

Rachel Winchester [00:00:02]:

One of the more difficult parts of educating your children can be making decisions together with your husband or wife. The challenge is multiplied when you are not in agreement on the hows and whats of that equation. In this episode, we will share a few ideas for getting on the same page with your spouse. You're listening to the Homeschool Made Simple podcast. This is a podcast to help you homeschool simply, inexpensively, and enjoyably. I'm Rachel Winchester, a fellow homeschool mom to 3 kids and the director of operations for Homeschool Made Simple. I'm joined by Carole's son, J. J. Seid, homeschooling dad of 4 kids. While we can't speak to all the specifics of this question, we do understand how difficult it can be to navigate in real time. So today, we will talk about how to gain a shared educational vision for your family. Listen in.

Carole Joy Seid [00:00:51]:

Hi, friends. Carole Seid here. Before we jump into this conversation, I wanted to let you know about some exciting changes that are happening at Homeschool Made Simple. Over the last few years, our team has expanded to include J. J. Seid and Rachel Winchester. I'm not going anywhere anytime soon, Lord willing, but you will hear from them more and more on the podcast as we become a multigenerational ministry. As many of you know, J. J. is a pastor and husband. He and his wife homeschool their 4 children, and Rachel is the director of operations for Homeschool Made Simple. She's also a wife and mother, and she and her husband homeschool 3 young children.

While it's wonderful to have spiritual parents speak into our lives, we also benefit from brothers and sisters in the faith as well. We at Homeschool Made Simple are excited for this new season, and I know you'll benefit from J. J. and Rachel as they share from their experience of homeschooling their own families. Enjoy the episode.

Rachel Winchester [00:01:59]:

So today, I'm here with J. J. Seid to answer a question that we get a lot from families as they navigate the decision to homeschool their kids and want to strive to get on the same page together. And so we're gonna tackle the question of, how do I convince my spouse that homeschooling is a good idea? We hear this question from both men and women as they seek to make this decision with their husband or wife. So we just wanna let you know on the front end that it's kind of a big question, and we can't get into all of the details of it. So maybe we would say something different if we were talking to you face to face and could really get into the depths of your specific details. But as we're talking to you over a mic, we're gonna keep this as generally helpful as we can and try to help you navigate this decision because we know it's not an easy thing.

J. J. Seid [00:02:45]:

Yeah. I think one of the first things that comes to mind for me, Rachel, is the dynamic of one spouse attending one of our seminars and hearing a lot of information, you know, in one Saturday, and then coming home with their thoughts spinning. And so it's just good to be reminded of that the other spouse, if they weren't there, in a sense, is at a disadvantage. So trying to have those conversations or recreate, you know, that entire experience over coffee or in the car is difficult. So I think it's helpful if one spouse has been to a seminar or listened to a seminar online or attended a webinar and is now seriously considering making an educational change to do their best to not leave their spouse at a disadvantage. So that might mean asking if their spouse is willing to attend an upcoming webinar, or listen to a seminar, or attend 1 in person before having those big conversations, so that the ask is a little bit smaller.

“Hey, I was at the seminar, and it really challenged my thinking in some fresh ways. But before trying to dump all that on you, you know, would you be open to listening to it as well? I'd just be curious how it would strike you, and then I'd love to talk about it.”

I think that may be a helpful first step because sometimes we can become convinced about something, and our passion can feel overwhelming to our spouse who's often just trying to play catch up.

Rachel Winchester [00:04:08]:

Yeah. It makes me think about when I was pregnant with our first child, and we did a birth class together. And it actually brought up a whole lot more topics than you might expect for that class to cover. But it was so good for my husband and I to go together because it was really comprehensive. And so it made us talk through things that we wouldn't have necessarily talked about before having a baby, and it really helps set the tone for our family culture. And the great thing about a classroom environment was that it didn't make either of us the expert because neither of us was initiating the conversation. We were just going to the class that we said we wanted to do together. And so then we were able to say, oh, what do we think about breastfeeding, or what do we think about birth? She even talked about where we source our food.

So it was very comprehensive. But the class made it a process of discovery that we were doing together rather than just a conversation one of us was bringing up with the other. And so I do think that mutual discovery and learning together is so important for that process.

