

Embrace Simplicity to Build Strong Families

Episode 267

Rachel Winchester [00:00:02]:

One of the joys of having mothers and grandmothers is receiving the wisdom passed down from one generation to another. But if you don't have those people in your family, God has provided spiritual mothers in the church. Today, we're talking about some of the practical ways we can strengthen family life and be people who give a lasting heritage to the next generation. You're listening to the Homeschool Made Simple podcast. This is a podcast to help you home school simply, inexpensively and enjoyably. Carol Joyside has been helping families homeschool for several decades now through her literature based approach to education. And I'm Rachel Winchester, a fellow homeschool mom using this method with my own three kids. In this episode, we finish our conversation with Lila Lawler.

Rachel Winchester [00:00:45]:

This time, we hit on keeping the Sabbath, receiving children, and what advice Lila would give to new parents. Listen in.

Carole Joy Seid [00:00:54]:

So, Rachel, let's take turns talking about some things that really, you know, made our heart sing. I'm gonna start. So one thing one thing that I loved was, your description of how to celebrate Christmas and celebrate the twelve days of Christmas in such a, just such a simple, joyful, inexpensive, low stress way where Christ is the center and family is the true gift. I also love just the practical aspects of your advice, like, as a good grandmother would, like, teaching young women how to dress their children for warmth. That just made me chuckle, like, the idea of wearing undershirts under your clothes. When I was a little girl, every child wore an undershirt. Nowadays, people are wearing, like, sundresses in snowstorms. And this Oh, yes.

Carole Joy Seid [00:01:52]:

And just that if

Leila Lawler [00:01:53]:

It's ridiculous.

Carole Joy Seid [00:01:55]:

But but I love your practicality as well as your deep theological perspectives, then you're just teaching us about food and how children need protein and how if they're hungry, angry, lonely, or tired, what you know, addressing those issues instead of considering it a behavior issue, helping our children to obey by giving them the structures to make them successful instead of defeated all the time. Just like these practical grandmotherly things that many of us have never received.

Leila Lawler [00:02:27]:

Like, the two examples that you give of celebrating Christmas through the twelve days and then also, like, dressing your children warmly, interestingly, those two things come directly from not having enough money. Yes. You know, really looking at Christmas coming and saying, we literally cannot afford more than one small gift per child. But that was a gift a real gift to us in family life to use our wits and to figure out and then later to you know? I mean, it's actually my husband who was kind of like Lila. There are twelve days to Christmas. Let's you know? Let's not put so much pressure on ourselves. And to take that guidance and to say this interestingly, this actually relieves us of the burden of having, like, this one day, you know, this fantastic

Carole Joy Seid [00:03:24]:

Extravaganza. Help

Leila Lawler [00:03:27]:

fulfill everybody's desires, which is not gonna happen. So that was a that was but that came from not having enough money, and the same thing, like, our house was very cold. Yeah. We didn't have enough money to eat it, really. The bigger picture is that, you know, as I sort of go into my fight against feminism, a lot of people will say to me, well, nobody can live on one income. And I'm kinda like, no. I am here to prove that. Thank you.

Leila Lawler [00:03:56]:

Income. You have to use your your brain, your smarts, but you can do it. And you might things might not be yours heat might not be set at 70, and you might not have a million gifts to give your children at Christmas. But, actually, it's gonna come out better.

Carole Joy Seid [00:04:12]:

I was just gonna say, but your children are better for it.

Leila Lawler [00:04:16]:

Oh, yeah.

Carole Joy Seid [00:04:16]:
Amen.

Rachel Winchester [00:04:17]:
Yeah.

Carole Joy Seid [00:04:17]:
Rachel, you were gonna jump in and say some of your favorites?

Rachel Winchester [00:04:21]:
Yeah. I've kept noticing how you would bring up the Sabbath that you were like you know, if you want to kind of you would always just bring up, like, the Sabbath is start with the Sabbath. Or then, like, when you're in the part about destruction proofing your family, you know, you start with the Sabbath is so important in that. So how did that kind of come about that?

Leila Lawler [00:04:43]:
So just as with Christmas being a season, the liturgical year is very important Yes. To me and to our family. And the anchor of the liturgical year is the Sunday worship. And I I mean, this is a commandment, you know, to keep holy the Sabbath day. And over the years, it really struck me that it's not possible to really be standing good conscience asking God to shower his blessings on us if we do not try to at least fulfill his commandments. And then I realized the the benefits that come from striving to do it. And if we orient our lives we're so busy and we're so you know, we don't have any help and there's all these things, all these pressures and all this stuff we have to do. And what is more natural than to take that one extra day and have it be a day that when you can get things done? And when I realized the importance of just for us as persons to have a day where we're not, quote, unquote, getting things done, but we're just actually worshiping God, resting because that is what God did on the seventh day.

