

# Wichita TPA HomeSchool Convention 2011

## *Honoring The Children God Has Given You*

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**Introduction:** Good Afternoon. I'm glad to see you here today. I know you must be exhausted – *invigorated* and exhausted.

I want to alert you that Voddie Baucham is speaking right now, next door, and I will not be offended if you get up and go over there – *I would if I were you!* I want to hear what he has to say about the State of the Family....

How many of you went to the opening keynote with Voddie Baucham earlier this afternoon? Wow! Isn't he amazing! He's one of my favorites and I'm sooooooooooooo thankful the TPA leadership brought him here to Wichita. His message is critical for Christian families, and the city of Wichita desperately needs Christian families to represent and reflect their King. The first time I heard Voddie, what he said rocked my world and I've never thought the same nor been the same. I *like* him, he seems fearless in the midst of group-think, convention, and middle-grounders. He's not afraid to make us wince – and we often need a swift boot on the hind-side to awake from our slumber. I praise God for that man! I think he is one of the biggest gifts to the Church in our day.

I'm humbled and grateful you've chosen to punctuate this first day of the conference *here, with us*, in the Cypress room.

**Opening Prayer** – Calm my anxious heart. Speak through me Lord, and encourage Your people for we love You and we desire to see Your Name revered among the people. Give us humble hearts, ears to hear, eyes to see, and ready feet to walk by faith with the power You faithfully provide. That we might come to truly know that You are most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in You; and may we believe You more this day and forward.

**PP** My name is Jill Grier and I am first and foremost a grateful wretch saved by grace alone; I'm the wife of my husband's youth, the privileged mother of three fine young men ages 17, 16, and 14, a former Colorado certified middle school teacher, and the founder of *Kingdom-MindedMoms* and Visionary Christian Home Educators (V-CHE).

We've been an 'official' homeschooling family since reading Gregg Harris' book *The Christian Homeschool* when our oldest was only six. Mind you, it takes quite a lot to convince a state-certified educator to consider the benefits and merits of this counter-culture – it goes against everything we've been taught to value. But God used this book (hold up) and this one little quote to completely dismantle my philosophical and practical framework.

The book, God used to convict and convince me; this quote, He used to inspire me. Perhaps you have already encountered it. If not, brace yourself – it's going to either fill you with zeal or make you squirm....

**PP** “Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.”

~ W.B. Yeats ~  
1923 Nobel Prize in Literature

It's been a couple years since I've spoken at this conference and I'm grateful to be here today. Tomorrow morning, first thing, I'll be speaking on Cultivating a Mind for God; but this afternoon I want to talk with you about

**PP** **Honoring the Children God Has Given You.**

We read much in Scripture about *children* honoring their parents and this is very clear ....

All you have to do is go to [Biblegateway.com](http://Biblegateway.com) and plug in the keywords 'honor your father and mother' – the synergy of Scripture is evident: (Synergy = the whole of Scripture is greater than the sum of its individual passages. Scripture interprets Scripture.)

**PP** KEYWORD - ESV: “Honor your father and mother”

Exodus 20:12

Deuteronomy 5:16

Matthew 15:4

Matthew 19:19

Mark 7:10

Mark 10:1

Luke 18:20

Ephesians 6:2

So, how do I have the nerve to assert that *we* are to honor the children God has given us?

Well, first let's define terms:

Noah Webster's 1828 Dictionary defines the verb (action) 'Honor' this way:

**PP HON"OR**, v.t on"or. [L. honoro.]

1. To revere; to respect; to esteem; to treat with deference (and submission), and perform relative duties to.

*Honor thy father and thy mother. Ex.20.*

(Yep – that original NOAH Webster Dictionary uses Scripture to clarify the definitions, *imagine that!*)

Beloved, hear the Word of God –

Scripture plainly declares we were *thought up* by God, *equipped by God* – for God's purpose and His glory in our 'work to do'.

Psalm 139: 13-14 "For You formed my inward parts; You knitted me together in my mother's womb. *I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are Your works; my soul knows it very well.*

Proverbs 22:6 "Train up a child *in the way he should go*; even when he is old he will not depart from it."

