

# LEAVING A LEGACY

By Alane Rozelle

Over the past 30 years, there has been a growing and thriving movement of parents determined to teach their children at home. Thankfully, most U.S. states, and gradually, even various countries around the world, have opened up to this education option and have relaxed their stranglehold on the requirements needed. The regulations have varied from the strictest, demanding oversight by a licensed professional and monthly reports, to the most liberal which allow parents to choose how best to teach their own children.

I would like to explain and promote some benefits of home-schooling, but also to stress the importance of being involved godly parents no matter what educational path is chosen. In this age of increasing chaos, of gender confusion, of violence and immorality in general, our children are ever more vulnerable to the temptations of this world. Lacking a vigilant father or mother in the home, many young people wander aimlessly, without knowledge and wisdom. They become involved in drugs, gangs, and other difficulties. We know plenty about this. The details of bullying, suicides, rape, and other youth problems are in our daily news feeds.

I work in a public school, with consultants and counselors who profess to be Christians, but who feel their mouths are gagged from offering the true answer to the teen anxieties, abused souls, and hopelessness that enter our doors every day. If we Christians do not have the courage to speak up, who will? The void is filled instead by all manner of self-help, feel-good activities and programs that merely lay a band-aid over the wound. But I'm veering slightly off topic here.

As Christian parents, we have an obligation, no, a mandate, to teach our children truth. We are all quite familiar with the foundational cry of our faith, "Hear, O Israel, the LORD your God is one," and

“Love the LORD your God with all your heart, soul and strength,” of Deut. 6:4-5. Well and good. But what do the four verses following that cry say? It is only the first step to know the Shema for oneself. We are to observe the next explicit instructions also: (1) engrave these commandments on your heart; (2) impress them continually on your children by talking with them in the house, on the road, at bedtime, in the morning; (3) tie them on your hands and forehead, and write them on your walls and city-gates. This is the grand challenge: to supervise the education of our own children, to oversee the activities of our youth, to teach our sons and daughters the way of God. We are to leave a godly legacy!

In this day, we are reaping what we have sown. Or we might otherwise say, we are not reaping because we have not sown. We have not sown to truth and righteousness. Our young people are leaving the church in droves to follow other masters: college professors, “significant others,” agnostic gurus of positivity, the almighty dollar, feminist warrior women, etc. The responsibility of training up our children in the way that they should go must not be left to just anyone. It is the imperative of the father and the mother. Parents, therefore, must themselves first be grounded and founded in the word of God and the teachings of his Messiah Jesus. Parents cannot guide their children if they have not made truth the priority in their own lives. Guard your own hearts! (Deut. 6:6)

Don’t despair at this grand task. In the immortal words of Winston Churchill: “Never, never, in nothing great or small, large or petty, never give in except to convictions of honour and good sense. Never yield to force; never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy.” In other words, never, never, never give up! Pray without ceasing for our children.

Secondly, I offer a very viable solution, or attack, to the problem: teach your own children in your own home. Allow me to recount the decision of my family. When my then-husband and I decided to have children, we also decided that we wanted to keep them close, because God had given them to us, and we did not want strangers to be in charge of their education or that they would spend the

majority of their day in the midst of a crowded classroom of unruly little ones. It was unthinkable to us that at their tender age of three, barely out of diapers, we would pack them off to pre-school, as everyone else seemed eager to do. We determined that I would stay at home to teach them for as long as I could. When we finally did enroll them one by one in the public school (between ages 11-13), it was with the peace of God, although still with some reluctance. We knew they were capable and that they had reached a point where they needed a more rigorous, higher-level instruction than I felt able to give. I do know of many families, however, that succeed in home schooling through to graduation. The paths are as various as the families.

Wait! I can hear you sputtering objections! What about this and what about that?! The number one objection I hear is that the parent doesn't feel he or she is competent to teach their child. How can this be? These are the lies of the world and of the devil. In the first place, who knows your child best? Who knows his or her heart and talents—you or a teacher fresh out of the university?

In second place, is it true that you aren't skilled and experienced enough to teach your own child? Do you not know more than a 4, 8, 12 year-old? Do you not know how to read, to count, to reason? Are you unable to search the internet for the answers to your children's questions? Haven't you already taught them how to feed themselves and walk and identify colors and not touch a hot stove? Why then do we suddenly think we become stupid when the world tells us it's time to enroll them in kindergarten?

