

God's Default Setting

by Steve & Carol Ryerson

We live in a world in which technology is progressing at a rapid-fire pace. Many times we hear people say that by the time you can get your new computer out of the box, it is obsolete.

I remember well the manual typewriter we had in our home as I was growing up ~ the one on which I learned to type. For the uninitiated, a manual typewriter is non-electric ~ no help pressing the keys down. You push the keys REAL hard in order to get them to type. When I worked in our church office in the mid-seventies, I used both an electric typewriter and an old manual one, whichever was available at the moment. In fact, to this day, I probably type with a heavier touch than most people because of my beginnings on those manual typewrites.

Yes, technology has come a long way in just a few decades. As I write this, I am using a computer that will quickly delete mistakes and move things around at every whim. I can even set it to justify the right margin. You don't even want to know what I had to go through to justify the right margin on my typewriter! And, unlike electric typewriters, the manual one had no correction tape. Some of you probably don't even know what a typewriter eraser was (In case you're curious, it was a special eraser that would delete typing mistakes ~ after you rolled up the paper and used it like any other eraser, then tried to roll the paper back down and get it even with where it was before. Woe unto you if you made a mistake on the last line of the page!).

My computer also has an amazing number of fonts and sizes from which to choose. It is frustrating that many of them are so similar, but nevertheless, there is an amazing number. I prefer the fancy ones. Life is short, so why not make it beautiful? Why save the pretty fonts just for special occasions? I can type whatever I want in whatever style and size I'm in the mood for, or that I deem fits the occasion.

On every computer there is a default font. My computer's default is Times New Roman, 12 point. Whenever I start a new document it automatically types in 12 point Times New Roman unless I set it for something else. Sometimes it keeps going back to Times New Roman even when I don't want it to.

Even though I don't know how to do it, I understand that the default setting can be changed. Now if I were the only one using this computer I would want the default to be *Amazonne BT* or *Edwardian Script ITC*, or *Barchment*, or possibly Imprint MT Shadow (which I'm using for this article). Since Bro. Ryerson sometimes finds those first three difficult to read, the default stays at 12 point Times New Roman. If we were to change the default setting, though, we would eventually get used to that new look so that Times New Roman would look different, maybe even strange or dated.

Today we hear voices saying many different things to us. Often times we hear that our views are old-fashioned, or that we need to catch up with the times. If we are not securely on our foundation, we may even question our own positions. We must remember, though, that God does not change.

Hebrews 13:8 ~ Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.

A couple years ago we were out door-knocking with a survey in hand that was intended both to challenge people and to teach us about our community. Upon asking one lady if she believed God changes, she looked at me with a very startled expression. Recovering from her shock, she replied, "Of course! He has to! God needs to keep up with the times just like everybody else!"

Isaiah 5:20-21 ~ Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!

Isaiah foresaw a day like the one we are living in. God never changes and His Word never changes. Right and wrong never change. People may call evil good and good evil, but that does not change which is which.

I am allergic to chocolate. I could look at a chocolate covered cherry all I want and even call it a caramel covered cherry. I could convince myself that it really is caramel. However, if I ate it, my system would still react. No matter what I decide to call it, chocolate is chocolate.

As people change the default settings of their lives, it does mean the original default begins to look very strange. The old default may evoke memories of the way things used to be, things that have been left behind for new things that seem better.

Let's zoom in a little bit closer. Have you ever been told, by a well-meaning friend or relative (maybe even an apostolic), that she could never home school? Maybe the comment has been that she lives "in a good school district." (Bro. Ryerson's definition of a "good school district" is "a district that is more efficient than others at proclaiming the wrong message.") Or, "I believe Christians should have their children in public schools to be the salt and light." Or, "I want my children to grow up learning to interact with people from all backgrounds." Translated, that last one is the old "What about socialization?" issue.

Whatever the particular comment that is made, the result is usually that you are made to feel defensive about doing something so strange as home schooling.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, fear not. Direct people back to the Word that never changes.

Deuteronomy 6:6-7 ~ And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

Proverbs 22:6 ~ Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

Proverbs 19:27 ~ Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.

Ephesians 6:4 ~ And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

The Word of God commands parents to take responsibility for the total rearing of their children. Many passages, too long to quote here, show clearly that the parents are the ones to train their children.

Home schooling is God's default setting. Through the years people have become so accustomed to government schooling that home schooling seems like an aberration from the norm. Keep your focus on God's Word. Remember that those with children in the government schools are the ones who have changed God's default setting to one that they prefer.

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Just as my computer sometimes goes back to its default setting when I don't want it to, so it is with those who have changed the default settings of their lives. Every time they see a home school family, it is a reminder to them of the real default setting that they don't want, and they don't like that feeling. They may try to shame you for the way you think and live. God is convicting them, and they want to get rid of the tangible things that cause the conviction. Think about that the next time you see in the news about some group trying to get rid of some aspect of Christianity. Those people have changed the default settings of their lives and they want to get rid of any reminder of the original default that convicts them of their sin.

Often when people say that they could never home school, what they really means is, "I envy you! I wish I could do that, but I don't have the _____ (self-confidence, self-discipline, you fill in the blank)." Be patient and loving with them.

Don't be intimidated by what other people tell you. Right is still right and wrong is still wrong regardless of what anyone says. Chocolate is still chocolate even if you call it caramel. People may try to change the "font and size" of their lives, but God's default settings cannot be changed.

Over and over again as we reach out to our city, people tell us of the problems they have with their children in the government schools. Why? Because they are not being obedient to God's Word. Almost without exception, every problem we have heard about would not have taken place if parents were really discipling their children at home. Of course, in those situations we must first win them to the Lord and then lead them into home education.

Psalm 119:105 ~ Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

Only by loving God and living according to His Word can we find true peace and happiness. Many times those people who ridicule us are watching us, wishing they had whatever it is we have.

Fear not! You are humbly, and in the fear of God, doing your best to obey His Word. Don't be intimidated! Don't cower when people question you or say they could not do it. Remember, you are living in God's default setting.