Romans 12:6 – Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them.

Hebrews 12:1-2 - ...let us therefore throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance *the race marked out for us.*

I Corinthians 7:17 – *Only let every one lead the life which the Lord has assigned to him, and in which God has called him.*

Ephesians 2:10 – For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus *for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

Ephesians 4:1 – I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to *lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called.*

(A family-favorite)

\*I Corinthians 6:19-20 – Do you not know that your body is the sanctuary of the Holy Spirit Who is in you, whom you have from God? *You are not your own, for you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body.*

Why is this so important in our day?

Why address *this* crowd?

Aren't Christian homeschoolers intentional about raising their children up in the love, nurture, and admonition of the Lord – aren't we often accused of being a bit too 'legalistic' in our obedience to our King?

Further – don't we tend to be child-centered? Our entire life seems to focus around affording our children the best education, the best environment and home-life, the best of *our* life.

So why *this* topic for *this* crowd?

You see, our mind and our actions should be based on the Word of God and on the leading of the Holy Spirit – not on convention, not peer pressure, and not the comfort zone. And unfortunately, both –

- 1.) Peer Mentality
- 2.) Comfort Zone

- They dominate the Christian homeschool subculture. God forbid! This should not be!

*Certainly* we should not walk in the counsel of the ungodly, but neither should we walk rank and file with the herd or stick to our comfort zone just because it's what we are familiar with.

To our great shame, many of us homeschoolers walk *more* in the counsel of the godly *than we do* in the wisdom of God through His Word and the leading and power of the Holy Spirit!

I want to warn you; there are two very prominent 'peer groups' among us. For the sake of our time today, I'm going to refer to these groups as 'herds' because it really conveys a collective mindset, a group-think, the peer dependence I'm warning you about – it also is a vivid word picture.

PP

- 1.) 'Herd Blue' – kneels to pragmatic and conventional wisdom in the education of their children. Basically, this looks like 'school at home' in that the definition of 'success' in Herd Blue homeschooling will be a high ACT score, require a college education in a marketable field, esteem to have future job security. This herd rarely sees a distinction in the design of male and female roles in God's order. Girls go to college so they can make something of themselves and support themselves "*In case something happens to their marriage*"; boys go to college so they can make something of themselves and provide for their families, a six-figure, white-collar income is prudent. Herd Blue tends to be more egalitarian in nature when it comes to their educational goals and philosophy.

This looks very much like the world's system and expectation, doesn't it.

PP

Cultural conformity cleaned up is the Herd Blue ethic.

PP

- 2.) 'Herd Red' – on the other hand, kneels to the philosophy that *bucks* conventional wisdom, and they subscribe to a *strict* complementarian view of God's order in all of life. Yes, their sons *may* be encouraged to pursue college in order to fulfill his role as provider, but their daughters are created to be help-meets and keepers of the home; at most daughters are encouraged to run a home-based business. Boys grow up to be Priest, Prophet, Protector, and Provider. Girls grow up to be godly wives and mothers, (unemployed) help-meets, and keepers of the home. This looks *nothing* like the world's system and expectation.

PP

Cultural NON-conformity is Herd Red's ethic... even to the point of throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

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"The opposite of courage is *not* cowardice, it is conformity."

~ Rollo May ~

Masters of Divinity

1938 Union Theological Seminary, New York  
(Same seminary attended by Dietrich Bonhoeffer)

PP

As Christians, we are charged to walk by faith.

'Whatever is not from faith is sin.'

~ Romans 14:23 ~

It doesn't take faith to follow a formula. One doesn't have to think if all you have to do is follow a list of rules and expectations:

**PP** Conform and perform to A + B + C .... And you'll get Z

HOW MANY OF YOU ARE RELATIVELY NEW TO HOMESCHOOLING?

HOW MANY OF YOU ARE NOT HOMESCHOOLING YET, BUT HERE TO GATHER INFORMATION BEFORE MAKING A DECISION?

I'm *especially* glad you are here – as you know, people can get set in their ways and it is awfully difficult to abandon course (repent) and shift gears when we're so far down the road.

