

# **I Am Not Prepared!**

**By Deborah Wuehler**

*'Twas the night before co-op, and all through the house, not a creature was stirring . . .  
except me and the mouse!*

*For all of a sudden I remembered what I'd said, so I grabbed my computer and jumped out  
of the bed.*

*I promised last month that I'd teach about something, and then I got busy and now my  
heart's thumping!*

*Up I arise and start my researching—I am reading and browsing and crafting and lurching.*

*I know in my heart I would not have been scared, if I had previously planned and was  
already prepared!*

Lame holiday poem, I know, but that homeschool twist rings true with many of us, doesn't it? Do you ever feel unprepared? You are not alone. One of the common laments I hear is, "I am not prepared!" I hear it about teaching high school or teaching co-op. I hear it about raising teenagers and teaching algebra. I hear it about that first year of homeschooling and the terrible twos and about Christmas. I even say it myself about each year ahead. Why are we so unprepared, or feel like we are never quite prepared enough? I have some ideas. Let's look at seven areas.

## **1. No Time to Prepare**

There have been days (seasons of years, even) that the demands on my time have literally left me with no time to eat. Or think. Or breathe. Or prepare for the next thing. Remember, it's a season that will pass; one day leads to the next and then we suddenly find we have breathing room. What we do with the little time we have in this very season will be highly important for the next. If we don't plant well in one season, we won't see any fruit in the next.

Moms, if we waste time now, we will see the fruit of that in the future character of our children later—who will grow up to be little time-wasters, too. We need to teach them that time is precious. We cannot afford to waste time, but we often do lesser than important things and then say we don't have enough time. Our flesh actually craves lesser things that will waste time. Let's devote our minutes, our hours, and our days to what is most important.

So, how does this relate to being prepared? Time management says that we make time for what's important. If God and our spouse and the training of our children are important, then instead of going on autopilot to pick up that novel, or click on that Facebook message, or read that blog, we will spend time with our Father, our spouse, and our children. We will use that little bit of extra time to plan our days, purchase that curriculum, grade that paper, or plan that co-op. We will use that time to pray for help with that little person's attitude (or our own) or pray for our spouse. If we don't have any extra time at all, we will enjoy our babies and meditate on His Word and pray throughout our days while we are working, and God will multiply our little strength as we offer it to Him.

*"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Psalm 90:12).*

*"Who is he who will devote himself to be close to me? declares the LORD" (Jeremiah 30:21).*

## **2. Unclear Direction**

We cannot prepare well if we are double-minded and second-guess our decisions or are unclear about our direction. If our decisions are based on God's unchanging Word and His direction in our lives, then we can be secure in the fact that God will bless our efforts. We can prepare for the future because we have faith in the God of the future. Although I do not always feel secure in myself or my curriculum choices, or of what's ahead for our family, I am *very* confident in God to complete the work He starts in me and in each of my children.

Knowing God wants to do a work in the heart of my children, I must also always be on the lookout and prepare for those times when He wants to work His character into them. I need to be ready to advise and instruct them in righteousness. It's my most important job! If I'm too busy to stop for this, I am too busy. Some days are just filled with fear. It's human nature. But God's nature can trump fear. Be prepared to face days of doubt with extreme faith in your loving God. Prepare yourself in advance for those days where you will feel weak or lack direction by leaning on His strength and reading His Word today.

*"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways" (James 1:5-8).*

## **3. Lacking Perseverance**

Homeschooling sometimes feels like a job with no end in sight. My youngest is seven years old, so I still have a stretch of time before me on this journey. But having graduated three, I must say, *"I know Whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day"* (2 Timothy 1:12). The victory lies *not* in knowing how or what to teach these children, the victory lies in knowing *Who* has made them and trusting Him to direct their steps and mine for the long haul. The question is *not* do we trust ourselves and our feelings, it is do we trust God to provide everything we need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3).

Patience and perseverance—necessary tools for this road of home education. And they often come through trials of many kinds. As teachers, we can't give up on our students when it gets difficult; we need perseverance and hope. Guess what? God rewards our perseverance with both hope and good fruit.

*"Tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed" (Romans 5:3, 4).*

*"Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness. . . For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:5-8).*

#### **4. Feelings**

Feeling unqualified or unprepared? Feel like a failure, or burned out? Should our feelings direct our actions? That might get us into trouble. Some folks actually stop homeschooling because of feelings. If we dwell on our fickle feelings, our thinking will become clouded, and we become unproductive. The Word of God is where our mind should dwell, for that is where truth is, and that is where our minds are renewed (transformed) and we will finally be able to know the good and perfect will of God (Romans 12:1, 2).