Thirdly, to whom did God give the responsibility of educating your children? To you or to a teacher that has a classroom full of 25 other children demanding attention? It is a curious situation that we receive these tiny blessings from God, child-proof our entire homes, and watch over them like hawks, then deposit them at the tender age of 3 or 4 in an institution far from us for 6 or more hours a day, to receive them back home tired, scared, upset, over-stimulated, and indoctrinated by a system

that has no respect for our Creator. Yes, I am over-generalizing, for there are most certainly godly caregivers and teachers providing excellent service. Still, it is a fact that the world's system is not going to train your child in the ways of the Lord. So again, I ask: to whom has God given this responsibility—to us or to an anti-God system, a system that promotes belief in evolution, distributes condoms to minors, and allows “gender fluidity” to flow through the hallways?

It could just be my crazy imagination, but I sometimes wonder if the reality is that many parents don't actually like their children. They seem to prefer that their children are away from home, not bothering them, not dirtying their freshly-scrubbed floors or interrupting their TV-watching. It has always shocked and saddened me to hear how eager parents are for the summer break to end so they can send their children away to school again. It is very difficult to give ourselves to the rearing of our children. It can be exhausting. It is also humbling and sacrificial. There are few (if any) prizes in this world for it. To take on the full responsibility to supervise and educate one's own children hammers against selfishness.

A second frequent misinformed objection to home schooling is “socialization.” The so-called experts in education have declared that keeping our children sheltered (implication: isolated and ignorant) affects their social development. According to their erudite studies, unless children attend public schools, they will not learn how to resolve conflicts or to relate to a variety of people. This is hogwash. I never had problems with my children's behavior until after we put them in a public daycare or a public school where they were harassed and drained. Peace does not reign in those places.

Additionally, socialization can occur in other contexts. My children participated in church activities, sports, and other community events to which we ourselves took them. We did not raise them in a vacuum or in a cave. We trained them up with supervision and love.

Now, having said all that, I concede that home schooling may not be for everyone nor is it a perfect solution. I do believe that more Christian families should consider it, at least for the primary years. I believe it could avoid or resolve many behavioral problems in young children. My main point, however, is: do all that you can, with the help and power of God, to raise up children to know the Truth. As a society, we have abandoned a generation of youth. As believers in God, we have a tremendous responsibility to reclaim them. We are mandated to leave a legacy.

Even if home schooling is not an option, there are still the commandments to every parent in Deut. 6:6-9 mentioned at the beginning of this article.

1) TALK continually to your children about God and his human son, our savior, Jesus; about the future kingdom of God on earth; and about living an upright and pure life. Talk to them about choosing a spouse who is also a believer, honest and faithful. Talk to them about sex, abortion, and Satan's evil schemes to destroy.

2) MEMORIZE scripture together. Print out verses and tape them to the walls, the cupboard doors, the bathroom mirrors. Recite God's word with your children day and night. Sing it in songs.

3) PRAY with your children before they go out the door and at bedtime.

4) WATCH over their activities and take care that they develop friendships that are healthy.

And, finally, I add that parenting does not end when the children leave the home. It just changes form. Our children, although adults, remain our children. My 85 year-old mother still worries about my two siblings and me. There is a fascinating example in 1 Samuel 2:12-34 of the results of a father not being vigilant over his adult sons. "Eli's sons were scoundrels; they had no regard for the LORD." (v. 12, NIV) They were demanding choice cuts of meat to be given to them from the sacrifices before the prescribed burning off of the fat could take place, and they were committing adultery in front

of all Israel. Eli did rebuke his Hophni and Phineas, but apparently it was too weak and too late, for they didn't pay him any mind at all. Instead, God sent a prophet to declare a "curse" over Eli's lineage, effectively cutting off his legacy, and foretold the death of Eli's sons to occur on the same day. God blamed the father for the sins of the sons. While we may not be able to exercise complete control over our adult children, we may be obligated to speak truth and correction into their lives. We can do this with great love, desiring to save them from that final death. We want to leave a godly legacy.