



The Relaxed Home Schooler®s Newsletter

July/August, 2015



Coming Up:

Mary will be offering some classes in her home in the Acworth, GA area this fall for teenagers...several different math classes, French, political science, economics, etc.

They will be beginning after Labor Day.

For information, email her mary.e.hood@gmail.com

Mary is available to do Relaxed Home Schooling Workshops, talks on Common Core, SAT prep workshops for teens, or workshops or keynote addresses at homeschool conventions. For info, go to our website

URL:

<http://www.archersforthe lord.org> and click on the the "speaker's page" or contact her directly at mary.e.hood@gmail.com

Welcome! Hope we help you to relax and enjoy life at home with your kids!

From Mary:

Hello again!

Welcome to our e-newsletter.

Lately I've been writing about some of the people who have influenced the movement, people like John Holt, Raymond Moore, etc. However, in this issue I'm focusing on some moms and how they are learning to balance their work as homeschooling mothers with the need to earn some money for their families. Hope you enjoy the change!

In addition to writing this newsletter, I am a regular columnist with The Old Schoolhouse Magazine. We also have a facebook group if you'd like to join...relaxedhomeschoolers-ARCHERS. If you have trouble finding it, friend me and I'll invite you.

If you have an idea or would like to submit something for our spotlight section, email me at mary.e.hood@gmail.com.

Feel free to forward this to your friends. Please also come and visit us at our website

URL:
<http://archersforthe lord.org>

This issue is discussing the "Proverbs 31" woman and how it relates to our roles as homeschooling mothers.

This has been on my mind recently because of the series of articles I've been writing for The Old Schoolhouse Magazine on the roles of the homeschooling mom. (By the way, the column I write for them, which has been called "The Ordinary Home Schooler" has recently changed titles to "The Relaxed Homeschooler®")

The focus section is spotlighting a young mom that I've known since she was a teenager herself, working at the dance studio where my daughter, my son, and myself all took lessons. She is now a homeschooling mom to a trio of bouncy boys and manages to run an internet business at the same time!

I've also included an article from the archives, focusing on another mom who homeschooled and ran a business at the same time. To avoid looking like advertising, I've left the names of the specific businesses out, but if you are curious, you can contact the two moms directly using their email addresses.

Notice the special promotion we are doing on our website this summer! Make a donation of \$25 to receive the full RHS workshop series on MP3, plus the fall retreat with Chris Davis and myself, also on MP3, as well as my common core talk. Plus, the first 25 people will be entered into a drawing to win a homemade quilt! This is really an amazing offer and will not be repeated any time soon!

Spotlight On:

Sara McFalls, Homeschooling Mom & Business Woman

I first met Sara when she was still a teenager, employed as receptionist at the dance studio where my children and I took lessons. She always struck me as a particularly calm, mature teenager during my normal dealings with her. Then one night I backed up in the parking lot and hit her car! The way she responded made me even more appreciative of her maturity and calm cool demeanor!

Although Sara wasn't homeschooled herself, she danced and went to school with many homeschoolers, and says that sometimes she felt everyone was homeschooled except her!

After Sara grew up and became a mom, she decided to homeschool her own children when the oldest turned two. Her husband was a university professor and they decided to be purposeful at home about educating him and his younger brothers as they were born. They never did sit down and have formal schooling, they just learned through life all the time, and she was amazed at how much they were picking up in that way.

When she had a 3 year old and a 1 year old, Sara created a blog, inspired by a friend who had paid her mortgage with her blogging income. Determined to make a go of it, Sara worked hard, sacrificing evenings, nap times, and weekends to write her posts. She networked with bigger bloggers, and soon her page views were strong.



As the money began coming in, she quit the dance teaching she had been doing in the evenings, and focused on her growing family and her blogging business. She put in a lot of hours, probably 20 a week during nap time, evenings, and on weekends when her husband could watch the kids. The time paid off and her blog really grew! All the time she was still spending lots of time during the day with her children (then three bouncy boys, 4, 2, and a newborn), learning through life, doing lots of art and reading. She said, "They were still learning even though I did nothing formal."

About this time, she was approached by a big blogger to join an essential oils team. That business also took off and became so successful that Sara and her family have been able to give a lot more to missions and ministries, save for retirement, and get little extras for her household that they weren't able to afford before. Plus, she has been sent on several all-expense paid trips that she earned for reaching a certain sales volume.

Next year, Sara's oldest will be six, and will be participating in Classical Conversations. The two oldest will be in the program and she will be doing a little more formal schooling with them. However, she says that she doesn't do a lot of the extra school work connected with the program, and also trained herself the past year to only work at her job during nap time and evenings. She hires a babysitter to come over once a week for 4 hours so she can work. She says she's been amazed at how much she can get done in those four short hours! It helps her tremendously!