J. J. Seid [00:05:09]:

I love that illustration, Rachel. That that has my mind going in all sorts of different directions. I love what you said. Somebody else was the expert, and so that actually takes pressure off your relationship.

You know, the 2 of you can now stand on the same side of the line and look across the line at this thing that's new or mysterious or maybe overwhelming or threatening and say, what do we think about that as opposed to squaring off on opposite sides of the line? I think we need to make a big educational change, maybe tempting the other parent to say, woah. Woah. Put on the brakes. If it ain't broke, don't fix it. You know, I don't understand where this is coming from. Our kids seem to be doing just fine. And so now you sort of turned each other into, like you're trying to both not fall out either side of the canoe or something as opposed to going on a trip together.

One thing that's beneficial about our seminars and even consulting appointments is the amount of data and research that gets brought out. And I think sometimes, this isn't always the case, but sometimes one spouse can tend more towards intuitive processing. So maybe they show up, they hear some things, and they think in their heart and mind, yeah. This feels right. This is what we need to do.

And it's a pretty easy shift for them. It's low friction. It doesn't cost them a lot. Maybe that's why they were at the seminar in the first place. They're the kind of person who seeks out new ideas, new experiences, they like to experiment.

And the other spouse is going, no, I like to process things slowly. I need to weigh out the evidence. I need to do my homework. I need to read a book, and I'm not gonna make that big a decision in a day like you did. It's gonna take me a couple weeks, maybe even a couple months, and I might need to talk to these crazy people that you talk to myself. So I think it's good for us to do that. You know?

I think Peter's words to husbands who in the 1st century carried a lot of power, you know, women couldn't testify in court. There was no such thing as domestic violence in a legal sense. And so it's interesting that Peter would write to husbands and say, dwell with your wives in an understanding way. And Peter and Paul both would say, hey, don't provoke your kids or or exasperate them in your parenting. So I think that could be applied to either spouse.

Hey. If you're intuitive, if you're the one who's all in on this early, you're the early adopter in your family, it's probably important to dwell with your spouse in an understanding way and and ask them, hey. What do you need to process this decision?

Rachel Winchester [00:07:22]:

So, actually, a husband sent us a version of this question of how do I convince my wife that homeschooling is a good idea, which I thought was interesting because a lot of times we hear it in the other direction of wives reaching out, asking about how to speak to their husbands about these things.

But when I read the question for the first time, it led me into all these other questions. I feel like being very curious is really important in the process because you need to know why they are perhaps hesitant to the idea of homeschooling. You know, questions like, why would they think it's a bad idea? You know, is it because they have personal inadequacy, fears of feeling inadequate themselves? Especially if it's a husband who wants his kids to be homeschooled, but his wife is gonna be doing the majority of the educating and being with the kids at home. So, you know, is it because she feels inadequate or scared, Or maybe she doesn't know what it would look like, and so she's unsure about that and doesn't want to even think about it? Maybe she's happy with the way things are and doesn't want to shift your life around.

I guess it's speaking to what you were saying of really living in an understanding way, really seeking to understand your spouse and where they are coming from in this. So instead of taking it personally or becoming defensive about it, just choosing to seek to understand why they feel this way. Because if it is inadequacy, I'm going to speak to that in a different way than if it's that the person doesn't want to be with their kids all the time.

J. J. Seid [00:08:47]:

Yeah. What if I ruin our kids? You know, the stakes feel really high. How do I explain this to my mother, you know, who is a teacher? So many different questions come to mind. Yeah. I like what you're saying. So often, I'm trying to convince my spouse as though they're a mirror version of me, assuming they have the same fears or the same concerns. And invariably, Kristen has to interrupt me and and remind me that her fears and concerns are actually different than mine. And if I would ask her, I'd be surprised.

You know? We can't read each other's minds. So I think what you're saying is absolutely right. You know? Hey. When I float that idea to you, what feels most overwhelming about that? You know? What feels riskiest? What questions come to your mind that you would definitely need answered before moving further? I think all those things would be such a different way to go about the conversation.

