

Fall 2011

The Virginia Home Educator

🏠 Home Educators Association of Virginia News Magazine



Crisis
IN *Homeschooling:*
EXPOSING MAJOR BLIND
SPOTS OF HOMESCHOOLERS

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NEW WEB ARTICLES!

Some of the magazine has gone online! Be sure to check
out these online bonus articles at [www.heav.org/resources
/home-educator/fall-2011.html](http://www.heav.org/resources/home-educator/fall-2011.html).

Reclaiming Independence Day
Marilyn Boyer

Seeing Their Potential
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FROM THE EDITOR

Mary Kay Smith

Once, long ago when I was very sick and thought I might die, I spoke to an older friend of mine about my children. I was concerned that I wouldn't have time to teach them enough about God and afraid that they would then be less likely to follow Him when they got older.

My friend was also my Precepts Bible study leader, so I knew she would give me good advice. But her answer surprised me. She said, "Your job is to love your children. That is the most important thing you can do, no matter how much time you have left with them. When they are sure of your love, then they are emotionally free to listen as you—or other people, if necessary—teach them about God. Don't spend your time teaching rather than loving."

That was a very wise response. It came straight out of I Corinthians 13.

Homeschoolers, especially, seem vulnerable to trying to do it all, teach it all, provide it all, train it all, and correct it all. While we have the right intentions, we can sound like gongs and crashing cymbals to our children when they aren't completely sure that we simply love them. In the end, we can be the very ones who de-rail our kids from the way they should go.

This is such an important topic that I asked author Reb Bradley for permission to edit his wonderful article on loving our kids from 17,000 words down to 4,000 to fit in our magazine. (You can read the full article online.) In fact, I am only offering one feature article this issue because you really need to read it. I needed to read it. If we heed only one message this year, it should be this one.

"And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love" (I Corinthians 13:13 NIV'84). ☺

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- **September 8** ■ How to Begin Homeschooling: What You Really Need to Know!
- **August 18 and October 6**
High School at Home: Yes, You Can Do It!

HEAV-SPONSORED MUSEUM EVENTS

HEAV has arranged special discounted "Home-school Days" at museums and historical sites across the Commonwealth. Visit www.heav.org/events for details.

- **Mariner's Museum**, Newport News
September 16, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- **Virginia State Fair**, Doswell
September 30 ■ 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.
- **The Frontier Culture Museum**, Staunton
September 30 ■ 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- **Virginia Air and Space Museum**, Hampton
October 20 ■ 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.
- **Mount Vernon** ■ November 4 ■ 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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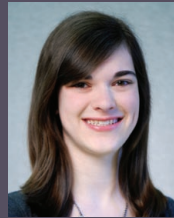
This summary article was written in response to a June 12 Richmond-Times Dispatch article that inaccurately linked homeschooling to the state government's contract with thirteen virtual public school providers.

Homeschool and virtual school are not the same! Home education is parent-directed education where parents can choose a curriculum that complements their child's learning style and imparts the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values they choose. Parents are able to introduce concepts when their child is developmentally ready, and work at advanced levels whenever appropriate.

In contrast, a virtual public school is essentially a small public school in the home, with parents required to use the curriculum chosen by the state. Faith-based curriculum cannot be included. Virtual school students move at a predetermined pace and meet the benchmarks of the state SOL tests. A certified teacher oversees their records and progress.

Read HEAV's full response, along with a comparison chart, at www.heav.org/law/virtual/index.html. ☺

VIRGINIA KIDS DID IT!



Congratulations to 14-year-old **Sophia Clifton** (Leesburg), who received first place in the state of Virginia in the Classical Association of Virginia's (CAV) Latin Exam for Level 1A. Sophia participates with the Classical Cottage School in Winchester, where the head Latin teacher, Mrs. Susan Schearer, said the CAV exam is the hardest Latin test she has seen in more than 35 years of teaching.



Jessica and Elyssa

Congratulations to **Jessica Grant** and **Elyssa Ranck** who shared the lead role in the ballet *Cinderella* presented by Rockingham Ballet Theatre, Bridgewater, in May. The cast of more than 60 dancers included at least 11 homeschool students.

