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Singing His Promises

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Dear Friends,

With the beginning of a new school year, we reflect back on our personal homeschooling days with a variety of emotions. We remember the "thrill of victory and the agony of defeat!" Can anyone relate?

As we traveled to homeschool conferences and had the opportunity to meet many of you, some of you shared with us, "You two are so real--you're just like us." It's true, we are. That's how we know that September may be a good month to share with you an encouraging word.

More than likely, there will be days over the next school year when you may feel discouraged, weary, fearful, or depressed. When you do (notice we didn't say "if you do"--are we pessimists or realists?), we hope you keep in mind some basic truths that will reorient you and keep you going. The following thoughts are based on familiar hymns and choruses.

In His Time

Beginning the year lifting your voices in prayer and praise will definitely cause your family to rejoice in the One who lays out your paths and leads you according to His time. Usually, stress increases when we run ahead of the Lord's timing, but peace and joy reign when we remember--

"He makes all things beautiful in His time."

How Firm a Foundation

When something gives way (the science experiment blows up, the algebra lesson is beyond your capabilities to decipher, your teen's hormones are going in the opposite direction of yours) and you want to quit, remember that your foundation is unshakeable. The Lord keeps His promises, and He will never leave you nor forsake you. His strength will lift you up on days when sleeping in sounds better than getting up, or when friends ask once again why you are homeschooling high school. Don't grow weary, but persevere and know that it's the hard times that grow deep roots.

"Fear not I am with thee; O be not dismayed, For I am thy God, and will still give you aid."

Breathe on Me, Breath of God

On some school days, a fresh breeze would be heaven sent, wouldn't it? As you anticipate teaching American history in a fresh way, or think of a creative method to teach Shakespeare, or find another source of help for the Spanish lessons that have you puzzled, ask the Lord for a brand new perspective. He delights in proving Himself to be your Provider, Sustainer, and miracle Worker! You are doing a mighty work. Trust the Lord to supply you with His own version of manna from heaven.

"Breathe on me, Breath of God, fill me with life anew, That I may love what Thou dost love, and do what Thou wouldst do."

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

Some days we allow our joy to be sapped by circumstances--in the case of homeschoolers, often it's too much activity and too little time. Slow down, weed busyness out of your life, and make a conscious effort to walk in joy. Listen to praise and worship music, begin your day soaking in a couple verses from God's word, and thank the Lord for your many blessings. Spread joy in your home by taking time to encourage your teen each day. Joy is a gift of the Spirit, and it will transform you.

"Thou art giving and forgiving, Ever blessing, ever blest, Wellspring of the joy of living, Ocean depth of happy rest."

O the Deep, Deep Love of Jesus

For some of you, disappoint fills your heart. With all your efforts, you are tempted to ask, "Where's the fruit?" Your teen may lag academically, lack spiritual maturity, or excel in foolishness. Your relationship with your teen may be in tatters. Where's the hope? Your hope is dependent on the depth of your understanding of the love of Christ for you--and for your teen. When you are convinced that the Lord loves you lavishly, completely, and unconditionally, you'll want to love your teen in the same way. You'll be able to love the unlovable. You won't shy away from training and correcting, but you'll do so with tenderness, compassion, and humility--as a fellow inner in need of grace. None of us have the power to do this on our own, but the Lord can help us do the impossible! (Memorize a verse or two on the love of God: For example, Ephesians 3:14-19, Romans 5:8, or Psalm 89:1-4.)

"O the deep, deep love of Jesus, Vast unmeasured, boundless, free!
Rolling as a mighty ocean, In its fullness over me,
Underneath me, all around me, Is the current of Thy love;
Leading onward, leading homeward, To my glorious rest above."

Blest Be the Tie That Binds

Even though our homeschooling days are behind us, we continue to be bound together with you in Christian love. As you are encouraged, turn and encourage another. The result will be a lighter spirit and joy filled heart.

"Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.
We share our mutual woes, our mutual burdens bear;
And often for each other flows the sympathizing tear."

We hope that during this school year these truths will pop into your minds when you most need to be heartened. Thank you once again for the outlay of love and sacrifice you are making in your teens' lives. You will reap a harvest--for eternity.

Join us next month as we discuss adding electives and extracurricular activities to your high school program.

Grateful for grace in our lives,

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