It makes me think of Stephen Covey in his famous book, *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, where one of the main principles in the book is seek first to understand before seeking to be understood. So I think adopting an attitude of curiosity and being willing to surface the fears and the questions that are unique to your spouse definitely would take the conversation a lot farther. I also think of a book called *Crucial Conversations*, which is famous. I think it's in its 3rd edition now. It's been around for 20 years. And the authors define a crucial conversation as a conversation where three things obtain that suddenly signal to us we're not having an ordinary everyday So and those three things are on the table. It's a high stakes conversation. Oh, So when those three things are on the table, it's a high stakes conversation. Oh, educating your kids? Yeah. That's high stakes. Emotions run strong. Wow.

I just got blindsided with this. Aren't homeschoolers weird? What if I ruin my kids? It's like, you bet emotions are high. And then opinions differ. So this is the how are we gonna educate our kids conversation is probably the epitome of a crucial conversation, and it requires a lot of curiosity and humility and willingness to approach that conversation with prayer and thoughtfulness and dwelling with your spouse according to knowledge.

Before I forget, I love hearing the stories particularly of dads who jump on a consulting call, and, you know, they've probably been in situations where their concerns haven't been heard, and they're not expecting necessarily to be received, particularly if they're consulting with my mom. You know? It's like, okay. They're on a phone call with their wife and this woman they don't know. And to talk about this thing that they're not sure about, you know? And if I were in that position, I would be like, man, is this an ambush, or am I about to get cornered? It's already 2 on 1.

So it's just been neat to hear the stories of particularly my mom's interactions with dads where she really respects their concerns and spends a lot of time listening and drawing those things out and speaking to them and honoring those men who are thinking hard about what's best for their family. They're not just a stick in the mud. Their wife doesn't care more than they do. I think oftentimes that partner or spouse, when they feel respected and heard, the whole dynamic shifts.

ad Rachel Winchester [00:11:54]:

We are taking a quick break from this episode to let you know about our ebook, *5 Essential Parts of a Great Education*. We wrote this ebook to introduce you to the homeschool made simple method of homeschooling. It lays out what we consider to be the 5 essential parts of a great education, and you can get the ebook on our website at homeschoolmadesimple.net/ebook. And did I mention that it's free? If you

like what you hear in this episode, the ebook will build on the ideas we share here. Download it today and begin deciding what matters most in your child's education. Now back to the show.*

Rachel Winchester:

When we were talking about this earlier, you mentioned a podcast that you heard that you thought might be helpful for people that spoke to this idea about calling forth and maybe how the spouse could encourage the conversation and maybe a tool that people could have in their hands as they go into these conversations with their spouse.

J. J. Seid [00:12:47]:

Yeah. Absolutely. I don't wanna misquote the person, so I guess I'll paraphrase. You know, you can speak to gold in your spouse, things that are beautiful and sort of the best version of themselves, the way God designed them to function as a person, or you could speak to the the shadow in them, you know, the the darker parts of them that are evidence of the fall and a reminder that we're all broken. If we're Christians, we're being slowly shaped into the image of Jesus, but we're really far away from that. So I think as a spouse, you can sort of challenge or speak to the immature parts of your spouse or the parts that frustrate you. And in a sense, that's the person you'll end up talking to, or you can speak to the best version of your spouse. The version of them you think of when you are hoping all things, believing all things, enduring all things in the words of Corinthians.

I guess to use an example from my own life, you know, there was a moment where I was being too harsh with the kids and and Kristen's appeal to me even through tears to say, hey. Your kids really love you, and they actually do listen to you. And so you don't need to say it that hard. You know, you can actually parent them with gentleness. Right? And, again, she's standing squarely on scripture as I mentioned earlier. You know, don't exasperate your kids. Right? Don't provoke your children to anger. Dads it's interesting that dads were singled out in the New Testament explicitly for that caution.

And so here's my wife, you know, appealing to me, but she did it with such gentleness, but also boldness that it caught my attention, and it kinda messed with my head in a good way. Because what she was doing was calling me up. She was speaking to the gold in me saying, like, your kids love you, and you have so much influence over their life. And they respect you so much. You don't have to demand their respect. You have it. And if you really knew that, how would you speak to them differently? You know, I'll

just speak to you men. Maybe your wife's gonna give you this podcast because I just said I'm gonna speak to you men.