Congratulations to 17-year-old **Ashley Smith** (South Riding) for winning a National Merit Scholarship for her high



Ashley Smith in the lead role of Sleeping Beauty, Reston Center Stage, May 2011. Photo credit: Images by Carrie

scores on the PSAT. Her scores also won her a full scholarship to the University of Alabama, where she will double major in dance and fashion design as a member of the honors college. ☺

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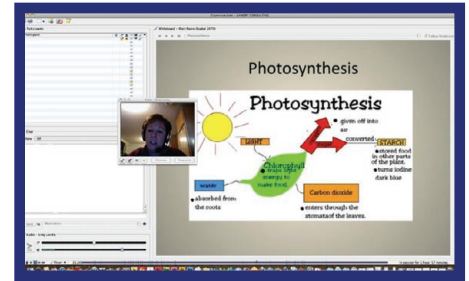
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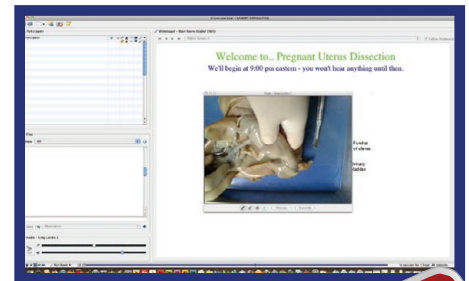
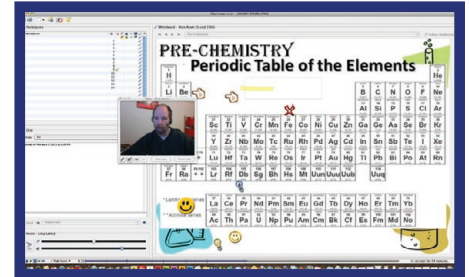
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"Dear Mrs. Iverson, THANK YOU for conducting such an exciting class yesterday about dissecting the owl pallet. We are in China so the time difference make the weekly class at 10pm. Last night the excitement went out the window . . . not only Justus was so dedicated and concentrated, but his younger sister Janice also tried to find skulls and bones. When they found a fang, it's like finding gold in a treasure box. At first I was a little concern about the smell of the pellet but they both said it had a chocolate smell so that went really well too.

Aside from a super exciting class last night, I also want to appreciate what you have done since the beginning of the class. I see my son's interest broaden and his responsibility level also improve. This includes staying up while everyone else is already asleep for the 10pm class...all due to interesting class content and your way of engaging the students. Thank you for your LOVE and care to these students. It has made a difference in Justus' life." ~Clarissa



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FROM THE DIRECTOR OF HOMESCHOOL SUPPORT *Yvonne Bunn*

We had a wonderful convention this year! More than 10,000 parents, children, vendors, parents of preschoolers, and graduates and their guests attended. We had 310+ booths in the Exhibit Hall and approximately 60,000 books in the Used Curriculum Sale. With 135 workshops to choose from and three powerful keynotes, we hope you left encouraged and equipped.

The convention is definitely the most visible thing HEAV does, but when convention is over, we are still serving homeschoolers with many other services, such as curriculum counseling, seminars, transcripts, reduced rates for field trips, links to helpful articles, and more! Our most important work, however, is protecting your right to homeschool.

It was because of HEAV that the homeschool law was passed in 1984. Because of HEAV, the cut-off score for standardized achievement tests was changed from the 40th to the 23rd percentile so parents could teach children with learning difficulties. HEAV successfully opposed mandatory five-year-old kindergarten and protected religious exemption from threats of change. HEAV successfully opposed daytime curfews for homeschoolers and mandatory SOL testing, and endorsed a law that required school

districts to notify and make available PSAT and AP tests to homeschoolers. HEAV also promoted parent-taught, behind-the-wheel driver instruction for homeschoolers. Laws favorable to homeschooling in Virginia pass because of HEAV.

WHY SHOULD YOU JOIN HEAV?

Sometimes a parent will ask, “Why should I join HEAV when so many services are free? What does HEAV do for homeschoolers with my \$35 membership?”

The most important things supported by your membership happen out of the spotlight. We represent your interests in the General Assembly, and when laws threaten your freedom to educate your own children, we speak on your behalf to protect your rights. We actively communicate with legislators, government officials, and the media throughout the year to make them aware that homeschooling is a viable educational choice.

Tackling issues that threaten homeschooling families is a big job—one we cannot do alone. Homeschooling is continuing to grow in Virginia, as shown by a 45.2% increase in the past eight years, and thousands of parents use the services we provide. Yet HEAV gets no grants from the government, and we get no support from the taxes you pay. We depend on parents like you to

stand with us—parents who also believe it is their right and responsibility to teach and train their children at home.

