

Homemaking and Finding Joy in Everyday Tasks with Your Kids

Episode 254

Rachel Winchester [00:00:01]:

One of the most popular episodes on the podcast was about homemaking while homeschooling. The thing about being home all day with your family is that your house gets a lot of use. It can be a challenge to manage it all. We understand. This episode is for you. You're listening to the Homeschool Made Simple podcast. This is a podcast to help you homeschool simply, inexpensively, and enjoyably. Carole Joy Seid has been helping families homeschool for several decades now, and I'm Rachel Winchester, a fellow homeschool mom using this method with my own three kids.

In this episode, Carole and I share some encouragement as you practice the art of homemaking for your family. Listen in.

Alright. Today, we're gonna talk about homemaking while homeschooling. This is something that comes up a lot because how in the world are you supposed to keep a house running while you're also educating your kids and keeping food on the table all at the same time? So I thought we could revisit this topic a little bit, Carole.

Carole Joy Seid [00:01:01]:

It's a great topic. I like to say if your children are all wearing clean underwear, you're a success. Like, there's you're keeping a lot of balls in the air when you're doing this, particularly with a large family. But, you know, Rachel, I think about one of the chapters in the *Successful Homeschool Family Handbook* a family is being interviewed. I think they had five children. I can't remember all the details. But I remember the mother being interviewed, and someone had said to her recently, your house looks great. How do you do it?

So, the mother says to the people, well, I haven't cleaned my house in five years. Something like that. You know, she loves to get a rise out of people. And then with a big smile and a wink, she says, my children do it all. I love that chapter because that's it exactly.

The more children you have, the more workforce you you got for free. And that's why in an agrarian culture, children were wealth and blessing. And very often people in our culture see children as burdens, but I don't. I mean, God's word says children are blessing. That's all I need to know. Yeah. They are blessing, and you can't have too many blessings. But they are also your your workforce.

And if you're vacuuming a rug and you have children sitting around watching a screen or reading a book, honey, what are you thinking? If you're working and they're not, there is something wrong in this picture. So Dr. Moore really, really pounded this into our brains, and I am so grateful. And Dorothy, talk about I don't know how to describe her. She was the most organized human being, the most disciplined human being I've ever known. She made it look effortless because she she was high thought and low work, if that makes sense. She really planned her work schedule out. She was very, very disciplined and organized, as I said. And so Dr. Moore used to say to us, don't do anything for your children they can do for themselves.

Don't do anything for your children they can do for themselves. And I like to say to mothers, particularly mothers of large families, do what only you can do and let your children do what anybody can do. So you're delegating so that you're there to pray with your children and read with your children and cuddle with them and cook and bake and garden and sew and remodel. You know, anything that daddy does, we know, has the ultimate on anointing. And so if daddy's doing anything, bring the children in on that. And I know sometimes it's more work than help when a child, is helping you. But in the end, it yields such fruit.

And so you can pay now or you can pay later. I have friends. I think of a friend, back up north who when she got married and, she was a school teacher. She had a master's degree. She worked at this very fine prep school. But when she had her first baby and, stayed home with the with the little boy, She would call me literally every day. She didn't know how to cook. She didn't know how to clean.

She didn't know how to take care of a baby. And I said to her, what did your mother teach you? And she said, my mother just told me to go study. And I'm like, so now I inherited what your mother has wrought. And I I consider that a real tragedy for her daughter, because she was lost in the domestic arts. She just had no skill, no experience, no confidence.

Rachel Winchester [00:05:08]:

Yeah.

Carole Joy Seid [00:05:08]:

So it's our job to train our kids to work.

Rachel Winchester [00:05:11]:

Yes. Unfortunately, I think that's how it is for a lot of women. You know, they get married and have children, and maybe they have the skills. You know, maybe they have the skills. Maybe they don't even have the skills that were necessary. But then they also if they do have the skills, they don't have the picture of what does it look like for this to be my job and to do this well, to do this joyfully, to do it with, like, capability, you know, and to manage the home. And I think that then women get into having a baby being at home and just feeling, like, overwhelmed of just where do I even start, how do I even do this.

And I was I was gonna tell a story that when I so I got married and then had my first child a couple weeks before my first wedding anniversary. Yeah. And so then so I was my husband and I decided I would stay home, like, from the beginning. So then here I am about six months into maybe being home with my son, And I called you one day. We were on the phone, and I was telling you how I was having so much trouble. I was just bemoaning the laundry and keeping up with the laundry and all this. I mean, this is two adults and a baby. And

Carole Joy Seid [00:06:41]:

Yeah. That's a big big big adjustment.

