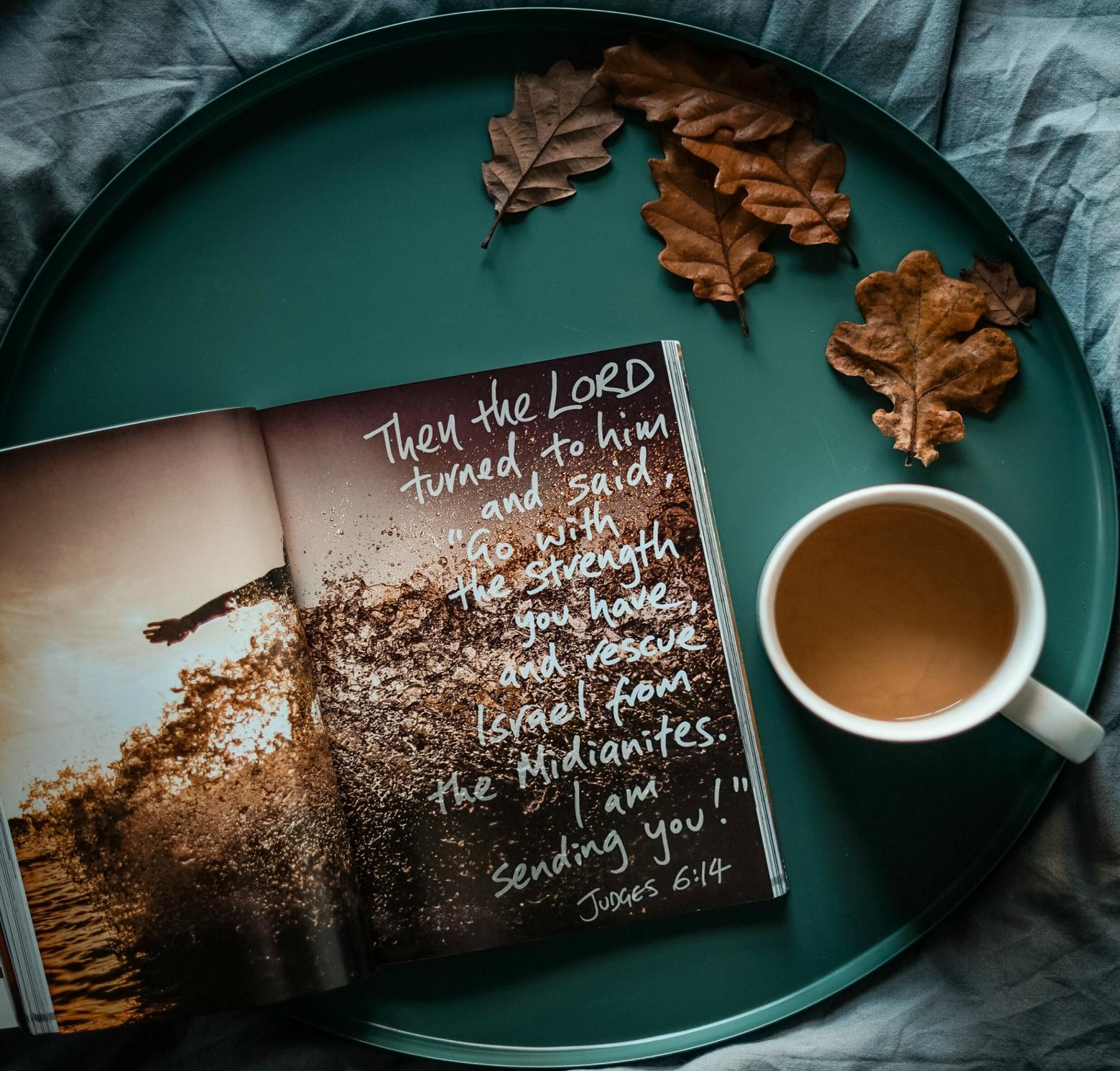


# MINIMALIST HOMESCHOOL

BIBLICALLY BASED, MINIMALIST MINDED, HOMESCHOOL LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE      AUTUMN 2018





Then the LORD  
turned to him  
and said,  
"Go with  
the strength  
you have,  
and rescue  
Israel from  
the Midianites.  
I am  
sending you!"  
Judges 6:14



WELCOME  
TO THE  
MINIMALIST  
HOMESCHOOL

THE BIBLICALLY BASED,  
MINIMALIST MINDED  
LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE  
FOR HOMESCHOOL  
FAMILIES

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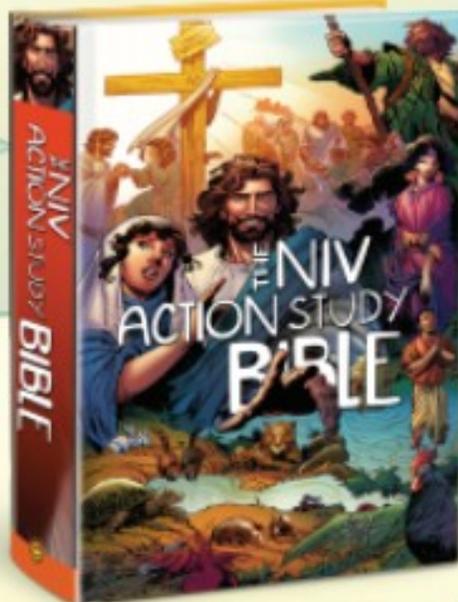
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# A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome!

We've started a "magazine"... but not a fancy glossy one you can pick up in the store but a DIY, homemade collection of pages that you can download for free. Why? Well, beside the fact that we clearly don't have enough going on in our lives (insert sarcasm here), but we (the WE being my husband and I) felt like we're really enjoying this community we've seemed to amass through the [MinimalistHomeschool.com](http://MinimalistHomeschool.com) website with our free homeschool plans, the YouTube channel with various minimalism/homeschooly things (including our current #100daysofhomeschool series) and our podcast *Let's Try Not To Mess This Up*. And within this community we would like to share more- to support the community of Biblical families striving to raise our children grounded in Christ and overflowing in grace.

The plan is to offer a publication each season, a collection of all things Biblical • homeschool • family • minimalism • child rearing • marriage • home keeping • and so on! A lifestyle magazine of sorts for folks that fall into the homeschoolin'/minimalist minded/Biblically based category... am I making any sense?

Hope so... because here we go! ☺

If you don't already know us and our family-- you can find us at all the places below:

[website](#) • [instagram](#) • [youtube](#) • [facebook](#) • [podcast](#)

I'm Heidi, he's Brandon, we're raising four kiddos (9 months to 14 years) in Western North Carolina on 8 acres of possibility. We're moving into ministry full time (as Christ leads us) but have a really long story full of more grace than should be possible and chaos that only the Lord could have saved us from. We're excited to share more with you!

Welcome friends, we're glad you're here!

♥, *Heidi + Brandon*



A stack of several books with colorful spines in shades of green, blue, red, and yellow. A decorative floral illustration featuring pink, purple, and yellow flowers with green leaves is placed over the middle of the stack.

# MINIMALIST HOMESCHOOL

free homeschool plans  
that are  
Biblically based  
& minimalist minded

[www.Minimalist  
Homeschool.com](http://www.MinimalistHomeschool.com)



The world and its desires  
pass away,

but whoever does the will of  
God lives forever.

1 John 2:17



# THE COMPARISON TRAP

by HEIDI GARCIA, [@minimalisthomeschool](#)

The digital world, social media, online everything-- they have their advantages in many ways. There's no denying the way in which this technology has changed the entire world-- and how we all live our lives.



I believe that we're pretty far past the days of social media (specifically) being just a simple tool that allows us to connect with friends and family near and far though. In many ways, it invades more aspects of our lives than we may notice. Like, comparisons. You see another mom's posts about their homeschool day. Their perfect home. Their model body (even after 17 kids or something ridiculous). The photo worthy meals. The perfectly posed children. Does it ever end?!

It's become many folks full time job (or so it seems at least) to do nothing but share the idea of perfect lives in little boxes of still frame images, or professional looking "real life" videos. Yet they swear they're "keeping it real" as you sink deeper and deeper into the "social media blues".

So where do we go with this?  
What do we do?

Are we truly failing at life when we don't measure up to all THAT?

*Am I saying this now to win the approval of people or God? Am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be Christ's servant.*  
– GALATIANS 1:10

Above ALL- who are you here to please? Who do you answer to in every moment? It is GOD, and GOD alone. It should not be our concern in the slightest to be living our life in a way that will please people and gain our acceptance there. Every decision, every move should be weighed with the Holy Spirit in how it will please our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Period. We must all remember this always!