These are turbulent times. I don't know what challenges home educators may face in the future, but because of the homeschool laws we have forged in Virginia during the past twenty-seven years, our generation has the freedom to homeschool. This means we have the freedom to pass on our family values, protect our children from negative influences, and provide rigorous academics. We must continue to protect these homeschool freedoms. HEAV's work in the legislature is as critical now as ever before.

Your support is critical to the task before us. We depend on donations and yearly memberships from parents who believe in what we are doing. Through membership, you not only help us serve homeschoolers today, but allow us to safeguard homeschooling for the future. ☺

Check the back of the magazine to see if you're a member. If you are, thank you so much for your support! If you're not, you can support our efforts to protect home education by joining HEAV or renewing your membership—just visit our website, www.heav.org, or call our office at 804-278-9200.

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Crisis IN Homeschooling:

EXPOSING MAJOR BLIND SPOTS OF HOMESCHOOLERS

Reb Bradley



I have heard from multitudes of troubled homeschool parents around the country, many of whom are leaders. These parents have graduated their first batch of kids, only to discover that their children didn't turn out the way they thought they would. Many of these children were model homeschoolers while growing up, but sometime after their eighteenth birthday, they began to reveal that they didn't hold their parents' values.

Some of these young people left home in defiance. Others got married against their parents' wishes, and still others got involved with drugs, alcohol, and immorality. Several exemplary young men no longer even believe in God. My own adult children went through struggles I never guessed they would face.

Most of these parents remain stunned by their children's choices because they were fully confident their approach to parenting was going to prevent any such rebellion.

After several years of examining what went wrong in our own home and in the homes of so many conscientious parents, our eyes have been opened by God to a number of critical blind spots common to many family-minded people.

1. HAVING SELF-CENTERED DREAMS

The reason our dreams for our children are so vulnerable to crashing is because they are *our* dreams—our dreams imposed on our children. As homeschool parents we make huge sacrifices and invest a great deal in our children, and our love for them can

be lost in love for personal success.

When my oldest son was eighteen, I had to ask him to leave my home for a season. My wife and I were devastated and grieved that he was now unprotected from the world's junk, but more than that, I was heartbroken that my dreams for him would no longer come true. I remember saying, "Son, you've ruined my dreams." My dreams involved adult children who lived at home humbly

When we see our children as a reflection or validation of us, they become our source of significance.

under parental authority, and who would one day marry after following my carefully orchestrated courtship process. But now, my son had "messed up" my perfect dreams.

What was particularly grievous was that I was more worried about the failure of my dream than the fact that my son and I had a broken relationship. Although he was restored to us four months later, it took me years to realize that I had contributed to the damaged relationship. I had yet to discover that parents who think it's all about THEIR success are often contributing to their children's struggles. Proper parenting is about the *children*, not the parents.

It is only natural for parents to have high hopes and dreams for their children. However, when we see our children as a reflection or validation of us, the children

become our source of significance. That affects the way we interact with them and subtly breaks down our relationship.

2. RAISING FAMILY AS AN IDOL

When we allow the success of our family to determine our sense of security, we are seeking from it something God intends us to receive from Him. I am describing idolatry.

When the Israelites worshipped idols, they didn't always forsake worship of the living God—they merely served other gods along with Him. Sometimes they simply made an idol of something good. An idol is anything other than God in which we seek security and fulfillment. It has the power to determine our well-being. We, who are devoted to our families—and who invest a great deal of time, energy, and heart in them—find it easy to elevate them too high.

A great problem with idolatry is that idols require sacrifice, and we end up sacrificing relationship with our children for the idol of the family. We effectively trade our children's hearts for our family's reputation.

3. EMPHASIZING OUTWARD FORM

Preoccupation with results often leads to emphasis on outward form. Imagine that you admired your neighbor's apple tree, noticing that its branches were laden with big, luscious apples. If you wanted similar results with your own tree, would you run to the market to buy apples and tie them onto your tree? No. You would care for and fertilize your tree to produce the fruit. It

is the same with our children. Parents are destined for disappointment when they admire fruit in others and seek to emulate merely that *expression* of fruit in their own children.

Parents can emphasize outward appearance in excellence, modesty, grooming, respectful manners, music style, or an attitude of sober reverence in worship. Some homeschoolers even take their children down a country path of wearing humble fashions, raising food, and making bread. Nothing is wrong with any of these things, but we must be careful—in modeling for our children outward changes, we can easily fall into molding their behavior and/or appearance while missing their hearts.

