, simplify preparation
- Unit studies – integrate a topic into several school subjects
- Living books – similar to unit studies, avoidance of textbooks
- Notebooking – a way to write down what you’ve learned, to show comprehension
- Charlotte Mason – living books,

narration, nature walks

- Principle approach – principles on which America was founded, or other principles
- Classical – grammar, logic, rhetoric

As you can see, there are a lot of choices! Depending on how YOU use them in YOUR homeschool, these could be bad choices or good choices. I can’t answer that for you.

I would advise you to get books by the different proponents of homeschooling methods and to read for yourself, in the authors’ own words, what their methods include.

For instance, if you want to know what John Holt or Charlotte Mason or Ruth Beechick are proposing, get their books. Read it from them, rather than going online and reading quick summaries of the various methods. Give yourself time to grapple with their ideas and to compare them with Scripture.

***Compare them with Scripture?*** Did you hear that? That can take a lot more work than even reading all these homeschooling books!

But remember that YHVH’s opinion of the people of the city of Berea. They were more excellent than those in the surrounding towns. Why? Because they searched the Scriptures daily to see if the things that Paul was telling them were true. They didn’t just take someone else’s word for it. They searched it out for themselves.

If you’re not sure what the Bible would

say about certain methods, determine to read quickly through entire Bible, asking YHWH's Spirit to show you things related to your children's education. Keep a journal. You can probably accomplish this in 1-3 months, if you make it a priority.

## *How to Homeschool*

The Bible makes it clear that we need to start teaching our children from a very young age. Parenting is not a hands-off thing, where we just create a good environment then set our children free to live in this environment and blossom.

Yes, we need a good environment! Absolutely!

But we are also to be present in our children's lives, actively taking a role in instructing them. You can see the role of a mother in instructing her children all through the book of Proverbs, but here is just one example:

"The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame" (Proverbs 29:15, KJV).

It takes time and effort to reprove and correct our children. Sometimes I feel too lazy to do that. It's just too much effort, and honestly, yes, sometimes I'm just too tired to care.

But note the warning in this verse: "a child left to himself brings his mother to shame."

I firmly believe that good parenting starts at birth. There are at least three

things that need to be taught to your children from an early age, to prepare them for learning, such as:

1. Order in the home
2. Respect for others
3. How to pay attention

Once you've prepared children to learn, what to do you need to teach them? in what order?

Some people say to start teaching reading, for instance, at a young age. Others say, no, it's better to wait until they're older and more developmentally ready.

Same with math. Do you start at a young age? Do you emphasize drill and memorization, or do you emphasize understanding, using lots of hands-on and manipulatives?

What about history? Do you teach it chronologically, more world history, or more American? Living books? Textbooks? Primary sources? Independent reading or one-on-one tutoring?

How confusing!

I'm not sure I can get too dogmatic here. The Bible just isn't going to answer our questions in black and white. YHWH wants us to make up our minds to obey His laws, but after that, He expects us to apply His instructions to our circumstances, determining to bring Him glory wherever we are.

For instance, He says that all of His laws can be summed up in "love YHWH your God with all your heart, soul, and might, and love your neighbor as yourself." The Torah has important specif-



ics that we should pay attention to, but most of it is principle oriented.

So while I firmly believe we should obey the Torah, there are many home-schooling decision that aren't laid out clearly in Torah. For these, I wouldn't get too dogmatic. I don't think you should either.

### **Subjects to teach by age:**

1. Skill
2. Content
3. Communication

Examples of age level (for reading, arithmetic, and writing):

#### **Skill Level (Kindergarten-3rd Grade)**

- Phonics instruction
- Math instruction
- Handwriting, spelling, copywork

#### **Content Level (4th Grade-8th Grade)**

- Read for information
- More abstract principles
- Write reports, make outlines, learn about poetry

#### **Communication Level (High School)**

- Read to solve a problem
- Applications to daily life
- Teach others through writing or speech (essays, arguments & debate, criticism, letters, entrepreneurial skills)

#### **Example of Teaching Bible by Levels:**

- Skill level – know how to find passages, memorize books of the

Bible, memorize much scripture, copywork

- Content level – know what each section of Bible contains, learn key doctrines, how to have personal devotions, how to use reference materials
- Communication level – apologetics, share testimony and plan of salvation, learn to teach a Bible lesson (outline, visuals, audience)

The book of James shows us an example of these three levels:

“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does. If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless. Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world” (James 1:22-27, NIV).

