

# The 7 R's of "higher" education

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Homeschoolers toil diligently to rear their children in the three R's: Reading, wRiting and 'aRithmetic... (*hmm... seems to be a phonics problem already...*)

As a 15-year homeschool veteran with six children, Lianne A. uses experiences, both good and bad, to suggest seven R's of "higher" education. Inspired for the devotional by Rick Warren's book, "The Purpose-Driven Life," Lianne explained that she fell in love with the Word of God some 14 years ago, but it's easy to lose our fervor in the busyness of life. Her passion is back.

As a backdrop for the seven R's, Lianne shared a reoccurring dream she had several years ago. After being handed a life jacket while boarding an ocean liner, she promptly stuck it under her seat and enjoyed the activities. In her dream, a violent storm struck without warning and capsized the liner. In the water, she heard screams and cried out herself, "Jesus, save me!" She somehow caught hold of some floating wreckage and when she came to she was battered on the shore. She realized that the life jacket was the Word of God, and was given to save her.

Shortly thereafter Lianne's life did capsize, and the Bible literally became her only lifeline. Through Warren's book, she was reminded how vitally important the Word of God is, not only to abundant life, but to survival.

The first "R" is Revere God's Word—meaning to regard with respect. James 1:18 says: "Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures" and Proverbs 13:5 says every word of God is pure. "We need to realize that God's Word is perfect and it is life," Lianne said.

Secondly, we are to Receive God's Word—to listen to it and accept it with an open and receptive mind. In the biblical parable of the sower and the seed, different types of soil represent the heart that receives the seed of the Word. The closed mind is the hard soil, the

superficial mind is the shallow soil and the weedy soil is the distracted mind. “Why is it that two people listen to the same message and one is moved deeply but the other hardly affected?” Lianne asked. James 1:21 says to put away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls and Luke 8:18 says to take heed how we hear.

The third “R” is to Read God’s Word. It sounds simple, but how often we neglect it. Job esteemed God’s word more than his necessary food. (23:12) Jesus Himself is called the “Bread of Life.” Lianne said everyone can relate to food! She asked how many have devotionals once a day. Maybe half the audience raised their hands. She then asked how many had three devotionals a day. No one raised their hand. But, we usually eat three meals a day, plus snacks...

Lianne often gave examples from her 15-year-old son Michael’s life. Since returning from a summer mission trip to India with Teen Missions International, Michael has been on fire for God. “He is in the Word every day,” she said. “When taking his Bible and notebook in the truck to work was not enough, he asked to be awakened earlier, so he could start the day in the Word. He’s pretty convicting to me,” Lianne shared. She reminded everyone that it takes incredible discipline to stay in God’s Word because we have an enemy who wants to keep us from the life of the Word.

Researching God’s Word was the fourth “R”. “We should go beyond the five-minute devotional and have a plan of study,” Lianne said. As homeschoolers, we are all familiar with plan books and lesson plans—how much more important to have a similar plan for the Bible?

Like many homeschoolers, Lianne stressed about academics with her kids. Are they getting enough? What about sports? She was deeply committed to excellence in academics, but admitted that they never stayed committed to daily devotions. When her oldest son graduated, she was heartbroken to watch him turn from the things of God. “I had stressed about the wrong things,” she said.

“A week after school, he was out of our house. All I could do was pray for his safety,” Lianne shared. “I knew he had what it took to

pursue worldly success, but I was very worried about his spiritual success.”

“I’m ashamed to say that it took me 13 years to make daily devotions a priority,” Lianne confessed. Since she made that commitment, it has made such a difference in her other kids. “They love our devotions and their prayer lives have changed. I think the situation with their brother hit us all.”

The fifth “R” is Remembering God’s Word. Lianne broke through all our excuses when she said we remember what is important to us—birthdays, anniversaries, phone numbers, social security numbers... In the two-week “boot camp” before his India mission trip, Michael learned the required 40 verses. “And he still knows them!” She compared not knowing God’s Word to showing up at a house on fire with no water. “We live in a world in trouble. They need truth to apply to their trouble.” And Colossians 3:16 says “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God.”

The sixth “R” is Reflecting of God’s Word. David was called a man after God’s own heart—he spent time reflecting on God’s Word. In Psalm 119:97 David says, “Oh how I love Your Law! It is my meditation all the day.” Lianne, on the excuse of not knowing how to meditate: “Do you know how to worry?” “How many of us can’t stop thinking about food when we’re trying to diet?” When the laughter died down, she said, “Whatever has your heart—you will think about. Meditate more, you will worry less.”

The final “R” was Revealing God’s Word. “When people see you, do they see Christ?” Lianne said to ask ourselves. If we allow the six R’s to become habit, our lives will reveal God’s Word. James 1:22 says, “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves” and in Romans 8:29, we are told to be conformed to His image. Do we project His image? We are commissioned to share the gospel and it’s been added: “use words if necessary.”

Next time you plan your lessons, remember to include a few columns for the seven R’s.