

# **Biblical Home Education**



A “Homeschooling How To” Book  
by Anne Elliott

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# Introduction

My oldest son is 15 years old, and I started looking at homeschooling methods and curriculum before he was even born. Over 20 years ago, in 1990, there were still very few homeschooling publishers or companies who were willing to sell curriculum to homeschoolers. By the time my son was born in 1995, things were starting to change dramatically. By the time he started kindergarten in 2000, just 11 years ago, choices such as Sonlight, Charlotte Mason, literature-based curriculum, and so many other styles of homeschooling were all starting to grow. The Internet was beginning to catch on, especially among homeschoolers. And now, just 11 years later, it is estimated that there are over a *million* homeschooling curriculum choices for us to wade through.

This is a mixed blessing! The original homeschoolers would tell you what a blessing it is to have great family-based publishers, people who saw the needs for quality curriculum and began to produce it and people who made the big companies jealous enough to also start selling to us homeschoolers.

But we are also faced with confusion and uncertainty. Moms who are just getting started this year in homeschooling are overwhelmed by all the choices. Yes, there are lots of websites now to help you, but to whose advice do you listen? How do you know, without wasting a lot of money, which curriculum or methods will work for your family, for your situation?

One of my favorite verses is

**“His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness” (2 Peter 1:3).**

One of my goals is to train my children for life and godliness, and this verse says I do that by increasing their knowledge of Him. It's so comforting to know that He called us by His own glory and goodness, isn't it? To know I was chosen in Him before the foundation of the world? Praise God!

God doesn't ever call us without equipping us for the task. His *Word* is how we gain knowledge of Him. When we use His Word as our instruction manual, His *divine power* will flow through us to give us everything else we need.

Let's examine the Bible carefully to see if it will guide us through all the choices and confusion, to a choice that will line up with His Word.

1. First, let's see if the Bible has any **goals** for us. Are there things God says clearly that we're supposed to do as parents?
2. Second, we'll look at homeschooling **methods**. Do the popular philosophies of homeschooling line up with biblical methods of parenting?
3. Finally, we'll look at how to choose homeschooling **curriculum** that will help us reach our goals. Does the Bible go so far as to recommend specific ways to teach our children?

I recommend that you have your Bible with you as you read. I'll try to insert Scripture verses right into the text of this book, but you'll especially want to have your Bible open to Deuteronomy, God's "parenting book." You will gain the most from this study if you read and re-read God's instructions, straight from His Word.

May the God of all peace fill your heart and home with His grace and love!

~Anne



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# **Part One**

## **Biblical Goals and Philosophy**

# Two Goals

Let's start with some goals for homeschooling. I've got some familiar verses to start with. These aren't just good goals for homeschoolers. These are good goals for all parents!

## 1. We're training up good workmen.

**“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15, KJV).**

We want our children to have a good, working knowledge of God's Word, so that they can go out into a lost world, capable of sharing God's light with lost people, protected from the wiles of the devil because they are filled to overflowing with Scripture. They're capable “workmen,” hammering and sawing with the best of materials, building up the body of Christ.

This is one of the reasons why God gives us children in the first place. Malachi 2:15 says God is seeking godly offspring. He wants us to reproduce ourselves – no, multiply ourselves – through our children.

## 2. We're making ready a people that are prepared for the Lord.

**“And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous – to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (Luke 1:17).**

One of the purposes of John the Baptist's ministry was to go before Jesus, in the spirit and power of Elijah. Who was Elijah? He was the



prophet who went before wicked King Ahab, and before the rebellious, idolatrous people of Israel, and he confronted them on their sin and told them to repent. Only when they were willing to repent of their sin and turn to the true God were their hearts prepared and ready for God to come and heal their land.

Well, your job as a parent is to do the same thing. You can't force your children to accept Jesus as their savior from sin. Oh, you wish you could guarantee that they would trust Christ! But you can't guarantee that, can you? It's a personal decision that they have to make. They have to personally repent and turn to God.

But here's what you *can* do. You can prepare their hearts. God wants to turn the hearts of fathers and mothers to their children. He wants those parents to show disobedient children (which they all are!) the wisdom of the righteous – that's the Bible, right? Why? To “make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” You can prepare your children to accept Christ by teaching them “the wisdom of the righteous.”

To help prepare the soil of your children's hearts, so that they are “good soil” that will produce fruit, as Matthew 13 describes – this is one of the loftiest goals of homeschooling, of parenting!

Our goal is to prepare their hearts, so that God's Word is implanted into good soil, so that they grow up to become workmen that don't need to be ashamed, workmen that go on to do great things for God in this world!

Practically speaking, this means that I will do the most “soil preparation” in the youngest years. Those are the years to hide God's Word in their hearts so that they will not sin against Him (Psalm 119:11). As they grow, I need to begin reproducing myself in them, so that by the time they're grown, they will have the skills and abilities they'll need to share the gospel. Can you see how this will affect what things will be taught to them day in and day out?

# Five Basic Principles

The Bible plainly sets forth some principles that we can use as we examine homeschooling philosophy. It seems like there are trillions of options that are available to us. As you read homeschooling how-to books and choose curriculum, keep these principles in mind.

## 1. Homeschooling starts with “well-educated” parents.

Biblically, the definition of “well-educated” is a father and mother who thoroughly know the Bible, God’s Word. In other words, a knowledge of math, grammar, science, and history isn’t as necessary as the knowledge of Scripture. If you know your Bible (and if you don’t, you should!), then you are extremely “well-educated.”