First, we have to hear God's Word. For

instance, these verses use taking care of orphans and widows as an example.

- We “hear” that the Bible says to care for the poor and afflicted. So we are learning a skill.
- We now know what to do, and we might even brainstorm ways in which we can do this. This is more of a content area. We might visit websites and read books that talk about adoption. We might meet people who have adopted orphans.
- But until we get to the “communication” level, where we turn around and do what the word says, where we actually “practice” what we’ve learned in a practical way, then we haven’t really learned anything, have we? In fact, many families who’ve adopted will tell you that you might have to adopt several times over before you really learn how to help these children.

So first, we prepare our hearts for learning by adding skills, then we add content that shows us what to do with our skills, then we practice doing.

I’m not sure you can break all this down into neat little categories and curriculum and ages, but you can see that this is the natural progression of true learning.

You can see some examples of this from Scripture, such as Moses or Samuel, two young boys who were separated from their mothers at early ages but had both been taught skills of

respecting and obeying YHWH and their parents. They probably learned most of their content in Pharaoh’s household, or for Samuel, in Eli’s wicked household, but because they had solid skills, they were able to thrive.

Yeshua and Paul are other examples. In first-century culture, they would have been taught the Torah from a very early age, beginning before age five and probably memorizing large sections of the Old Testament. Yeshua was able to debate with the temple leaders at the age of twelve, which means that He was now in the communication level of learning.

Paul was able to understand not just Jewish culture but Greek culture as well, as we can see from his skillful ability to share the gospel with the people of Athens in Acts 17. Do you see why it’s so important for us to teach our children solid skills and deep content, so that they can ultimately share the gospel, communicating Messiah Yeshua to those who didn’t know Him, as Paul was able to do?

## *Specific Subjects*

### **Teaching Bible**

It might seem obvious that the Bible should be the primary textbook for teaching the Bible, but so often, curriculum, character studies, and good story books become our main tools. Instead, consider...

- Reading directly from the Bible

with your children every day. (A logical place to start is at the beginning!)

- Teaching your children to use their own Bibles (finding passages in their Bibles, reading it with expression).
- Discussing the Bible with your children as you read it together.
- Memorizing portions of the Bible with your children.
- Journaling/notebooking about what you've read.

### **Teaching Reading**

The Bible contains a wealth of reading material, and mothers have been using the family Bible for centuries to teach their children how to read. Consider...

- Spending half an hour with your beginning reader each day, reading WITH and TO them from God's Word. Follow this with a time of direct phonics instruction.
- If your child doesn't know a word or can't sound something out, help him. Make reading fun, not stressful.
- Daily practice is best. Make consistency a priority in your day.

### **Teaching Handwriting**

If you think about it, you don't really need an expensive handwriting curriculum. Learning to write is simply a matter of figuring out technique then getting lots of practice. Consider...

- Teach proper handwriting technique first by letters, then by

phonograms (letter combinations such as sh, th, ing), then by words and sentences.

- Once technique is learned, graduate to copying verses and paragraphs from the Bible. Have your student add favorite passages to his personal notebook.
- Remember that kings were told to copy God's Law and keep this copy with them (Deuteronomy 17:18). This is an excellent idea for training little princes and princesses, too!

### **Teaching Grammar**

Learning proper grammar is really just as simple as analyzing a sentence or two from your Bible each day. Consider...

- Identify prepositions and prepositional phrases (marking them with parenthesis).
- Identify sentence patterns.
- Find complements (such as adjectives and adverbs).
- Find subordinate clauses and identify their functions.
- Diagram the sentence.

### **Teaching Spelling and Vocabulary**

The Bible is rich in vocabulary, as well as challenging spelling words. As your students encounter difficult words (in their journaling and other writing), add these to an alphabetized list in their notebooks. Consider...

- Teaching spelling with phonics instruction first.
- Teaching common spelling rules.



- Teaching roots, prefixes and suffixes so students can use these to figure out the meaning and spelling of unfamiliar words.

## *Teaching Writing*

If you think about it, writing is just learning to talk slowly. If you can teach your kids to talk, then you can teach them to write. Also, writing improves when you study the writing techniques of good writers. Again, the Bible contains the best examples of writing! Consider...

- Discussing what you read together from the Bible. (Again, writing is just slow talking.)
- Having your children tell back to you ("narrate") what they are learning from the Bible. As they talk, Mom should write (or type) their words onto paper.
- Learn how a Bible passage is put together by outlining it together. Try to "put it back together again" in written form by looking at the outline.