*For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.* – JAMES 3:16

If you spend much time at all in your Bible, you may notice that things like jealousy, coveting, and selfish ambition come up over and over again. These are all things we are to turn away from. I'm not saying it isn't hard- as I know and fail at this too. But we must remember what James says here- where you let that exist, disorder and every vile practice will be able to exist.

*Now there is great gain in godliness with contentment, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content.*  
– 1 TIMOTHY 6:6-8

So we know that it's difficult to not fall into the comparison trap. We know we don't like the feelings that come from it, but what do we do? We find contentment with the lot given to us.

You're right- maybe someone else has a nicer home. A fitter body. A professional photographer that follows them around making everything look perfect 110% of the time. Maybe that is all true. Even if it is-- that's not your lot. And that's just ok! Because God has perfectly crafted everything within you and around you, and the moment you are in at this time is His perfect design. Through HIM, and HIM alone, will you be able to live your life here to the fullest as you look forward to the

return of Christ and the coming of His Kingdom. Does anything else TRULY matter?

Not only does it not matter that you don't have the worldly desires you feel you need when you get the social media blues (and don't take this as a judgmental statement, I'm speaking to myself here every time I scroll through Instagram or get sucked into a YouTube hole and feel these things as well) but odds are that what is being portrayed to you on social media... is really not true. Prove me wrong if so. Their home does not look like that ALL the time, homeschool does not look like that ALL the time. They don't wake up professionally airbrushed and life isn't rainbows and unicorns. Life is hard. Things are difficult. A lot of it straight up stinks.

But again-- our focus is NOT of this world! It is on Christ. It is on our being reunited with our King and eternity in the Kingdom to come. Lord how I pray it is time for that-- this is truly a longing, a desire, that I have rooted in my soul. Nothing else is even worthy of comparison.

---

*Heidi is a homeschooling mom of 4 (3 pictured ;), married to her jr-high school sweetie, and living in the country of Western North Carolina with 2 dogs, a cat, 22 chickens and 1 turkey (as of now).*

*She shares Biblically based, Minimalist minded homeschool plans online for free at [www.MinimalistHomeschool.com](http://www.MinimalistHomeschool.com), creates a crazy cool free online magazine (hello! ;), shares snippets of her daily life on [Instagram](#), and has been sharing vlogs of her family's 100 days of homeschool on their [YouTube channel](#)!*

*Because she believes in showing what it is for her and her family, without all the fancy pretty fluff of the "cool kids" of the internet.*

*Come check them out, say "Hey", you don't have to do this alone! :)*





# WOULD YOU LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE?

Do you feel led to contribute something to an upcoming edition?

Pray over it- we'd love to have your input!

Or maybe you just have a suggested topic you would like to see discussed?

Email us at [\*\*TheMinimalistHomeschool@gmail.com\*\*](mailto:TheMinimalistHomeschool@gmail.com)!

# NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

*A collection of homeschool goodness for all the families new to the journey!*

When it comes to all things law wise- the go to spot for state-by-state information is the HSLDA site, see [HERE](#). This site is a great resource to many, many families!

## *DO YOU KNOW YOUR HOMESCHOOL STYLE?!*

Fearless Homeschool has a fantastic series on their site, see [HERE](#), discussing the various styles of homeschooling.

If you're new to this, I'd suggesting looking them through to see what might fit your family the best.

I think most families fall within probably a couple areas, but learning about the options that you may not know about, or have even thought about, might be a great start!

And if not for anything else, you'll probably gain a deeper understanding to the average homeschooling memes once you acquaint yourself with the big names in homeschool land.

And that's a win all around.

*She also has a **free workshop recording** about homeschooling styles [HERE](#), and when you sign up you get a homeschooling styles ebook!*

## THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO HOMESCHOOLING STYLES

SCHOOL AT HOME

UNSCHOOLING

CLASSICAL

CHARLOTTE MASON

UNIT STUDIES

STEINER / WALDORF

MONTESSORI

PROJECT-BASED

ECLECTIC

FEARLESS  
HOMESCHOOL



What's something you wish  
you knew when you started  
homeschooling?

Type something...

“My toddler would be jealous”

“How easy it really is. Everyone had me terrified! But thank the Lord, He always comes through! ♥”

“The different local groups and where bigger kids can go for free or cheap events.”

“Not everyone will be as excited about the decision as I am”

“That it takes a lot of planning and adjusting. What worked last month might not work this month.”

“That you don’t need any curriculum for the preschool years.”

“That you don’t need to get hung up on the fact that you might not have a good support system in place. A support system outside of your home isn’t needed at all! Rely solely on the Lord, and HE will lead you through!”

“How natural life is when you keep your children near to you.”

“That it would be by far, THE BEST parenting decision my husband and I EVER made!”

*“So commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these words of mine. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. **Teach them to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up.**”*

Deuteronomy 11:18-19

# CHILDREN BEING SWALLOWED UP BY THOSE BIG YELLOW MONSTERS

As seen on the blog, [The Transformed Wife](#) – See full post [HERE!](#) ♥  
by LORI ALEXANDER, [@thetransformedwife](#)

Women have asked me why I support homeschooling because they don't believe there is any biblical support behind it. Oh, really? God commands fathers to raise their children in the nurture (to educate; to bring or train up) and the admonition (gentle reproof; counseling against a fault; instructions in duties; caution; direction) of the Lord. He commands younger women to be keepers at home and love their children, i.e. be the ones home to love, protect, and raise their children.



The greatest passage in the Bible against public schooling is found in 2 Corinthians 6:14-17: “Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an

infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.”

We are also warned that bad company corrupts good morals and we are also commanded to walk with the wise. We are told to teach the Lord's ways to our children continually. “And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up” (Deuteronomy 11:19).

Joel Belz in his article [A History of Separation](#) wrote, “My very first exposure to the general truth of that assertion (that splitting up family units has always been a specialty of what we used to call ‘liberal’ political interests, but which many refer to as ‘progressive’) came some 70 years ago when I overheard my father talking with my mother and other folks from our church. ‘There’s just no way,’ I remember Dad’s saying, ‘that we’re going to keep tolerating our children being swallowed up by those big yellow monsters—just to go and be taught an alien gospel.’

Several local public schools were in the process of being consolidated into just one, and for Dad, the big buses that would haul us to a more distant town were grim symbols of a government stripping from parents their God-given rights and duty to shape their own children's education."

There's nothing in the word of God that calls us to ship our children off to strangers five days a week for hours a day for all of their childhood. The purpose of having children is to raise godly offspring (Malachi 2:15) and how will they become godly if they aren't being raised full time by godly parents? God has been kicked out of the public schools yet Christians all over the place continue to send their precious children, who have soft, teachable hearts and are so impressionable, to be taught the ways of the world.

The peers that your children will be with all day long will have a great influence upon them which is not good either. You all can see the garbage that is on the TV, movies, and the music people are listening to but most parents don't censor any of this for their precious children. These children will share this worldly garbage with your Christian children. Children in public schools are not being protected from the evil of our culture by their mothers! As culture grows darker, we must be all the more diligent to protect our children from Satan's influences.

***Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.***

1 Peter 5:8

---

*Hello! My name is Lori Alexander and I have been married to Ken since 1980. We have four grown children who all walk in truth and have strong marriages. We have been blessed with five grandchildren so far. The reason I have chosen the title "The Transformed Wife" is because God, through His Spirit and His Word, have transformed and will continue to transform me into the godly woman that He has called me to be.*

*My ministry is based upon Titus 2:3-5 in which God commands that older women teach younger women to be sober, love and obey their husbands, love their children, be chaste, discreet, good, and keepers at home. If you would love to learn and grow in these areas and allow God's Word and His ways to transform your marriage and your life, please join me as I teach you what I have learned from His Word, my own experience and mentoring many women, and most importantly, allowing the Holy Spirit to convict and transform you into the image of Christ.*



Lori's blog, [The Transformed Wife](#)

# THE FARM THE LORD PROVIDED

by HEIDI GARCIA, [@minimalisthomeschool](#)

*Our family's story of faith and submission to God's surprising path!*



Our family is not new to feeling God calling us in a way, even when our family and friends think we're totally nuts, and us going with it. Diving off into the unknown with no safety net in place. We've moved to the other side of the country, to a state we had visited once and knew no one. When we left our jobs and headed to another new state we had never been to, to start a business from scratch, again- without a set safety net in place. And that brings us to this new stage-- giving up that business that's been our sole provision for the past 7+ years

to head into something without any line of safety or security in the world's sense. This new stage?

