

Home School and Public School: Is one better than the other?

In the last 15 years, the topic of home schooling has had an increasing impact on family life. Some parents are very concerned over messages being imparted to children in public school. They feel their authority over their children is being undermined by schools on such topics as sex education, homosexuality, and other LGBTQ issues among students.

If you had spoken to me in the mid-1980s, I would have been staunchly against the idea of home schooling. But given the changes that have emerged with schools in recent years, I am totally sympathetic and understand why families make decisions to home school today. In the next few weeks I would like to address the following themes concerning home schooling and public school education.

- What are the benefits and shortcomings to home schooling?
- What are the benefits and shortcomings of public school?
- Is there any long term research that addresses the impact of home schooling on youth after college?
- Is the best plan to do a combination of both home and public schooling?

If anyone knows of any research studies that have been done on the long-term impact of home schooling, please let me know.

Christ is risen!
The blessing of the Lord be upon you,
The unworthy +Paul

Crivella Reflection

by *Deacon Basil Crivella*

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In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen!

Today we hear the story of a man who is at the end of his wits. He is totally desperate. His son, whom he loves, is severely afflicted. And this man, this father, is doing everything he can think of to help.

Imagine how much he has spent on trying to get help. How many people has he gone to see? How many healers? How many specialists? How many doctors and pharmacists? And picture how hard he works to pay for the treatments: the long hours and blisters on his hands. All of it so he can scrounge the money to pay for the help; pay for the medicine; pay for the special equipment.

Imagine how, after working the extra hours, he comes home to his son, even though he is exhausted. Even though his back is killing him, and his eyes are heavy with the need for sleep, he stays with his son.

The father strokes his hair. The father helps to dress him and feed him. The father watches over him, lest the poor afflicted boy throws himself into the fireplace, or drowns himself in the nearby stream, or tries to hurt himself in some other way.

Imagine how this father feels when nothing that is supposed to help his son works—the grinding despair.

His hopes rise. A new treatment. A new person who might be able to help. This will finally be it. This will finally bring relief to his beloved son.

And then, the hopes are smashed into pieces on the ground. The medicine doesn't work. The treatment doesn't help. The experts are all confounded. Even the Apostles seem to be powerless.

Brothers and sisters, as most of you probably know, this gospel reading really cuts close to my heart. I have a lot in common with this father.

But it's not just the affliction of our loved ones that brings us to hopelessness like this father. Sometimes we ourselves are the afflicted one, desperately looking for a cure. For help. All of us come to moments where we're hurting, where things are totally messed up, and it feels like there's no one there that can help us; like no matter what we do, we can't find a way out of the mess life has put us into; that there is no hope.

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This is the great lie that the fallen world whispers to us in these moments. The demons say, “Your relationship with your family, your friend, or your neighbor is ruined. Don’t even bother trying to love them. There’s no hope.”

The demons say, “Your health, or the health of your loved one is just wrecked. It’s going to be nothing but pain and misery forever. Don’t even bother trying to get help. There’s no hope.”

The demons say, “That situation with your schoolwork and grades, or your job and making ends meet—Don’t even bother with those. Nothing is ever going to change. There’s no hope.”

The prince of lies tells us in our deepest sufferings that there’s no hope, especially when we cry out and seek for help, and nothing seems to be working.

The evil one tells us, “There’s no hope, because God doesn’t really care!” It’s like the Tom Waits song: “God’s away, God’s away, God’s away on business.” Business! You’re not important to Him!

But God isn’t away! He’s not off being too busy with something else. Christ is in our midst! God sees you when you’re struggling. God hears you when you cry out to Him! God is present with you in your pain. Even in your darkest moments, when you feel like everything is falling apart, you can turn to Him. Like the man who has suffered so much, we can come to Christ! We can pour our heart and our sufferings out to Christ.

The man who kneels before Christ cries, “If you can do anything, have pity on us! Help us!” Christ tells us, “All things are possible to him who believes!” The one who believes has their sufferings transfigured by Christ.

The pain, the despair, and the uncertainty no longer lead them to lash out; to look for someone or something to blame; to yell at the family and neighbors who visit or try to help; to get angry with the doctors or professionals when the results aren’t what we want or need; to just throw up our hands in despair and not care anymore.

Instead, our own sufferings become our

opportunity to show Christ to others—to be like Christ when He suffers; Christ who shows love to the world despite the sufferings we inflict on Him, despite the pain He endures: the love that doesn’t look for someone to blame but carries the cross up the hill; the love that doesn’t show anger or outrage but endures with patience; the love that doesn’t give up or quit, but continues on; the love that opens our heart to the suffering and pain of others.

What I’ve learned more than anything from the suffering and sorrow of my own life, of my own situation, is that EVERYONE suffers. And even though the situations I suffer through are mine—the pain, the frustration, the fear, the sadness—they’re the same.

For me. For you. For the father in the story. For the person sitting next to you. For everybody. And the love that Christ has is the love that He shows during His own suffering, the love that leads Him to carry His cross all the way up to Golgotha and die on it for us. That love that doesn’t judge. That love is patient. That love is kind, even to the end and despite the suffering.

We can show that same love, and in the same way—even during our own sufferings. To me. To you. To someone like the father in the story. To the person sitting next to you. To everybody.

And we show that love every time, despite our own pain and our own sorrows, and our own problems; we seek out someone else that we know is hurting. And we spend a little time with them. And we listen to them. And we pray for them. And we try to be like Christ to them. And when someone who sees us hurting and comes to us, we spend time with them, too. And we listen to them. And we pray for them. And we try to be like Christ to them.

The love that God has that will raise us up on the last day to a place where pain, sickness, sorrow, and even sighing have fled away!

And God gives us that love even now. And even during our greatest sufferings, we can share it with others.

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen!