



ANSWERS for Homeschooling

TOP 25
QUESTIONS
CRITICS ASK

ISRAEL WAYNE

What others are saying . . .

Israel Wayne has written a book that has been needed since the renewal of the homeschool movement 40 years ago. This book is the Walmart or Costco of consumer information for homeschoolers. For the new homeschooler or investigator of homeschooling, this book will give you everything you need to know, and more, in one book. The answers to the critical questions every homeschooler has at one time or another are found in this book and are easy to understand. The bottom line is that Israel's book is the first place any homeschooler should go to have their questions answered. And it could be the only place that one would have to go for this critical information about the homeschool world. Israel is owed a great deal of gratitude for finally giving us what we have needed for years. I also recommend that you look into partnering with HSLDA as they are committed to preserving and protecting our precious freedom to homeschool. Go to hsllda.org for information about how you can be involved.

Mike Smith, President of HSLDA



We have worked with Israel Wayne since our first event in 2012. Each year, he has been a tremendous blessing to the homeschool families that hear him speak. Now, he has distilled the wisdom and knowledge he offers in his workshops into an incredibly helpful book called *Answers for Homeschooling*. By weaving historical information and statistical data with incredibly practical advice from a homeschool veteran, Israel gives you solid answers to questions you may not even know to ask yet. Every year more and more Teach Them Diligently families discover just how wonderful Israel Wayne is, and with *Answers for Homeschooling*, he has written a “must read” for homeschool families.

David Nunnery, founder of Teach Them Diligently Homeschool Conventions, and Leslie Nunnery, author of *Teach Them Diligently: Raising Children of Promise*



Do you or the people around you have some concerns about homeschooling? Israel Wayne's book answer those concerns in a thoughtful and concise manner giving you the confidence to homeschool your children. Israel is a product of the early home-school movement and a leader in the current movement. His book, *Answers for Homeschooling* is a must read for anyone considering, or in the thick, of home educating their children.

Todd Wilson, "The Familyman," author
and conference speaker



I have known Israel for many years and appreciate his desire to teach and encourage families. As I began reading this book I was impressed by the scholarship and practical nature of his insights and counsel. Even though we began teaching our four sons at home in the early 80s, and I know most of the history and key players in the home education movement, I was captivated by the information and found myself looking forward to reading more. I particularly enjoyed the pluses and minuses of each educational option. Israel has done his homework, and coupled with his experiences of being home taught himself and teaching his own children speaks with depth and practicality. This book is a wonderful resource for parents considering home education and those who are engaged in the special journey of teaching their children to love forever. I heartily commend it to you.

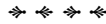
Steve Demme, the creator of Math-U-See, founder
of Building Faith Families, and a frequent speaker
at home education conferences



Many families fail to consider homeschooling seriously because of misconceptions about what homeschooling involves. In *Answers for Homeschooling*, Israel Wayne and his wife, Brook, dispel those misconceptions by answering nearly every question about homeschooling that parents might have. There has never been a time

when it has been more vital to rescue our children from the intellectual, moral, and spiritual pathologies of government schools, and I am convinced that the information provided in *Answers for Homeschooling* will lead many more families to experience the joys and rewards of homeschooling.

Bruce Shortt, author of *The Harsh Truth About Public Schools*



When my friend Israel asked me to review his new book, *Answers for Homeschooling*, I raised the very question he said his readers would probably ask, “Why another book on homeschooling?” As I started to read the book, however, I found myself saying, “Yes! This book is needed!” Like Israel (even though I wasn’t homeschooled), my late husband Chris Klicka — who Israel mentions in his book — and I taught all seven of our children at home in the early days of the modern homeschool movement. Chris’s legal work with HSLDA in the 1980s and his books on homeschooling in the 1990s, *The Right Choice: Homeschooling* and *The Heart of Homeschooling* were instrumental in helping to create a free and supportive climate homeschooling families now freely enjoy. However, that freedom isn’t guaranteed. Because of this, Israel not only makes a compelling case for why we need to learn about the roots of this truly miraculous movement of parent-led education in America, he helps parents understand how very possible it is for them to provide best what their children need. He invites you to raise the challenging questions many ask concerning home education, and then adeptly answers them. This book will help equip you, the parent, as you consider embarking on one of the most exciting and rewarding journeys with your children!