Leila Lawler [00:06:02]:
He rested, which implies and has embedded in it being appreciative and grateful for just creation. That in turn implies a certain festivity, so there has to be some sense of enjoyment of each other. So at least on this one day that we are worshiping, resting, and celebrating, even if by celebrating, I mean, just, like, we just relaxed and played a game or took a walk or did something to show in a almost like physical bodily way that we have gratitude just for being. Mhmm. And that is just all about doing and accomplishing. And what I noticed, it's so funny because from the other end of it, you

know, people will write me I mean, they write me a million emails and ask me a million questions. And sometimes it's very, like, yeah. Like, you actually need more than one dish towel.

Leila Lawler [00:07:01]:

I learned that from my mom. Sometimes it is something that I will just honestly say, I just actually don't know the answer to this question. This is a very, very difficult question. I don't know the answer, but God does. So you have to prepare yourself to receive the answer. And the only way to prepare yourself is to order your life to put you in a position of receptivity, which means that you have to obey his commandments and one of them is to keep holy the Sabbath day. So for the mother of the family, that means like it's actually takes some work because it actually has an impact on everything you decide to do on on a random Tuesday because in your mind, you can't think, oh, I'm gonna have just, like, this procession of days that I can get everything done. You have to say, actually, the things the really important things that I need to get done need to be done by Saturday.

Leila Lawler [00:08:07]:

Right. Yeah. Because on Sunday, I don't want now are you still gonna have to do a load of laundry or whatever? Yeah. Probably. But it's amazing the change that it makes in people's lives. A simple thing. If you just say you just discuss with your husband and you just say, we are just not gonna go shopping on Sunday. That is just a matter of basic justice because sure.

Leila Lawler [00:08:33]:

Does my not shopping on Sunday have any impact whatsoever on all the people who have to work on Sunday because people choose to go shopping on Sunday? Not in any detectable way. But at least I have to have in mind that it's wrong to insist that people be there at my beck and call. Sure. Like, they need to be in the pharmacy. They need to be at the grocery store because, you know, maybe, like, there's certain things that have to be open. But society functioned for a very long time with stores closing. I can remember. On Sunday, the stores just weren't open.

Leila Lawler [00:09:14]:

And

Carole Joy Seid [00:09:14]:

And you you made do, didn't you?

Leila Lawler [00:09:17]:

You figured it out.

Carole Joy Seid [00:09:17]:

That's right.

Leila Lawler [00:09:18]:

Everything all the moms knew. I better buy the milk. Right. You know? I better get what I need. I better but and it's not just like I'm not people aren't just buying milk. They are literally saying, oh, we're gonna have to get our, you know, get all our clothes that we have to buy to go on our vacation. We'll do it on Sunday. Right.

Leila Lawler [00:09:42]:

No. You can't plan things that way. That's a plan, and it's a plan that really goes against what Sunday should really be, which is rest, worship, and celebration. So, yeah, that has been my emphasis emphasis over the years because I don't wanna say, like, I'm the one who's gonna solve all your problems. God is gonna help you. And my job is kind of to say, here's how you can order your life so that God has a chance to say something to you and, you know, you might listen. I don't know.

Rachel Winchester [00:10:17]:

Yeah. Just going to worship, hearing the word preached, and participating in the liturgy, taking a nap and resting so that you can just be rested and have a level mind and everything, those alone just make a huge difference.

Leila Lawler [00:10:32]:

It makes a huge difference. And another thing that struck me, maybe, you know, after I've been saying this for so long, is how okay. Going back to that thing of we're living on one income and we're also being open to having a large family. Well, now you have a husband who really has accepted the burden, which is, you know, part of his manhood. It's not it's not payable, but it is a burden that he is gonna be responsible for the well-being, the financial, physical well-being of all these people. And he is working super duper hard. Also, he's a great guy, so he's he's also volunteering for this and that. And you know what? On Sunday, the band needs a nap.

Carole Joy Seid [00:11:19]:

Amen.