“It's hard to teach an old dog new tricks.” We all know it's best to start off on the right foot.

But if you are that 'old dog' and have been homeschooling for a comfortable while, *please* don't allow the spirit of discouragement to darken you. Our God is in the business of restoring what the locust have eaten (Joel 2:25) and He really enjoys displaying His glory against the slimmest of odds when it comes to His people gaining ground – and growth in record time.

God did NOT give us a spirit of timidity, but of power, love, and discipline (2 Timothy 1:7 nasb)

We should never succumb to a spirit of fatalism.

May we follow hard after the Spirit's direction – and God's unique crafting of our children. May we not only be *filled* by the Spirit, but let us *walk by* the Spirit!

May we have as our goal in home education nothing less than this:

**PP** “I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well. <sup>6</sup>For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, <sup>7</sup>for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.”

~ Paul the Apostle ~

to his spiritual son

Far too many of us, as Christians, bow down to social philosophies when it comes to educating our children and preparing them for their lives. These social philosophies can come from conformist in Christian circles and non-conformists in Christian circles.

These philosophies try to tell us that every person is supposed to meet a minimum standard of ‘normalcy’ according to their ethic.

- Being ‘normal’ is good,
- being above normal is – well – great.
- and being sub-normal is *bad*.

We must do everything in our power to at least be ‘normal’ – we must at least keep up with the herd and conform to expectations.

But, we’re not supposed to follow *people*. We are to follow hard after God by the Spirit.

**PP** “At an early age, you started hearing it: ‘It’s a virtue to be *well-rounded*.’ You were told this was your ticket to teachers’ approval, straight A’s, a great college, a successful career – not to mention money, happiness, and fulfillment. Through schooling, training, and societal expectations, you got the message:

**PP** “*Soften your sharp edges. Become smooth and well-rounded....*”  
(*Living Your Strengths*, pp. 11)

**PP** “Here’s the problem: Conventional wisdom doesn’t consider who you really are. And, besides, God didn’t make you well-rounded!”  
(*Living Your Strengths*, pp. 11)

I would venture to guess there’s not one of us in this room who hasn’t, at some point in time, been taken captive by this idea.

*Most* of us have been captivated through conditioning by the ‘cultural-conformity cleaned-up ethic’ of Herd Blue that insists:

*“By the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> grade, all students have read Tolstoy’s War and Peace, write a persuasive paper, speak fluent French, solve trigonometry problems, excel in a team sport, enjoy formal debate, run a 10 minute mile, and score high on the ACT.”*

Some of us have been captivated by the cultural Non-conformity ethic of Herd red that insists:

*“By high school graduation, girls should desire marriage and motherhood right away and be able (if need be) to help her family make ends meet by teaching classical piano in her television-less home, and boys should be well established in their entrepreneurial enterprise and able to support a wife and little ones on the way.”*

Anything short of this expectation is considered flawed or defective or deficient according to the particular herd. Now, you know this is a sweeping generalization, and there *are* people within these herds along a spectrum ....

But God says, in Colossians 2:8 –

**PP** (Colossians 2:8 esv) *“See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.”*

The world in our day is entrenched in secular humanism....

But more disturbing than that, the Church in our day is entrenched in ‘Christianized-Humanism’.

Truth is – all people are fearfully and wonderfully made, and we are NOT all supposed to look alike, think alike, perform alike. We are *not* all supposed to go to college and study for a marketable career for financial stability and job security... not even our sons!

We’ve been fashioned by our good, loving, and sovereign Creator God. He designed us to be different. He designed us to complement each other. He designed us for a work to do, and guess what – *we are not all supposed to do the same work!*

We are not supposed to have the same strengths, the same talents, intellects, abilities, interests, passions, and gifting. God has even given our different handicaps, challenges and limitations – even our outright disabilities. YES, God ordained these too and they are all part of His ‘fearfully and wonderfully made’ creating of the who He made you to be. (Exodus 4:11; John 9:1-3)

These are all clues as to the work He has ordained for us to do – our particular calling.

