



The Unhurried Homeschooler: A Simple, Mercifully Short Book on Homeschooling

Durenda Wilson , Melinda Martin

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Homeschooling is a wonderful, worthwhile pursuit, but many homeschool parents struggle with feelings of burnout and frustration. If you have ever felt this way, you're not alone! Most of us need to be reminded of the "why" of homeschooling from time to time—but The Unhurried Homeschooler takes parents a step further and lifts the unnecessary burdens that many parents place on themselves.

Drawing on twenty years of homeschooling her eight children, Durenda Wilson gently reminds parents about the things that really matter, as she offers a clear portrait of what a life-giving home life can be during the homeschooling years. Reading The Unhurried Homeschooler is like having coffee with a trusted friend. You'll be encouraged as you learn to do what God has put before you. This book will lighten your load while helping you learn how to raise life long learners and ENJOY the homeschool years with your kids.

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Abbie says

Some of the "unhurried" principles were good, but... I just could not get around the fact that she doesn't teach her kids any science, history, etc. I mean, I know those subjects will come again and in more depth later, but... never? Really? I agree with a focus on reading, writing and arithmetic for the younger years, but we still easily make time for art, science, history, music, etc. And that's in less than three hours per day!

Not my cup of tea.

Kristin says

Good, quick read on not succumbing to the pressures associated with homeschooling. Although I'm new to the homeschooling world, I'm already feeling the pressure when it comes to choosing the right curriculum, dealing with friends and family members who think my children won't be socialized (trust me doubters, I'm on top of it), and dealing with my own fears and worries about my abilities, just to name a few. One excellent point emphasized over and over is that we, as parents, should become "students of our children" to best adapt curricula and teaching styles to their best learning styles. Slowing down and taking in the little things will deepen the family connectedness and allow for true interests and passions to develop at a deeper level, thus a deeper level of learning is possible. Although this is written from a Christian perspective, non-Christians can also benefit from the general principles laid out in this quick read.

Laura says

This was a "mercifully short" book and I am so glad for it. It's a wonderful little book that I will be able to reread, without getting bogged down, and glean the encouragement and gentle reminders of why I have chosen to homeschool. Although, I can't fully embrace her style of educating her children, due to the strict homeschooling laws of my state, it was still a great, thought provoking, read on how we can stop worrying about every little detail, and to simply focus on what works best for my family.

I would recommend this to all the homeschool parents who feel burnt out and feel like the family is being formed around the homeschool, instead of the homeschool forming around the family.

Jennifer says

There is nothing new here for the classical/CM educator, but it is so very encouraging. And kind. And wise. We cannot underestimate the value of simple encouragement as we live and work as homeschooling mamas. It's a quick read--takes maybe an hour--but it will stick with you. So many important reminders about what we are REALLY doing as we teach and guide our babies to love the Lord. Really trying to let go of the stuff that doesn't matter and Wilson gave me all the permission I needed.

Heidi says

I love the author's heart and perspective, but can't say I got a whole lot out of the book. There are so many resources out there for homeschoolers nowadays that I think authors must try harder to offer a novel or fresh perspective. I suppose in a way, she does, but it's from a personal perspective and backed up with very little from anyone else.

Alicia Bayer says

This is an okay beginner's guide to relaxed homeschooling, especially if you are homeschooling for religious reasons.

It's encouraging to read how well it has worked with her kids (most of the older ones have gone on to college and seem to be doing okay) but it's surprising how little she says she actually teaches and how much her teens learn on their own and from others, considering this is not an unschooling book.

The author says she doesn't teach science, history, art, etc. at all to her kids. She basically teaches rudimentary math and reading/writing herself at a very slow pace and starting pretty late, and then has them take on more work themselves as they enter the middle school and high school years. She farms out things like math or has them figure it out themselves. They also learn things related to their interests on their own, so of course some science, history, etc. will work its way in that way. She also assigns lots of chores and seems to have high expectations of her kids outside of academic things.

There is a LOT of encouragement about trusting the Lord and remembering that the things that matter are things like a strong work ethic, time with family and such, and there are lots of reminders that the goal should be serving God.

