

The Teaching HOME

VOL. XIX, NO. 1

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2001

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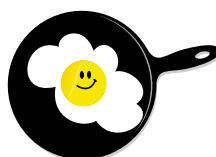
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Spiritual Basics: The Gospel

by Dr. Roger Congdon

The gospel, or "good news," is the one message that Jesus commanded His disciples to preach to every creature. It includes the truths about Christ's work to redeem sinners and the fact that they may obtain eternal life through faith.

In Gal. 1:6-9, the Holy Spirit indicates that the gospel is inseparable from "the grace of Christ," His unmerited favor. A solemn curse is pronounced on any person who preaches a gospel in which salvation is not a free gift of grace, but requires works or merit either to obtain or to retain its benefits.

God proclaims the true gospel in I Cor. 15:1-5. This gospel secures forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life to every person who possesses a vital faith (not an empty or "vain" faith, v. 2) in Christ.

But there are many false Christs (Matt. 24:24; I Cor. 8:5-6). Therefore, it is necessary that we identify the Christ who alone can save.

First, He is God. God the Father calls His Son *God* in Hebrews 1:8 (cf., I John 2:22). At the same time, because of the incarnation, Christ is man (I John 4:3). Those who deny either the deity or the humanity of Christ are called "anti-Christ" in I John.

The gospel includes four historical facts concerning the God-man Christ Jesus, the object of saving faith:

1. He died for our sins.
2. He was buried.
3. He rose again on the third day.
4. He was seen by many witnesses.

The burial, in which the body was wound with linen and about 100 pounds of gums and perfumes and a separate head wrapping (John 19:39-42; 20:5-7), testified that His body was really dead.

The record that Jesus was seen by many individuals and small groups and finally to over 500 at one time assures us that the resurrection was genuine.

God provides salvation only to persons who will accept it as an undeserved gift, by faith.

Finally, I Cor. 15:3 says: "I delivered unto you first of all . . ." This means the gospel is of primary importance for us to understand, believe, and teach our children.

(You may contact our Pastoral Advisor at Box 20219, Portland OR 97294.)

The Teaching HOME

Our Purpose

The Teaching Home magazine was founded in 1980. Our purpose has always been to provide information, inspiration, and support to Christian home-school families and Christian home-school state and national organizations.

The Teaching Home publishers, Pat and Sue Welch and their children, have purposed that the organization and all of its activities and publications will be consistently and forthrightly Christian to the honor and glory of the Lord God.

"But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:15c).

Information in *The Teaching Home* is not given as legal advice and should not take the place of legal counsel from a qualified, informed attorney. We recommend membership in Home School Legal Defense Association.

We Believe

The Bible is the inspired, infallible, written Word of God and constitutes His completed and final revelation to man. It is the sole rule of faith for the believer. The Bible, in its original autograph, is without error in whole and in part, including theological concepts as well as geographical and historical details.

God has existed from all eternity in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ was God come in human flesh being fully God and fully man, except without sin.

All men are in violation of God's righteous requirements and His holy character both by nature and act, and are therefore under His wrath and just condemnation.

The central purpose of the coming of Jesus Christ was to demonstrate God's all holy character that He alone is just and the one who justifies. Jesus Christ alone paid the penalty for man's sin through His substitutionary death on the cross, the successful accomplishment of which was attested to by His subsequent visible, bodily resurrection.

Salvation is God's free gift to the sinner. By God's grace alone, this gift must be responded to by individual faith alone, not trusting in any personal works whatsoever, but in the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ alone.

God's Plan of Salvation

God loves you. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

Man is separated from God by sin. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). "For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).

The death of Jesus Christ in our place is God's only provision for man's sin. "He (Jesus Christ) was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification" (Romans 4:25).

We must personally receive Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord. "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12).

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast" (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

March/April 2001 Six Millennia of God's Working in History. Outline of God's working in history and man's responses, the faithful remnant and godly leaders in each age. How to teach history from a Christian world view. (Article submission closed.)

May/June 2001 . . Summer Opportunities. Various options for year-round schooling or for summer activities that enhance or prepare for learning. Also travel and household organization. (Article submission closed.)

July/Aug. 2001. Essential Skills for Everyday Living. Practical life skills for managing a home, family, work, and personal life. (Articles due March 15.)

Sept./Oct. 2001 Literature. How to study literature and use it to complement other subjects. (Articles due May 1.)

Nov./Dec. 2001 . . . Impacting Our World for Time and Eternity. Political action, community service, charities. Personal evangelism, including relatives, neighbors, business contacts, prayer, home missions. What to do and how to do it. (Article submission closed.)

You Are Invited To Contribute

The Teaching Home is written for home schoolers by home schoolers. We invite you to be a part of this magazine by sharing in various ways.

Articles. Articles on the topics listed above or material for features or columns should be received by the due dates listed.

Articles should be directly applicable to home education and be consistent with Scripture and our purposes (see box at left). The more specific and practical your writing, the more useful it will be to others. We will edit as necessary. *The Teaching Home* pays for original articles used.