She says that she is still able to have dinner on the table almost every night, but sometimes the cleanliness of the house and the laundry suffers, which sometimes gets to her. It's not perfect, of course, but it is all working out very well.

Sara has been in touch with me and often comments on our facebook page. She says that her laid back approach to homeschooling, which she picked up through the influence of our ARCHERS organization, has just given her supernatural peace that this is the way she is supposed to do everything for now. She states that her ability to relax and enjoy her homeschooling has allowed her to have her own business as well.

Recently, Sara commented that there were a number of stressed out mothers of four year olds at a recent program she attended. She said she was so glad to be beyond all that, and that she learned how to relax, and has been able to balance her desire to homeschool her children with her need to make a little extra money for the family.

That's why I chose Sara for our model "Proverbs 31" mom! Not because she is perfect, but because she is managing to thrive, and keep in balance during a very busy stage of life. Even more importantly, she is managing to keep herself centered and rooted in her family, while still pursuing outside interests and making some extra money for the family.

You can reach Sara at Ksmcfall@gmail.com if you'd like to learn more about her business or read her blog.

The Proverbs 31 Woman:

By Mary Hood, Ph.D.

Many devotionals have been written concerning the Proverbs 31 woman. She is probably one of the most revered women in the entire Bible, being set up on a pedestal and made to be a role model for all of us.

But who was she, really?

The answer was that she was a fictional character! At the start of the chapter, it states that these are the words of King Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him. Scholars disagree over who King Lemuel was. Some think it is just a pseudonym for King Solomon, which would make his mom Bathsheba. Since there is no King Lemuel referenced in the writings of the Hebrew people, another possibility is that he was a foreign king, but it is unlikely that the words of a foreign king would have found their way into the book of proverbs.

If his mom was really Bathsheba, we all know that she learned a lot of lessons the hard way. Whether or not she was a willing participant, she participated in extra-marital sex and birthed a child by someone other than her husband. Later married to King David, she undoubtedly learned a lot about the various problems that can happen when a man has a penchant for taking numerous women as their wives. Remember that many of the psalms he wrote were composed as he was in hiding because one of his own sons was trying to kill him!

None of this really matters, though. In my opinion, the salient point is that whoever Lemuel was, he was a king and he still valued the advice that his mother gave him enough to write them down as a proverb. That is homeschooling at its finest! Since character development and the beginning of wisdom are some of my own highest goals as a homeschooling mom, I would be tickled pink if one of my boys someday referenced the words I spoke to him in this manner.

Whoever King Lemuel was, and whoever his mom was, she was clearly painting a portrait for him of the kind of woman she hoped he would marry. That's why I called her a "fictional character"...she is meant as an ideal and a role model. This is not an actual portrait of a real woman.

It reminds me of all the articles in the homeschooling magazines that portray women whose families are all dressed in identical outfits that the mom apparently made on her treadle sewing machine. You can almost smell the homemade bread baking in the background. Everyone is smiling in the picture and there are no problems whatsoever.

That isn't real life, folks!

So if the proverbs 31 woman isn't real, what positive things can we learn from her fictional story?

The most important one, I believe, is that this woman is clearly centered in her own household. She sews, she gives to the poor, she buys fields, she plants vineyards, she delivers girdles to the merchants, she exercises, she speaks with wisdom. The one thing she doesn't do is have an outside job.

While I certainly don't want to imply that any of you who have outside jobs are making a mistake, I've always believed that it is very difficult to basically serve three masters...God, your husband, and an outside employer. The one time I had such an outside employer, my own kids were grown up already. Even then, I found that having to do things on his schedule, with the inherent stress that comes from outside deadlines, turned me haggard really quickly. If I had been a homeschooling mom of young children at that time, it never would have worked. Of course, that was an appraisal job. Not all jobs would have been quite as stressful as that one.

Nevertheless, I strongly urge young moms that, if they really need a way to make extra money for their family, they try to find a way where they are their own boss, and where they work with their home as their base. The articles in this newsletter about two moms who do just that will give you a feel for what I think is the ideal to strive for.

The Proverbs 31 woman was clearly a driven woman, someone who spent almost every waking hour working and achieving things for her family. However, she also took care of her own needs. She "girded her loins with strength and strengtheneth her arms" (went to the gym?). She made herself nice clothing, and dressed in purple (which was considered a rich, kingly color at the time).

We must also remember that the customs of the time were naturally reflected in the Bible verses. Back then, there was no "homeschooling movement", so there is no mention of learning algebra or taking her kids to co-op classes. Few of us will actually hold our hands on the distaff at any point in a typical day, and even fewer have a staff of household maidens (servant girls) to take care of at the start of the day.

