

He Requires So Little of Us

Denise Kanter

If we allow ourselves, we can get pretty wrapped up in thinking that homeschooling is just too big a job. There's finding the right textbooks, dealing with different learning styles, choosing methods, and so on. It's easy to think that we are responsible for everything. Have you ever thought that? I have.

Recall for a moment the story of Moses and the parting of the Red Sea. There Moses was, standing at the sea's edge. A multitude of people—perhaps numbering in the millions—had followed him. To make matters worse, Pharaoh's army was closing in. Pretty overwhelming situation! What on earth might Moses have been thinking at that moment? Was he thinking that he had not done enough, or taken a wrong turn, or that he had completely failed? Was he thinking that God had forgotten about them? Was he about to take matters into his own hands and tell the Israelites to start swimming? Or did he have complete confidence in God, knowing He would rescue them? As Moses stood there, God spoke to him and said:

"But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea." (Exodus 14:16)

Such a simple act God requested of Moses. And how did Moses respond?

"And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided." (Exodus 14:21)

He obeyed. All God asked of Moses, physically speaking, was to stretch out his hand. Why had God asked him to do anything? Certainly, God could have parted the sea without this. What lesson did He have for Moses? It was a lesson on trust and obedience. No huge feats, no swimming across the Red Sea, no battle.

Likewise, God seeks simple and small gestures from us as signs of our trust and faith in Him. While we are thinking that the entire load is on our shoulders, it's not. It's on His. We get the little part, He gets the big part. Remember what He is able to do. If we humble ourselves, God will lift us up. He delights in taking care of our needs. How awesome is that?

Homeschooling is humbling, and that's a good thing!

"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up." (James 4:10)

We have four children. I taught the first two, both girls, using a myriad of different Christian methods and textbooks. With our third child (our only son), my husband took up the role as his primary teacher. This proved to be a humbling lesson for me, because at one time, I was confident in my views about "how to homeschool." I was successful in teaching my girls, so I was sure that my method was the "right way." So sure was I that, on an occasion or two, I gently shared with my husband how he should teach our son like I taught the girls. But my husband remained confident and committed to teaching him to read his way: using only one book. Not even a textbook or specialized reading program. Can you imagine teaching your child to read without a textbook? I was an experienced homeschool mom and I had successfully taught two children how to read. I knew from experience that you needed textbooks, reading primers, flash cards, phonics software, etc., etc. I have an entire bookshelf filled with these products as evidence. My husband's method was impossible. One book? But sure enough, my husband taught our son to read with that one book: God's Word.

"And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." (Ephesians 6:4)

I used Christian textbooks, but my husband's method was easier and a lot less expensive, and my son was blessed by learning to read with God's Word. And I humbly admit that there is more than one method to homeschooling!

So which method is right for you?

If you are already involved in a homeschool support group or have attended a homeschool convention, you are probably well aware that there are many methods of homeschooling. You may be one of those families who settles in very quickly with one, or you may try a few before finding the right one for you. The most popular overall methods are:

- Full Curriculum Set: Probably the most popular and much used method is a "boxed" set of Christian curriculum. Generally this includes textbooks for each subject and includes teacher's guides. This is a safe way to begin your homeschool journey, as it helps you to know right off the bat where your child's strengths, gifts, and needs are. Along with curriculum sets, some publishers have accompanying DVDs and software.
- Unit Studies. Another homeschool mom and I chatted recently about our favorite topic: homeschooling. The subject of unit studies came up. Heather shared with me that she takes breaks from textbooks during the holidays and at other special events during the year to do a themed unit study. She has found that when she spices up her children's education with unit studies, it keeps learning fun and enjoyable for her children. Many homeschool families use unit studies for the

entire school year. Unit studies are also a wonderful way to teach a subject to several children at once.

- **Adaptive Study:** Each child has a learning style and gifts that are unique to him. Adaptive learning is a great way to meet your child's need in every area. For example, my eldest daughter is advanced in reading, so I am able to use textbooks above her age level on subjects that rely heavily on reading. Rather than a curriculum set for a particular grade level, "Adaptive Study" uses curriculum to match exactly where your child is.

Methods aside, there is a mandate that all education be God-honoring. Therefore, it is very important to keep your homeschool free from atheistic views of origins and the philosophies typically found in all levels of secular curriculum and secular homeschool programs.

Where to buy curriculum?

One of my biggest concerns initially was finding and purchasing the right curriculum. I was not a big computer user back then, so I figured that the best place to find Christian textbooks was a Christian store. Just as I had hoped, I found a wealth of homeschooling textbooks and materials there. As a new homeschooler, it was immensely valuable to me to actually look at the curriculum. It gave me the confidence I needed to know that I could teach our children.

For those without easy access to a Christian bookstore, curriculum purchases can be made online, through catalogs, or from advertisements such as those found in this magazine. However, if you are new to homeschooling, there is nothing that will give you more confidence to homeschool—and will help keep you from buying the wrong products and wasting money—than to actually see the curriculum before you buy it. Here are some suggestions on ways you can look at homeschool curriculum choices:

- **Conventions:** Contact your state group and find out when their next convention or curriculum fair is. Homeschool curriculum publishers are usually on hand with products. The costs of attending the convention can easily save you money in the end.
- **Friends:** Do you know someone who homeschools? Ask them if it would be all right if you could look at their curriculum, or perhaps they even have used curriculum that you could borrow and try out.
- **Stores:** Visit Homeschool Headquarters at www.homeschoolheadquarters.com and see if there is a Christian store near you with curriculum.

- Online: Many online retailers and publishers have very good return policies, which makes online buying attractive (check each company's policy first). Do an Internet search on key words such as Christian homeschool curriculum and you'll find plenty of results to start your research.

Finding the right method and curriculum can be a rewarding and joyful process if you consider it part of the journey. Next time you're feeling a little overwhelmed, remember this: all God required of Moses was to show his trust in Him and follow as He led. That's all that God requires of us, too. He just wants us to trust Him, and He will direct our paths.

"In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." (Proverbs 3:6)

Biographical Information

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