

It's not *what* you know....it's *Who* you know...

Sandi Michon, November 2005

How many of you have worked a job and someone got promoted that you weren't sure deserved the job? How many of you have thought: "Apparently, it's not *what* you know, but *who* you know that counts."

And, what's your next thought? "That's not fair!"

You're right. It isn't. It's happened to me, and I didn't like it one bit.

Let's take a slightly different look at this same concept... How many consider yourselves blood-bought, children of God? As such, you're now in God's company as a member of the universal, corporate body of believers. Can I ask you how you got the job – er, honor? I count myself in God's company – and how do you think it happened? Right. It's not *what* I know, but *Who* I know.

Is that fair? No. That's what grace is all about.

What does all this have to do with homeschooling? Not much, until you read Ecclesiastes 12: 12-14:

"And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

I was first struck by these verses while doing a prayer walk in the rain at Holyoke Community College. As I walked the perimeter of the campus, I was praying Scriptures I felt God gave me. I thought how appropriate these verses were, as most of the curriculum at HCC is not from a Christian perspective – and would indeed cause much weariness in the flesh! But, the Lord seemed to whisper that the verses were very applicable to homeschooling. I asked God to explain...

First, who penned these words? Ecclesiastes is written by Solomon, the wisest man that ever lived. He wrote this after a long life filled with wealth and wisdom. He had seen it all and found most of it to be vanity.

He closes his reflections with the three verses you just read. It is his period on life, so I take notice.

Let's look at verse 12 in the Amplified version for more definition:

“But about going further [than the words given by one Shepherd], my son, be warned. Of making many books there is no end [so do not believe everything you read], and much study is a weariness of the flesh.”

Verses 9-10 tell us about the preacher's words of uprightness and truth. That is what he is talking about going further than.

I can't imagine that there were many books back then – especially compared to now! But even, then, they apparently got distracted by all the things “under heaven” instead of keeping their focus on the things revealed by God in the heavens. That was what Solomon struggled with toward the end of his life as he married foreign women and was distracted by their false gods. Before he died, however, he saw things in their proper perspective.

Is this phenomenon limited to Solomon's age? Not according to II Timothy 3 – a sort of time warp to our present age. This is the chapter that deals with the characteristics of the end times. See if you find the description relevant: (verses 1-5)

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.”

Verse 7 gives us the link to Ecclesiastes: **Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.**

There is a learning that does not result in truth. Much of modern education fits that statement, and if we're not careful, it creeps into our homeschool. How? Let me suggest a few ways.

How many get around to doing art? Usually, that's a subject that gets crowded out in our quest to get all our subjects done.

Here's an "ouch" question: How many of you get around to doing devotions? We wouldn't dream of not doing math, reading, science, history, spelling. **I would suggest that there is weariness in much books, but there is refreshment in The Book.**

I am not suggesting that we neglect providing a wellrounded, excellent education for our children. The Bible has much to say about diligence and excellence, but there is also much exhortation to keep our priorities straight. When the Bible speaks about teaching your children (Deut 6, 10...) it always talks about teaching them the truths of God. In a way, the other subjects are simply springboards to link each topic to the truths of God.

I remember when Darlene's son, Matthew, had cancer. Imagine how a trial like that would challenge your homeschooling. Darlene shared how some days all they got to was their devotion – but God richly blessed those times, and they lost little ground in academics during that time. (I have two of her daughters in my co-op class and they do not lack intellectually.)

Let me put it another way: Have you ever taken a photo of your child, only to view the photo later and find out that the bush was in sharp focus and your child was out-of-focus?

Sometimes, life is like that. We run our life camera on automatic and think we are on "auto-adjust" until God shows us a snapshot of our life and we discover our error. *Rule of thumb: keep your subject in focus.*

Picture it – you've lost it – you're screaming at your kids and tearing out your hair in clumps. FREEZE FRAME: What's wrong with this picture? Did you lose your focus in the busyness?

How about a more subtle snapshot, since subtle is the devil's best mode of attack: Your kids are fabulous students – genius even – but their hunger for the things of God have waned, and so has their compassion for others. FREEZE FRAME: What's wrong with this picture? Something is out of focus.

In II Timothy 2, this scenario is nailed in verses 14-16:

“Of these things (God’s truth) put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.”

The specifics of these verses will vary according to the call God has on each child’s life, but the concept is worth examining in your homeschool. This is very hard to do, considering all the pressures we are under – from school systems, to relatives – and yes, ourselves. (If our kids underperform in some way, the buck stops with us...)

BUT, Solomon’s words have wisdom and they are carried into the New Testament by Paul’s words to his young disciple, Timothy. Let’s see what does matter most to Solomon, and finish with Paul’s words in II Timothy 3.

In verse 13, Solomon concludes the matter with two priorities: Fear God. Obey God. Two simple statements—but easier said than done. To fear God is to revere Him above all else – to put Him first. If we don’t do the first part, we hardly know how to do the second part. To put God first is to learn what pleases God – then to do it. At the end of a long life, Solomon reduces his priorities to reverent faith and obedience.

Verse 14 answers the why – because we’re not fooling anyone – God will judge all things. He will examine the secret things and determine the motives – whether good or evil.

Let’s finish with II Timothy 3:8-17 (the part right after describing those who are always learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth)

“Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was. But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at

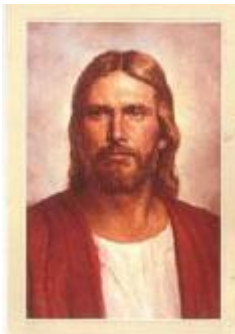
Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

Is this not what we want for our kids – that they be thoroughly furnished unto all good works?



As we continue through this school year, let a mental picture exhort you. Picture a table with all your curriculum – and your Bible. Picture the Bible in sharp focus and all the rest of the books slightly out-of-focus. Now keep it that way!



One more reminder. **The Bible’s primary role is to reveal the Author.** Consider John 5:39-40: ***“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.”***

Scripture is not an end to itself, but its purpose is to lead you to the Author and Finisher of our faith—Jesus

Christ.

Remember – in the end – it really isn’t *what* you know, it is *Who* you know!