Rachel Winchester [00:06:45]:

And you said I I don't know. We talked for a while. I just remember it. In my mind, I'm in my living room, and there's a basket of laundry in front of me And you and my little son crawling around at my feet, and you said, you're not watching TV, are you? And I was.

Carole Joy Seid [00:07:08]:

You were watching TV when we were talking?

Rachel Winchester [00:07:10]:

I was watching TV, like, as if it was my job. Like, I would put on an episode of Gilmore Girls to, like, fold the laundry. A forty five minute show or something for a, like, five minute job.

Carole Joy Seid [00:07:25]:

Yes.

Rachel Winchester [00:07:26]:

And so then it would make it feel like the laundry takes so long to do.

Carole Joy Seid [00:07:31]:

You know?

Rachel Winchester [00:07:32]:

And, you just totally called me out on having the TV on and being distracted from what I just needed to do. And I was like, you're right. I can't watch *Gilmore Girls* anymore. And I just but I I feel like and now even even more, we have these smartphones and you could constantly be distracted and just be like, I'm so bored. I don't wanna fold the laundry. I don't wanna lead my kids in folding laundry right now. I'm just gonna, like, zone out because that's so much easier, or, like, we'll just have this on in the background or something like that. I think that's a real big temptation because it was for me, and I think it is, you know, really easily done.

Carole Joy Seid [00:08:14]:

Yes. It is. But the flip side of that, Rachel, is seeing like like, Ruth Bell Graham, Billy Graham's wife, had a little sign above her sink. She was not a domestic goddess at all. She didn't like to cook. That was just she was very, very, literary, very highly intelligent. And she just wasn't super domestic, but she had a little sign above her kitchen sink that said divine service performed here three times daily, which is something like in the British, churches. It'll have a little sign divine service, you know, such and such a time on Sunday.

And I love that because as we are, really and Edith Schaeffer taught me this, that coming out of the the the reformation theology was that everything we do is sacred. Whereas in before the reformation, it was like, well, this is secular, and this is sacred. But the reformer said, no. It's all sacred. The way you change your baby's diaper, the way you make your bed every day, the way that you dust your furniture or plant your tulips. It's all as under the Lord.

And the scripture says, whatever you find your hand doing, do it with all your heart. And so getting a a theology of housekeeping. It's not something we do get to the stuff we want to do, but to really love doing it. And, you know, there's a book that came to my mind, and it's right here. It's called *Home Comforts: the Art and Science of Keeping House*. It's by Cheryl Mendelsohn. And, in this book so she's a lawyer and, highly educated. Can't remember her story. It's been years since I run the introduction, but I

think she's an Ivy League graduate, highly, highly educated, living in Manhattan with her husband. And, she realized that she wanted to really I mean, it's a big thick book.

And she realized that she wanted to be an expert at domestic things, like a domestic goddess. And, I mean, honey, her her chapter's on, like, ironing. And, I mean, you to read it. It it my mother could have written this book, and I was raised with the same way of how you fold things for your linen closet. So when you open it, it's like a poem. Yeah. And, you know, all the things my mother instilled in me Mhmm. Because she took even though my mother was highly educated as well, you know, master's degree, everything, but she took her domestic calling as an art form.

My mother would tell me that when she was in graduate school, she'd come home from, taking a a a stressful class, and she'd whip up a cake for therapy because to release stress. Like, she just embraced her domestic calling, and and her friends called her Julia because, you know, they they said she was like Julia Child, and they call her every night at dinner time. Ask Julia if I'm supposed to separate the egg whites before or after the and I and she'd be like, let me let me talk to her. And then no. No. No. You have to do this first, and then you yes.

Of course. Because if you do that, it will separate it. And then the women like, oh, Madeline, what would we do without you? Like, she because it it becomes like a joy and and a passion instead of a drudgery. Yeah. You know? And then people ask me, having been an art major all my life, you know, what are you doing? Are you know, what what are you using your art for? And I'm like, really, I have to admit that my home is my art form. And that's why I'm always doing things.

And people in my life, like my son, is like, mom, you're always doing a project. Can't you ever I'm like, I can't help it. It's my art form. I love to create beauty in my environment. And it's my gift of hospitality that my home needs to always be ready to host people and things. And so it's it's part of that finding our fulfillment in the beauty that is at our disposal as a wife and a mother instead of just feeling, oh, this any robot could do this.