Tracy Klicka, homeschool writer and director of development for the Home School Foundation



As the home education movement is growing by the millions of children in America and around the world, many parents have questions. Homeschooling pioneer Israel Wayne provides helpful and balanced answers to the most common questions posed. This book will help parents avoid common pitfalls and help them to succeed in the discipleship of their children.

Kevin Swanson, *Generations* Radio Host

First printing: February 2018

Copyright © 2017 by Israel Wayne. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission from the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations in articles and reviews. For information write:

Master Books®, P.O. Box 726, Green Forest, AR 72638

Master Books® is a division of the New Leaf Publishing Group, Inc.

ISBN: 978-1-68344-110-6

ISBN: 978-1-61458-643-2 (digital)

Library of Congress Number: 2017962769

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version (ESV) of the Bible, copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scriptures noted NIV are from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide.

Scriptures noted NKJV are from the New King James Version. Copyright© 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scriptures noted BSB are from the Berean Study Bible, copyright© 2016 by Bible Hub Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Please consider requesting that a copy of this volume be purchased by your local library system.

Printed in the United States of America

Please visit our website for other great titles:

www.masterbooks.com

For information regarding author interviews,
please contact the publicity department at (870) 438-5288.



A Division of New Leaf Publishing Group
www.masterbooks.com

Contents

Introduction.....	9
1. Is Homeschooling Legal?.....	13
2. Are You Qualified to Teach Your Child?	19
3. How Can You Afford to Homeschool?	25
4. Is That How It's Done in Public School?.....	33
5. What about Accountability?	43
6. What about Socialization?	51
7. Isn't Sheltering a Child Harmful?	57
8. What about Being Salt and Light in Public School?.....	63
9. Is Homeschooling Elitist?	69
10. Will Homeschoolers Be Good Citizens?	75
11. What If I Don't Have Enough Patience?	81
12. What Does Dad Do in Homeschooling?	87
13. Can Every Family Homeschool?	93
14. Are You Cut Out for This?.....	101
15. Won't I Be Wasting My Own Education?	107
16. What about Public School at Home?.....	115
17. What about Vouchers for Homeschoolers?	121
18. How Can You Teach Multiple Grades?	127
19. What about Special Needs Education?.....	133
20. What about Extracurricular Activities?	141
21. What about High School?	147
22. What about College?	153
23. How Can You Find Time for Everything?.....	165
24. Do You Know What Causes That?.....	173
25. How Should I Respond to Opposition?.....	181

Special Thanks and Acknowledgments

As a special thank you, I'd like to thank my mother for homeschooling me, my wife for loving me, my children for letting me experiment on them as a parent, my sister Sony for proofreading the manuscript, Randy Pratt for suggesting the concept for the book, Tim Dudley for being the bravest Christian publisher on the planet, Laura Welch and Craig Froman for their editing expertise, and the entire Master Books team for creating a biblical worldview curriculum that isn't merely "Christian in name only." We love you guys! And finally to Jesus, without whom nothing is possible, but with whom all things are possible!

Introduction

I casually mentioned the creation of this book on social media, and in typical fashion, someone shot back with a snarky response. (That predictable Internet phenomenon probably needs to be addressed in a book somewhere!) The reply was, “Why does anyone need another book on homeschooling? Everything you could possibly say has already been said by others in books that are already published. And for that matter, a simple Google search could answer any one of these questions just as easily . . . for free!”

I’m pretty sure encouragement isn’t that person’s spiritual gift. Just a hunch. But it raises a valid question, “Why is this book important?”

One of the things to consider when getting information is the experience and reliability of the source. Many of you may not know me, so I’d like to take a minute to give you my experience in the homeschooling movement.

Who Is Israel Wayne?

My family was one of the very first families to begin homeschooling in the United States during what I call “the modern-day homeschooling movement.” Homeschooling is as old as Adam and Eve, and 6,000 years of family life since creation. But in our day and age, it feels like a very new experiment.

My older sister was taken out of kindergarten in 1978, and we began our adventure as homeschoolers. In 1988, my mother became the founding publisher of the *Home School Digest (HSD)* magazine (it went on to become the longest-running national

Christian homeschooling periodical). Her magazine provided a launching pad for many of the homeschooling speakers and writers of the 1980s, 1990s, 2000s, and beyond.

One of the blessings of this was the many mentoring relationships I was able to form with the leaders and pioneers of the homeschooling movement. I read their books and articles, attended their seminars, and welcomed them into our home (as well as visited them in their homes).