I really have no idea after reading this book how the author homeschooled 8 kids by doing almost nothing past teaching them reading, writing and basic math, and got them through the middle school and high school years. She describes what she did for the little ones (daily time doing a couple of workbooks in math and reading, then reading something and writing up a bit about it every day) but she's very vague on how things looked past then. She said she has no problem paying for classes, tutors, etc. and that the kids apparently are pretty much in charge of things themselves, but there's no real information on what that looked like or how she/they did it (other than a lot of references to the fact that one of her kids picked up a coding book at 12 and then taught himself what he needed to know and is now finishing college soon).

I read this book free through Kindle Unlimited and it was an interesting, short read, but not really helpful to me as a homeschooling mother who's been doing this a long time and not just starting out.

Lindsay says

Definitely lives up to its name about being mercifully short. :) But it was just the encouragement I needed during a low in my journey of homeschooling. I love hearing an older mom remind me not to stress or

compare, but remember that Jesus' yoke is easy and His burden is light.

Jenni Moeller says

She talks about most of this stuff on her pod casts so it felt like review to me BUT what she is saying is really good stuff!! Her point is God should lead our homeschooling and it shouldn't look like public school or how our friends homeschool. It should be unique to our family's lifestyle. I wish I would have believed all of this when I started my homeschooling journey! I'm still learning to let go of expectations I place on myself and trust God's leading is perfect for my family. I would encourage any potential homeschoolers or those just getting started to read this, even those who've been doing it for a while and feel bogged down by expectations. There is much freedom in letting God lead your schooling!

Sipas Cheo says

This book is not a clear guideline for home-schooling or any home- curriculum, it is just a personal perspective of a home-schooler. To be honest, I totally agree with her approach. I wonder "why our children education must depend on the schools? what are our responsibilities in children's life? Why we always think that school is the only representative of education?"

Sometimes, I was confused between homeschooling or unschooling, but to me, it is the "name" not the way you apply for your child. The author repeats many times that you do not need to have a specific or fixed curriculum, it should be changed every moment, every day to suitable for your child. Recently, I think so much about "constructivism" and "alternative education" and find the connection between them in any AE methods such as homeschooling (HS) or unschooling(US). Even in "Homeschooling" definition, we do not need to think that we buy a fixed curriculum to teach your children. Because we can design anything you like or your children want to do like unschooling.

The same point which I found in both HS and US is a belief. Most of unschoolers believe in themselves or in universe (like me) while homeschoolers believe in God or other regions. This is necessary if you choose another way which is different to mainstream education and society. If you do not have a belief in someone, it is not easy for you to continue your children's education and even your education. And education is a marathon, not a sprint so let keep your belief in your choice on the family' journey.

Amber says

This is a short, encouraging book -- a very quick read. It was well-timed for me, and could be a good one to encourage others who aren't as far along in their homeschool journey also. It's not an in-depth, detail type of book -- just a little breath of biblically-based practical perspective, good for helping us step back a bit from the midst of minutiae and take a look at the bigger picture.

Some things I appreciated about this book:

- Her encouragement to trust motherhood instincts. It's been hard for me to know at times through the years just how much to listen to my "gut feelings" or "intuition." My tendency has often been to downplay those in

favor of things I can think through and express with clear reasoning. I've always been cautious about trusting emotions or instinct, but have learned that while neither should be blindly followed, wisdom doesn't dismiss them altogether, either, but weighs them with respectful consideration and evaluates them by its light. I have learned through living (sometimes the hard way) that if I have a gut feeling about something, it's probably wise for me to pay attention. Having that confirmed by a mom with more experience (20 years teaching, 8 children) was good for me.

- The encouraging reminder that home life is good for children, that character is shaped through routine, that much of what may not feel like "school" still provides learning, just in a different way – even play, and even challenging life circumstances that may make more formal learning more difficult.

- Her discussion of what her homeschool days were/are like. She doesn't dwell on detail, just an overview, but I enjoy peeking into others' homeschool days.

- The "Think About It" sections, which contain questions and/or thoughts to help me evaluate my homeschool.

- She discusses teaching from a place of strength in two ways. First, using our own talents/gifts and interests to give our children a boost in those areas. Taking who we are into account in what we emphasize for our children enables us to look realistically at what we can best give them ourselves and what we may need more supplemental help with, either from materials or outside sources. Secondly, teaching from strength is having courage, and trusting that God is going to help as we work to fulfill our role.

Some of the quotes I liked:

"Unfortunately, we often put more effort into thinking about how we're going to protect our dogs and front yard than how we're going to protect our children. Our children need us to be their greatest allies and greatest protectors, especially when they are young. God has a lot to say in His Word about defending the defenseless. Our children are among the defenseless, and they need us to protect them. We are called to protect them" (9).