Should we wait until we feel like homeschooling before we bring our kids home where they belong? Or should we lay our feelings down at the feet of Christ and take them captive unto obedience? Obedience should always come before and even replace our feelings. Our obedience will be rewarded by God. Our feelings will be rewarded with more like feelings and can lead to a downward spiral.

I may never feel fully qualified or fully prepared or fully secure, but I think my children are secure in knowing that I am committed to this God-given conviction and will continue doing the right thing whether I feel like it or not. I want them to be obedient no matter how they feel when they are on their own someday, so I cannot be the example of someone who gives up.

So, what do you do with all these feelings? When you are weary or frustrated or anxious, let the children hear you and see you go to Jesus. Cast all your cares on Him. Have a good cry, and then rejoice in His care for you. Stand on His promises. This will be an important lesson for your children, because they will be prepared and able to find peace in their own time of need.

*"Thou will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusts in Thee" (Isaiah 26:3).*

#### **5. Lacking Order and Discipline**

If your house is out of order, and your children lack discipline, you will be unprepared for much else. Stop other things, and start teaching the kids in both order and discipline, and you will eventually find peace. Create that chore chart. Take one half hour a day to do one thing that is calling you loudly. Clean out that pantry that is bugging you. Tackle that pile of papers. Take care of those piles on the floor. Rethink that fifth grader's curriculum. You can do this. If things are overwhelming you, do one thing at a time until they are under control. And give yourself grace if you have a lot of little ones underfoot. Sometimes our peace of mind comes from enjoying them and letting the dust gather.

The children will eventually learn that they cannot have free time unless their schoolwork and chores are done and their spaces and things are cleaned up. This will help you and them in the long run. Teach them to cook and clean properly. It is messy and takes more time now, but the rewards will be great down the road. Set a flexible, basic schedule and make things doable for all of you.

Put your kids on a timer for chores and electronics. Twenty minutes of chores, then the reward of twenty minutes of electronics. It might be best for everyone if you put a timer on your own surfing the Web, too. There is so much to virtually distract us from what is important in *real life*.

## **6. No Vision**

Are our children prepared for their future in this age of extreme moral decline? If we are not prepared to teach them the ways of God now, who will, and when? It's time to have a vision of preparedness. We are the families of the hour to affect change on the hearts of the next generation. The time is now. Let's not wake up too late! Let's not be unprepared, or train children to be unprepared. Let's prepare our children now for life and faith and persecution and Heaven, too. Home education is a lot more than academics. We are preparing adults for the future—God's men and women of righteousness. So, how do we stay focused on this goal?

## **7. Basic Training Needed**

If you look at military basic training, you see that they cram into a few weeks everything they deem essential in becoming a good soldier. It's pretty basic. They require and reinforce unquestioned obedience and they prepare them mentally and physically for possible future combat. Specialized fields come later. Ever thought of that in relation to your goals for homeschooling? I want my children to unquestioningly obey God's commands and my commands, and I want to help prepare them in the basics for whatever the future holds. And then, as I pray, God will show me how to develop them in their specialized fields. Obedience to God first, academics second.

Academically speaking, consider what they *don't* know. If they are not proficient in the basics of reading, writing, and math, continue with the basics. Look for things that repeat and reinforce. They may excel in foreign language, but if they don't know their multiplication tables, something basic is missing. They may be able to do the best science experiments, but if they cannot write a decent letter, it's time to go back to the basics. If they can play video games for hours but can't spend two minutes in prayer, something is definitely lacking. Before academics, we would do well to teach wisdom and holiness and worship—raising up a different kind of generation.

## **Prepare the Way**

Raising godly children will be a big part in preparing the way for spreading the gospel. Just as John the Baptist prepared the way for Christ's first coming, our families can learn to prepare the way for His second coming. How? By embracing The Way, The Truth, and The Life ourselves and revealing Him to our children. Anyone can go the broad way (that "all-inclusive, tolerant, open-minded" way) that leads to death and destruction, but only a few will find the narrow way that leads to life. We need to light up that path for them to walk in. Do they know that the Way to the Father is through Jesus? He is the Truth and the Life. There is no other way, there is no other truth, and they will find no life apart from Him. We want to prepare the way for our children to believe in this Jesus and to follow Him wherever He leads, that they, in turn, will prepare the way for others to know Him.

How we live our own lives, and our responses to the circumstances that come our way, prepares our children to handle their future—whatever that might bring. It is imperative that we teach them to do combat with their enemies: the world, the flesh, and the devil, and to be more than conquerors through Jesus Christ. May we raise them up to be a people prepared for the Lord as we keep them *Home Where They Belong*.

*"He shall be great in the sight of the Lord . . . and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (Luke 1:15-17).*

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