

Striving For Excellence in Home Education

by Rena Hulsey

We live in a microwave generation. It's the hurry up, let's go, get-it-fixed-quick generation. We like our drive throughs and drive ups. In many ways we are the weakest, most self-indulgent generation to ever live on this planet. We know that gluttony and laziness can lead to heart disease and diabetes, yet we continue to race down the road to destruction. Could you imagine for a moment the utter chaos that would take place if all of a sudden we had to grow our own food, make our own clothes, and scrub our clothes clean on a washboard?

We have a society that does not want to work but wants to get paid. We have people who want success without having to get their hands dirty. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, we have 49.7 million people on disability. Social Security Administration disability programs are expensive, growing, and headed toward bankruptcy. People with psychiatric disabilities now constitute the largest and most rapidly expanding sub-group of program beneficiaries.

Having said all this, you might be thinking, what does this have to do with homeschooling? Well, the answer is simple: we are a nation of people who no longer place a high value on striving for excellence. I recently asked a homeschooling mom a question about her child's performance on a standardized test, and her response was, "We don't have to have stellar students." I thought about that statement for several days, and it made me kind of sad and kind of angry at the same time. Not at the homeschooling mom, but at the lie that many Christian home educators have fallen for—that as long as our kids become good Christians, they really don't need to pursue academic excellence. The thinking is that Jesus is coming, and the only important thing is that they are saved.

I disagree. I believe it is our duty, first and foremost as Christians, and then as parents, to educate our children to the utmost degree that we can in a wide range of knowledge. Our sons and daughters are the future generation. It is our children who will have the awesome responsibility of taking the gospel to this perverse generation we live in. To be effective, they will need to be equipped to "contend for the faith," but to do this they will need to be equipped to speak intelligently, persuasively, and authoritatively. Many will be unable to do this if they lack the basic knowledge of life in this world.

On top of academic excellence, we need to be training our sons to be leaders in their homes, leaders at work, and leaders at church. We need to cultivate a love for God's Word in their hearts. We need to teach them about godly and holy character. We need to teach them to do the right thing, even when it's the hard thing. As my husband likes to tell our children, "Always take the hard right over the easy left." We need to teach them to be diligent, hard working, honorable men.

We need to train our daughters to be kind, loving, gentle, keepers of the home; to have a submissive heart; to love godliness; to pursue holiness. We need to teach them how to be godly wives and mothers. Having a career is okay up to a point, but God created our daughters first and foremost to be godly wives and mothers. Let's be sure to keep our priorities straight.

The bottom line is: we need to teach our children to strive for excellence in all things. As home educating apostolics, we need to have a large and challenging vision for our children. We need to get a hold of God's vision for the next generation. I believe with all my heart that the next generation will see the coming of the Lord, and our children will be a part of a great end-time harvest.

We should want our children to have the best education possible. Who knows how the Lord might use them for His glory? It is our job to prepare them for the work that the Lord may have for them in the future. Psalms 127:4 says, "Like arrows in the hand of Almighty warrior so are the children of one's youth." We prepare them as a warrior prepares his arrows, and then we shoot them off, never knowing exactly where they will land.

In conclusion, home educating is more than just keeping our kids away from the public school system. It is more than just keeping them away from ungodly influences. It is more than just trying to get away from the government controlling our kids. Home educating is for the purpose of training and equipping stellar young men and women who can be launched out into society to serve God and bring Him glory. Should my kids be stellar students? You bet they should!