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Seeing Today in Light of Eternity

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Dear Friends,

As we promised last month, our goal for this newsletter is to get your noses out of the books, the lesson plans, and the activity calendars! We know it's only September, and you probably have fresh inspiration for another school year, but is it enough to last through the end of the school year, the end of next month, or just until the end of this week?

As former homeschool moms, we know that the day to day work of homeschooling and all of the details and deadlines you must deal with can be overwhelming. You may already be tempted to take your focus off of your long-term goals for homeschooling. We'd like to stop you in your tracks and concentrate for the rest of this newsletter on...eternity.

For readers who share our Christian beliefs, we hope the rest of the article serves to encourage and spur you on in your homeschooling. For other readers who do not share our views, we graciously ask that you consider reading on and gather the nuggets of truth that resonate with you.

Let's look at four areas that take us beyond the book work, the school supplies, and the school calendar and set our hearts soaring--faith, joy, hope, and rewards.

Faith

The Bible says that "without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him."

Do you believe that the Lord is involved in the details of your homeschooling? He is! He is mindful of you; He sees your efforts on His behalf, and He stands ready to provide whatever you need to accomplish the work that He has given to you each homeschool day. Thank Him each morning for the strength, the wisdom, and the guidance that He freely offers. No matter what the day brings, rejoice in knowing that the Lord has handpicked each of your children for you and He has chosen you to be their parent(s). To be further encouraged, read Hebrews 11 and see how God records and remembers the lives of Old Testament saints. God remembers you in the same way as He remembers Abraham, Sarah, Jacob, Rahab--your faithfulness to Him, not your shortcomings!

This perspective will fill you with awe, compassion, and gentleness when your patience runs out or when you are tempted to be harsh. Your ability to homeschool does not come from your own might or power, but it comes from faith in the Lord's power and might. His love towards you is everlasting.

Joy

As believers in the Lord, we know that our joy is not dependent on our circumstances, but our joy comes from the Lord. If you have lost your joy and are overwhelmed by your responsibilities, spend time today in God's Word asking the Lord to restore and lead you beside still waters.

You may think that homeschooling is in some ways a prison for you. You may feel trapped, unable to do what you want to do, or you may be feeling as if your time is being wasted. But, even in prison, Paul and Silas sang for joy because they knew that

the Lord had not abandoned them! They were assured that even in their present circumstances their joy could be found in the Lord's presence. Pick out a favorite hymn or worship song and set your mind to praising the Lord. He is greatly to be praised; He is worthy to be praised, and in His praises you will find joy.

Psalms 63:3-5 says "Because Thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips will praise Thee. So I will bless Thee as long as I live; I will lift up my hands in Thy name. My soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth offers praises with joyful lips."

Hope

We hope for many things, don't we? We hope it doesn't rain if we intend to go on a picnic. We hope the chicken we left in the oven doesn't burn up before we return home from soccer practice. And we really hope that the beautician cutting our hair is not newly certified! For most of us as parents, our most fervent hope, though, is that our children walk in truth.

When our children walk in truth, they are a joy to be around, our lives are easy, the skies are blue everyday, and homeschooling is a cinch. If that's your life right now, we rejoice with you! And...we ask that you find, befriend, and earnestly pray for someone else's child who may not be doing well spiritually. Most of all, thank the Lord that although you are doing your best to teach and train your child, that it is really the Lord's grace that is enabling your child to follow in His ways. Reminding yourself of this daily will keep you from walking in pride and tending towards condescension of others.

On the other hand, when our children don't walk in truth our hope sags. And, our homeschooling days may be tough, bleak, and tedious. If your child is not where you hope him or her to be spiritually, humble yourself before the Lord and acknowledge that you are powerless to change his or her heart. Cry out to the God Who saw you in your hopeless state and Who saved you while you were still His enemy. All of us stand on level ground at the foot of the cross. Be careful in your dealings with your child that you do not develop a cold or hardened heart. It's easy to do when someone is causing us problems, isn't it? But the Lord would have you trust Him and entrust your child to His tender care. Remember, too, that you are simply called to faithfully sow the seeds and water them, but it's the Lord who makes them take root. (The Lord never condemns. He convicts us, but He also sends help and hope. So don't give yourselves 40 lashes for your perceived mistakes!)

Charles Spurgeon, in his devotional book "Morning and Evening," wrote the following with regard to Mark 9:7-24 where a father seeks healing for his son. The disciples could not help this father, but Jesus said "Bring him to me." Spurgeon says:

Despairingly the poor disappointed father turned away from the disciples to their Master. His son was in the worst possible condition, and all means had failed, but the miserable child was soon delivered from the evil one when the parent in faith obeyed the Lord Jesus' word, 'Bring him unto me.' Children are a precious gift from God, but much anxiety comes with them. They may be a great joy or a great bitterness to their parents; they may be filled with the Spirit of God, or possessed with a spirit of evil. In all cases, the Word of God gives us one receipt for the curing of all their ills, 'Bring him unto me.' O for more agonizing prayer on their behalf.... Never must we cease to pray until they cease to breathe. No case is hopeless while Jesus lives.

Let that last sentence renew hope in your heart. No matter what your situation may be or how difficult your child may be, "no case is hopeless while Jesus lives." A good book to encourage you in prayer is *Prayer: Finding a Heart's True Home* by Richard Foster.

Rewards

It's not easy to keep homeschooling each day when it seems that the rewards are few and far between--or nonexistent. However, if we stake our claim on the clear promises of God, we are sure that work done in the name of Lord (including our homeschooling) will not be in vain. The Lord is a gracious Master; He will see to it that your work, your prayers, your time invested in teaching and training your children will be rewarded. Don't lose sight of your reward--ultimately the greatest reward any of us can hope to receive is a "Well done, thou good and faithful servant...enter into the joy of your Master." (Matthew 25:21) Many times in Scripture we are told not to lose heart. Take time to read again the promises that the Lord has in store for those who look to Him:

- Peace: "The steadfast of mind Thou wilt keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in Thee." Isaiah 26:3
- Mercy: "Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy." Matthew 5:7
- Grace in time of need: "Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and

may find grace to help in time of need." Hebrews 4:16

Last, the work that you are doing and the skills that you are learning here on earth will one day be put to even greater use in the Kingdom of God throughout all eternity! We encourage you to read "Heaven" by Randy Alcorn to be radically encouraged to look with eyes focused on eternity. Other books we suggest to point you in the direction of eternity are "When God Weeps" by Joni Erickson Tada, which speaks to making sense of our suffering, and "Transforming Grace" and "Respectable Sins: Confronting the Sins We Tolerate" both by Jerry Bridges which teach us how to walk in biblical integrity before our children as we travel the road leading to eternity.

As much as we enjoy providing you with assistance on transcripts, courses, credits and the rest, it remains our greatest pleasure to have the opportunity to encourage you in the Lord. Commit during this school year to walk by faith not by sight, to rejoice in the Lord always, to remember the hope you have as an anchor for your soul, and to look forward to the rewards awaiting you in heaven. Have a blessed school year!

Next month, join us as we return to the practical topic of explaining how to calculate grade point average (GPA), and discussing various aspects of this important calculation.

Until then, we are focused like lasers on eternity,

Becky Cooke and Diane Kummer
HSLDA High School Coordinators



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Author: [Becky Cooke](#)
[Diane Kummer](#)

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