

September 1991

From the Heart— The Struggle You Face

My heart goes out to you as I know the struggle you face daily to accomplish the task to which God has called you. I personally teach my own children and know the resistance that is offered on occasion by the blessings that God has given. I know the difficulty you have trying to balance your resources of money, energy, and time in accomplishing the teaching of students and still maintaining husband-wife, and parent-child relationships, along with a proper relationship with God. I don't have all the answers, and I, just like you, am called to be a servant of the Lord. How often do I feel inadequate, like I am trying to do the impossible. Yet God uses these very circumstances to humble us and cause us to call out to Him so that He can enable us.

Our home-schooling has changed this year now that we have *two* school-aged children, one of whom is not able to read well yet. (We also have three pre-schoolers). This has caused me to do more direct teaching or reading to the children. This has given me the opportunity to spend more time with my children, though it has been difficult at times.

Home education is a bigger undertaking than it looks on the surface. Many beginning home-school parents feel, "What *have* I gotten my self into?" The reason is that God has called us to a higher purpose than just academic training. Pride in academic accomplishments is a hollow victory in our world of low moral standards. The desperate need today is not for good students, but for disciples. Let me explain, using the academic realm as an example. Classroom schools *teach*, but there is no provision in the classroom to make sure that the skill is mastered. Assuredly, some of these students will not master the material, so spiral curriculum is used—the same material is taught again and again the following years (for the benefit of those who didn't learn it last year). Home-schooling allows the parent to go beyond this level of learning. Our goal is to *train* our students—to direct and supervise their studies until they are proficient in academic skills.

Many parents have relied on the church to *teach* their children spiritual truth. But ultimately we, as parents, are called to *train* our children. Home education gives parents the opportunity to go beyond academics. Our children should learn to listen to us about spiritual things as well as academic things. As Jesus said to Nicodemus, "You are Israel's teacher, and do you not understand these things (*see context*) . . . I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things?" (John 3:10).

Let me back up to academic training, as spiritual training is beyond the scope of this letter. Training does not come from the curriculum

materials. It comes from the parents. The goal of training is not the accumulation of facts or knowledge, but rather, learning how to think. Students need to learn the principles used in solving problems. The problem, however, is that rules alone are meaningless to the student because they are not relevant to daily life. Rules and principles are best learned on a case-by-case basis. This is what discipling is all about. To put this in practice in home education involves working with the student, providing the insight they need to solve the problem at hand. Using the beginning reader as an example, this is accomplished by gently reminding the student of the applicable phonics principles until they have been mastered by practice. (The See-and-Say approach ultimately fails because it leaves the students without the tools to continue beyond what they were taught.) This applied principle approach works equally well for other areas, but it requires that you, the parent, master the material yourself.

There is conflict in training students, since children do not like to do difficult tasks. These same tasks are transformed into simple matters through practice. Teaching, alone, will not get them to this point. *Knowing* and *doing* are two different things. The transition requires training. If you are having a hard time home-schooling, humble yourself: ask for help. Ask God first. Ask those in your support group who have been where you are now. Realize that home education is a struggle for all those who have undertaken it. (Although we would much rather tell about our successes.) May God bless you as you train up your children in the way they should go.

Special Thanks to all of you who prayed for Linda and me concerning the birth of our daughter, Hannah Dawn Stablein (8 lb. 4 oz.), born July 2 at our home. Now please turn your prayer hearts toward Pat and Terri Wade as they are expecting in November.

Sincerely,

Greg Stablein