

THE CORNERSTONE CURRICULUM PROJECT

A FRUITFUL FAMILY

by David Quine

Is there a recipe for a fruitful family? If so, what ingredients are necessary for yielding the abundance that our loving Father offers? As I consider what makes a fruitful family, four elements come to my mind: vision, hard work, the life of Christ, and prayer.

VISION

King Solomon said that without a vision the people perish (Proverbs 29:18). The story is told to two men. When asked, "What are you doing?" one answered, "I am sanding some wood." The other responded, "I am helping to build a throne for the king." Though these two men were performing the same task, their perspectives were entirely different!

As home schooling parents we are not simply teaching our children the multiplication tables or the parts of speech. We are equipping our children to stand independent of the current philosophies and ideologies so that they will be able to stand for Christ. The apostle Paul writes "... we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ (Ephesians 5:14, 15). We are helping our children to grow up in all aspects into Christ.

Perspective gives vision significance. Stand back and gain God's perspective and vision for your family. If you have lost your vision amidst the daily duties and routines of home schooling, let me encourage you to stop right now and ask God our Father to renew your perspective

HARD WORK

"Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men" (Col. 3:23). What is meant by heartily? With all your heart, or from deep within your soul! God has called us to a work for Him and His glory. To literally throw ourselves into the work he has given on days we feel like throwing in the towel is to depend upon God. With a large family we know the great quantity of work it takes just to maintain a family. Paul described this work as a 'labor of love'. We work as he did 'night and day' to disciple those whom God has given us (I Thes. 2: 7-12). But we also know that whatever God requires, He also supplies ... "for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure" (Philippians 3:13).

THE SECRET

No matter how great our vision, no matter how devoted we may be, or how hard we labor, if we attempt to home school our children in our own strength with our own might, we will eventually fail and burn out. If you feel like a failure this moment, do not despair. You are in good company and God the Father wants to tell you a secret.

Hudson Taylor had been a Christian and missionary to China for approximately fifteen years. He was tired and exhausted. He was overburdened and at the point of giving up when he found the secret. Oswald Chambers had become a Christian as a child. He had been a Christian for years. Yet, he admits that he “had no conscious communion with [God].” During this time he thought the Bible was the “dullest, most uninteresting book in existence...” and then he found the secret. Francis Schaefer tells of a time, some fifteen years after his conversion, of questioning the reality of God’s presence in his own life. But then, he found the secret.

These heroes of the faith asked: Why do some of God’s children live victorious lives while others are in a state of constant defeat? When our five oldest children were between the ages of 8 years and 3 months, Shirley daily felt so overwhelmed. She tried again and again to keep the perfect home school going, to keep dirty laundry from getting so heavy she couldn’t carry it to the washing machine, and to keep her frustration from erupting on the children. But failure and defeat were most often her closest companions. She was ready for God to tell her a secret.

And God the loving faithful Father did tell her His secret. He whispered it. “Come unto Me” (Matt. 9:28), “Abide in Me” (John 15:4), and He whispered all of John chapter 15 to her. Through failure she began to understand that Christ gave His life for us, so that He could give His life to us, in order to live His life through us. Hudson Taylor explained this as the ‘exchanged life’ (Gal. 2:20). Oswald Chambers thought of it as the ‘highest life’ (Phil. 1:20,21). Francis Schaeffer wrote of ‘the true spiritual life’.

The apostle Paul asked who is adequate for this ministry? (II Cor. 2:16) He then answers his own question in the next chapter. “And such confidence we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life” (II Cor. 3:4-6). Jesus said that apart from Him we can do nothing. But as we abide in Him, He then lives His life through us enabling us to have a fruitful life.

PRAYER

“Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12). Dr. Bill Bright has said that “Prayer releases the mighty forces of the invisible kingdom into the visible kingdom ... No mighty feats are ever accomplished for the glory of God apart from prayer.”

As we abide in Christ, we can come to God with all our burdens of home schooling with confidence. “Lord, what is best for this child’s needs? How can I encourage and motivate this your mind? Father, empower me to trust you for all my children’s needs and rest in you to do the needed work in their hearts.”

The recipe for a fruitful family is a simple one. “He that abides in Me and I in Him, he brings forth much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15: 5). Remember, we are like a “tree firmly planted by streams of water; which yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers” (Psalm 1:3). To God be the glory for the fruit he is bearing in His time.