Jesus came against the Pharisees for their preoccupation with what they felt were legitimate expressions of spirituality. They measured holiness by what was avoided and by what would be seen by others (Matthew 6, 16, 23; John 7:24). The Pharisees were earnest in their religion, but they were preoccupied with outward expressions of holiness rather than with hearts of humility and love (Micah 6:8) that would bear genuine fruit.

4. TENDING TO JUDGE

In setting standards for our families, we work through a process of evaluation and analysis to decide what is safe, wise, or permissible. Once we become convinced of our personal standards, it often follows that we believe they should apply to others as well.

The Pharisees belittled others who didn't hold to their standards. We have gone their way when we judge others. It is easy to miss this area of pride because we may not express our judgments arrogantly; we may instead wrap them in compassionate-sounding words. Arrogance wrapped in concerned tones is deceiving.

Typically, when judgment is in our own hearts, we also imagine it is in others' hearts. Consequently, we find ourselves frequently being defensive. We assume that others will think lowly of us for some perceived inadequacy, so we offer unsolicited explanations and clarifications for us or our children. For example, let's say we walked passed a TV at Sears and saw something of interest. When we tell others what we saw, we are careful to clarify that we saw it at Sears and weren't watching TV at home. If we live under fear of judgment, not only will we tend to be on the defensive, but whenever we are in a public setting, we will put pressure on our children.

When pride is working in us, we sincerely believe our personal opinions reflect God's utmost priorities and standards. What we believe to be our "enlightened" perspective then becomes a filter by which we gauge others' spirituality, therefore limiting our options for fellowship. We develop a very narrow definition of what we call "like-minded" people. Now we are on a path to exclusivity and will no longer associate with those who will be with us in eternity. We have lost sight of fellowship based on love and devotion to Jesus, substituting personal standards. We need to be careful of measuring *everyone else's* enlightenment by what we have decided is modest, spiritual, or holy.

There are several serious consequences of raising children in a home marked by pride and judgment. Children may grow up also judging others. Or, they may hide their real values, acting as though they embrace our values when, in fact, they are simply seeking to avoid discipline and lectures while at home. Or, they may see the shallowness of our legalistic faith that consists primarily of "avoid this, wear that, and attend this," and not be attracted to it in the least.

5. DEPENDING ON FORMULAS

Homeschooling parents often take a "formulaic" approach to parenting. Committed to achieving results, we look for formulas and principles to ensure our success. Knowing the Bible is full of the wisdom and promises of God, we look to it for its self-working principles and promised methods.

Yet, there is a problem with that: We are commanded to trust in *God*, not in formulas (John 14:1; Psalm 37:5, 62:8). There is a monumental difference.

Trust in formulas is really dependence upon ourselves to carry out a procedure correctly. But anyone who really understands the grace of the gospel knows that we cannot take personal credit for any spiritual accomplishments. We are totally God's workmanship (Ephesians 2:10; Philippians 2:13, 1:6) and can do absolutely nothing by ourselves for which we can take credit (Ephesians 2:8-9; Galatians 6:14; Romans 4:2; 1 Corinthians 1:28-31; 2 Corinthians 11:30). Many of us lean toward a formulaic mentality because our fallen natures are drawn toward self-reliance. We want to feel that by our own efforts (works) we have achieved something that will make us acceptable to God. By nature we are legalistic.

God wants us to trust in HIM! Our responsibility is to obey; God's job is to produce results (1 Corinthians 3:6). If a formula for success consistently produces results, where is God in the mix? The heart belongs to the individual and must be touched by God.

6. DEPENDING ON AUTHORITY AND CONTROL

Fruitful training of roses and children require a goal, a plan, and diligence in labor. However, the difference is that roses have no mind of their own and only grow as they are allowed, whereas children are self-determining individuals who ultimately choose how they will respond to parental influence.

Obviously, our training increases the likelihood our children will cling to the faith when they reach maturity—or turn back to Christ if they enter a season of rebellion—but our training does not *guarantee* the desired outcome. In Proverbs 22:6 we receive encouragement to diligently train our children, but we must remember that they are processing their upbringing and will one day have their own time of reckoning with God.