**It would be the farm the Lord provided.**

*Because of this I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you shall eat or drink, or about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than the food and the body more than the clothing?*

*Look at the birds of the heaven, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into storehouses, yet your heavenly Father does feed them. Are you not worth more than they?*

MATTHEW 6:25-26

Let me back up, and explain the story. In the ultra condensed version- my husband and I began dating when I was just in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, he was in 10<sup>th</sup>. At 17 & 20 we found ourselves married and parents. We moved at least yearly, we worked our ways through various jobs and up corporate ladders, we were blessed with more kiddos (a trio of girls now ages almost 8 down to 9 months), started our own business in the wedding industry, my husband decided to go through seminary, our lives have taken a complete turnaround as our faith has exploded in ways we were always longing for, and now we're at this point. The point where what looks to be the path before us includes letting go of our business. It's been my all consuming focus for over 7 years, and it's slowly been tapering down to the point of now. And in all of this-- we're more than ok with it.

So what does it mean to ride this crazy way of life, to create a business with your own two hands (or so we thought, God is always the provider- even when we don't realize it), to be rockstars bringing in a six figure income in less than five years of business worth zero debt... and then to let it all go? To dive off, yet again, into the unknown which promises no income. No safety. **No security of worldly measure.**

**It feels freeing.** It feels like my every breath is purposeful, in keeping it all synced with the Creator. We were called out of the city, to the country- a town in which neither of us had ever even heard the name of. God has sustained us in this home, providing all as our business has slowly dried up before our eyes. Our children have grown, we've been blessed with our last child. My husband's faith has exploded, forming him into the strong, Godly leader he is today. Our family ministry has been created and is growing. Every day I am in utter awe at how I see God moving in our lives, stronger and stronger! It doesn't mean we're without trial or tribulation- I almost think we're more so with those than before. But with every trial we face-- it declares the Lord's sovereignty loud and clear in our lives!

So, we're on this land (not that it's huge, but plenty of space for us), our business is slowing, my husband has completed seminary, our family has a

fire burning within like never before... we can feel God preparing us to move. Somehow. We're praying, waiting, praying, waiting, praying. Lots of praying. Then we discuss this idea, what if we raise food on the land (chickens, turkeys, garden goods, maybe cows, who knows!) and as it is ready-- **let's give it to people.** Feed folks God created, natural, organic food- but without any cost. We will tell God our needs, and we will rely on Him and Him alone to fulfill our needs.

We will continue to focus on our family ministry through our [homeschool website](#), my [husband's podcast](#) discussing topics of faith, our family [YouTube channel](#), and now [this magazine](#) – hoping that if anything, maybe just one thing we might do may help even just one other person to draw closer to YHWH as we wait in anticipation for the coming of Christ Jesus! If **one** person comes across something we do, and it leads them in drawing closer to God, in pursuing a deeper relationship with the Almighty-- then everything we will have done, all of the stress and worry of being without a “real” income, the hardships and struggles of life, the endless hours on the computer doing all these things-- then ALL of it will be COMPLETELY worth it!

So here we are- on the “farm” that the Lord provided. I say “farm” as we're total newbies turning all my years of dreams and YouTube research into reality. We started with some hens, added on some turkeys, then some meat birds to go through the whole process with, then more hens. The garden beds are being prepared, the work is endless, and the chickens have become all of our best friends. We praying, we're lifting others up, I'm continuing to focus on all of these projects and connect with other families to see God's mighty works. Lord willing, I cannot wait to see where He takes this all, as we are dying to ourselves daily and surrendering our all to Him. Asking the He may lead us in every step we take, that anything we may do may be done to the glory of Christ.

*We would love to share our journey with you, we would love to lift you up in prayer, we would love to join together in fellowship.*

*Thank you for being here. ♥♥♥*

# WHY DO WE HOMESCHOOL?

by AMY LINES, [@raisinglittledisciples](#)

God called us to move from England to New York City, but the call to homeschool our children felt even bigger. I wanted to have global impact, so God suggested I stay home and teach my kids.



I looked at my son one day and saw my little self. The child in me was the child before me. His big emotions, his zest for life. God began to speak to me about my childhood and my school experience. He began to draw out old feelings and reflect upon my past, asking me questions. He reminded me of the pain, the stress, the bullying, and the feelings of being overlooked. He wasn't doing it to be unkind but rather to bring to mind and *remind* me of the little person I once was. God wanted to speak into

how I was mothering my kids from a place of hurt, offering to heal my brokenness, while also reveal brokenness in my children. We always want to protect our children from pain, but we live in a world of it, it's bound to be inevitable. But what I began to realise was some pain was avoidable, some pain wasn't necessary; we had choices, we had options.

My son had been attending pre-K where we lived in the U.K. and despite us all loving his teachers, having friends and coming out with a big smile, (most of the time), **he'd start every morning kicking and crying about not going.** I decided it was just 'the norm' for every kid to have to push through the tears and put up with it. But God started to speak to me about unpacking his pain and not overlook it. He needed peace, he needed joy, he needed flexibility and I was about to realise that home educating was going to give him just that.

I had heard of a few families who home educated, but never thought it would be for us. Somewhere along the way I had believed the myth that

homeschooling equated to lack of socialisation, lack of people skills and social intelligence, and it could leave kids a little, well, 'weird'. I did not have any experience of home education, despite having a couple of lovely friends who had been, I never considered it. Then God started moving on my heart.

We had been planning for a number of years to move from the U.K to America, and as God started to shape my heart and increase my curiosity into teaching at home, I told myself it would just be temporary, if we were to homeschool. I expected that once we were on a working visa things would change and 'go back to normal', and we'd place them in public school in NYC. **I expected not to love it, I expected it to be too hard, I felt unqualified, I felt afraid that our kids would become the 'weird' ones.** But then I remembered, what God had spoken to me. These were His kids, He wanted the best for them more than I did.

Once we had decided, it was as though God continued to confirm to us that we were making the right choice. Even today when I have my doubts, or people I love question me, or we go through a hard week, I cry out to God if we are doing the right thing! He answers every time, often by using a random person to ask me why I homeschool and what I love about it. It all comes flooding back and my heart is settled again. It's not about controlling their education, or fear of bullying, or avoiding different belief systems or because I don't respect teachers. Teachers are some of the most overlooked, underpaid heroes in our world. The time and effort they and other school staff pour out, giving their lives 24/7 to teach hundreds of children is remarkable. For me it's more about the environment of education. I have spent much of my life as a young woman, pushing against the tides of sexism and hierarchical systems, often based on a

belief that age and knowledge, gender and race, equates to value and power. In my opinion this is often encouraged in the standard schooling structure and very hard to mentally escape from the longer we're in it. The cultural diversity of school when done well is beautiful, and a total reflection of God's heart for humanity. But one of the things I love about home educating is that when we get together as families to play and learn together, we are naturally teaching age diversity as well as cultural diversity. We are reinforcing the truth that 'older does not equate to better', that older does not mean wiser, because all ages can interact and grow together, learning from one another. So much of my school experience was about the year ahead being more superior; if you were underneath you felt it and if you were at the top you embraced it. **When I look at Jesus I don't see that in His message of how we should interact with one another.** He who was in very nature God, humbled Himself to wash the feet of His disciples, teaching in the synagogue at aged 12, learning carpentry from His father, gathering young and old to Himself. I want to teach my kids to embrace and relate to others in regards to their God-given value, not their school grade system.

Looking back, I can see I was searching for my significance and belonging, and the school system. Peers who were also working out who they were in the world, were the voices I was placing most weight upon for my own significance. I wasn't a naughty kid and I wasn't super smart, so I felt like I sailed under the radar with my struggles. Despite having a very secure and stable, encouraging home life, I was very dependent on what other people thought of me, and at 30 years old, I am still working on that! So when it comes to our children I want them to know their identity and purpose is secure in God before they search for it in the world. Homeschooling gives us more time to invest in their character before their academic abilities.