### **Teaching Math**

Arithmetic teaches children that God is orderly and that His laws govern all of His creation. They also learn to be precise, exact, neat, and disciplined in their work. Consider...

- Using a math curriculum that emphasizes these values.
- Drilling your children so that they

can memorize and recall math facts quickly. This will enable more than just math understanding; in addition, your children will learn to work with excellence.

- Doing studies of Bible characters who excelled at math and learning why God chose to use them for His purposes.
- Working a weekly "story problem" from the Bible, such as the size and mass of Noah's ark, the dimensions of the tabernacle or temple, timelines and dates, the size of people groups, money, weights and measurements, distances between locations, and more.



# 08

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

These questions and answers were written by Anne in 2010, when her children were ages 14, 11, 10, 8, 6, 3, and 1, and Homeschooling Torah didn't exist other than a dream in their minds.

**1. If you could tell us one thing about homeschooling that would be encouraging or reassuring, what would it be?**

The most reassuring thing about homeschooling is that anyone can do it.

There have been many days when I've felt incapable of handling everything, teaching all the subjects, and living up

to "superwoman" status. The great thing is that YHWH doesn't want me to be a supermom. He chose me before the creation of the world (Ephesians 1:4), and He also chose me to be my children's mother. He's going to complete the work He started in each of us (Philippians 1:6), and He's faithful to equip us for our tasks (Hebrews 13:20-21). Best of all, He's promised to never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5).

YHWH wants to teach me as many things as He does my children. He wants me to be teachable, willing to listen, and eager to learn.

As I commit each day to Him, He will

mold my home with His best curriculum of all, His Word. When I need wisdom to teach my kids, He promises to supply (James 1:5).

**2. Do you use a particular educational philosophy or approach? If so, what, and why? What is the biggest benefit you see to using this approach? Any negatives? If so, how do you deal with them?**

I like to call our homeschooling method the “Hear, Learn, Keep, Do” method, drawing from Deuteronomy 5:1.

As a family, we studied the book of Deuteronomy extensively, looking for any insight into parenting or homeschooling. Our deepest desire is to use the Bible as our primary textbook.

With this method, we help our children hear what we’re teaching, learn it well, keep (or guard) what we’ve taught them through much review, and do it by applying it to real life.

We chose this method after using a variety of methods during the 15 years we’ve been homeschooling. As our oldest son became a teenager, we realized what a short time we have to teach them what is truly important. We wanted to teach the things that God said were a priority first.

As we read through Deuteronomy, we saw that YHWH has specific things that we are supposed to teach our children. He even suggested “methods” for teaching.

The benefit of using this method is

that our children really seem to learn well. Things seem to stick better. It has also helped me be more consistent in my teaching.

Of course, this all makes sense, since our Creator knows what is best for us and how children learn. Following the Maker’s advice is quite logical!

One negative of this approach is that it’s difficult to find curriculum that uses the Bible as the primary textbook. This is getting harder all the time, it seems, because mass-market advertising is moving away from biblical methods to appeal to an ever increasing, secular audience.

**3. What is your favorite thing about homeschooling?**

My favorite thing about homeschooling has been the development of friendships with my children. When my children were very young, I was their mother and authority. However, because we have spent so much time together and because they learned to obey me first, we become closer friends the older they get. We’ve had the hours needed to grow together. We share inside jokes. We share common memories. We really enjoy being a family and doing things together. Time is a priceless treasure given to me by homeschooling.

**4. What is a homeschooling challenge that God has delivered you through, and do you have anything to share with another family who may be facing the**



## same challenge?

One of the most difficult challenges we have faced is having several health problems in our family. I have a chronic disease that can make me feel very exhausted if I do too much, and several of our children have faced various health problems.

Sometimes I get discouraged because I'll make plans for our school year but I don't always have the energy to fulfill them.

Here are three things we have done to help us make it through the rough times:

(1) Workbooks. They're not always the enemy! This week, my children's workbooks are ensuring that they continue to get lots of review on phonics sounds and math concepts, even when I don't feel like doing much else. If I were feeling better, I would concentrate more on games, hands-on activities, etc. But this week? Well, at least we can keep having school, not forgetting the skills they have already learned.

(2) Read-aloud books. I don't have a sore throat, so I'm quite capable of cuddling on the couch with my kids and continuing to read through *Mystery of the Roman Ransom* and our Bible reading. We're reading slowly, but books give me a chance to cuddle even when I might not feel like doing much else. (Audio books are another blessing!)

