

TruthQuest

HISTORY

"How do I talk with my teenagers about switching to TruthQuest History? I let them decide which curriculum they use because I hated having material shoved down my throat in school. But they oppose almost all of my suggestions!"

In answer, we share from a letter written by Michelle Miller Howard to a dear mom with just that question...

Dear Sister,

As I continue to lift you up before the Father, it comes to my mind that you may be walking a path which many of us have walked...homeschooling in a way that reacts against the way we were educated when young. While it is gracious of any mother to save her children from suffering as she suffered, God's way of educating is not in reaction to anything. Rather, it is—in and of itself—life. If we are thinking anything like "I'm not going to force things down my kids' throats like it was forced down mine," it may be a clue that we are reactively homeschooling. This severely limits us because our negative education is in control; it is determining our reactions. We are not letting God be in control, even if that is the furthest thing from our intentions. On the other hand, if we want to homeschool in a way that duplicates what we had as students, we might be letting a better educational system rule...yet still not the Lord. It is a very fine balance, isn't it?!

One thing is certain: His way is the way, it is life, and it is truth. It is all-encompassing. It is not limited to spiritual truth, but also includes educational truth and parenting truth. While we know the Lord wants us to consider the unique nature of our children, we can ask Him if our children should exert 'veto power' over their learning materials. We do know the Lord has overall ordained Dad and Mom to make final decisions—based on His direction and the loving assessment of each child's needs—and that children are then to accept that loving care with gratefulness. If they

cannot, then perhaps no material would ever satisfy. You could buy every learning tool in the world, and one student could find something that does not please. Don't we see this in our children sometimes? If given full 'veto power' over food, would they not often reject the healthiest? If given the right to 'veto' all activities, would they not play all day, rejecting piano practice and chores?

When Mom has a gentle spirit and the kids sense that she is being driven by educational fears, they can easily gravitate toward taking advantage, hoping to exert their own control. Here we must remember that control is different than input. No young person can handle total control because they do not yet have full wisdom to see the end from the beginning or the character to always do what they ought. We must also remember that because God asks us to be in loving authority over our children (to their benefit), He gives us special guidance for decisions. Since children are not in authority, they do not get this same parental input from God. Of course, if we allow our children to make parental decisions, they are glad to try! Who is benefitted though, when Mom is frustrated and incapacitated, Dad feels the stress in the home, and the children are adrift?! The loving, gentle intentions of the parents are then derailed.

We parents must be praying about this history decision then. I too often forget this, and was wracking my brain in response to your letter. Only after noticing that each idea conflicted with the last did I realize I was not taking your concern to the Lord! How could my little brain know what is best for your unique family? One wise woman suggests Dad and Mom sacrificially set aside 15-30 minutes each day over the next week to get alone with God, blank paper in hand, ready to write the ideas that come on this decision. The answer often comes quickly because He is the center of HIStory, and the teaching of history is a prime opportunity to instill some of the most important truths of life on this planet! No wonder the enemy tries to keep us from victory in this area!

Many great questions are before you as you take this issue in prayer to the Lord:

Do your kids understand the enormity of who they are in Him? Do they know they are utterly unique individuals with very particular identities, and that God made them this way so He can (as a chosen outlet for His infinite

love and 'relationalness') have an infinite number of unique relationships with people throughout history?

Do they realize that their opportunity to homeschool is an opportunity to learn about everything God has done and made in a way that profoundly deepens their relationship with Him?

Do they know that education is not merely the fulfilling of a requirement, or the crossing of a hurdle to adulthood, but is a precious gift? Thus, any tools you utilize (such as study guides, reading assignments, etc.) are not obligations to be shunned, but are opportunities for which they are to be grateful as God gives them supporters and aids in their growth?

Do they realize that when Jesus Christ said He was the way, the truth, and the life that this is not only about salvation, but is powerfully true for all areas of life? Do they know this truth for government, art, law, economics, and more?

We parents have been asking ourselves big questions. Maybe we should ask our teens some big questions too, for it is certain to help them realize what is at stake:

Do you realize that you will soon be on your own? Do you know the way to live? Do you know the truth about the world? How will you spend your life?
(Again we echo John 14:6.)

Do you really know Who God is, and how He has made to work this universe you inhabit? Do you know how nations and towns are to thrive?
The arts? Businesses? The sciences and law?

I've often seen teenagers have an awe (and a little fear) for what is ahead of them. They are often quite desperate to figure out life, but see no connection between their schoolwork and that urgent need for preparation. We should ask ourselves...are they right? If so, by God's grace, let's model for them the willingness to flush the secular (petty, superficial, demeaning, and lifeless) definitions of education we absorbed as students, definitions which did not spring from the way, the truth, and the life. Let's together seek the special callings given our teens by God. Let's spend their remaining months in our home on what they really need before graduation. Parents and teens will both, then, be serving God with trusting obedience, glad perseverance, and inspiring diligence. These final days can be ones of tremendous joy and accomplishment!

Would a teen easily rebel against such support and investment? It would be—in effect—to rebel against themselves, not against their parents. Hopefully, through our example, they can see that God uses His authority

not only to rule, but also to shower us with love, dignity, and destiny, for that is just what we parents are seeking to impart as we make important decisions regarding the teaching of history.