If you're listening to this podcast on your commute, men, because your wife begged you to, I'm sorry. And yet, you know, I would just say to you, I've been there a 1000 times, you know, where my wife is appealing to me for something. And if I'm honest, so much of her timing and her tone and her approach will make it easier for me to receive it, and I don't like that about myself. I wish that I was so mature that it didn't really matter how she served the dish. You know? But in my humanity and frailty and when I'm tired and I've had a long day, when she exercises some diplomacy, it does help, and I notice. I notice when she's calling me up. You know? So I guess I would say that to you guys. I think we all know as men in the solitude of our own hearts or in our car when we're kinda stuck, and maybe we're spending too much time watching TV or too much time in our phone, and we're not fully present to our wife and kids, and we feel guilty about it.

And if anyone points it out, including our spouse, we'll probably respond defensively. But deep down, we're responding defensively because we know this, you know, this isn't what we envisioned. We hoped we'd be in the backyard playing catch, but the truth is we were at work 12 hours and our boss gave us extra work and we're spent. You know? We come home feeling exhausted, and so it feels really good to just scroll on our phone. So whether it's talking about homeschooling or whether it's talking about even changing your family's relationship to screens, there's so many things in the air. And as dads, it usually feels like we're being asked to do something that's gonna make everything worse. But that's usually the only way we make anything better is we finally agree that we're willing to embrace the pain to make a change. You know?

Okay, we're gonna turn the TV off. You know? We're taking video games out of the kids' rooms, or we're gonna go outside and throw the ball around in the yard, or we're gonna take a walk as a family. I'm really tired. That doesn't even sound fun to me. But I think when we're done, I'll be really glad that we did. And I'll probably even be surprised by the version of my kids I'm getting when we're outside breathing fresh air and moving our limbs together and remembering that we actually do enjoy each other as opposed to being scattered throughout the house on our separate screens and then yelling for someone to come pick up their dirty laundry off the floor.

So I think all of us men are leading in our home whether we admit it or not, and it's just a question of how we're leading. And there are moments where our wives are gonna approach us and say, hey, I'm dreaming about more for our family. I'm dreaming about more for you. Maybe we didn't like how she brought it up or we didn't like her

timing. But if we're really honest, we know she's putting her finger on something. And so that's an opportunity for us to step up and recognize that's a gift that we have a wife who cares about our kids and who cares about us. And that doesn't mean that we're failing as husbands and fathers. It just means we married well.

So for whatever that's worth, I'm grateful for you dads, grateful for you husbands. I know you're tired. I know you have so much on your plate. You often feel overwhelmed. But some of the things that we talk about in this Homeschool Made Simple ecosystem, whether it's putting your phones down and being present to each other or refusing to live busy lives or fighting for time to read aloud together as a family. Even if you don't jump all in and homeschool, you decide that you're gonna read together more as a family and you're gonna continue in your current educational path. You know, these are all things that we're trying to call people to, because we really do think that you'll be glad you did.

Rachel Winchester [00:17:51]:

I think that for the women, you know, it can be challenging discerning when to speak if someone doesn't want to be a quarrelsome wife. You know? And so I think probably all of us fall into 2 categories, really, generally speaking.

We can be a person who just spews the words out very easily and freely, just, you know, as a verbal processor, someone who talks very easily and freely. Or maybe you're a person who more so holds things in and is not a verbal processor, and so keep things to yourself. And this is, like, for good or for bad. You know? It's not necessarily one is better or worse than the other. It's just different dispositions people have.

But I think knowing that about yourself is really helpful just to have an awareness of which kind of person that I am so that then I can take that into the conversation just knowing, am I someone who's going to hold back naturally and keep things to myself to the degree that then it could be detrimental to the conversation because it's just you know, this is actually something that the Lord does want me to speak to my husband about, but I am being timid about speaking.

And so I need to formulate my thoughts. I need to pray and ask for courage, and then ask for the Lord to reveal the right time and figure out how to initiate the conversation even when I don't naturally feel comfortable doing that.

Or the other person who is just always saying things and speaks very freely, that person would then need to put a guard over their mouth and think about, how do I make sure that I'm measured so that when I do say, hey. I'm thinking about homeschooling. That it

isn't coming off in just a casual flippant way or that it's not just being these comments being scattered around, but that then it's put forth in a way that is then able to be received and is just done really thoughtfully because both of these extremes have their problem spots because you're not bringing out the best in the family dynamic.