Yet we can learn a lot from this fictional woman! We can learn to center our lives on our own households, to make sure our husband's hearts are safe with us, to speak wisely and with kindness in our tongue. We can get up early, and spend our days productively. We can garden, and sew, and reach out our hands to the poor. We can try to find a way to make some extra money for the family, while still retaining our own balance. If we do all this, we can be sure that ultimately, our own works will praise us in the gates, and we will be called blessed....even if sometimes that isn't exactly what our kids say to us in the morning when they rise up!

The bottom line is, the Proverbs 31 woman is a role model; a representation of the ideal woman that this mother hoped her kingly son would find. Did he? Well, if he was really Solomon, the answer is, he found a whole bunch of women, and some of them were hardly the picture of perfection his mom would have hoped for. Even so, he listened to her, and he wrote out her ideals for us all to read. Nobody's perfect, but the more we can look like the woman Lemuel's mom described, the more we can look at least a little like a Proverbs 31 woman, the more likely we will be to stay balanced and full of joy.

From the Archives: Do What? AND Homeschool???

By Sandra Kay Koch

Originally printed in "The Relaxed Homeschooler's Lifestyle", a prototype magazine we published in Spring, 2009. (Hopefully to be resurrected at some point!)

That was my reaction almost five years ago You remember in the Bible when Jacob "wrestled with God"? I think I know how that might have felt! The Lord was trying to lead me down a beautiful path of growth for both me and my family, and I was resisting. The path didn't look so lovely to me. All I saw were the thorns and pitfalls. All I felt was the potential of a heavier burden, and that is why I argued so vehemently. Fortunately, HE won. Thank goodness He always does!

You see, five years ago I was sick and tired of being sick and tired. Despite my best efforts to feed my family well, it seemed that someone was always ill. At the time our four children were 3, 5, 7, and 9 years old. My husband travels for work, so I'm sure you can imagine how confining and depressing it was to constantly be nursing a sick child at home. We were grinding wheat and making our own bread. We bought most organic produce from a local food co-op. We ate nearly every meal at home, and we took handfuls of food-based vitamins everyday. What else were we supposed to do to be healthy? Why were we getting sicker instead of healthier?

Here sits the devoted homeschool mom at wit's end, crying out to God. "I'll do anything!" Just show me how to make my family healthy!"

Turns out the "something" was to start my own home-based business, thus thrusting me outside of every box I had ever had and every comfort zone I knew, and it is the best thing that ever happened to my family. We were led to a company that carried a whole food concentrate supported by science. Our health dramatically improved. Through the business of sharing that food concentrate with our friends, we began to change our financial future. More importantly, mommy began to experience unparalleled personal growth. The business has been the catalyst for the Lord to take me from caterpillar to butterfly, for me to truly begin to reach for my full potential in His Kingdom...right in front of my children.

Over the past five years, my children have been my greatest cheerleaders and support team. Together, we have learned to identify and act on priorities to make time for a growing business. We have prayed together for the families whose lives are being impacted by this whole food nutritional concept. We have learned to focus on what we want, instead of complaining about what we don't want in our lives (Philippians 4:8). And more importantly, we have seen how crucial it is for each of us to seek God's definition of success for us as individuals and as a family.

Success is not an accident. It is a consequence of the scriptural law of sowing and reaping. What are God's goals for your life? I guarantee you they are bigger than you can imagine. The question is, are you willing to open your eyes and your heart to see the big picture and walk forward in faith? Success is about a life of service. True success always blesses others.

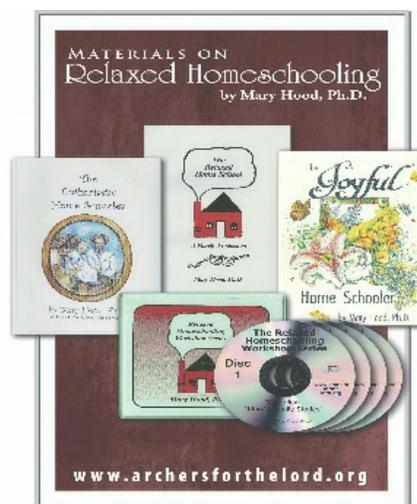
Mary's notes:

This was excerpted from an article written in 2009. Sandra has continued to work in the field of nutritional supplements, and has also continued to homeschool her own children. One has graduated. The others are 14, 16, & 18.

In addition, she has become a Certified Health Coach with the Dr. Sear's Wellness Institute, and has taken a part time position as a vision therapist, after realizing that two of her children have double vision.

If anyone wants to contact Sandra to learn more about her business, or opportunities for you to participate in the company, or if you are interested in learning more about vision therapy, you can contact her at the6Kochs@comcast.net

Sandra Kay Koch is the mother of four children. She grew up in Cary, NC, and moved to Atlanta when her husband, Randy, experienced a career change. She met Mary at a curriculum fair in the Atlanta area, where they exchanged ideas on nutrition and homeschooling.



All of Mary's talks are now also available as MP3s!