**PP** “Your ability (and your disability) unveils your destiny. ‘If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ’ (I Peter 4:11). When God gives an assignment, he also gives the skill. Study your skills, then, to reveal your assignment.”



~ Max Lucado ~  
*You Can Be Everything GOD Wants You To Be*

When we recognize and honor this unique design, we are fulfilled and satisfied – and, to quote Piper –

**PP**     *“God is most glorified by us when we are most satisfied in Him.*

We are not all *supposed* to be uniform! That’s NOT what God desires for us.

You may have six children, you may even have identical twins, but each child is an utterly unique creation formed by the loving and very intentional hands of the Master-Creator of the universe. He thought up your child. He fashioned your child. He has afforded you the privilege of mothering or fathering that child to train up and nurture for His glory and His good pleasure in His calling on their life.

That’s our job. That’s our challenge. That’s our holy charge.

Aside from teaching our children to know and fear God through teaching the Scriptures which is able to save their soul and lead them into a life-giving relationship with King Jesus, one of the best gifts we can give our children is to **bless them by recognizing and appreciating and encouraging WHO it is God has designed them to be!**

To honor them as His purposeful and wonderful creation.

Everything, absolutely *everything* has been hand-picked by our Sovereign Creator for His high purpose and glory – and for our joy!

No mistakes! No oops! No regrets!

No Open-Theism!

A great gift to our child is when we SEE the wonder, RECOGNIZE the wonder, APPRECIATE the wonder, and help them to value and honor who God made them to be. To help them see how God will use that quality to glorify Him and to love and serve others. How they will only be satisfied – truly satisfied – when they are doing the work God created them to do.

(READ FROM [LIVING YOUR STRENGTHS](#) – book, pp. ix)

“If you’re like most people, you have grown up with the ‘weakness prevention’ model. You’ve been told that to become strong, successful, or truly serve God and the world, you

must ‘fix’ your weaknesses. You’ve been told that your talents and strengths are a source of sinful pride.... What you *really* need to do, the ‘weakness experts’ say, is to develop your areas of non-talent. Then, they believe, you will be ready to fully serve God and the world.

That thinking is just plain wrong.

In Gallup’s research into human potential over the past 30 years – including interviews with more than 2 million people – the evidence is overwhelming: **YOU WILL BE MOST SUCCESSFUL IN WHATEVER YOU DO BY BUILDING YOUR LIFE AROUND YOUR GREATEST NATURAL ABILITIES RATHER THAN YOUR WEAKNESS.**

**PP** YOUR STRENGTHS AND TALENTS SHOULD BE YOUR PRIMARY FOCUS! ....” (End of Quote)

**PP** Your strengths are clues to the work God has created you to do!

Education should develop your child’s strengths, while honoring their limitations. We should equip our children to know the unique creation God made them to be so they can identify what ‘mission’ He has for them. As a child of God, we don’t get to decide ‘what we want to be when we grow up’. We’ve been designed for a mission – a specific work to do. It’s our job to study our child and help them honor this assignment. We’ve been bought at a price!

This goes along with the Reformed doctrine of ‘CALLING’. Not as in the ‘general calling’ in evangelism, or the ‘effectual calling’ unto salvation; but a secondary calling – as in vocation and roles to fill. **THIS IS A DOCTRINE THAT IS ALL BUT LOST IN OUR PRAGMATIC AND PLENTIFUL DAY.**

So what is a CALLING?

**PP** “A vocation or calling is a certain kind of life, ordained and imposed on man by God, for the common good.... Every person of every degree, state, sex, or condition without exception must have some personal and particular calling to walk in. The main end of our lives...is to serve God in the serving of men in the works of our callings... the true end of our lives is to do service to God in serving of man.” (William Perkins)

We should be sober in taking stock of who God has created us to be.

The *who* God has created our child to be....

**John Piper puts it this way:**

“As a Christian, you have been given gifts and resources you are to invest wisely. You will be held accountable by God (and called to give) an account of what use you have made of these gifts. At that point of eternity, you will not be able to ‘pass the buck’ to some career counselor or fast-talking recruiter.