Let me emphasize that I do believe that firm control of our children in their younger years is critical for the maturing process because, as our young children learn to submit to *outer* controls, they concurrently develop *inner* controls. And young children who are trained to have inner control (self-control) are better equipped to receive values taught them as they grow. However, as our children head into adolescence, if we find ourselves still focused on influencing them chiefly through tight control, we shouldn't be surprised if they begin to manifest an independent spirit during their teens.

Solomon set for us a great example of balanced parenting—he admonished his young adult children and gave them commandments, but he knew that for them to honor his commands, he needed their hearts. That's why he said, "My son, give me your heart and let your eyes keep to my ways" (Proverbs 23:26 NIV'84). Paul also recognized this truth: "... although in Christ I could be bold and order you to do what you ought to do, yet I appeal to you on the basis of love..." (Philemon 1:8-9 NIV'84).

If we have their hearts,
our children will remain
open to our influence.

If we are to have significant influence on our teenage children, we must have their hearts. Winning their hearts means gaining the opportunity to influence *who they are*, not just *what they do*.

7. OVER-RELYING ON SHELTERING

An over-dependence on control is often accompanied by an over-reliance on sheltering. It is not uncommon for homeschool parents to feel that by filtering whatever their children see and hear, they will control the results in their lives. However, fruitful parenting is more about what we put into our children than what we protect them from.

I have heard countless reports of highly sheltered homeschool children who grew up and abandoned their parents' values. Some were never allowed out of their parents' sight and were not permitted to be in any kind of group setting, yet they still managed to develop an appetite for the world's pleasures. Conversely, I've known some Christian young people who didn't have any of those restrictions, yet they walk in purity; have respectful, loving relationships with their parents; and now enjoy good marriages. Their parents broke all the "rules of sheltering," yet these kids grew up close to their families and resilient in their walks with Christ.

A Godly Protection

Protection from temptations and corrupting influences is part of raising children. All parents shelter—they just draw their lines in different places. Protecting our children is not only a natural response of paternal love, but it fulfills the commands of God. The Scriptures are clear that we are to make no provision for our flesh (Romans 13:14) and are to avoid all corrupting influences (2 Corinthians 6:17-7:1). It warns us that bad company corrupts good morals (1 Corinthians 15:33) and that those who spend too much time with bad people may learn their ways (Proverbs 22:24-25) and suffer for it (Proverbs 13:20). Just as our Father in heaven will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we can bear (1 Corinthians 10:13), we rightly keep our children out of situations they lack the moral strength to handle. Young children are weak, and we are to protect the weak (1 Thessalonians 5:12).

God understood the vulnerability of human nature when he gave the Israelites instructions to chase out the pagans in the Promised Land, lest His people associate with them and be drawn into idolatry (Exodus 23:32-33; Numbers 33:51-56; Joshua 23:7-13). Their neglect of His warnings to shelter their families brought pain to their children and to their grandchildren for many generations.

An Unbalanced Protection

However, we are imbalanced when *sheltering from harm* is the predominant expression of our parenting. If parents have this primary focus, the children will grow up ill-equipped to handle the temptations in the world. A child isolated from disease may appear to be of the greatest health, but health is only proven by how the body withstands an attack. Our spiritual and moral health is developed and proved in the same way. If we isolate our kids until they are adults, they may appear to us to be spiritually minded and strong in character. However, it is how they ultimately engage the world that proves their spiritual resilience. Sheltering is nothing more than keeping something flammable away from a fire. It does not transform the human heart—it merely preserves it temporarily.

When I was in college, I moved for a summer to a Christian commune. I remember feeling so full of faith, so committed to holiness, and so in love with God that summer. However, the "spirituality" I felt and the level of holiness I achieved could not endure testing. When I returned to college, I discovered that I had not developed

true spiritual muscles. When faced with temptation, I fell flat on my face every time. The communal environment isolated from significant temptation had not prepared me for the battle I would face in the world. Valid spiritual growth required that I *face temptation* and *develop the capacity to resist it*, which I eventually did. My isolation from temptation had left me like a boxer who had shadow boxed, trained rigorously, and looked good in his trunks, but had never faced a sparring partner, let alone a true opponent.

I believe that a primary reason we over-rely on sheltering is because it is easy. It requires no planning or expenditure of energy. It takes minimal immediate brainpower. We simply assess that something might be harmful and say to our children, "NO." I don't know if I would go so far as to call it *lazy* parenting, but I will say that investing in our children takes a lot more work and much more time.