Newsletters. Have your home-school organization send us their newsletter with permission to reprint excerpts. We will share selected items with our readers. In exchange, we will give your group an ongoing complimentary subscription.

Letters and Sunny Side Up. Write about personal experiences in your home school. If your contribution is printed, you will receive a one-year free subscription.

We welcome comments and suggestions as we seek to serve the Lord by serving you.

Sue Welch and Cindy Short, Editors

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MEMBER EVANGELICAL PRESS ASSOCIATION

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Send articles to The Teaching Home

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Cover Story

Roger and Cory Lisk

Roger: I am very grateful that God impressed us with the vision of home schooling nearly 15 years ago.

Initially I thought of home schooling as a way of protecting our children from the negative influences of public education or, in our case, overseas government schools.

Home schooling became much more than that to our family. It provided the opportunity to grow and develop spiritually and brought a great deal of stability into our lives as we moved from place to place during my military career.

Raising children that trust in the Lord with all their hearts and allow Him to guide their decisions has been our primary goal. By God's infinite grace, we are seeing the fruits of our labor. We look forward to the plans the Lord has for our family as we continue down the path He has chosen for us.

Cory: Before our first child was born, God made it clear to me through a series of events that He intended me to be a stay-at-home mom. I enthusiastically began motherhood with a sweet baby girl. Jenna was 2 years old when we first heard about home schooling.

Roger and I knew in our hearts that this was the next step the Lord had for our family. It was an opportunity to continue to instill our beliefs and values in our daughter and to begin a new adventure with her.

By beginning home schooling out of obedience to the Lord, we should avoid any difficulties, right? Wrong! It was a true revelation to me that I had areas in my own life that needed changing and maturing. I had character to train, and it wasn't just our daughter's character!

God had me in a great place of dependence on Him. We were stationed with the Army thousands of miles from home in Germany and I knew no other home schoolers. Most people we knew had never heard of home schooling and were sure we would be in jail soon—a foreign jail!

I spent the first several months on my knees at the end of my day tearfully asking the Lord to show me how to do this task He had placed on my heart. I had to trust fully in Him and His understanding, because I had none of my own.

I learned many lessons in that first year. First and foremost was to trust in the Lord; second was to ditch all my preconceived notions of what school should be; third was



The Lisk family home schools in Maryland. Left to right: Matthew, 17, Bethany, 12, Michael, 6, Cory, Susannah, 1, Roger, Rebekah, 4, Jessica, 9, Jenna, 20.

to relax and enjoy the special time together.

We moved many times in our married life during Roger's military career and home schooled in several different states. I have been grateful for Roger's solid support of home schooling.

We recently moved across the country in two big Ryder trucks plus our Suburban. With seven children, four dogs, and a cat, keeping a sense of humor was one lesson I learned well. We are now settling into our new home in Maryland, trusting God in this new chapter of our lives.

In our 14 plus years of home schooling, we have moved seven times. We haven't had to worry about changing schools or our children changing curriculums. We simply pick up where we left off.

During the summer we try to keep up on our math skills, and our children love to read. We usually have a garden and animals to tend to as well.

Along the way we have received great teaching, wonderful mentoring, and the vision to continue from ABCs to SATs.

We view home schooling not just as filling heads with knowledge, but also as developing a lifestyle of learning and serving one another.

We never stop learning as long as we are breathing. We teach our children how to seek answers to their questions and take part in the process of learning with them.

Our first priority is developing godly character. We do this through chores, which reveal areas needing attention. I believe that working together gives each child a feeling of importance and being

part of a team. I also have our older children help with the younger ones by teaching a topic or entertaining a baby while I help another child.

As needed, we adapt and are flexible with our schedule and methods in order to meet the needs of the youngest family members. I teach the younger children as a group when possible. The subjects of Bible, science, and history are easily combined this way—a great time saver for Mom.

In elementary and middle grades, we use textbooks as a take-off point. For example, we may read through a science text together, creating projects as we go along.

We also do memory drill games in a group to cover some math and geography for the middle elementary students (although our younger ones have been known to surprise us with their knowledge of math facts).

Another way we have worked with the younger children is by having our two teenagers teach them. This has been fun for all involved and fosters close bonding between older and younger siblings.

I am frequently asked about high-school-level courses. I have found with our children that by the time they reach high school, they are capable of learning on their own. In high school we have chosen a more traditional textbook approach, but with an increase in research and project opportunities.

We have used some Internet and correspondence courses at the high school and college levels with success, since at this age our students are able to extract the knowledge from a text and apply it.

Our high schoolers are expected to manage their own time schedules. These are important skills that benefit them not only in their college pursuits, but also throughout all of life.

Before our recent move, the Lord had us in a position of ministry in our state home-school organization. I had the opportunity to mentor and encourage many new and veteran home schoolers and hone my own organizational skills.

A favorite Scripture passage of mine that I hope will be an encouragement to you also is Psalm 139:5: "Thou hast enclosed me behind and before, and laid Thy hand upon me." What good news to know I can rest securely in Him.