So I like that concept of speaking to the light in your husband or your spouse. I think knowing yourself is a great place to begin in that so that then you can go into the conversation believing the best without having a tight grip on what the exact outcome needs to be.

I think that's personally been helpful for me, figuring out how do I interact with my husband when something is on my heart that is burdening me, that I think we need to change. And it takes courage for me to speak when I know something's gonna possibly be met with that resistance that you're talking about earlier.

So, I've written letters to my husband to get the conversation going so then it helps me feel like I can fully express everything. And then we dialogue about it later, but it just helps me in my process.

And so it's important that we understand how each other works so that we can communicate well, especially as we enter into these more difficult conversations. But trying to give some tools for how to know yourself, know your spouse, and enter into that in as peaceable way as possible.

J. J. Seid [00:20:50]:

That's right. Yeah. I think there's a lot of wisdom in what you're saying, Rachel. And we talked off air earlier this week about the book of Proverbs and how that's so applicable to all of this. You know? The one who answers before he hears, it says folly and shame. James reminds us to be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to become angry because the anger of man doesn't bring about the righteous life God requires.

So, you know, we think about these passages and they are. They're inviting us into the postures that you're naming of reflection and prayer.

And if we have to write ourselves clear, you know, we do that. We choose one trusted friend who's wise, who's not just gonna rubber stamp what we say, but actually challenge us and ask us good questions and hold us accountable to having the hard conversations, and we process it with them before approaching our spouse. We get quiet enough to name our own fears and insecurities that may be driving some of our anxious energy as we approach our spouse or ways in which we're having a fight that's

5 years old and actually has nothing to do with the current conflict. All these things are on the table. It takes a lot of courage and humility and patience to suss out what we're feeling and thinking, present it before the Lord, and then honor our spouse well as we have these weighty conversations, to quote the title of that book again, these crucial conversations where emotions are strong and opinions differ and stakes are high. And that could be a recipe for disaster, or it could be a moment where we encounter the grace of God in new ways, and we're surprised by how such a risky conversation ended up producing good things for our family and for our relationship.

Rachel Winchester [00:22:25]:

Well, thanks for everything that you've shared today, J.J.. Would you pray for these families as they navigate these conversations and make big decisions for their family?

J. J. Seid [00:22:34]:

Yeah. If it sounds good to you, I think I'd like to maybe just pray for the husbands and wives who are listening to this and and maybe have one of those crucial conversations in front of them. Just hope that the Lord, you know, helps them and and guides them as they as they try to do that.

So, Lord, we do ask for husbands and wives who may be listening to this, who have a crucial conversation in their future, who are seeking to move towards their spouse and dwell with them in an understanding way, and talk about the possibility of homeschooling, or talk about changing the relationship to screens and books or maybe even the frenetic busyness of their life and just desiring to live with more margin and simplicity. And those conversations feel scary.

So we ask that you would give our listeners wisdom, increase their confidence in you, that you care more about these conversations going well even than they do. Remind them of the things that cause them to fall in love with their spouse in the first place. And, Lord, help them to guard against the parts of their heart that might be tempted to be cynical towards their spouse or contemptuous.

And we ask that you would enable each listener to see their spouse like you see their spouse, not just their shadow, but their gold. The calling, the high calling that you've given to each of them, and the purposes and plans you have for each spouse, and the dignity and the beauty that you're working out in their story slowly. And I pray that you would help them all to be patient with each other and to hear your voice really clearly when it comes to how to educate their kids and how to lead their kids and how to order their home and how to plan out their life. Pray that they would be on the same page. They'd have unity with each other, unity with you for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Rachel Winchester [00:24:12]:

You've been listening to the Homeschool Made Simple podcast.

We hope this episode has been encouraging for you in your own marriage and the decisions you make with your spouse. If you find yourself in a particularly difficult or even abusive situation, we encourage you to seek help from your church leaders as they are the ones who can really provide the care you need.

Thanks for joining us this week on the Homeschool Made Simple podcast. Remember, Jesus' commandments are not burdensome. What he calls you to do, he will enable you to do. Blessings.