### **But what about ‘the mission field’?**

The Christian life tells us that wherever we are is our mission field, so naturally we bestow this mantle on to our children to see their schools as their place of influence, sharing the Gospel and reaching people. This can sometimes be a big pressure for a little heart who is still discovering what the world is, let alone how to ‘reach’ it for the Gospel. I do believe that we can encourage our kids to love others at school as Jesus has loved them, and be secure in His love themselves, but for a little person to keep this in mind for 6 hours a day is a big expectation when we still struggle to do that too! Those first formative years are where we build our world view, our foundation for how we see ourselves in the world, so I am very passionate about giving time and space at home for them to discover who they are and establish themselves before sending them on ‘mission’. **Instead of seeing their playground as *their* mission field, I’m seeing our home as *my* mission field.** They are my first calling. The stressful days, the hard days, don’t mean we give up, and just because it

takes up so much of our mental and physical capacity doesn’t mean we can’t do it. I often think if I was working 9-5 at a job in the city I’d have to give the same of myself, I’d still have to weave in my prayer life, learn how to hear God on the daily. I have days where it might drain me but I see the reward and press on. So for me, right now, their education and character development is my primary calling, my mission field. They have plenty of time ahead of them to discover theirs, and to ‘go into the world and make disciples’.

**Homeschooling is no longer just necessity, no longer just temporary.** We homeschool because we are called to raise our little disciples, teaching them how to discover who God is, and His love for them. Teaching them how to hear His voice and hear who He says they are before peers or systems shape them. We homeschool because it’s fun and flexible and we can tailor our lessons to their interests, and as a bonus we can travel during term time when prices are cheaper!

Nowadays coming to ‘school’ is no longer pushing through the kicking and screaming, but rather laughing and loving. We can tailor lessons to their interests and ensure playtime is a big part of our learning. I’d love to write more about how much they have grown since we started but I can confidently say the last 2.5 years have been more about God teaching me, than me teaching them. **I’m so grateful He began this work in us as a family, calling us out of ‘the norm’ and into ‘the weird’, as we learn to run against the tide and trust God in the journey.** It can be hard but it’s worth it, and I’ve no doubt that this calling will have more global impact than I could have imagined.



Amy has 2 children, is Church planting with her husband in Brooklyn, NYC and leading the Children's Ministry.

When she's not teaching or reheating her cup of tea, she runs her website,

[www.raisinglittledisciples.com](http://www.raisinglittledisciples.com)

You can also find her on Instagram/FB

@raisinglittledisciples where she shares more of her heart in the journey of Christian motherhood.

Your  
~~Luck~~  
God  
will  
Provide

Visit Raising Little Disciples for more from Amy – along with her wonderful store full of fun printables + freebies!  
(Like this FREE phone wallpaper!

Can I get an AMEN?!)

[www.RaisingLittleDisciples.com/store](http://www.RaisingLittleDisciples.com/store)

# OUR FAMILY SECRET TO A HEALTHY SEASON

by HEIDI GARCIA, [@minimalisthomeschool](#)

Help keep your family healthy this season with homemade Elderberry Syrup!

(We recommend using Organic/Non GMO products whenever possible)

>> Recipe from Wellness Mama – visit [HERE](#) for more information!

## Ingredients

- 2/3 cup dried [black elderberries](#), or 1 1/3 cups fresh or frozen
- 3½ cups water
- 2 TBSP fresh or dried [ginger root](#)
- 1 tsp [cinnamon powder](#)
- ½ tsp [cloves](#) or clove powder
- 1 cup raw [honey](#)

## Instructions

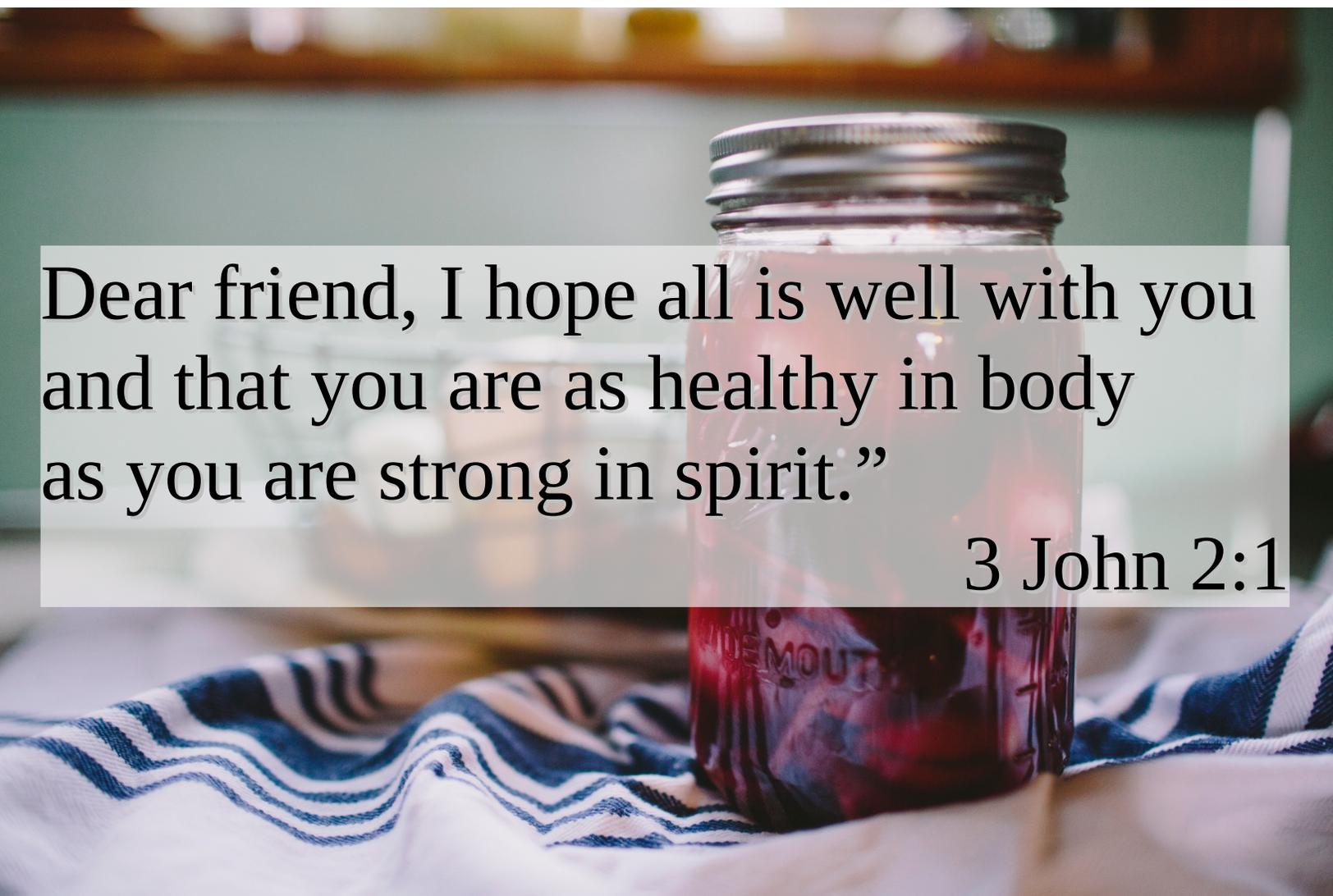
1. Pour water into medium saucepan and add elderberries, ginger, [cinnamon](#), and [cloves](#).
2. Bring to a boil and then cover and reduce to a simmer for about 45 minutes to an hour until the liquid has reduced by almost half.
3. Remove from heat and let cool until it is cool enough to be handled.
4. Mash the berries carefully using a spoon or other flat utensil.
5. Pour through a strainer into a glass jar or bowl.
6. Discard the elderberries and let the liquid cool to lukewarm.
7. When it is no longer hot, add the honey and stir well.
8. When the honey is well mixed into the elderberry mixture, pour the syrup into a quart sized mason jar or 16 ounce glass bottle of some kind.
9. Ta-da! You just made homemade elderberry syrup! Store in the fridge and take daily for its immune boosting properties. Some sources recommend taking only during the week and not on the weekends to boost immunity.

There are endless recipes online- some that include Apple Cider Vinegar (which I am excited to try), some with the spices, without-- feel free to play with it and find what fits your family best. It's super easy- and well worth it!

Our family takes  $\frac{1}{2}$ -1 tsp every day as a preventative medicine. I put a spoonful in our loose leaf, organic Rooibos tea each evening!

Any time we feel a bit of a cold or any somewhat yucky feeling coming on- we just double or triple up on the amount until we're back to 100%!

I credit this in part (we also try to eat natural foods, stay away from loads of sugar, and up our Vitamin C intake) but we went through this past winter without anything other than a couple cases of the sniffles! Especially with a horrible national season of flu outbreaks and a brand new baby in the house-- Elderberry Syrup is our homemade go to!



Dear friend, I hope all is well with you and that you are as healthy in body as you are strong in spirit.”