I graduated from my homeschooling high school experience in 1991, at a time when homeschooling was not even legal in all states. In January of 1993 I began working as the marketing director for *HSD*, and wrote my first article in 1994 on the HR-6 bill (a huge national power-grab that threatened to require teacher certification for all homeschooling parents in America). The response against that bill was so massive that it shut down the telephone switchboards at the U.S. Capitol. That experience put homeschooling on the map like nothing had previously.

In 1995, I began speaking at homeschooling conferences, which I have done every year since. (I have spoken at hundreds of events over the years). In January of 1999 I married my wife, Brook, who was also home educated (since 1983). Her family was instrumental in starting the homeschooling movement in Arizona. My first book on homeschooling (*Homeschooling from a Biblical Worldview*) was published in 2000.

My family was featured in a cover story on homeschooling for *TIME Magazine* in 2001, and I've been featured on dozens of national radio and television shows discussing home education. I have been a regular columnist for three national homeschooling magazines: *HSD*, *Home School Enrichment*, and *The Old Schoolhouse*. I have been featured regarding homeschooling in publications like *WORLD Magazine* and HSLDA's *Court Report*.

At the date of this writing, my wife and I have nine children, ages 2 to 17. Our children have always been home educated, and, by God's grace, always will be.

To date, I have keynoted dozens of state homeschooling conferences in the United States, Japan, Russia, Mexico, and Canada. I have served on the leadership team for INCH (Michigan's official Christian state homeschooling association) and have served on an advisory council for the National Alliance of Christian Home Education Leadership. I have done marketing consulting for numerous Christian and educational publishing companies looking to market their materials to homeschoolers.

To summarize, almost nothing has ever happened in the history of the modern-day Christian homeschooling movement for which I wasn't there with a front-row seat.

So What?

Does this make me the world's greatest expert on homeschooling and parenting? Unfortunately, no. I wish it did, but in reality, I'm just like you. I'm a parent who is trying to do the best he knows, and I often fail and fall short in my attempts. I've had a lot of advantages and many great mentors, but I'm still a guy trying to find his way like everyone else. I'm not perfect and don't claim to be. My children sin like everyone else, and their dad has days where he pulls his hair out just like you do. (Okay, my hair is probably a little further gone than yours!)

What I want to assure you is that I'm not a second-year homeschooling mommy blogger. Much of the information you find online regarding homeschooling is coming from new, enthusiastic writers who have a lot of opinions but not much experience. Personally, I think that is a wonderful thing! We need more of those writers, not less! I'm so thankful they are there. But I think we also need to hear the voices of people who have been there.

I was homeschooled in a day when it was against the law, and you could be taken away from your family if you got caught. I remember before homeschooling was even a term, let alone a socially acceptable idea. In fact, my family was in court several times, defending our right to home educate. I have the battle scars

from almost 40 years of being in this fight for parental control over education. I have dedicated decades of my life and have spent as many as 200 nights a year on the road (mostly with my family) ministering to and equipping other homeschooling families.

I'm not shooting from the hip here. What you will get in this book is real, honest, direct, and genuine guidance and counsel. I'll share what I know, what I'm confident in, and I'll be forthright when I'm uncertain about something. I even deferred two chapters to my wife, as I'm not an expert in those areas (home and time management).

A Unique Angle

What makes this book special, besides having the dual perspective of a homeschooled student / homeschooling father, is the fact that we want to equip you to have confidence in your decision to home educate, and we want to prepare you to defend your choice to the skeptics you will inevitably face along the way.

Not everyone will rejoice over your decision to homeschool. As you read my answers to these questions, I hope the issues will be settled in your own mind, and that you can use my approach as suggestions for how to respond when people level these questions/accusations against you. This book serves as a handy, bullet-point companion for my larger and more comprehensive treatise on a biblical philosophy of schooling: *Education: Does God Have an Opinion?*

That book is the big picture; this book is more of the nuts and bolts. That book gives a biblical apologetic for the *what* and *why* of homeschooling; this book deals more with the *how*. If you have not done so, I strongly encourage you to grab a copy of that book, as I believe it will be potentially life-changing for you.

Thank you for taking the time to read this book. I pray it will equip and strengthen you for your task. Please share it with friends!

CHAPTER 1

Is Homeschooling Legal?

For the 6,000 or so years of history, parents were primarily responsible for the teaching and training of their children. Formal schooling of any kind was usually relegated to a small percentage of students (often from the most wealthy or influential families).