(3) We prepare for the inevitable

"down" weeks by having the older children (age 8 and up) practice doing dishes, preparing very simple meals, and doing basic housekeeping chores. If we are able to keep up a basic routine, even when Mom or a little one is sick, we all feel a lot better. Homeschooling, combined with homemade soup, store-bought sourdough bread, and a fabulous husband, is even possible on the rough days.

## 5. Homeschooling isn't always easy, what makes it worth it for you?

Sometimes I feel like I need to be involved in ministry that is "important," and I can be deceived into thinking that mothering is not important. It's difficult to view changing diapers, teaching math facts, and diagramming sentences as eternally important.

Several years ago, I read the book *A Mother's Heart*, by Jean Fleming. She makes a case for the eternal importance of mothering. In the book of Deuteronomy, YHVH reiterates that fathers and mothers have the eternally important task of teaching His commands to their children, modeling love for YHVH and others to them in the "boring," daily routines (Deuteronomy 6:5-9).

YHVH has asked me to be faithful in the little things. Being a mom is exactly what He wants me to do at this season of my life (1 Timothy 5:14), and I know that the rewards for obedience are great.

## 6. If you've been homeschooling for

**a while, what is something you know or understand now that you wish you had known from the beginning?**

First, I wish I had realized how important it is to have some rhythm and predictability to our days. As a young mom, I felt like I should let circumstances and moods dictate what we did each day. As a result, the “tyranny of the urgent” often led our lives.

Secondly, I wish I had realized that it was perfectly okay to use curriculum, rather than trying to reinvent the wheel by making our plans from scratch. While curriculum should never make decisions that we as parents are responsible for, it is a helpful tool to guide us.

Third, I wish I had realized that it’s never good to compare our home and school to others. Whenever I start to compare, I lose confidence and change my mind. This costs me time and money! Worst of all, the decisions that my husband and I prayerfully made at an earlier time can be tossed on a whim.

**7. What defines success in your homeschool? Your kids are successful when / if, and you are successful when / if.**

Why are we here on this earth? We’re here to bring glory to YHVH. How do we do this? We show His glory to all the earth by communicating what He has done to all people. If this weren’t true, God could just fast-forward to the world to come—death and resurrection.

Wouldn’t that be easier? However, He has us here to complete the important job of sharing the gospel with the lost, using the unique skills and gifts He has given us.

Because of this, I will feel that our homeschooling is successful when we and our children see YHVH’s glory in all He has made. From science to art, each conversation should help us delight in YHVH, His creation, and His wonderful grace to us.

It doesn’t stop here, though. I will feel successful when our children can communicate the glory of YHVH to the culture in which we live. This means that school goes beyond merely learning facts about God’s world. We need to read, write, and speak effectively to others, always remembering our goal of “loving our neighbors” enough to share the gospel with them in a way they can hear.

**8. Is there a resource, strategy, technique, or method that has really helped with the way you homeschool and how successful you and your children feel?**

My favorite homeschooling resources are the books written by Ruth Beechick.

First, her books *Biblical Home Education* and *Heart and Mind: What the Bible Says About Learning* helped me formulate a biblical homeschooling philosophy.

Next, *The Three R’s* and *You Can Teach Your Child Successfully* gave me a lot of practical strategies for what

homeschooling looks like, done in a way that isn't overwhelming.

Finally, I love her books on biblical history, such as *Adam and His Kin* and *Genesis: Finding Our Roots*, because she shows us how to believe the Bible is literal, true, and worthy of building our lives upon.

### **9. Talk about individual design and purpose and how it affects your decision making in your home school.**

I believe there are certain skills that all of us need to have if we're going to be effective ministers for Yeshua the Messiah. However, each of us also has unique personality. The Father has given us spiritual gifts, a heart and passion for certain things, unique abilities, and experiences that shape how we view the world.

God has given me, the mother, a husband to whom I can go to with questions. We discuss each child and pray together. We also have regular meetings with our children, discussing their goals and dreams, trying to see how God might be leading them.

In our homeschooling, we use the mornings to work on common skills that they all need, such as math, reading, writing, history, and science. In the afternoons, we coach them in their individual skills, by tutoring them one by one and by helping them pursue their God-given interests individually.



# JOIN HOMESCHOOLING TORAH



Our mission is to produce a family-centered homeschooling curriculum for preschool to high school that is founded on the Bible, with support materials and Bible studies to encourage parents, promote strong homes, and provide discipleship materials for local congregations.

[www.HomeschoolingTorah.com](http://www.HomeschoolingTorah.com)