Leila Lawler [00:11:20]:

She just needs a nap. And you if you have set if the mom hasn't committed herself to a bunch of outside things, then she can take a nap on Thursday. She can take a nap on

Friday. But in the back of her mind, she'd be like, for the well-being of this man and for the well-being of our family, Give the guy a rest. And I think that pastors need to do this too. I see a lot of church programs really relying on this, you know, good hearted man is gonna volunteer on Sunday too. How about not? How about he can just go home and be with his kids who probably hasn't seen all week other than, like, on Saturday, he had to take them to a million soccer games and while he was on the ladder, you know, figuring something out on the roof. And just let him rest, and that's gonna be better for your church community that this man has a sense of

Carole Joy Seid [00:12:22]:
Rest.

Leila Lawler [00:12:23]:
Oh, you know, this is a good life. One day out of the seven. And if we can take the long view, your church community, your community at large, and even the whole country is gonna be better than yourself.

Rachel Winchester [00:12:37]:
Yes. Yep. Wow. Could we circle back to the idea of letting the babies come to you?

Leila Lawler [00:12:44]:
Oh, yeah.

Rachel Winchester [00:12:45]:
Having I mean, you kind of said this posture of receiving.

Leila Lawler [00:12:48]:
Receiving. And This is the so I have my, you know, the three rules of destruction proofing your marriage, and then there's also the fourth one. And,

Carole Joy Seid [00:13:02]:
Can you share those rules, Lila?

Leila Lawler [00:13:03]:
So the and it's they're not, like, in order of importance. They're in order of how I felt at the time that I wrote them that they would be my readers would be most receptive to them because I do think that women tend to have, like, the small picture of, like, well, how are we gonna do certain things? And so the first one is to try to have dinner as a family, dinner together and to have in mind, especially as your family gets bigger, that at least four days a week, you really are gonna sit down and have dinner together. And

one of those days will be Sunday dinner. And that's the first rule. And I really do believe that this time together is so important to I mean, it's so important when your kids are young. It's very difficult when your kids are little. The thing to keep in mind as the goal is that when they're teenagers and they are so close to leaving you pretty much for good, that those times will be so formative and the time around the dinner table for your teens

Carole Joy Seid [00:14:09]:
Yeah.

Leila Lawler [00:14:09]:
Is super, super formative. And then it's all in an atmosphere atmosphere of respect and love, which is the dinner table. The second rule is Sundays as we just talked about. And then the third rule of destruction proofing your family. And, you know, in all these things, I say, I'm not here to say that bad things don't happen to your family. It can happen. You can do everything, quote, unquote, right, and there's no guarantees.

Carole Joy Seid [00:14:39]:
Yeah.

Leila Lawler [00:14:40]:
But I'm just saying, like, these are the things that you would hate to turn around and look and say, wow. I really regret that. I just didn't know about these things. So the fourth one is friendship, just friendship and admiration between husband and wife. But you cannot actually have friendship and admiration if your fundamental relationship with each other has an attitude of resisting the one thing that is the crown and glory of your relationship, which is children. Because marriage, it is what its essence is that it is the one flesh union of the two people, man and woman. But the but what it is for, it is for the procreation and education of children. So if you're rejecting what marriage is for on this fundamental level that you resist having children, then it will be very difficult to have a friendship and to admire your spouse because that friendship has to be based on loyalty and trust.

Leila Lawler [00:15:48]:
And if and those two things are contradictory. It's contradictory to say, I am loyal to you and trust you and also don't want any of your children. Like, that that doesn't make sense. It's not it's not the language of love. Now what makes people inclined to resist children is that they think that if they don't resist children, they will have all the children. And the people who don't have children are not visible. You can't see what isn't there. People who do have a lot of children are drowning in children.

Leila Lawler [00:16:22]:

Like, you can see them. They forgot their shoes at when they were headed to church. Like, they are a mess. Their children's hair isn't brushed. Like, you can you can say, wow, that woman looks really tired. Yeah. She's really tired. She has a baby.

Leila Lawler [00:16:37]:

You know? That's not exactly an argument for not having children. But because that's what you see, you know, in a society where everybody is taught to be selfish and men are really don't know how to act towards women and there's terrible transgressions against God's law. Yeah. There's a lot of reasons why people are afraid of children. I know the emotional anguish that it causes. But the other thing that I actually did live through is having my sixth child be the occasion of great difficulty that I almost died. And at that point, was really confronted with, you know, being 31 years old and kind of like, that's it. Like, now, what are you gonna do? And you also have just been told by the surgeon who saved your life that you should never have another child.