Government-run schooling is, for the most part, a very new conception in world history. The Prussians began promoting government-controlled, compulsory education in the late 18th century. In the United States, a Unitarian named Horace Mann began promoting compulsory attendance laws in Massachusetts in 1840. The first laws were passed there in 1852. In 1918, Mississippi became the final state to adopt some form of compulsory attendance requirements.

Once these laws mandating attendance in government schools were in place, it criminalized truancy and absenteeism. The government now had a complete monopolistic lock-down on schooling in America. It was not until 1925, in a landmark Supreme Court case entitled *Pierce vs. The Society of Sisters*, that the Roman Catholic Church in America gained exemption from compulsory attendance laws and earned the legal freedom to start their own, competing parochial schools.

An Amish man named Jonas Yoder eventually won the *Wisconsin vs. Yoder* case in 1972, allowing the Amish communities to do the same. Yoder had a religious conviction against sending his

children to schools where they would be taught values that conflicted with his religious faith. This case opened the door for other Protestant churches to freely establish privately-funded Christian schools that offered explicitly religious instruction for students.

Homeschooling Begins Again

Between 1979 and 1983, Dr. James Dobson had Dr. Raymond Moore on his radio show a few times to discuss his research on early childhood development. Dr. Moore was an advocate (based on his studies) for delaying formal schooling for young children, especially boys who were struggling with reading. On the broadcast, he encouraged parents to keep their children at home and let them develop until they were older before sending them to a formal school. He quickly began advocating for home education as a general principle, as he saw the success parents were having in teaching their own children at home.

Because of these broadcasts, thousands of families around the nation began taking their children out of public school (or never sending them in the first place). This was met with legal opposition from local school boards and truancy officers. These families were violating their state compulsory attendance laws by refusing to send their child to a government or private school.

In 1983, Michael Farris and J. Michael Smith founded the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) and were soon joined by a young lawyer named Christopher J. Klicka (formerly of the Rutherford Association). They began to represent families who had decided to home educate but were facing truancy charges from school districts.

That same year, Christian state organizations began to form, and state-wide homeschooling conventions were established. Parents could come and hear speakers teach on home education, and they could buy curriculum from vendors in the convention hall.

The Legal Battle

Christian school administrators, many of whom had faced their own legal battles in a fight for exclusively Christian education,

began to take notice of these families. Many of them allowed homeschoolers to enroll in their school, as private school students, but to continue to do the bulk of their teaching at home. The private schools kept all the records and did standardized testing (in many cases) to appease authorities. Because private schools were not mandated by law to hand over the private records of these students, it was almost impossible for these families to be prosecuted, even though the students were not attending a formal school classroom.

HSLDA began working in conjunction with many state homeschooling associations to create legislation that would exempt private home educators from compulsory attendance laws. This created a new category, legally, of “homeschoolers,” rather than the two previous options of “public school” and “private school.” State organizations have provided important legislative work by watching their legislature each year for bills that could adversely impact homeschooling freedoms.

The Early Days

When my family began homeschooling in 1978, homeschooling as a concept was virtually unheard of. Parents who chose to keep their children at home usually did so clandestinely. Not only was homeschooling illegal, but there was also almost no support. Curriculum companies that sold to Christian schools would not sell to parents. Pastors told parishioners who chose to home educate that they were being disobedient to Scripture. They said that Romans 13 commands parents to obey all civil laws, and so they were disobeying God by trying to give their children a Christian education at home.

Because of the threat of truancy officers or child protective service workers showing up unexpectedly on your doorstep, families like ours stayed inside during school hours. We kept the curtains closed. We tried not to talk about school with our nosy neighbors (who wondered why the bus never stopped at our house). We didn't tell many people what we were doing. Grandparents and extended relatives thought we were being deprived, and believed

the experiment would go totally wrong. They were convinced we would grow up to be social misfits, be unemployed, and have no idea how to relate to others in the “real world.”

The stakes were high because if you were caught homeschooling, your children could be taken away from you. Your parental rights could be terminated and your children could be placed into foster care (where government schooling was mandated). It was a scary time. Many homeschooled children actually had escape routes planned of how they would hide if social workers came to get them.