3 John 2:1

# “I DON’T WANT TO DO SCHOOL!”

by HEIDI GARCIA, [@minimalisthomeschool](#)

If we're being honest, we've all been at that point where the kids (or us) just didn't want to do school that day.. or week... or month.... So what do we do? How do we go about our homeschool life when the kids could care less, are flat out disobedient, or just utterly unengaged? Here's a little map of thought from my experiences.

Kids will push against school for many reasons. Determining what the root cause of the push back you are experiencing is key. Whenever I find myself getting some push back, the 'anti-school' grumpies- I try to go through these possibilities first:



**Is it because there is something else they would rather be doing?** Is it super nice outside? Did they just get a new Lego set they want to play with? Is there some new Minecraft world they're obsessing over? Usually if there is something else they would rather be doing, I let them. I know I have a hard time focusing on computer work if my mind is too wrapped up and excited over, say, a new magazine I'm dying to work on. ;) Sometimes allowing them a set time to go do that other thing (like- for 1 hour,

until after lunch, etc...) is all that's needed to make that work.

**Are they too excited for some activity or event that's coming up?** Maybe a new movie you want to watch, a place to go to, someone coming over, etc... My kids will work like rockstars if there's something big/exciting we're getting ready for BUT we have to get through school first.

**Do you have a daily rhythm where they know what to expect?** Maybe you're dropping the ball here- do you just spring 'school time' on them whenever, wherever, as it suits your time? I know I've been guilty of it-- and my kids pay the price. Get into a simple daily rhythm- one that works for your family. My family personally wakes up slow- we eat, have a Bible study, feed the chickens, and then get into our daily list of tasks (you can see them [HERE](#)) with school, have lunch, and then turn them free for the afternoon, sometimes hit up some electives, and whatever else life brings our way. They know what to expect.

**Is it because they hate what they're doing for school?** This is a big one- for years we've struggled with our oldest- due to his dyslexia he has had a strong aversion to most everything we had to do with our school plans. Reading, writing-- he'd lose his mind! I had to work consistently to adjust my plans to something that he liked, to be flexible in

finding activities that made learning fun for him. Talk with your kid(s) about your school activities, and listen to their feedback.

**Are they too young?** I see this one A LOT. Well meaning parents stressing full school schedules on the little ones. I don't push a mandatory daily "school" plan until our kids are about 7 years old. I wish I would have done better with this for our oldest, as I truly believe it would have made a huge difference. If you are homeschooling a kiddo under the age of 8- I can't recommend *Better Late Than Early* by Dr. Raymond and Dorothy Moore enough!!! You must read that book- common sense goes a long, long way!

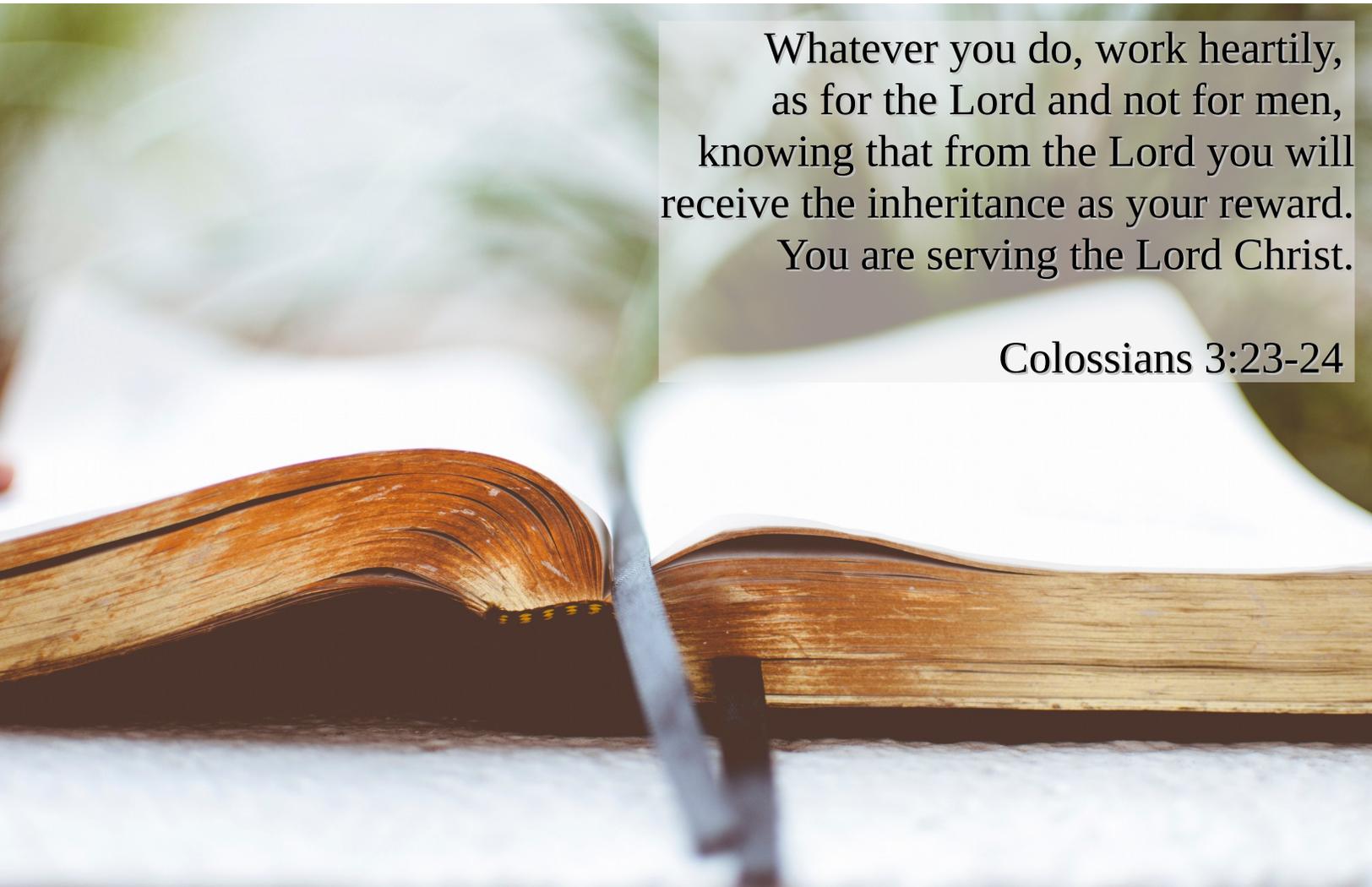
**Are you having heart issues?** Disagreeing with parents is one thing, we are all going to have a difference in thought and opinion. But then there are the heart issues- angers, jealousy, contempt, disobedience, etc... Rachel of *Thriving Home* has a great article [HERE](#) for more on this.

**Is your school boring?** Maybe you're packing on too much? Is it stressing them out? Pause. Sit back.

Have an unschool day/week/month-- let them lead based off of their interests and ideas. We should be fostering a life long love of learning in our children-- boring them to death probably isn't helping.

**Do they need a break?** I like to think we keep to a set schedule with planned breaks... but we don't. Some days we call it quits mid-day. Whether they were just done-- or I was, sometimes you can sense that they need a break (or you do). If they're getting stressed and you're losing your cool- take a break. Take the day, week, month- pause the school lessons and regroup. Dive into prayer, into scripture, seek guidance and wisdom. Trying to push through rarely works when everyone is losing it- and you're not setting a Godly example when you're pushed to your limits.

**Is there something else?** I'm sure there's a million and a half reasons I've missed- but know we're here for you! Reach out- we'd love to hear from you, offer up our prayers, and possibly some of our own experiences that may help. Contact us [HERE](#). ♥



Whatever you do, work heartily,  
as for the Lord and not for men,  
knowing that from the Lord you will  
receive the inheritance as your reward.  
You are serving the Lord Christ.

Colossians 3:23-24

# HOMESCHOOLING WITH BABY?

*Mom's share their tips for adding baby into your homeschool day!*

“I think that so much natural learning takes place with a new baby in the home. I'd say give yourself grace when it comes to the academics and instead encourage your school age children to be involved in the caring for the home and the newborn. There is so much learning that happens just in the rhythm and routine of daily life. If you feel like you aren't doing enough, read aloud while nursing a new baby as so much learning happens around a good book. ♥”



– Lacy, mom of 2 [@lacy.arrowsmith](https://www.instagram.com/lacy.arrowsmith)

“Breathe. Accept that it is absolutely ok if you only get one thing done in your check list for school. Depending on the age of the child, let go of the reins a little and give the responsibility of making sure an age appropriate task gets done.