We have a charge to keep. Each and every one of us has a calling on our life. God has equipped us for this calling. We need to be sensitive to it. Against worldly pragmatics of our day, our calling – what some may call a vocation – is NOT OURS TO DECIDE. We are not the result of mindless circumstances. God has summoned us into being for *His* chosen purpose, and He has designed you to be uniquely able to fulfill that purpose and to have joy and satisfaction in it. This brings God glory.

God desires for you to bear external fruit through your calling. Don’t let this business about calling and joy remain a theological idea, but translate it into practical experience.” (Piper/Christian Hedonist)

**PP** *“As God helps you grow, you will change, but you will always be you. An acorn will grow into an oak tree, but it cannot become a rose bush. It can be a healthy oak or it can be a stunted oak – but it won’t be a shrub. You will always be you – a growing, healthy you or a languishing you – but God did not create you to be anybody else. He pre-wired your temperament. He determined your natural gifts and talents. He made you to feel certain passions and desires. He planned your body and mind. Your uniqueness is God-designed.*

*Here is the good news: When you flourish, you become more you. You become more that person God had in mind when He thought you up. You don’t just become holier. You become you-ier....*

**PP** *God wants to redeem you, not exchange you.”* (an excerpt from *The Me I Want To Be* by John Ortberg)

Again from Ortberg:

**PP** “Each of us has certain strengths. We are born with them, they will always be our strengths, and we delight in them. Work happens best when we discover these strengths and put them to use, and focus on developing them. Trying to improve our weaknesses is like trying to teach a rabbit how to swim or a snail how to race. God’s design for work is best when it goes *‘from strength to strength.’*” (End of Quote)

As a Christian parent – study your child. Learn how God fashioned them so you can encourage and help them flourish in their God-given calling, not exasperate them. Read them. Attend to them. Listen to them. Affirm them. Discover their learning modalities, their thinking styles, their love languages, their temperaments; pay attention to their likes and their dislikes, their strengths and their talents, and their limitations. Even their signature sins are indications of their strength-gifting.

If this child is born again, help them discover their spiritual gifts.

Providing your child an education according to his or her particular bent *will* require you to walk by faith and trust in God to direct your steps. It *won't look* like anybody else. You won't be nice and neat in Herd Blue or Herd Red – you won't be able to measure yourself or your children by other people – you'll be in a class all your own.

It will be scary ....

It will catapult you out of your comfort zone.

**PP** Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”

~ God ~  
Joshua 1:9

Don't be afraid to be Word saturated and Holy Spirit-directed in your home-life. Fan into flame a fire for learning and serving others from their strengths. Help them to be the man or the woman God made them to be; for God's glory, for the good of their neighbor and the Church, and for their joy here and now and to come. This will honor your children and honor your God and bless your neighbor.

It is a kingdom calling.

Raising and educating our children for the glory of God, the eternal and temporal good of our children, and the joy of the nations is an enterprise in spiritual warfare.

*Believe it!*

It's not for the faint-hearted...but it *is* for the Christian.

The Christian is called to believe God's Word. There is a big difference between merely 'believing IN God' and BELIEVING GOD.

Even the demons believe...and tremble. (James 2)

(Hold up left hand and recite Beth Moore's Shield of Faith aloud)

- 1.) God is Who He says He is
- 2.) God can do what He says He can do
- 3.) I am who God says I am
- 4.) I can do **all** things through Christ – who strengthens me
- 5.) God's Word is alive and living in me.

I'M BELIEVING GOD!

(Keep hand raised and pray a blessing over the group.)

**Closing Prayer:** Oh Father, give us courage to do right by our children. Embolden us to live by faith knowing that even though we are often faithless, You are always faithful. May we be a people known for believing You, known for making much of You; known for being a blessing; known for advancing Your Church against all opposition. May we be found faithful. May we be useful in building Your kingdom. We ask these things that Your Name might be revered among the people, that they would fear You and know You and be in awe of You, for You are holy, holy, holy. Thank You for your mercy. Thank You for this time together.

AMEN!

Thank you for coming.

SDG