It's hard to believe that we aren't talking about some communist nation during the Cold War, but the “land of the free and the home of the brave” during the 1970s and '80s. My own family was in court on several occasions to defend our right to home educate. I remember the fear I had that I would not be able to continue living with my family and would not be allowed to homeschool. On two different occasions, because of run-ins with the courts (my second and sixth grade years), my older sister and I were placed in private Christian schools for a year until the smoke cleared, and then my mother promptly went back to home educating us (after everyone had forgotten about the ordeal).

It is a blessing that such scenes are almost a distant memory in today's homeschooling climate. It is important for newer homeschoolers to learn the history of the modern-day home education movement. I have created a website and interviewed many of the pioneers, allowing them to share their experiences and stories. It is called HomeschoolPioneers.com.

The long and arduous battle for legal freedoms for all homeschoolers is told in a unique book by the late Christopher Klicka, entitled, *Home School Heroes: The Struggle & Triumph of Home Schooling in America*.

Homeschooling Is Legal!

Today, homeschooling is legal in all 50 states and many countries around the world. Almost everyone knows someone who is

being, or was, home educated. Homeschooling is almost mainstream, with people from all walks of life choosing to take control of their own child's education.

Legal requirements vary quite a bit from place to place, with little to extensive regulations. Some states require annual reporting to a local school board. Others require some form of standardized testing. Still others require a certain number of hours for formal instruction, usually on specifically outlined academic subjects. Since there are no federal laws regulating homeschooling (and most homeschoolers want to keep the federal government completely out of the education business altogether), there is much variation on a state level.

The best way to stay informed regarding the laws in your state is to become a member of HSLDA and your Christian state homeschooling association (which you can locate from HSLDA's website).

The Future of Homeschooling

The biggest threat to homeschooling in the future, in my view, is not a big federal power-grab where the government seeks to make all homeschooling illegal. Instead, I believe the greater risk is that homeschooling parents will simply give away their autonomy, and the legal freedoms that were so painfully fought and won, in exchange for "free" government handouts in the form of education vouchers for homeschoolers and other government-funded educational opportunities. Whoever pays for the education controls it.

The next generation of homeschoolers will need to learn, and know, the history of the pioneers, and not allow their work to go to waste. I will discuss this more thoroughly in the chapters on dealing with public school at home and vouchers. Homeschooling freedoms will be maintained through eternal vigilance on the part of parents and organizations who are committed to the principles of liberty and parent-directed and -controlled education. We have gained so much freedom. Now it is up to you and your children to maintain and preserve those freedoms.

CHAPTER 2

Are You Qualified to Teach Your Child?

My own homeschooling experience was rather unique. My mother had a bad experience in government schools when she was growing up. She was dyslexic and was made to feel stupid because she wasn't good at academics, so she quit trying to work within that system and essentially dropped out in ninth grade.

It was probably this background that made her more willing to take my older sister, Sony, out of school when she had a bad experience in kindergarten. Homeschooling was not only *uncool* in 1978, but it was also *illegal*. We ended up being in court several times over the years fighting charges of truancy because of the compulsory attendance laws that were on the books in almost every state.

By the time I entered high school, my mother was a single parent with two teenagers and four little girls to raise. In case you missed the math in the scenario, I was the only boy in a family with five sisters! (Feel free to extend lots of sympathy here!)

What If I Never Learned a Certain Subject Myself?

I was also dyslexic and struggled academically. I desired to finish up my studies as quickly as possible so that I could get a job. My mother told me that I could do something that would today be called "Accelerated Distance Learning" for high school. She

explained that if I doubled up my studies, I could complete four years of high school in two. She provided the curriculum and classroom video instruction at home so that I had a “personal tutor” to guide me through the material, using Abeka Academy, which was a very time-intensive, and fairly rigorous, academic approach. I didn’t have much of a social life for two years! But I finished 12th grade a week or so before my 16th birthday, and immediately got a job working 40 hours a week.

My mother simply didn’t have time to hold my hand all the way through my studies. Neither did she feel obligated to cram my head full of every fact and detail that could possibly be learned in the universe. But she had supplied me with the basics, and taught me how to learn. By engaging me in meaningful discussions throughout my high school years, and grading my tests, she provided accountability to ensure that I was completing the assigned work.

What Are the Essentials of Teaching?

My mother informed me that her responsibility to me was to:

1. Teach me how to read
2. Teach me how to think/reason
3. Teach me how to study/learn

She said, “If you know how to read, how to reason, and how to find the information you need, then you can teach yourself anything you need to know in life.” Her goal was not so much to teach me, as it was to teach me how to successfully teach myself.