Most important- it's ok to skip a day to snuggle and enjoy your children and watch movies for a whole day. You can't get that time back, and sometimes the older kids need the reminder they are still your babies.

But you CAN work school in on a Saturday.”



– Alexis, mom of 3

“My advice for homeschooling with a newborn would be

- 1) lower your expectations
- 2) be flexible and homeschool around the baby's schedule
- 3) take full advantage of nap times
- 4) get a baby carrier or wrap, I find I am able to accomplish more with a newborn when I baby wear
- 5) teach older siblings how to help out around the house, have them read to the young siblings, or assist with other age appropriate tasks”



– Kaycee, mom of 3 [@redbrickschoolhouse](https://www.instagram.com/redbrickschoolhouse)

“A sibling can learn so much about helping to care for a little one. It’s a life skill. And isn’t that the beauty of homeschool? To learn real life skills?! So, set aside the math for a bit and enjoy those fleeting moments of precious real life learning.

OR, you can turn the care into a math lesson... ‘Mommy went to bed last night a 9 o’clock but then I was awake with the baby from 12 to 1. And again from 4 to 5. I finally woke up at 7. How much sleep did Mommy get?’”



– Dorothy, mom of 4 [@at\\_home\\_with\\_kids](#)

“Have a schedule in place but give yourself grace.  
Lots and lots of grace!”



– Nicci, mom of 8 [@afarmhousefull](#)

I was a bit amazed at how little we did after baby #4 was born at the beginning of this year. And I was prepared to take it pretty lax for a bit upon her arrival. I think letting go of it all, having some simple workbooks around that the kids could still use to keep some sort of routine, plenty of educational things to watch, books to read, and snuggles upon snuggles! That time of coming together as an entire family to just soak up the newness of a sweet baby was such a special time for not only my husband and I, but for the kiddos too! We never “technically” finished up our school year, but no one’s seemed to notice. ;)



– Heidi, mom of 4 [@minimalisthomeschool](#)

Be patient with yourself. One of my favorite scriptures is Psalm 34:14 “Seek peace and pursue it” If getting right back into your homeschool routine brings you the most peace- then do it. But if taking a break and just soaking up all the newborn goodness is going to cause the least amount of stress in your home; don’t feel bad to do that instead. The newborn days go by so fast so don’t allow outside pressures or “mom guilt” to dictate how you spend them. ♥



– Elizabeth, mom of 4 [@fortheloveofhomeschooling](#)

# HOW SHOULD CHRISTIAN FAMILIES HANDLE HALLOWEEN?

As seen on the blog, [Christ-Centered Mama](#) – See full post [HERE!](#) ♥  
by SARAH LIBERTY, [@christcenteredmama](#)

Many Christian families have questions and doubts about Halloween.

Is it appropriate for Christians to celebrate Halloween?

What does the Bible say about Halloween?

Is it possible to redeem Halloween? To have a Christian Halloween?



*Christ-Centered Mama*  
Motherhood to the Glory of God

Some might feel that it is 100% unacceptable for Christians to acknowledge Halloween, and in fact, **I've been there**. However, I've come to realize that there's more than one acceptable answer for Christians. The Holy Spirit works through us to accomplish goals that we cannot understand.

If you feel convicted to modify your celebrations or lack thereof on October 31st, that conviction **might** be coming from the Holy Spirit. He might be prompting you to protect your family more for this season, or He might be prompting you to open your arms to your neighborhood with love.

*It comes down to this: If you feel it is wrong to celebrate Halloween but you do it anyway, that's sin.*

Does that sound harsh? Let's look at a Biblical parallel for clarity.

There was a controversy in the early Church that Paul had to address. Some people felt that eating meat sacrificed to idols was **sinful**. Almost all meat available in the markets was dedicated to false Gods, so some Christians decided that it would be better to never eat meat again than to support that practice. It seems Paul wasn't one of them, and he stood in a moderate position.

*“But if you have doubts about whether or not you should eat something, you are sinning if you go ahead and do it. For you are not following your convictions. If you do anything you believe is not right, you are sinning.” [Romans 14:23](#)*

So. If you feel that you should not celebrate Halloween but you let your children's friends, your

friends, or your family force you into celebrating anyway, **that's a sin**.

If you feel that Halloween is permissible but you judge other Christians who do hold back, that's also sin. Paul writes some surprising words to the Roman church:

*“As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him. Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand. One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.”*

[Romans 14:1-5](#)

That sounds like it's referring to American holidays, but Halloween was not even invented yet, so it wasn't the controversy of the day. It's actually referring to some new Christians who wanted to continue the required Jewish tradition of fasting once or twice a week, not out of personal conviction, but rather regulating everyone to do it.

So, it's not talking about Halloween, but there's a Biblical principle that I'd like for you to notice. That last phrase of [Romans 14:5](#) is golden.

*“Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.”*

On matters that do not have explicit commands in Scripture, there is Christian liberty. For example: the Bible clearly says to not kill. But the Bible doesn't particularly say anything about capitalism, for instance.

What? Are you saying it's okay to celebrate Halloween!?!

Hold your horses. There is an explicit command that Christians need to be aware of that relates to Halloween.

The Bible makes it clear that Spiritual warfare is **not** to be messed with.

Satan is real and so are his tricks. We shouldn't participate in Halloween the same way the rest of the world does.

The Bible makes this clear.

*“For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness.”*

[1 Thessalonians 5:5](#)

and...

*“Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”*

[1 Peter 5:8](#)

If you are a Christian family trying to navigate Halloween, here's the options as I see them:

1- Turn Your Porch Light Off (Or, go leave your house and do an unrelated activity)

**Pros:** You'll protect your family.

You'll probably be able to start conversations with those around you about why you choose to skip Halloween. Use it as an opportunity to share about the Holy God.

If the Holy Spirit seems to be calling you to do this, you're right to do it.

**Cons:** You might miss an opportunity to introduce Christ to a neighbor.

Less candy, but... hey. Maybe not if you make a trip to a candy store.

2- Celebrate Reformation Day instead

Do you know what Reformation Day is? Last year was the 600th anniversary of Martin Luther nailing his 95 Theses to the wall of his local church. He was a monk and meant to reform the Catholic church and hold fast to the Scripture, particularly regarding how people are saved. It's a great conversation starter to talk to your kids about what you believe about the Bible. My friend, Cassie at Reformed Mama, wrote a [roundup of resources about Reformation Day](#) if you want more information.

**Pros:** You can use the Halloween season as an opportunity to speak to your kids about church history and apologetics.

If the Holy Spirit seems to be calling you to do this, you're right to do it.

**Cons:** No dressing up, although I do know some people that dress up as Martin Luther or other reformers.

3- Welcome kids on your front door and hand out Gospel Tracts or Church invitations (Make sure to include the **GOOD** candy or a fun special treat!)

**Pros:** You might make new friends. You might even introduce someone to Christ for the first time. If the Holy Spirit seems to be calling you to do this, you're right to do it.

**Cons:** You might encounter hatred from parents who don't want you to invite their child to church. (Even though they are on your doorstep ) You also might encounter children or teens dressed as characters that are too scary for younger children.

Use October 31st to guide your children and to win the lost.

There's more than one way to do this. We don't celebrate Halloween like the rest of the world does, but there is liberty and grace for Christian families. If you are trying to be spiritually intentional with how you parent on October 31st, and listening to the Holy Spirit's guidance, you are doing your job.

***Christ won over the grave. Our lives are to be examples of that power.***



My name is Sarah. My husband is Benjamin and he's a family pastor; I love to serve the Lord with him. I'm a midwestern stay-at-home mom, pianist, wanna-be photographer, and encourager of young women and Christians seeking to grow in their faith.

My husband and I were blessed with our son, Cyrus after trying for 3 years. We were pleasantly surprised to learn that God blessed us with another child, and I gave birth in March of 2018 to our daughter, Roseanna.

I love being a mom to both a newborn and a toddler. Their stages are so fun, and seeing life through the eyes of my toddler is a serious blessing.

*Children are a heritage from the Lord. The desire of my heart is to encourage my husband and love the children that God has blessed me with and that He will use them to glorify His name.*

# HOME RENOVATION, \$100 AT A TIME

by HEIDI GARCIA

Our poor old house is a disaster. And no matter how much I clean- it still feels grungy. I guess we should do something about it... but more of a “poor man’s” style than a “Chip and Jo” bedazzling.

