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Hope for Tomorrow

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Dear Friends,

A new year is a wonderful opportunity to get a fresh start and a renewed perspective on your homeschooling. Although most of our newsletters provide practical input about academics and the "how to's" of teaching high school, this newsletter will focus on nurturing hope in the midst of "tending the souls" of your children. Tending souls is often a workout for the heart—it can be heartwarming or heart-wrenching! Dads and Moms, you may become physically, emotionally, and spiritually exhausted. So this month, we want to share some thoughts from our hearts and extend to you something that all of us need no matter what season of life we are in—HOPE. Even if you are currently experiencing a time of joy and peace in your homeschooling, this message of hope may be timely for you to share with friends who will benefit from an infusion of hope.

The hope we are speaking about is that comfort, expectation, confidence, or trust that God's promises are true. We could define hope as looking towards that which we do not see with the promise that it will come to pass in God's timing and in His perfect way. There are a number of reasons why you or someone you know has lost this hope. The day in, day out school and family life routine may be particularly draining right after the holidays. Add to this all of the chores and sundry items that you promised yourself to take care of after the holidays, and it may seem that you are now looking at an overwhelming mountain of tasks that vie for your time and energy. Don't give up! There is hope.

- First be sure that your expectations are reasonable.
- Second, realize that you have limitations. If at the end of the day your mind is filled with thoughts of how much you did not accomplish that day, chances are that your "to do" list was too long.
- Third, seek out help from your spouse or a trusted friend to pare down your list to what is essential. Some things may just have to wait for another time. The Lord is gracious and will always give you enough time and strength for everything He has called you to do in a given day. Remember, the days are long...but the years are short. Trust the Lord for the grace you need as you start each day.

Another reason your hope may be sagging is that you see no evidence of growth in your teen's maturity or character development. Training is a long, slow process. Persevering in discipling your children is well worth the eventual fruit that will be harvested in both your life and theirs. This is a faith walk--don't be tempted to despair when you don't see change. The Lord is at work doing what He does best--working on the inside, deep inside the secret crevices of the heart. Many people mentioned in the Bible waited a very long time (may we mention, Sarah?) before the promises of God were fully realized. Others (like those who were sawn in two--sorry to be so graphic!) never had the joy of "seeing" the promise fulfilled on this side of heaven, but yet stood firm on the promises of the Faithful One. You, too, can stand amidst the churning waves and not be swept away.

On a personal note, both of us have walked through the heartache of watching several of our children make poor choices not in keeping with the values and beliefs we sought to instill in them. If you are despairing of a child who has turned his back on the faith you desperately desire him to embrace, remember there is hope. Just as much occurs beneath the surface of the soil before the plant breaks through the earth, so much good work may also be taking place in your teen's heart that you are not yet aware of.

Here is a short acrostic which may help you to maintain your joy as you endure some tough times:

H--Hang in there. God is the God of the impossible, the Redeemer of souls. Have a vision of this trial that is in line with God. Even when we are faithless, He remains faithful. His lovingkindness is everlasting. You may be in despair because you don't see the end. But God sees the end, and you can trust Him. He takes our weaknesses and our insufficiencies, and He provides us with His grace, strength, and power to keep going, to keep depending on His wisdom in dealing with our child, and to keep

relying on His ability to change a heart.

O--See the opportunity to grow in the Lord. Have you ever stopped to think that this trial might be more about you than about your child? In the book, "Lies Women Believe" by Nancy DeMoss, she states that one of the lies we are prone to believe is that God should fix all of our problems, including our relational problems, which a lot of the time involves our children. But many times, instead of fixing our problems, the Lord says, "I have a purpose for your problem." Have you ever seen this trial as a part of the Lord's means to fulfill His purposes and plans for your life? Amy Carmichael often prayed, "Give me the light that changes the look of all things." We all say that we would love to have more patience, more humility, more trust--but what we don't like to admit is that the way we develop these traits is by going through trials that are difficult and insurmountable in the flesh. There is no better trial to increase patience, humility and trust in the Lord than to be utterly helpless to change a child we can't control and who we feel totally insufficient to train. But the word of God says we are more than conquerors, we are recipients of more than abundant grace, and we are beneficiaries of godly, not worldly wisdom.

P--Prayer is a powerful weapon. None of us would be the prayer warriors we are today without having experienced the burden of praying and asking the Lord to work in our children's lives. As you wrestle with the Lord in prayer, you will be amazed at the change in your life. When you experience first hand the Lord's compassion and gentleness in caring for you, your manner and disposition towards your child will change from one of frustration, anger, and discouragement to one of tenderness, mercy, and kindness. Your thoughts will turn from ones of desperation to thoughts of His love for you and for your child as evidenced by the cross and the sacrificial love demonstrated there for you. Enlist a few close friends or relatives to pray regularly for you and your children. Just knowing that others are interceding for your children will lift the burden you carry. We will probably never know the power of our prayers and the trust, reliance, and dependency on the Lord that our prayers brought about.

E--Encouragement from God's Word. When you humbly come to the Lord and ask for refreshment, a godly perspective, and life-giving water, He will never fail to illuminate a verse or Bible passage and send you on your way revived. Be diligent to search out Scripture and re-hydrate your soul on a daily basis. Tack up verses on your bathroom mirror, on your car dashboard, or near your phone to remind yourself of the Lord's promises. You may wish to keep encouraging verses on index cards in your purse so you can flip through them while waiting in grocery store lines, at the doctor or dentist office, or waiting for your child to finish up a sports practice. Romans 5:3-4 in the Phillips translation reads:

"This doesn't mean of course that we have only a hope of future joys--we can be full of joy here and now even in our trials and troubles. These very things will give us patient endurance, this in turn will develop a mature character, and a character of this sort produces a steady hope, a hope that will never disappoint us. Already we have the love of God flooding through our hearts by the Holy Spirit given to us."

Let that verse flood over your souls as you homeschool your children everyday and nurture them in the ways of the Lord. The key word is HOPE--an anchor for your souls in the midst of any difficult day or season. If you are experiencing tough times right now with one of your children, you may be encouraged by this article on the Crosswalk website by Jenefer Igarashi entitled, "[What to Do When You Think You've Lost Them.](#)"

Looking forward to eternity when our faith will be sight,

Becky and Diane



This resource is an article from the *Homeschooling Thru Highschool* newsletter (1/4/2007), and is provided by the Home School Legal Defense Association as a service to the homeschooling community.

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