**“These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe** in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live **by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you**, and so that you may enjoy long life. Hear, O Israel, and **be careful to obey** so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, promised you. Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. **These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.** Impress them on your children (Deuteronomy 6:1-7, emphasis mine).

Education is not just head knowledge, though. A truly well-educated person knows how to *apply* knowledge to everyday life and lives it out in all her decisions and actions. The same is true with God’s Word. It’s one thing to *know* God’s Word; it’s yet another to act on your knowledge.

**“He who fears the LORD has a secure fortress,  
and for his children it will be a refuge” (Proverbs 14:26).**

Therefore, according to God, a successful homeschool is one in which the parents have a thorough, working knowledge of the Bible and a fear of God that results in obedience to His Word. **As you read homeschooling how-to books and choose curriculum, be very sure that the authors uphold the authority of Scripture and will help teach *you* first**, especially if you’re lacking in your own knowledge.

## **2. A homeschooling parents’s job is to teach.**

Scripture seems to make it very clear that education is led by the father and mother, not by the child. A child is not born with knowledge, wisdom, or understanding; rather, a child is born with the same selfish, sinful, and pleasure-seeking nature that follows you around most days. Your child, left to himself, will choose to please himself, will rarely think of others, will be lazy and avoid hard work, and will do only what looks right in his own eyes.

When Deuteronomy 6:7 says we are to “impress” God’s commands on our children, the idea is that we are to intensively poke, pierce, prod, and drill these commands into our children. God has presented us with the curriculum (His Word and commands), and the “method” He has chosen is for us “drill” it into our children.

Note also that the curriculum is set! We don’t get to pick the subjects. God is clear that we are to teach His commands.

**“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that**

**the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:14-17).**

**As you read homeschooling how-to books and choose curriculum and methods, simply toss out any of that “gentle” advice that seems to hint that children just pick things up naturally, without any effort on your part or theirs.** Keep the methods that require you as a mother to do hard work, impressing and drilling and teaching. It might not be as fun, but it’s biblical.

**Also, as you read homeschooling how-to books and choose curriculum and methods, get rid of secular, humanistic textbooks and concentrate your efforts on teaching Scripture so your children will be “thoroughly equipped.”**

### **3. A homeschooled child’s job is to listen.**

Here the Scripture stands in firm opposition to the politically correct notion that parents should be the ones doing all the listening. Rather, the Bible *repeatedly* warns children to honor, obey, listen to instruction, hear, pay attention, and hearken. I don’t have space to list all the verses, because there were so many, but Proverbs even opens with this thought:

**Listen, my son, to your father’s instruction  
and do not forsake your mother’s teaching.**

**They will be a garland to grace your head  
and a chain to adorn your neck (Proverbs 1:8-9).**

Therefore, one of the first jobs of a mother is to teach her child to listen to her. Paying attention to authority isn’t just a nice thought; it’s vital to everything else in your child’s life. If your child will not look at you when speak, pay attention to your words, and obediently do what you say, then you will certainly fail in your homeschooling.

**So as you read homeschooling how-to books and choose curriculum and methods, it's urgent that you choose methods that will help your child learn good listening skills.** Choose curriculum that reinforces the importance of following directions, paying attention to you as teacher, and obeying instructions from the very earliest age.

#### **4. Homeschooling requires a large time commitment.**

If you weren't groaning before, you probably are now! With seven children, I can certainly understand the frustrations involved in trying to be a wife, maintain a home, be involved in ministry, maybe work a business, and even have time to play a little — all on top of getting school done each day. It can be agonizing.

Yet Scripture is absolutely clear where my priorities must be.

**“The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame”** (Proverbs 29:15, KJV).

Can it get any clearer than that? “The rod and reproof” require a mother who is physically present in the room with her children. A child “left to himself” will bring me to shame — both now and in the future.

These verses haunt me! My own inclination is to give my children over to someone or something else who has more time than I do, but the Bible is clear with whom they should be spending their time. It's also clear with whom I must be spending *my* time, even though I would almost always rather be doing something more “fun” or “glamorous.”

**So as you read homeschooling how-to books and choose curriculum and methods, the Bible is clear that we need to choose ones which require my physical presence in the room**

**with my children** if we expect them to get any wisdom from their education and if we don't want to be ashamed of them someday.

## **5. Homeschooling instruction should be pleasant.**

Aren't you glad God put this into His Word? After the cold-hard facts of the previous four points, homeschooling could be a real drudgery without this. God, however, is a God of love, joy and peace. Even though His standards are high, His methods are hard work, and His curriculum is rigorous, His schoolroom atmosphere is pleasant, fun, and inviting.

**“The wise in heart are called discerning, and pleasant words promote instruction”** (Proverbs 16:21).

**“She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness”** (Proverbs 31:26, KJV).

I've enjoyed recently having a room set aside for just school, but for many years we used the kitchen table, the living room, and even the back seat of the van as our school room. Maps, decorations, and windows with bright sunshine can certainly add to the pleasantness of our homeschooling days.

However, God says the one essential thing to a pleasant, joyful, instruction-promoting school environment is your tongue. Your words will make or break it. Do you want your children to love learning? Do you want them to be passionate discoverers, lifelong learners, and avid readers? Rather than investing your money and time into special equipment, expensive encyclopedias, and fancy computer software, God says to use “pleasant words.”

**So as you read homeschooling how-to books and choose curriculum and methods, look for those that will help you succeed as a mom by promoting your own godly character.** In fact, rather than reading all those books and searching through stacks

of catalogs, maybe your time would be better spent with God Himself.

**“Above all else, guard your heart,  
for it is the wellspring of life” (Proverbs 4:23).**