Leila Lawler [00:17:38]:

So what are you gonna do? And I mean, honestly, it did plunge me into a pretty deep depression, and I really prayed about it. And, you know, I emerged from the other end realizing that you know, and this is something that everybody has to really this is a conscience thing. It's a very personal thing to just say, well, I you know, and the priest said to me, like, Lila, I know so many women who have been told they shouldn't have more children. I'm just saying that you just have to pray and don't worry, and I will pray for you every day. And that really helped me and it my husband and I did decide that we did have an interior piece and an interior column, and we weren't gonna worry about it. But lo and behold, two years went by and we did not get pregnant. Mhmm. And I think then we did get pregnant with our last child.

Leila Lawler [00:18:30]:

And then after that, we had no more children. And that experience really drove home to me. You aren't gonna just have the 22 babies that you feared. You'll consider yourself lucky that you had seven. Mhmm. Our little Bridgette was 18 old, and we were sending our eldest Nick off to college. And I can remember the fear that I had right then. We have not had enough children.

Leila Lawler [00:18:55]:

Yeah.

Carole Joy Seid [00:18:56]:

We're gonna be back tomorrow.

Leila Lawler [00:18:59]:

We need more. And but, you know, god has other plans. So, anyway, this is my main message is just, you know, when somebody writes to me as they do a lot, like, I have four children. It seems like a lot. Here's all our issues. Why we're really thinking we should never have anymore. And I will always say, would it change how you think if you could look into the future and know that you would only have one more child, that God would send you no more children or only one more? Would that change? A lot of times I find that it does really change how they feel about it and that it drives home the point that God has given us this gift. He gives us the grace.

Leila Lawler [00:19:45]:

He never promised that we wouldn't suffer, but do we trust him or not? And then you'll get your children, and you think, well, which one would I not want? I want them all. I love them all. I can't imagine saying, here's these four beautiful children. I don't want another one. I

Carole Joy Seid [00:20:05]:

don't know. True. Oh my word. Lila, we could talk to you for three days. As a matter of fact, can you come live with us? Because we wanna we wanna start a commune, and you could be the We'll

Leila Lawler [00:20:18]:

do that.

Carole Joy Seid [00:20:20]:

But I would love us, to close with any last thoughts. If you if you you know, little Susie comes along, she's getting married, or she's pregnant with her first. What you know, encapsulate what would you say to that young mom and young dad as they're starting the journey?

Leila Lawler [00:20:39]:

The first thing I would say is that if it seems like too much to you to read a three volume book or read a blog with posts that go on and on about all this stuff. I do have a substack that I started in the fall that is literally, like, 90% of the time, 300 words or less that just kind of encapsulates these little things that I'm saying, sends them to your inbox. And I think people do find them a little bit easier to take. There's also a voice over in case you need my voice every morning.

Carole Joy Seid [00:21:16]:
And we will put that

Leila Lawler [00:21:17]:
in the

Carole Joy Seid [00:21:18]:
show notes. Yeah. That would be a nice way to brush your teeth every morning to Lila.

Leila Lawler [00:21:23]:
Yes. And I would just say go back to the very simple things. We don't have to be in a rush that the simple things are the beautiful things, that men and women really are different. And a man has his perfections and virtues, and a woman has hers, and they're complimentary. And children fit into this complimentary relationship in a way that will grow and will show God's love to other people. And if that's the kind of life that you would want to strive for, then just know that it's it's not hard. It doesn't require, you know, like, a lot of constant motivation. It's actually just built in to our human nature and that we should be receptive to it.

Leila Lawler [00:22:18]:
You know, as God said to Job, look at the sun rising. You could not do this. Like, you cannot make the sunrise, and you cannot make the snowfall. Only God can do that. So we just have to be grateful that he gave us existence. He gave us each other. And to seek that sense of that ultimately through all the struggles, through all the suffering, this is the destiny that he has in mind for us.

Carole Joy Seid [00:22:45]:
Yeah. Receive it and rest rest in his love. Rachel, anything you wanna add or you wanna close us in prayer?

Rachel Winchester [00:22:53]:
Thank you. This has been really encouraging. Lord, we thank you for the mothers who have gone before us, like Lila and like Carol, who have lived a faithful life and who have sought to hand down what they've learned and teach it to others. And we pray that you would bless them. And we pray that those of us who are younger, who are seeking to receive these things would take them and build upon them and share them with our children and our children's children. And that there would be a remnant who remains for your kingdom and your glory. We pray this in Jesus name. Amen.

Rachel Winchester [00:23:35]:

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