She used to tell me, “In the real world, you don’t see people walking down the street carrying a stack of textbooks under their arm. That’s not how adults learn.”

My experience in high school mirrored what research from Dr. Brian Ray discovered when examining the standardized achievement tests of homeschooled students:

A parent’s education background has no substantive effect on their children’s home school academic performance.

Home educated students’ test scores remain between the

80th and 90th percentiles, whether their mothers have a college degree or did not complete high school.¹

According to Dr. Ray's research, a child in the government school whose parent has a master's degree or a teaching certificate will score 25 to 30 percent lower, on average, than a homeschooled student whose parent has only a high school diploma or less. In homeschooling, it is the customized context and the parental involvement that make the difference, not the academic pedigree of the parents.

What Makes a Good Teacher?

What makes a good teacher is not IQ. It is not being an expert at knowing random facts and information. It is caring about the student and understanding their strengths and weaknesses. It is helping to walk alongside them, encouraging and equipping them to overcome hurdles and difficulties. A good teacher is a good listener. A good teacher is a good example, modeling good character, work, and study habits.

I remember years ago talking to a friend of mine who was a government school teacher. She told me that her goal was to stay one week ahead of her students. She said that she didn't remember most of the material she was teaching (because she didn't use it in everyday life), but as long as she stayed just a few steps ahead of her students, everything worked out okay.

The wonderful thing about homeschooling is that you, as a parent, have the opportunity to learn alongside your student. It's a great way for you to review, or fill in the gaps of your own education. Don't be embarrassed if you don't know everything. No one does. Even professional school teachers don't know everything there is to know about the subject in which they specialize. They frequently must look up answers or ask others for advice or direction.

The fact is that no one knows your child, or cares about him, more than you do. God gave your child to you, not to the government or the church or to another family. He gave that child to

you, because He believes that you are the best-equipped person in the world to raise him or her.

What about Gaps in Their Education?

Most students are strong in certain subjects and weak in others. We obviously want our children to be as well-rounded as possible, but we must recognize certain innate limits. Most people choose the career they do because it best fits their inclinations and aptitudes.

If your child has good study and research habits, he or she can learn whatever may be lacking in their education. In high school, my mother insisted that I do Algebra 1 and Chemistry, even though she knew that I probably wouldn't ever use those subjects in my future life and career. She wanted me to develop the discipline of studying subjects that I didn't necessarily enjoy. But she did not insist that I study trigonometry or calculus. She said that I would simply be wasting my time, considering my interests lay elsewhere. I really haven't used any of those subjects, but I can see the importance of using wisdom and balance in determining which subjects to emphasize and which to overlook. We only have so much time in life, and we need to learn to say no to some subjects so that we can say yes to the ones that are the most important.

How Can I Learn How to Teach?

Utilizing a curriculum that contains a good lesson plan scheduling system, or buying one if you are creating your own mix-and-match curriculum, is very helpful. One of the most important things is to ensure that you don't destroy your child's love of learning. There is far more to learning than studying textbooks.

Create short-term and long-term educational goals. Develop a strategy, including required resources, and a timeline for how to accomplish your goals. Encourage your students to do independent study and research, including reading books or doing field trips that may help them to understand the lessons they are learning. Make sure you reward your students' successes and be careful that you

don't demoralize them when they fall short of their or your goals. Remember to verbally encourage and affirm them as they grow and develop. Keep an open dialogue going so they know that they can ask questions without being emotionally shot down or discouraged.

Surround yourself with local and/or online support networks of other homeschooling parents who can help you with their knowledge and experience. Increasingly, there are online social media groups of parents who use a particular curriculum so you can gain advice and counsel from other parents who use the same materials you do. Sometimes, the authors of the curriculum will join the discussions and answer questions directly. I also highly recommend attending homeschooling conferences and attending teaching workshops conducted by various experts in their field. It is invaluable information that can save you so much hassle and even years of regret by getting things off on the right foot from the beginning. You can find a list of state homeschooling associations, along with their websites and their annual conferences, by visiting www.HSLDA.org.

Endnotes:

1. Dr. Brian D. Ray, National Home Education Research Institute, 1997 study, <https://www.hsllda.org/docs/study/ray1997/07.asp>.

CHAPTER 3

How Can You Afford to Homeschool?