Some Goals of Protection

I want to be with my children when they encounter the world—but not merely so that they will survive it. Survival has to do with self-preservation and is concerned with self, not others. Like a good captain, I want to be with my children *so that I can lead them offensively into battle*. We and our children are warriors in God's kingdom, and we must take them into the world for the purpose of advancing that kingdom.

The more children
become projects, the less
we have significant
relationship with them.

It is wise to expose our children to the world a little at a time so that they will not be overwhelmed when they finally face it. In a society like ours that is so full of immodest fashions, desensitization eventually will happen, but our children's greatest need is to have compassion for those who tempt them. The root of lust is self-centeredness, so the more selfless and loving our children are, the less they will be impacted by lust. I therefore encourage parents to concentrate on raising children who selflessly love others. Praying for those who tempt us accomplishes two things—the tempters receive prayer, and the one who prays sees tempters through the eyes of God and will tend to have compassion on them as lost souls.

Jesus modeled this when he called his disciples to go with him into the world to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). Because his goal was to send his followers on a rescue mission into dangerous territory, he declared to his Father, "My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one" (John 17:15 NIV'84). I believe that those homeschoolers who don't just *survive* but *thrive* in the world do so because they have a "kingdom" view of it. They see it as the place inhabited by potential members of God's kingdom.

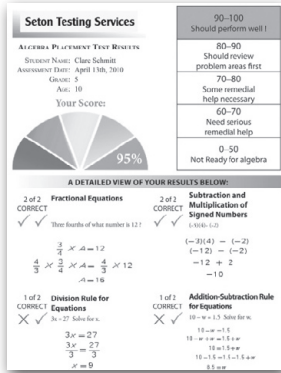
8. NOT PASSING ON A PURE FAITH

We've all heard that faith is *caught* and not *taught*. The Galatian church polluted their faith by seeking to make themselves acceptable to God with what they did or didn't do (Galatians 3:3). It is critical for our sake, let alone for our children's, that we enjoy a life-giving faith in Christ with no religious trappings added to it.

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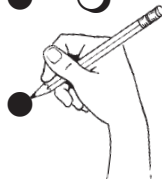
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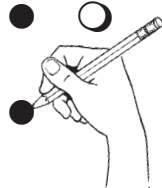
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As I look back, I see that with my older children I was too concerned with how they were perceived by others. I saw their behavior as a reflection on me, and I wanted to look good. They, therefore, sensed in me a measure of pretentiousness—not the genuineness of faith that would have drawn them to me or to the Jesus I spoke about. My sincere concern for their character was overshadowed by my concern for my reputation. I have discovered that, like me, multitudes of parents want their children’s hearts but live a faith that fails to completely attract them.

9. NOT CULTIVATING A LOVING RELATIONSHIP WITH OUR CHILDREN

Relationships between parents and teens are weakest in control-oriented homes. Bev and I treated our children as if they were “projects.” The more they became *projects*, the less we had significant *relationship*. The less we had *relationship*, the more we lost their *hearts*. Without their *hearts*, the less we were able to *influence them or their values*. We regularly spent hours coaching and admonishing them during their teen years, not realizing that without their hearts, the best we could do was make more rules and devise new consequences. The consequences affected the outside, but not the inside.

OUR STORY

When my oldest son was almost sixteen we let him get his first job washing dishes at a restaurant managed by a Christian friend of ours. We didn’t realize that he would be working with drug-using, tattooed partiers, and that our Christian friend was never scheduled to work our son’s shift.

Within a month, it became apparent that our son’s work associates were having an effect on him. He came home one evening and asked, “Dad, can I dye my hair blue?” After my wife was finally able to peel me off the ceiling, I laid into him, reminding him whose son he was and that I would not have people at church telling their children not to be like the pastor’s son.

Two months later he came home from work and asked me if he could pierce his ear. He thought it might be okay since he wanted a *cross* earring—as if I was supposed to be happy because it would be a “sanctified” piercing. If that wasn’t enough, he also wanted to get a “Christian” tattoo!

As I was looking back on this experience several years later, something my son said shortly after he started his job kept coming back to me. When I picked him up the second night of work, he got into the car with a

big smile on his face and said, “*They like me!*” As I dwelt on that comment, it suddenly became clear to me—my son had finally met someone who liked him for who he was. Few others in his entire life had shown him much acceptance, especially not his mother and I. *It is no exaggeration. In our efforts to shape and improve him, all we did was find fault with everything he did.* We loved him dearly, but he constantly heard from us that what he did (who he was) wasn’t good enough. He craved our approval, but we couldn’t be pleased. Years later, I realized he had given up trying to please us when he was fourteen, and from then had just been patronizing us.