That is not true. If it's done with with love and it's done with excellence, a robot could not do it.

Rachel Winchester [00:13:03]:

Absolutely. Yeah. I think attitude is everything, and that all the skills in the world won't remedy a bad attitude about the work that has to be done in the home to keep it to keep it going and to serve the people that live in it and everything. I know that I had to

the Lord really just had to do a work in my heart in the early years of me being home with my kids because and I think that's really important is to be like, to keep it before him. I mean, I would be just lord, it's me again overwhelmed by my house and what all that I have to do. And he would I mean, there's places in my script in the bible that I use where I wrote down, you know, like, the date and the year and homemaking and stuff where he just encouraged me that it wasn't in vain, that it's okay that I didn't have a lot of energy. I didn't have a lot of know how, but that he was gonna help me, and he was gonna teach me, and he was gonna give me the energy that I needed.

Carole Joy Seid [00:14:05]:

And he has. Yeah. And now I just feel like you are a tip top homemaker. You are. I remember talking about coming over as a college student. And, yeah, talk about that a little bit because that really intrigues me, how people are you know, young people in our lives or even our peers, how we can minister to them through our homes. Yeah. Talk about that a little bit.

Rachel Winchester [00:14:31]:

Yeah. I mean, just coming to your house when I was younger

Carole Joy Seid [00:14:35]:

and stuff.

Rachel Winchester [00:14:35]:

Yeah. I think just yeah. I think for our kids and for anybody that comes into our home, when they experience the atmosphere of the home life where it's love and peace and just the fruit of the spirit is just in the air and that it's like, this is taken care of. This is thought about. No no detail is too small, you know, that it was it was paid attention to. And I think that people, even if they can't articulate that, they pick up on it so that then they're like, oh, wow. Your your home is so beautiful, or I just love being here. You know? And then they want to replicate that.

And so then I think that's really creating that. I think as far as modeling it for our our daughters and our children in general is just at least to start with that base of just what it is to live in a home that's cared for. Like, so much of what you gained from your mother is what she just, you know, gave you through her spirit, through her happiness to care about the linen closet. I mean, you know, some people are just like, oh, this linen closet, I just hate. It's always throwing out, you know, towels on us and everything. And she's like, oh, I just love my linen closet and sell it rejoicing over it. I mean, that just totally sets a different tone of, like, my life and my life energy is worth

organizing a closet to make it lovely and serve my family and everything. I just think that's

Carole Joy Seid [00:16:07]:

huge. It's telling it's telling the people in our family and our guests that they're important. Like, whenever people come to Sabbath rest, you know, it's the same phrase that every single person when they write in the guest book or they write a thank you note later, they always say the same thing. Do you know what it is? You thought of every detail. Oh, I thought of every detail? Because there are details that are important to me. If I were gonna stay like, there's a little rule of thumb in hospitality that you should always sleep in your guest room occasionally. And and so it's really good to say, oh, this lamp is not a good reading lamp. Out.

These sheets are scratchy. Out. There's not you know, whatever it is, by you staying in there, you have to, like, pre because I've stayed in guest rooms that are an insult to the word guest room. And over you know, staying with different as a speaker, you know, you stay in homes and sometimes that's a little interesting. And other times, it was lovely. But you just never know. And it's not about money. It's about care, thoughtfulness.

Mhmm. You know, it can be a very humble house, but people thinking, do you need an extra blanket? Do you you you might get hungry in the middle of the night. Here's an apple and some Like, it's just thinking of other people with love. And that's what housekeeping is all about. You're not keeping house. You're keeping family. Mhmm. Thing, a sacred place.

And I love the little plaque that they used to sell in Christian bookstores years ago, that people would put outside their house. Peace to all who enter here. That this is a sacred space. Mhmm. And, people would come to my house in Illinois, and they would lay on the carpet in the living room. Older there was this older lady that I went to church with, and she'd say, I just feel the peace of the Lord in your house. I just feel his presence. I just feel the Holy Spirit.

Well, this house has been prayed in more than probably any house in America. So good. You know? I'm glad you feel that. But it's it's we're creating a place that people feel not not that they're impressed with, oh, Carol has the cutest decorating room. Who cares? That is irrelevant. Mhmm. It's the, the sense of welcome because the gift of hospitality is not doing the Martha Stewart gig.