A Christian ministry did an email survey to their readership of several hundred thousand evangelical Christians. The survey targeted Christian parents, asking if they would choose Christian education for their children if cost was not an issue. In other words, if someone else would pay for your child's education, would you choose homeschooling or Christian schooling over government schooling? While the report was never published, I was told privately by a friend of mine at the organization who conducted that survey that 77 percent said they would prefer homeschooling or Christian education if it were provided for free.

This tells me that money is the number one reason that most Christian parents choose government schooling for their children. Since about 80 to 85 percent of Evangelical parents send their children to secular schools, it clearly is not because they think it's the best option. It is because they feel they can't afford it (or don't want to make it a financial priority).

Yet other families do see the need for a Christian education and truly desire it for their children. They just haven't figured out how to get things squared away to be able to support their family on one income and/or how to afford to buy the needed curriculum.

How Much Does It Cost to Homeschool?

The truth is, home education is a bargain compared to the amount of money that is spent on each child in the government

school setting. It costs 20 times the amount, on average, for a child to be “schooled” in a brick-and-mortar, government-run school than it does for parents to teach that same child at home.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics:

Total expenditures for public elementary and secondary schools in the United States in 2013–14 amounted to \$634 billion, or \$12,509 per public school student enrolled in the fall (in constant 2015–16 dollars). Total expenditures included \$11,222 per student in current expenditures, which includes salaries, employee benefits, purchased services, and supplies. Total expenditures also included \$939 per student in capital outlay (expenditures for property and for buildings and alterations completed by school district staff or contractors) and \$348 for interest on school debt.¹

Dr. Brian Ray of the National Home Education Research Institute says:

Families engaged in home-based education are not dependent on public, tax-funded resources for their children’s education. The finances associated with their homeschooling likely represent over \$27 billion that American taxpayers do not have to spend, annually, since these children are not in public schools. . . . Taxpayers spend nothing on most homeschool students, and homeschool families spend an average of \$600 per student (annually) for their education.²

How Much Does Curriculum Cost?

There are several approaches to curriculum. For instance, you can buy an entire “grade in a box” from a traditional textbook publisher and usually spend less than \$400 for the kit. The higher grades will, of course, cost more than the lower ones. If you go with a video curriculum, or an online program with video instruction, that can be \$1,000 or more per child, per year.

You can, however, utilize many methods to cut down on your curriculum expenses. One way is to buy new when the publisher runs sales. Most publishers have a couple of times a year when they reduce the price of their materials. Others will offer special conference rates at your state's annual homeschooling convention. Some publishers will offer a special "scratch 'n dent" sale, where you can buy unused display copies of their textbooks that may have been scuffed, or corners bent, during shipping to and from conferences.

There are also used curriculum fairs, online curriculum swaps, and even Facebook groups where people sell their used (or new pre-owned curriculum) at a discounted price. Often a family will buy an expensive program, only to realize that it isn't working as they had hoped. They will resell it for pennies on the dollar, just to recoup some of their cost, and pass it on to someone who can use it.

There are also library sales and used book sales, many of which offer wonderful finds for frugal homeschoolers. Old historical books in public libraries are being thrown away in exchange for newer novels and popular books for children and teens. The older books often contain stories about Lewis and Clark, Daniel Boone, Kit Carson, Betsy Ross, or other great American heroes. The newer books (often recommended reading in local government schools) are often about teen dating relationships, vampires, witchcraft, and much more. It's sad to see how people's values are shifting, but our family has really benefitted from the rejection of these older books. The library's loss is our family's gain!

Homeschooling for Free!

When my family began homeschooling in 1978, it was against the law to teach your own children at home. For the most part, no one had ever heard of such a radical concept. In those early days, Christian curriculum providers had created materials for Christian schools, but they would not sell directly to parents. So, families like my own set out to create our own curriculum.

While not necessarily preferable as a long-term solution, there are ways to home educate entirely for free. If you have

access to a local library, you can create your own unit studies using books that you check out at no cost. You can supplement with free educational videos online. You can take your children to historical locations (many of which are free) that may be right in your area.

There are also many homeschooling parents who would be willing to loan curriculum to you that they are not currently using. We have done this with other families whom we sensed needed this.

If you truly want to homeschool your children, I believe you can eventually find a way. My mother homeschooled six children on absolutely nothing (for a season). The main issue is one of the heart. Are you totally committed to the concept of giving your children an exclusively Christian education? If so, God will show Himself strong on your behalf.