Young people who are least tempted to follow the crowd are those who are secure.

The reason our son wanted to adorn himself as his work associates did was because they accepted him for who he was. He wanted to fit in with those who made him feel significant. That problem wasn’t one that could have been solved by extended sheltering. He could have been sheltered until he was thirty, and he still would have been vulnerable. The problem was that we had sent our son into the world insecure, with a hole in his heart that God had wanted to fill through his parents.

Whether believer or unbeliever, those young people who are least tempted to follow the crowd are those who are secure in themselves and don’t need the approval of others. The Bible calls insecurity the “fear of man,” which allows others’ opinions of us to affect our values and choices.

THE SOLUTION

In the Bible, we see that people obeyed God for two reasons—*fear* and *love*. King David sang of his love for God (Psalms 18:1, 116:1, 119:159) and he also sang of the fear of God (Psalms 2:11, 22:25, 33:8). God wants His followers to be drawn to Him out of love (Jeremiah 31:3), and that’s why it is His kindness that leads us to repentance

(Romans 2:4). But He also wants us to be kept on the path by fear of His authority (Luke 12:5; 1 Peter 2:17). That’s why He told the Israelites He wanted both their *fear* and their *love*: “And now, O Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul” (Deuteronomy 10:12 NIV’84). With our children, it should be the same.

Those who have the most power to influence our hearts are those to whom we are drawn: those who succeed with our values (which is what a *hero* is), those who can benefit us, those who make us feel valuable, and those who have earned our respect.

If our children grow up motivated only by fear of consequences, they will eventually get away with what they can whenever we are not around (Ephesians 6:6). If we have their hearts, they will seek to honor us whether we are present or not and will remain open to our influence. This can only happen because of who we are, not what we do. We cannot simply implement what we think are loving actions in our homes—we must truly love (1 Corinthians 13:3).

CONCLUSION

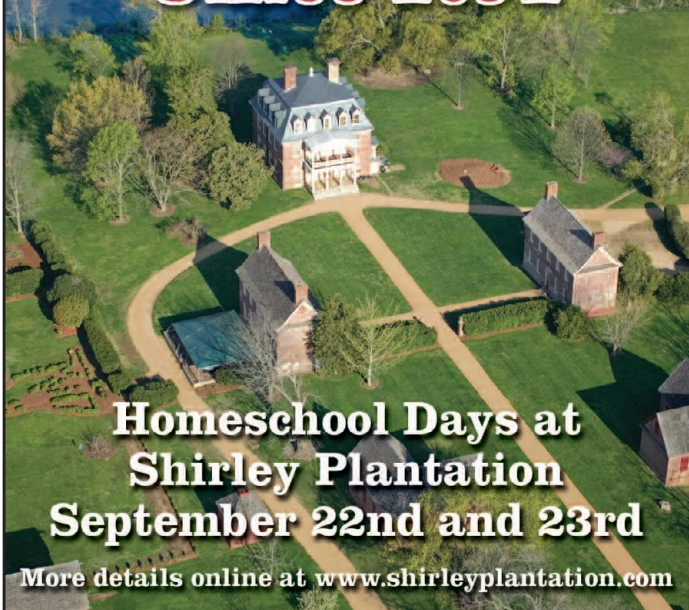
I am convinced that the most contagious parenting is living a heartfelt faith before your children. Fruitful interaction is not about *what you do* to your young people, but *who you are* with them. It’s about having a real faith in God, and expressing it in a real relationship with a real person—not about methods and self-working principles. God intends that the side-effect of loving Jesus and enjoying the grace of the gospel will be that all people—including our children—will be touched by the Savior in us. I pray in Jesus’s name that as you read these words you will experience the grace of God in a fresh and new way. ☺



Reb Bradley is a writer and national conference speaker who works to strengthen the modern Christian family. Reb and his wife, Beverly, have taught all six of their children at home. Visit

*www.familyministries.com to order Reb’s CD set *Influencing Children’s Hearts*. Read the complete article from which this excerpt was taken, at www.familyministries.com/HS_Crisis.htm. Enjoy other articles on our website, www.heav.org!*

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