

You Homeschool? You Must Be So Patient!

Deborah Wuehler

I am sure I am not the only one who has heard that comment. Many people who find out that I am educating all of my own children all by myself and all in my own home give me that wide-eyed look accompanied with "You must be so patient!" I start laughing about then, but my response normally is: "No, not really. And I am not organized either." This is when the conversation goes into something about me being a saint or being insane. I guess I am a little of both. Admittedly, I did start out as a somewhat patient person. I was raised in the military environment of "hurry up and wait." Throughout school, I learned to wait for all the other kids to catch up with us smarter kids or to wait in line for something or to wait until Christmas for a toy or gadget that kids today receive any day of the year if they really want it. However, there is a very big difference in the patience it takes to wait for something and the patience it takes to bring up children while you wait for them to grow to maturity. Seems like people today have neither attribute. Why are we, as a society, so impatient with our children? Maybe it is because we are too busy getting the good stuff of life or too busy consuming the good stuff or too busy gratifying selfish desires of "me time." Or maybe we have believed the lie that has slowly taken hold of our Western society—that children are indeed a nuisance rather than the Biblical reward they are promised to be. They take too much time, too much money, too much upkeep—too much patience! We are too rushed, too busy, and too selfish, and children interfere with our agendas. In our quest for as much as we can get as quickly as possible, we end up with less time for the patience and love that raising (let alone educating) children takes. We have no national collective patience for children. This opens up a myriad of questions.

A Myriad of Questions

Parents may have no time or patience to raise their own children, but interestingly enough, the government does. We must ask ourselves not only why the parents of today don't want the hassle of full-time responsibility for their children but also why does the government want that job so desperately? Are government intervention and government oversight in the most important facets of our personal lives things we really want? Why does the government want to teach the nation's children from cradle to college graduation? Do we feel like we owe them a debt and we pay it with our own children? Can this big government-run institution believe it can do a better job raising society's individual children than the parents themselves? There's no logic in the oxymorons of this Western culture, where children are portrayed as a nuisance and parents are thought to be ignorant about how to raise them. If these ignorant people are going to have children (and only one or two, please), let someone else raise them. Parents aren't really necessary (see the September 2012 Editorial), but then, children aren't really necessary either. If parents aren't necessary and children are a hassle, where does that leave the future of our society? In the meantime, just send all the little ones away and let someone else raise them and provide for them and tell them what to think and feel. Maybe when they grow up, they can solve the crisis. Where did these ideas come from? Has this always been the case in our nation's history?

History of Education

Before 1850, most children were educated at home by tutors or parents or in private schools. In the United States, studies included life skills, history, math, reading, and writing. However, between 1900 and 1960, things went to mass public educational venues, even to the point of mandating that education be compulsory. In the 60s, John Holt began to point the finger of blame for children failing academically at the school system and proceeded to publish a book on how children learn best. Thus began the homeschooling pilgrimages of the 60s and 70s by families who underwent much persecution to blaze the trail ahead of us. In the 70s Dr. Raymond and Dorothy Moore published a book titled *Better Late Than Early*, which spoke to the damaging effect of engaging a child in formal education before he is ready. The Moores' ideas were highly promoted through *Focus on the Family*, and homeschooling took off and began to grow in the 80s, although many states still deemed it illegal. There were 500,000 students being homeschooled in the 80s. By the 90s, homeschooling was legal in all states. By the year 2000, as John Taylor Gatto once again exposed the errors of compulsory education and the failure of the public education system to produce anything but assembly line workers, there were close to a million homeschooled students. More and more parents began to finally look at the behavior of the schools and the behavior of their children and consequently pull them out of public schools. By 2010, approximately 2.35 million children were being educated at home in the U.S. History reveals that the government education system slowly took on the parent's job and made it their own. History also reveals that parents are taking that responsibility back and keeping their children home where they belong. Homeschoolers have proven that home is the best place to raise and educate that child. But do we have the patience to do this job? Let's look at some definitions of patience.

Definitions of Patience

If we look at the definition of patience, we will find it defined as more than just an ability to wait. The modern Merriam-Webster dictionary defines patient as "bearing pains or trials calmly or without complaint; manifesting forbearance under provocation or strain; not hasty or impetuous; steadfast despite opposition, difficulty or adversity." This definition accurately describes what is needed for home education. So if patience is what we are lacking, where do we get more? Let's look at the Scriptures, from whence comes our help.

Help From the Scriptures

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (James 1:2-4).

This is what is lacking in today's parents and why they say they cannot possibly educate their children at home: Biblical patience. Their faith has not been tried through patience. A patience that endures hardship and resists selfish temptation can be found in a homeschool parent. That journey of patience brings forth fullness and wholeness, that we might lack nothing. Parents, don't be afraid that you don't have enough patience; God will give you all

that you need. Not only that, but don't be afraid that you don't have enough wisdom; just ask God for more! The next two verses tell us:

"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" (James 1:5-6).

We are to be blessed examples of patience through endurance and suffering:

"Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure" (James 5:10-11).

We must not be lazy but instead must patiently endure until we obtain the promise, like those who have gone before us:

"That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. For when God made promise to Abraham, . . . saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise" (Hebrews 6:12-15).

We can be strengthened with power for patience:

"That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness" (Colossians 1:10-11).

We can clothe ourselves with patience and longsuffering:

"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering" (Colossians 3:12).

Wisdom gives us patience as we confidently overlook an offense:

"The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression" (Proverbs 19:11).

The next time you think you need more patience than you have for home education, you will be thinking right—you will need lots of patience. Through every trial and tribulation that come your way, you will find help as you grow in patience. You will know beyond doubt that God will be with you, and in you, and for you, as you keep your children Home Where They Belong!

Deborah Wuehler is the Senior Editor for TOS, participating author in The Homeschool Minute, wife to Richard, and mom to eight gifts from heaven. She loves digging for buried treasure in the Word, reading, writing, homeschooling, and dark chocolate!

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