"It's hard to miss what [Deut. 6:6-7] seems to indicate about time - more time together than a typical school schedule can afford. It paints a picture of daily life together, and it doesn't feel rushed. Instead it centers around an intentional heart, set on God's priorities as we walk life out with our kids" (10).

She quotes the Moores citing a Smithsonian Institution study of geniuses which noted three factors they had in common: "1) warm, loving, educationally responsive parents and other adults; 2) scant association outside the family, and 3) a great deal of creative freedom under parental guidance to explore their ideas, drilling as necessary" (17).

"I firmly believe that as a parent, you have a God-given compass inside you when it comes to raising your children. He equips us for what He puts in front of us to do, and raising our children is one of our greatest callings and accomplishments in life" (19).

"I've found that if I teach our children out of my strengths - that is, out of my giftings - God faithfully takes care of the rest" (20).

"We need to understand that no curriculum or homeschooling method is 'the answer.' Our trust needs to be in God.... He loves our kids more than we do and has their best interest in mind. Our job is to keep our eyes on Him..." (21).

"Typically, fear is a big part of what causes us to feel hurried or stressed. God clearly says in His Word that we are not to fear. He gave us a 'spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control' (2 Timothy 1:7).... Love (that is, God) leads us, but fear 'drives' us.... Every time you start to feel driven, I encourage you to hit

the pause button and wait on the Lord" (22).

"Play, work, and service are every bit as important as working the mind, and they actually do work the mind as well, just in a different way.... Is there a balance of head, hands, heart, and health in your days?" (24)

"You are responsible to train your children's hearts. How is it going? What are they learning?" (24)

"The way we homeschool has everything to do with who I am as a mom, who we are as a family, and what worked during specific seasons of our life. I strongly urge you to let your homeschooling journey take on its own unique design" (25).

"How we approach life, handle stress, our worldview, etc. will have a greater impact on our children than any curriculum or bookwork" (35).

"What it really comes down to is being willing to surrender our plans and visions to the Lord in exchange for His.... It involves yielding, a whole lot of prayer, and walking in obedience to Him, trusting Him for the end result" (52).

"His presence is the reason you can slow down and savor these precious years with your kids. He's got this and He's got you" (53).

Catherine Lowe says

"The Unhurried Homeschooler" is not a how-to book; it's a perspective book. Each mercifully short chapter ends with a "Think About It" section to help apply introduced concepts to the reader's specific context. The result is a helpful book that encouraged me to look at my strengths, my child's strengths, and our goals for homeschooling. "As parents, we need to keep the big picture in mind because when everything is said and done, what matters is that we raise people who love the Lord and are givers, not takers. We want them to find their passions and fulfill the purposes for which they were made."

I am responsible to train my child's heart. How is it going? What is he learning about God's creation? Is he learning to love and serve others and point to Jesus?

"Here am I, and the children the Lord has given me. We are signs and symbols in Israel from the Lord Almighty, who dwells on Mount Zion." Isaiah 8:18

Michelle says

This goes straight to the top of my list of recommended HS Books!

Begin by reading this book if you are beginning your journey. I am a homeschooling mom to 4 (ages 1 to 8 years old) and only have been homeschooling officially for 2 years (unofficially 4 years), and I already see the truth of what Durenda Wilson writes beginning to play out right before me. Her knowledge and wisdom is invaluable!

Some may choose rigor versus a more gentle approach, workbooks versus literature based learning, whatever

your homeschooling style - the keys mentioned here, I believe, simply spell s-u-c-c-s-e-s-s!

Thank you Durenda for sharing your wisdom!

Mandy J. Hoffman says

I love the concept of this book and appreciate so much of Durenda's personal preferences. However, as much as I respect the ideas presented, in the state where I homeschool the law restricts me from embracing them to the fullest.

Eileen says

I wasn't sure how to rate this. If you're a new homeschooler this is a great book. But for me who has 12 years of homeschooling under my belt, there is nothing here I haven't read before, many, many, many times. I'm not sure that there is really a need for this book when there is so much out there already saying the same thing.

Petie says

An honestly and beautifully written read on a homeschooling mama's journey and the wisdom she has gleaned. It was such a sweet and godly encouragement to my soul and gave me the freedom to just be the mama God created me to be and He will take care of the rest. Oh, and pray. Pray continually.