That is not hospitality. That's showing off. What you're impressing you know what I mean? When you're trying to with, oh, we have the cute dishes and the cutest tablecloth and the blah blah blah. I mean, those things are great and fun, but it's when someone walks in and you're not saying, did you notice what I've done? But they're saying, wow. I feel noticed and feel welcomed and wanted and loved. That's what the gift of hospitality is. It's the gift of welcoming people and making them feel at home. Yeah.

So as you train your children in that, and they love to do this. Aunt Tilly's coming for dinner tonight. Let's make the table really pretty. I mean, I see my grandchildren saying, can we can we decorate? And sometimes I hear Kristen going, no. We're in a hurry. We don't have time to do one of those. Yeah. But but I hear on the phone as I'm talking to her, and the kids are like, can we do this? Can we do that? Can we

Rachel Winchester [00:19:24]:
write? Oh, yeah.

Carole Joy Seid [00:19:25]:
Yep. They love that. It's innate in our heart. Yes. But but if you raise them to think, no. That that doesn't matter. That's a waste of time. Who care? On paper plates, and who cares about anything. But because you value beauty, you value that kind of thoughtfulness. Your children have picked that up from you, and now they're reproducing it.

Rachel Winchester [00:19:48]:
Yep. It's a beautiful thing. And I think that our culture just says, you were made for so many more important things than to worry about the food that people eat and the clothes that they wear and all those kind of things. Unless you're an influencer trying to make a home for everyone else to copy, then you're wasting your time on these domestic arts. You know, it's it's kind of strange how we've made an industry out of something that act actually marginalized and put aside culturally. But I really had to wrestle with the feeling of I was made for bigger things than this and just confessed that.

Carole Joy Seid [00:20:29]:
And what's bigger than raising human beings for the kingdom of God?

Rachel Winchester [00:20:35]:
Exactly. Absolutely. There's nothing bigger. This is and it's such a it's such a big task. Mhmm. And that that actually that sense was actually born of just pride and of a

thinking of myself first and having such a shortsighted view of what's happening. You know? It's like, well, I was made to do something that I or and I'm not very good at this. So I wanna do something that I feel competent in rather than say, I don't feel competent. I'm having trouble just keeping clothes clean, and I'm gonna practice and learn to actually, my husband just told me last night when I was transferring the clothes from the washing machine to the dryer, he said, I guess you've learned to love what must be done.

Carole Joy Seid [00:21:29]:
Right? And

Rachel Winchester [00:21:30]:
You oh my word.

Carole Joy Seid [00:21:31]:
I think you put that on the needlepoint.

Rachel Winchester [00:21:33]:
You Because it's it's a it's a quote that I used to, like, keep plastered on my head because the quote is stop cease striving to do what you want to do and learn to love what must be done.

Carole Joy Seid [00:21:48]:
Oh my word. Okay. My granddaughter did a needlepoint for me that was a quote from Louise May Alcott, and it says, the humblest tasks get beautified if loving hands do them. The humblest tasks get beautified if loving hands do them. Or Abraham Lincoln said, the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world. His mother said that. The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world. You are influencing the ultimate influencers, not on silly social media posts, but you are raising the next president and the next doctors and the next gardeners and, you know, whatever your child is called to do, the next pastry chefs.

You are influencing people that will go on to be missionaries and, like, people that will change the world, people that will change the world, the next authors, statesmen, professors. Wow. How you raise those little children at your house, Rachel. What are they gonna be? Benji, we know is gonna be president. We know that.

Rachel Winchester [00:23:07]:
I'm pretty sure he's office that much.

Carole Joy Seid [00:23:09]:

That's true. That is true. But he'll be like Ronald Reagan chopping wood on the weekends and riding horses, so that'll be good. But I Lucy's gonna I'm gonna think about that. She has so much personality. See, like, as you as you're raising these children, you're saying, lord, let them be everything you've called them to be, and let me influence them in a way that will equip them to be launched as arrows into the world. And how raise them. Because when you raise them in a beautiful environment that is full of love, you're saying to them, you're important.

You're something. I was talking to someone the other day and, a family member, and he was talk I he was asking about the grandchildren, and I said, they're so angelic when they come to my house. I can't figure it out. And and he said, having spent time in their house, he said, that's because they feel so loved. Because he's commented on how my daughter-in-law speaks to her children, and he's just stunned by it. The the kindness that she shows to them and how she, you know, explains things, takes the time to explain why. And he's just never seen anything like it. And he said children who know they're loved can't help but turn out well. That's what he said. He's not a believer, but but he's watching.

