

BOOK REVIEW: EDUCATING THE WHOLE-HEARTED CHILD

(by Clay and Sally Clarkson; 1994; 198pp).

I was not surprised to learn that this is the favourite Home Education book for many seasoned home-schooling mums. It is the most comprehensive of the (many) books I have read on this topic and is written in an accessible, encouraging and humorous style.

The Clarksons have educated their four children at home in the USA since 1988 and have been actively involved in promoting home education through newsletters, workshops and catalogues. They believe that 'a whole and healthy heart guided by a mind filled with God's wisdom is the true goal of home discipleship and home education'.

The first chapter considers reasons for choosing home education, including acknowledging the costs, being sure that it is God's will for your family and some legislation issue from a US perspective. They consider the topics of Discipleship and Education as separate chapters, then briefly describe a range of approaches to home education (namely Curricula, Un-schooling, Delayed Academics, Classical, Principle, Unit Study, Computer-Based, Accelerated, and Charlotte Mason). The practical chapters discuss Teaching Methods, Learning Styles, Home Management, Lifestyle and Support. Four appendices list useful resources, books and planning forms.

The book was first published in 1994 (then 1996) and reads as though the authors know what they are talking about. They acknowledge mistakes and 'oversights' in their own home-schooling journey and offer over 200 pages of gentle wisdom to help others avoid some of the classic pitfalls. The chapters are laid out with generous margins that contain verses, quotes, interesting facts, personal opinions, suggestions and other comments. They have tried (and succeeded) to give a wide range of possible approaches to each topic, not just push the approach that their family has adopted.

I particularly liked some of their suggestions for home management - as every home-schooler soon learns, the standard 'home' model needs a bit of modification to accommodate the 'stuff' which seems to accompany kids who are at home full-time. To give you a flavour of the book, I have copied their 'Universal Laws' on the next page. I think they mean more to me now than when I first read them several years ago ...

BOOK EXTRACT: THE LAWS OF HOME SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT

(from *Educating the WholeHearted Child*, page 158;
Whole Heart Ministries, PO Box 228, Walnut Springs, TX 76690)

Just as there are natural laws that govern the natural universe, so are there home laws that govern the home universe. These laws are a part of the 'warp and woof' of your daily life in your home universe - you are either working with them or against them. The astute home manager understands these laws and submits to them. You cannot escape them, but you can learn to use them to your advantage.

Universal Laws of Home Thermodynamics

First Law In home systems, all things tend toward disorder and disarray.

Second Law In home systems, a finite amount of energy is being dissipated at a constant rate.

Universal Laws of Home Systematics

Law Systems work.

First Corollary If you don't work your systems, your systems won't work.

Second Corollary The more you work your systems, the less you'll work.

Universal Law of Home Cause and Effect

Law In home systems, every undesirable effect has a cause.

First Corollary To eliminate an undesirable effect, you must change the cause.

Second Corollary Causes can be changed only through the application of time and effort.

Third Corollary Causes are not changed by ignoring, complaining about or rationalising effects.