We’ve moved. A lot. And in each home we rent- we go all out! We paint, we put in new fixtures, we do this... yearly. Then when we finally moved into our current house-- we stopped. It’s an older ranch home built in the 70’s, that has seen the wear and tear of being a rental for far too long. But feeling a great weight of conviction over my (and the mainstream society’s) transforming our homes into worshipable idols, we did nothing. We didn’t patch the holes in the walls, we didn’t paint, we didn’t add light fixtures. We have stayed for 3 years now and I think the time has come. I think we need to do some fixin’ up’in.

Our basis here:

*We are not fixing stuff up because our hearts are in a sinful place.* There is much obsession, idol worship even, of our homes in today’s culture. Picture perfect homes that we obsess over, stress over, and are constantly being horrible stewards of the financial means we have been given because we desire these ridiculously perfect homes when we have neighbors that are struggling. Again- I am not saying this to anyone in particular, I was saying it to myself as I felt convicted, but I’m sure many of us are guilty of this.

*We want to use our home as our base of operations for our ministry.* We have some issues that definitely need to be taken care of here to aid us in doing so. Not that we’ll let them hold us back from opportunities to serve, but stuff needs to be addressed. Like yesterday.

*We are broke.* Like, struggling to pay bills as we transition away from our business but in desperate need of showing this home that the Lord has led us to, some love and attention. He will provide. But we will be keeping ourselves in check to take care of things in a purposeful but cost effective way.

First project? Our master bathroom. Mainly because-- the mold. Yup. It’s always had issues, it’s always been hideous, but as of late- the mold is growing on the walls and ceilings and we can’t seem to keep it away. No can do’s-ville baby doll. We’re fixing this bad boy right up.

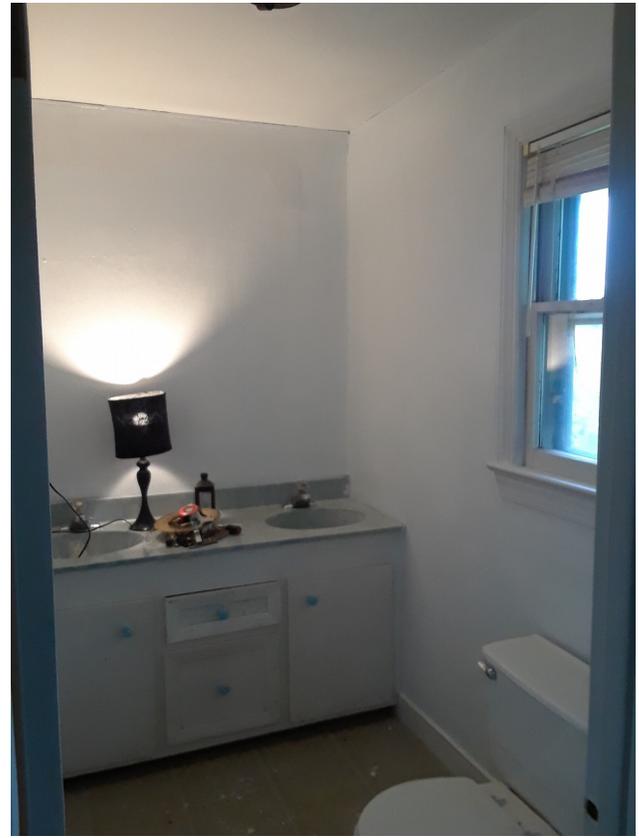
The plan? To tuck away \$100 at a time and fix as much as we can!

We started in our bathroom- I bought a \$30 can of [Mold Killing Primer](#). I also scraped the popcorn ceiling off- guys. Have popcorn ceilings?! Getting rid of them is so easy! I am beyond fired up to do so in the rest of the house now. It's like the most amazing thing ever to do. For real. We covered every inch of our bathroom in this primer- it's amazing! And even just having the walls and ceiling painted with this makes it feel like we're in a luxury resort over here!

BEFORE:



AFTER:



We've also pulled up the old vinyl flooring and are getting ready to do the floors with ARDEX Feather Finish cement underlayment! We bought it a while back to use to redo the counter tops, but I've decided on something else there, so we're going to do this for our bathroom floors. I'm really excited to try it out! A bag of feather finish is usually \$20-30, but we already have a bag on hand.

*In this installment of \$100 Reno-* we had \$70 left after the primer was bought, so we purchased a copper bowl, an \$18 faucet, and are using some scrap wood along with some tapered legs to DIY build a new vanity complete with vessel bowl sink. Eeeeks! The bowl and faucet just arrived- so we're eager to get to work on it. We'll also be pouring the flooring in with this first step! Luckily we already have some white paint on hand too, so that will be what I use on the ceiling.

*\$100 Reno #1:* Scraped ceilings, primer-ed everything, cement floors, DIY mid century inspired vanity with vessel sink

*\$100 Reno #2 Plan:* Faux shiplap walls (the walls are in terrible shape due to decades of wallpaper abuse, shiplap to the rescue), primer and paint for said wall treatment, copper accents, and a new shower head.





H A N D M A D E L I N E N A P P A R E L

# JOSEPHINE'S LOT



@ J O S E P H I N E S L O T

# HE DOES SO MUCH WITH A 'YES'

by TIFFANY ANDERSON, [@tiffany.rene.anderson](https://www.instagram.com/tiffany.rene.anderson)



On a semi-whim in July, my husband and I decided to sell most of our belongings, move our family across the ocean, and live in an RV full-time traveling around the country, working and homeschooling on the road for a few years. We'd been in Hawai'i for nearly a decade together. But both of us have historically been land and ocean leapers. I lived in Thailand for three years teaching, and my husband had lived in South America and Mexico.

We met at our church in Hawai'i and started casually hanging out going scuba diving. Because

that's how most people fall in love, right? In a cave with a shark and those flattering neoprene suits.

This month, we'll have been married for seven years. My favorite kind of dates are those where we go for a hike, or kayak, or watch the sunset and dream. We go over our family mission and vision, we pray, and we work through each season change and how our family thrives best. We have two bear-cubs-of-boys, a 5 year old and an almost 3 year old.



And for all of us, we do best in nature. From day 1 we started paving a new way for our family, completely different from how either of us grew up. In June, after Cory and I took a trip, just us, to Yosemite and Zion National Parks, I caught a vision of simple living.

*The simplicity and slowing down of camping and being outside was a haven in itself. A kind of balm.*

*A sliver of peace. A living-in-the-moment. I craved more of it. Less busy. Less stuff. I found passports at the national parks and imagined the boys stamping theirs at each one we went to. I couldn't wait to take them. I tried to imagine summer trips when they were older. I hadn't quite caught the vision of full-time RV living. Those lands that are still wild and protected and just shout in a-supernatural-love-note, "I created all of this wonder for YOU"- Love God, lulled me into His arms. And when we got home, and I would be quiet, rocking on the chair on our porch or driving down the mountain to the beach, I could hear it was time to grow. To get uncomfortable and live radically. To trust. And to go.*

*God has nudged my heart to grow and go for years in specific ways. I remember when I transferred colleges and moved out of state when it didn't make sense. When I moved overseas right after graduating, to a country on the other side of the planet for three years. And then from there, I moved straight to Hawai'i having never been there or knowing anyone. Each time, I feel more alive. Find more of the True God and more of the true me. Each time I grow. And heal. And see The Father's steadfast love and faithfulness. Since we launched a few weeks ago, with slightly trembling wings, my vision is already clearer. My heart more steady. And my courage bolder. **He does so much with a yes.***

We are going against the cultural norm and choosing a lifestyle and work that aligns with our family mission and vision. We want to be together more. I want the boys to know their father. I want to work together. I didn't know this until I heard a friend, Jeff Bethke, share it at Mops, but most fathers didn't go off to work and leave their family until the industrial revolution. The work was done with the family or from the home, downstairs at their storefront or on their farm. And they were

together. “One of the most life giving things that a family can do, is for the Dad to adopt a belief that the home is his domain too. That it’s not just the place of resting from work, but it’s actually the place of real work.” –Jeff Bethke. However “work” looks, Cory and I are both working in the home and we believe it’s the most important work we do. It’s where saving-the-world starts. That’s what Mother Teresa said.



We are choosing experiences and family over stuff. And it feels so freeing. Letting go for something better. It’s scary. It’s risky. It takes faith. Radical living and doing something different to have different results. Getting uncomfortable to grow and change. **That’s worth it.** All the shiny things don’t satisfy anyways. King Solomon had forests, vineyards, hundreds of wives and houses for each

of them, gardens, epic parties, years of vacation and none of it filled the groove of eternity in his heart. So I try to remember that wisdom.