Rachel Winchester [00:24:34]:

It is. And I mean, these are the people who are gonna make homes for their own families one day. And if they can just build on what I began and make it even better, that's really what we're going for. And then that would happen in three homes that then gets multiplied to more and more homes, and Right. It's just affecting generations and generations of people.

Carole Joy Seid [00:25:00]:

It's true. I I always tell you that you've surpassed me. You're a daughter. Haven't I told you that? It's true.

Rachel Winchester [00:25:09]:

Oh my goodness.

Carole Joy Seid [00:25:10]:

It is.

Rachel Winchester [00:25:11]:

So we're not giving any deep cleaning tips. You know? If you come up with ways to deep clean your house or whatever, you can do that on your we're not the source for that. But the Home Comforts book, that'll really set you up for success.

Carole Joy Seid [00:25:29]:

You will be starching and I mean, you will not believe the things that she will teach you. And what I love is that she's highly, highly educated and a feminist, you know, and yet she's drunk this Kool Aid, and it just makes my heart sing to see a woman embrace the female art. And for our kids to grow up I mean, if you could see the way my mother trained me to iron my father's shirts, I mean, I could have gotten a professional job as an ironer, and I'm not kidding you. Like, you start with the cuffs and then the collar and then the yoke and then the front and then the back. And, yes, she trained me. And I I've had old ladies over at my house visiting me in California one day, and and I was ironing because I always multitask. I was ironing, and the lady said, "Boy, someone really taught you how to iron." And I was like, "Well, duh, doesn't everybody know how to do this?" And you turn the plaque over so you don't go over the buttons. I mean, like, every detail that I was taught by my mother, I'm so grateful. So your kids to work. Don't do anything for them they can do for themselves. And the last and final word from Dr. Moore, don't expect them to work alone. Children want to work with you.

You want your children to love work. Work with them and make it fun. Put on really fun music, have contests, recite poetry. I I know one family in Nashville that does full musical productions of classic music musicals, and they all do parts while they're doing the dishes. And I hear them banging around in the kitchen, and they're all singing, and they're all it's absolutely delightful. It's it's the message you're sending your kids is this is fun. This is rewarding. Like, I love to work with children.

And then to step back and say, wait. Wait. Let's close the closet. Alright. Let's open it. Oh my word. You know? And the kids just giggle and clap because they know it's gorgeous, and they contributed to its beauty.

And what child isn't proud of their work? Yeah. But a lot of times, I think we don't praise children that we just assume, well, that's your job. You know? I'm not gonna but, no, they need to it needs to be fun, and there needs to be a lot of affirmation of their amazing abilities. Nobody can clean a a floor like that, or nobody can like you, Susie, or Harry. You are the best shower cleaner that ever walked the Earth, and we're gonna take pictures. And daddy's gonna wear sunglasses when he comes in. He's gonna get retinal damage.

And, like, make it fun, but get your kids working. And as they get older, they will begin to work independently without even being told. If they work when they're little with you when they grow up, as, you know, junior high, high school, they will be able to out

clean you and outwork you because train them that work is rewarding and that it's as under the Lord and not as the men.

Rachel Winchester [00:28:40]:

So good. Well, I think this will be encouraging. I know I'm encouraged, and it just is good to have that reset and just to say, what is this really about? What is this really for? To get, you know, all the tips in the world can't fix your attitude and just help you kinda have that vision of of what we're going for in our homes.

Carole Joy Seid [00:28:59]:

Okay. I have one more word, and that is get the castle ready for the king before he walks in. That is a huge way to honor daddy. And feel like he's not an annoyance or he's interrupting something, but that the whole day builds to his arrival. When my grandchildren hear that garage door go up, it is every man for himself. They are slamming people against the wall trying to get to daddy. It is so fun to see because daddy is honored and loved and treasured as he should be in every family.

And it's so important for your kids to get that castle ready for the king. And in doing that, they're saying daddy is the most important person in our family, and we're gonna honor him because he takes such good care of providing for us.

Rachel Winchester [00:29:53]:

That's great. Thank you. You've been listening to the Homeschool Made Simple podcast. If you like what you heard in this episode, please leave a rating and review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify, or share this episode with a friend. It means so much when you help us spread the message of Homeschool Made Simple with others. 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.