An extensive list of free homeschooling resources can be found at www.hsllda.org/highschool/FreeResources.asp.

Help and Support

While not an option for every family, The Home School Foundation,³ which is a non-profit division of HSLDA (Home School Legal Defense Association), gives grants for qualifying families in certain situations (widows, for example) to help purchase homeschooling curriculum.

Several state homeschooling associations (Texas, Louisiana, and Alabama come to mind) have raised support to help families who lost their school books due to flooding because of hurricanes. Some curriculum publishers have offered to donate free (or replace) curriculum to families in such situations. On occasion (although it is not as frequent as I'd like to see), even local churches have come alongside families to help them create a financial and logistical roadmap to be able to home educate their children.

One way our family saves money is by buying textbooks that are reusable for younger students. We may pay a bit more up front for these resources, but it enables us to be able to pass them down to other children. Our overall cost for homeschooling nine

children is quite low, because we do not have the same investment with each child (just additional student workbooks).

Financial Freedom

Oftentimes, the inability to afford to homeschool comes from a financial lifestyle that isn't conducive to living on a single income. Sometimes, the circumstances are beyond one's control (massive hospital bills, ongoing special needs care, loss of a home, etc.). In most cases, however, it is either that a family has expectations of living "the American dream," and they won't make the sacrifices necessary to ensure that they can live on one income (perhaps having one vehicle, foregoing cable television, or doing without eating out or going on expensive vacations).

In many other cases, a family has buried themselves into deep debt because of poor financial management. It is my advice that families who find themselves in such situations seek out budget counseling through their local churches or through a qualified financial consultant. They need to create a game plan to reduce their debt and create a scenario where at least one parent can be a full-time stay-at-home parent, or they can toggle their work schedules so someone is home to teach the children.

You may not always be able to go from where you are now to where you want to be in one easy step, but having a workable game plan is essential. As I discuss in the chapter, "Won't I Be Wasting My Own Education?" having two full-time incomes is often not as financially advantageous as we have been led to believe.

Having a financial plan, and accountability from your church elders or budget coach, can help you to break free from debt and poor financial management. I hear parents, who make more money than my wife and I do, say that they cannot afford to homeschool their three children. My wife and I successfully homeschool our large family on less money than they make. There are many families who make it work. Perhaps you need to consult with some large homeschooling families who have learned how to homeschool successfully on very little income.

Should Poor Children Be Punished for Being Poor?

People often tell me, “Some people just cannot afford to homeschool,” the implication being that they need to send their child to an anti-Christian school if they are below a certain financial threshold. I just don’t understand that logic. Why punish the poor child with anti-Christian indoctrination simply because his parents don’t make very much money? Is that what Jesus wants? Does He think to Himself, “I want all of My children to be educated in the fear of the Lord . . . except for the poor ones. I want them to learn that they evolved from pond scum and that they don’t have a defined gender.”

I don’t think so. From my perspective, I can’t afford NOT to homeschool! What does it profit me if I gain the whole world (financially) and risk my child’s soul?

In my book *Full-Time Parenting: A Guide to Family-Based Discipleship*, I have chapters on “Living on a Single Income” and “Considerations Before You Start Your Own Business.” I’d direct people to these chapters for more information on how to make things work logistically for your family.

Suppose we lived in a hypothetical universe where there were only two choices:

1. Send my child to an anti-Christian school where they would be lied to and given an anti-Christian world-view for seven hours a day
2. Have my child sit and stare at a wall for seven hours every day

I would always choose the latter because at least then I’m not having to deal with a deficit. If I had to make up time in the evening with only two to three hours of parental involvement a day, I’d rather have a scenario where I wasn’t having to deconstruct and deprogram my children each night from the falsehoods they had been taught at school during the day.

Thankfully, none of us are truly faced with this false dichotomy. There are many ways that children learn, and almost none of them require a classroom. Never confuse schooling and education. They are NOT synonymous terms. Children with a low income can learn the truth very easily, and be prepared for life quite adequately, without ever stepping foot into a formal school classroom. We just need to have our minds renewed so we learn to think differently about what education actually is and how we can best facilitate it.

Endnotes

1. <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=66>.
2. Dr. Brian D. Ray, National Home Education Research Institute, March 23, 2016, <https://nheri.org/research/research-facts-on-homeschooling.html>.
3. <https://homeschoolfoundation.org>.