

# Should You Put the Kids Back in School?

by [Barbara Smith](#)

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When well-planned lessons continue to bomb, when routine household chores pile up, when bills and other family responsibilities multiply, homeschooling parents may look for other schooling alternatives. They recoil from introducing chemistry, Shakespeare or fractions to children who refuse to complete simple workbook assignments. Watching their homeschool dreams founder, frustration, fear and frenzy overtake some parents. They worry, as pressures increase, about their children's futures and the family's present. "Should we put the kids back in school," they wonder?

Home education will conclude at one point or another. However, may I encourage the parents who are frustrated or fearful, or at their wits' end? If fear and frustration were not sufficient reasons to choose homeschooling, neither are they sufficient causes to stop home education. The call to homeschool must come from God. So, too, the command to continue or make alternative arrangements must come from God. Stay the course until the Lord removes you from this duty assignment. Will you seek this call as carefully as you decided to homeschool?

Solomon, the master builder wrote: "Any enterprise is built by wise planning, becomes strong through common sense, and profits wonderfully by keeping abreast of the facts." (Proverbs 24:3-4 LB) Building and strengthening your children's education program means keeping abreast of the facts. What are the facts of your homeschooling enterprise?

## 1. Did You Ever Define an "Education?"

In their exuberance to begin teaching their children at home some parents skipped over defining the name of the game education or what it was they planned to do. They jumped in without thinking about what an education is, or why an education is valuable, or what God thinks about training children. What is your definition?

## 2. Who is Supposed to Do What?

An effective student is one who takes responsibility for learning the information, even if the material is dull, the text complicate and the teacher frustrating. An effective student is one who willingly submits to authority because his or her heart is not puffed up. (1Corinthians 8:1) Whether at home or "in school," is the student willing to do what it takes to learn? An effective teacher is one who edifies students because knowledge is not an idol. An effective teacher is one who fears God, keeps His commands and is willing to do what He says. Is the teacher willing to be taught some uncomfortable lessons?

## 3. Who IS in Charge?

Parents have biblical authority and responsibility to teach. They must not leave their children with any excuse for thinking that parental responsibility is something mom and dad improvised. They should examine Deuteronomy 6:6-9, Ephesians 4:29-32 and 6:4. Children should understand that taking on mom and dad also means taking on their Father who is in heaven.

## 4. Review Your Goals:

One day the knowledge that traditional and home schools promote will pass away. (1 Corinthians 13:8) What do you want your children to learn that they are not learning at home? We want them to be able make their way in this world! We want them to be able to earn a living and take care of a family we hope God will give them. Do you want them to be able to teach the Gospel to those children?

## 5. Assess Yourself

Some homeschooling parents who rushed to start homeschooling forgot to assess their strengths and weaknesses, and the drawbacks that homeschooling will impose on their freedom. What are your strengths and weaknesses?

Some parents forgot to look at the emotional and spiritual cost of educating their children at home, and now are feeling "sticker shock." What is shocking you about homeschooling?

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Some parents doubt their intellectual or academic ability to teach their children. God gives wisdom to HIS servants (Daniel 1:17-20) Wisdom is a gift that God gives to those who fear Him and are willing to learn; who are willing to receive instruction. (Proverbs 1:1-7) Parents model wisdom in humble dependence on Go who gives it in power and love and discipline. (2 Timothy 1:7)

## **6. Discipling and Disciplining**

Remember Jacob's failure to discipline his children? Seventeenth century commentator Matthew Henry said of Jacob's troubles with his sons, in Genesis 34, "things never go well when the authority of a parent runs low in a family."A willful child who rejects a teacher's authority can stop any kind of schooling dead.

The issue of effectively educating a rebel is not who teaches them, or where we teach them. The issue is the heart, not the brain. Those who do not fear God despise wisdom and are fools, no matter how many degrees from prestigious institutions they win. "Whoever loves discipline, loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is stupid." (Proverbs 12:1 ) Praying for a child's heart to soften to Christ is the single wisest tool a parent can apply to training their child. Children who resist their parents' authority are resisting God's rule of their lives and will struggle with learning from anyone.

If parents still wonder what educational path to follow, ask God, and trust Him to do it. He is always available for free consultation. The psalmist knows that God answers such prayers and rejoices: "Good and upright is the Lord; therefore He instructs sinners in the way . . . He will instruct him in the way he should choose." (Psalm 25:8,12)

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