**Have I been a little terrified during it all when we were selling most of our things, and moving?**

Ummm, yes. Am I going to let it tell me what to do? Nope. You don’t have a voice here, fear. And you are not messing up my chill vibes. #byefelicia #talktothehand #iamnotafrail #itsallgood #wevegotthis #allthefeels #doitscared.

Finding an RV has been an adventure all on it’s own. I had an idea of how things were going to go. A vision of remodeling our fifth wheel, and well let’s just say...

**I’m learning to lean into the stuff-doesn’t-always-happen-as-planned plan and to trust God with His surprises.**

And, there’s a real peace in it. It’s much more fun this way too. Trying to maintain my perceived control was quite the wrestle.

We’re ready to launch into our new rhythm and this next chapter. We just need that RV. Just that insy-tinsy detail we’re still working out. In the mean time, in the no-man’s-land, hurry up and wait, what-seems-like-an-in-between season, I’m trying to practice being present. I’m trying to sit in this uncomfortable place right here. The imaginary page that sits right in the middle of an ending to one chapter and the start of another one.

That imaginary page turns into an entire chapter on its own. If I just look, really look, I can see words all over the paper. Words with adventure and growth, and joy and faithfulness. Abundance. And life. More than I could ever imagine. Right in the middle of no-man’s-land. **The place called Waiting, is a place all on it’s own.**



Join us on the adventure. I'm on instagram [@tiffany.rene.anderson](https://www.instagram.com/tiffany.rene.anderson), and I'll be sharing next month **right here**, about what we're packing with us for toys and homeschool resources, and how we're going to make road schooling work. What our rhythm looks like. How will we survive without a library card or a plethora of beautiful wooden toys and manipulatives.

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own  
understanding;  
in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths  
straight.  
*PROVERBS 3:5-6*

*(FIRST 3 PHOTOS ARE COMPLIMENTS OF [KELSEY HETZLER PHOTOGRAPHY](https://www.kelseyhetzler.com))*

# BUT GOD.

by KRISTIN DAHMAN [@thequietwayhome](#)

I know that every homeschooling mother says it and I am not the exception. I never thought that I would homeschool my children. Let's face it I never thought that I would have six children either.

**But God...**God ALWAYS has better plans than we have for ourselves doesn't he?



I may have questioned him along the way but he has always been faithful to lay things on my heart in such a way as to prepare me for whatever season he has had for me. For instance, right after my husband and I were married my fervent prayer was that I would have a better prayer life and a better relationship with the Lord.

So, guess how he answered my prayers?

He didn't just automatically give me a perfect relationship with him or even a perfect prayer life.

**What he did do was he gave me a great opportunity to pray.**

Two months after my husband and I were married we found out that I was pregnant with twins. I found in that season that there was no lack of prayer in my life.

As time went on he placed the desire on my heart with each child that we would conceive, one by one.

Fast forward four children later, two girls and two boys, all who were around two years apart and I heard that still small voice calling to me yet again to a new season of parenthood.

*This* time it was different though.

*This* time it seemed urgent and necessary.

*This* time it WAS different.

*This* sweet babe was a little boy whom we named Isaac.

You know like Isaac who God spared his life and whom he saved from certain death?

At about twelve weeks into the pregnancy we learned that Isaac's life was compromised by a subchorionic hemorrhage in my uterus near the

placenta. Surely, I thought that his name was telling of the outcome of his story. God saved Abraham's son, why then wouldn't he also save mine?

I'll give you a hint. I've mentioned it before.

God ALWAYS has a better plan than we have for ourselves. **ALWAYS.**

How could our son losing his life before it even began be a better plan?

Simply this.

It is just as Jesus' death was a better plan even though he didn't deserve to die. God used his death to save his children.



Now, I didn't come to feeling this way immediately. Not when my arms were empty and my heart was aching and I thought that life could not go on.

A couple of weeks after our son died I found myself taking off in the car in a fit of anger. It was pouring rain just as the tears were pouring down my face so I pulled over. I pulled into a church parking lot. Here I was, angry with God, and I wind up pulling over in the parking lot of the house of God. I sat there in the pouring rain just outside of the church screaming at God.

**“WHY?!”**

It was the only question that I could utter in my groanings.

*Looking back I know that He was right there and that He could hear the groanings of my heart. He knew right where I was and just how I was hurting just as He knew me by name and had numbered every hair on my head. It was in that place that I finally surrendered to His will and accepted my lot. There was no other place to go other than where He was leading me and to be honest, I didn't have the strength to go on without Him.*

Fast forward a few months and I found myself invited to join a local women's Bible study that also had a children's Bible study for homeschoolers that met at the same time.

I had just finished an online Bible study entitled "Made for Community." I knew that God was once again preparing my heart to do great works in my life. He was leading me to step out in my grief and back into the world. I knew that not only did I need this but so did my children. This was clearly where God was leading us.

So one autumn morning we walked through the doors of **THAT** church.

**THAT** church where the rain had poured down with my tears.

**THAT** church where I had brought all of my anger to him, who I thought had abandoned me, only to find that he was leading me home.

Just as his Son had died for me for my salvation, he had used the death of my son as a part of my salvation story.

**THAT** church we now call home. We have come to know the people inside as friends and family; God has used those people to help us to heal and to point us to God's truths. I never thought that I could ever be grateful for walking through these trials but now

I can see the unfathomable beauty in God's love for us.

How great his love must be to allow such pain in his own children to draw us closer to him and use it to bring us to our salvation.

God always ALWAYS has better plans than we have for ourselves.

**ALWAYS.**

God continues to write our story. Since the loss of our son Isaac, he has blessed us with two more daughters for a total of six children. Our homeschool is thriving again and we are so grateful for our church family and our homeschool community.

To find ourselves in a season that is so life-giving has really breathed life into us. I'd like to think that God sent our son as a part of our salvation story.

*“But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.”*

*1 Thessalonians 4:13-14*

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Kristin Dahman is a wife and mother to six children and two in the nearer presence of Jesus.

Her family consists of her and her husband of thirteen years, fraternal twin girls who are twelve, two boys, ten and eight, and two more little girls who are four and three months old.

They are a biblically based Christians and have been homeschooling for over seven years. Their homeschool is geared towards Charlotte Masons methods.

Kristin is also the creator of the @livinghomeschool community.

Outside of the home their family participates in many groups within their church.

They are striving towards a minimal home, clean eating, clean household products, AND following where God leads.

**CONNECT WITH KRISTIN!**

[@THEQUIETWAYHOME](#) + [@LIVINGHOMESCHOOL](#)



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# HOW CAN WE PRAY FOR YOU?

"Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray.

Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise."

-- James 5:13

It's been on my heart, but I would really like to open up a prayer request forum. "Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted," 2 Timothy 3:12 -- as we keep Jesus Christ our Lord as our focus each and every single day and spend the time we have to draw closer to Him and to train up our children in the truth of the scriptures we will indeed be under attack. We will also be blessed by the Lord our God -- "Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his wondrous works!" 1 Chronicles 16:9.

I would love to know how to pray for you and your family- you can email us [HERE](#), message us on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) us, or leave a comment on [YouTube](#)! Whatever way gets it to us.

I also would like to ask everyone here to take a moment each week to pray for one another. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 instructs us to "pray without ceasing" and how important that is!

"The Lord bless you and keep you" -- Numbers 6:24

# PRAYER REQUESTS

## Jennifer + her family



: This is what it looks like after a huge sob fest with our boys, as we told them the news. The cancer is back. Nodules throughout my abdomen. Of course, they are pushing for more chemo combined with immunotherapy. But it has to be a different kind. But along with that, is the news that this cancer will come back in half the time it did this time. Then they would switch up to another chemo combo, and then the cancer would return in half of that time. So the news is that this is not curable. They are offering me bits of time. My gut tells me no. I do not want to live my last breaths earthside, with chemo throughout the whole time. How it destroys your body beyond what cancer already does. **But there is hope. Because I trust in Jesus.** And if I do not receive healing earthside, I WILL receive healing with my maker. The heartache for my boys is real. But the joy of the Lord is steadfast. We are considering a few natural healing protocols and still digesting all of this news. Because you have been a support to our family, I wanted to share our walk with you. But at this time, I'm going to put my phone away for awhile- and love on my boys. Thank you all. For carrying us. We are ever grateful.

Please join our family, and many others, in lifting Jennifer, her husband Scot, and their three precious boys!

Follow Jennifer on Instagram, [@jennifernaraki](https://www.instagram.com/jennifernaraki), to see their journey.

*'Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.'*

2 CORINTHIANS 4:16-19



