

A Heart That Kneels to Fear

By Chris Davis

It was the all-too-familiar phone call I receive almost daily at work. A home schooling mom had purchased a popular grammar program for her 8 year old son.

It wasn't working for him; so she called me.

"My son and I have this great relationship," said Mom. "But, just yesterday he said to me, 'Mom. I hate this but I don't want to fight with you, either.'"

She continued, "So, what I've decided to do is purchase [she named a different grammar program] from you. What do you think?"

I thought about all the seminars I've given, all the CD sets I've sold and even the book we wrote about home schooling. "Do I have to answer this question with every single home schooling mom in the world?" I thought. "How does the enemy have such access to people's minds, anyway!"

To the mom I said, "To be honest with you, it's not your choice of grammar programs that is important to me. It's the fact that you are trying to make an 8 year old learn grammar in the first place. Sure, you could purchase [the other program she had mentioned], and your child would learn what a 'noun' is and what a 'verb' is. But, why? What's the point?"

In my mind I could see Mom's face: it was now wrinkled with worry.

"But all the other children his age who are in school are learning grammar," said Mom, with a little panic in her voice.

"Yes," I responded. "But is that the reason your son is home with you—to be in school? Is what you are doing with him working for both of you? Are you maintaining the great relationship you have with him? Is there anything in this 8 year old that reaches out to learn grammar?"

Avoiding all my questions, she said, "But doesn't he need to know grammar?"

"That's a very important question that most parents never ask," I said. "But, more important than that question is the one that asks, 'Does he need to know grammar at eight years old?' Let's say that you decide your son should not leave home without having learned grammar. OK. That's fine. And, even though the most grammar an adult knows is the difference between a noun and a verb, learning grammar certainly won't hurt him. It may even be beneficial to him."

There was silence on the other end of the line. Then Mom said in a small voice, "The truth is, I don't care if he never learns grammar."

"What are you concerned about?" I asked.

"I'm concerned that my son will not be well educated," she confessed. "I'm concerned that he will have gaps in his learning. I'm concerned that someone will discover what a bad parent I am because my son doesn't know the things he should know. I'm concerned that he will grow up and not have all that he needs"

She was only articulating what most home schooling mothers feel.

I was concerned, too; but not for the same reasons this mother was expressing. I was concerned about the level of fear I hear whenever I talk to home schooling moms.

"You are not really concerned," I finally said. "You are afraid. You can use the word, 'concern' if you want to; but that's just a nice word for being afraid. You are afraid. And, you might even be weary, worn out, or sick of trying to make things work like so many other home schooling moms I meet. What is that, anyway?"

"Yeah," said Mom. "What is that?" Her tone was stronger now. "If I did what was in my heart to do, not only would we not do grammar, we would do a lot of things that aren't labeled 'school' but that my very bright—very inquisitive—8 year old would love to be doing. AND, he would probably learn a lot of things those other kids in school don't know because they don't have a chance to learn some of the things THEY want to know!"

"So," I said, interpreting her words back to her, "What I hear you saying is that there are things in your heart that you want to be doing with your son, and there are things you are driven to do by the fears you live with."

"I guess that's about it," she sighed.

"OK, then. Who is going to win?" I asked. "Who is going to submit to whom? Will your heart kneel to your fears; or, will your fears kneel to your heart?"

I offered a suggestion. "Why don't you consider the things that the Father seems to bless: Things you do with, and for, your son that work; things that strengthen your relationship; things that bring life and joy and that causes your child to ask questions and show the natural inquisitiveness that he possesses—those things that are in your heart to do? Then, think of the things you do with, and for, your son that don't work; things that aren't blessed; things that cause stress and bore both of you—the things that you do only so you can dull, or appease your fear of failure?"

She began to cry. She was being given permission to do what she wanted to do.

Will it work out if we do what is in our heart as we raise our children?

The Bible says that Jesus set us free so that we could be free. Pretty simple, huh? Not "set us free" so that we could be better at doing what others tell us to do. But free from what binds us to fear. It takes faith to be free and to trust that—when it's all said and done—we will have done the right things by our children.

Your fears will kneel to faith. The Father of these children has created them and then given them to you to help Him raise them. Have faith that you know what is right. Make your fears kneel to your heart.

[This article is not meant to represent any particular individual but, rather, many individuals with whom I have spoken. I am available for counseling by phone. Call the office at 1-888-2-ELIJAH if you would like to schedule an appointment.]