

A LIFESTYLE EDUCATION THROUGH DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE
FROM ME AND MY HOUSE

Freedom & Simplicity in His Story

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*A Lifestyle Curriculum Guide
for Liberty and Joy in
Learning & Teaching God's Story*

by Lisa Hodgen

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Revised and Expanded 2006

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Table of Contents

Preface	4
Introduction	6
Laying the Foundation – Looking for God’s Wisdom	9
<i>Biblical Foundation</i>	9
<i>Rudiments</i>	15
Building the Framework – the Methodology for Gaining Understanding	31
<i>6 Processes of Learning</i>	31
<i>7 Pillars of Excellence</i>	34
Filling with the Furnishings – the Application of Knowledge	37
<i>12 Foundational Concepts to Keep in Mind</i>	38
<i>One Way to Develop a HisStory Study</i>	40
<i>Help! I don’t know anything. How can I start?</i>	41
<i>The Lesson</i>	43
<i>Studying the 4 Key Aspects - P.I.P.E.</i>	45
Practical Logistics	52
Recommended Resources for Wisdom, Understanding and Knowledge	60
Discipleship yoU!	71
Appendix A	75
<i>Expanding the 3 External Processes of Learning</i>	75
Appendix B	81
<i>the Learning Maps</i>	81
<i>Key Aspects Learning Map</i>	82
<i>P.I.P.E. Learning Maps</i>	82
Appendix C	89
<i>the Timelines</i>	89
<i>Timeline Pages</i>	92
Contact Information	95

Preface

Bringing Freedom & Simplicity to a study does not just mean finding the easiest way to get it "done" as quickly as possible. It means bringing liberty to the individual through his taking dominion over an area, and the simplicity of being led by the Spirit, disciplining our children in the things that are "in our hearts", not trying to adhere to the dead, dry letter of the law that brings bondage and death.

Freedom & Simplicity education is seed planting. We prepare the soil of our children's hearts to receive the seeds we plant, which unfold and expand over the years and eventually bear fruit and reproduce. The seeds we plant are the Biblical principles and rudiments of a discipline (academic study or other). We plant and water, but it is God who gives the increase. It is our responsibility to present to our children foundations, the tools for reflective learning and Biblical reasoning, and a love for life-long learning, not to drill every jot and tittle fact to enable them to pass a test and then promptly forget.

Freedom & Simplicity is also Big Picture education. It is seeing all of life and learning through the lens of God's word, laying a foundation of Wisdom. We build upon this foundation by reflecting and reasoning to gain understanding, and applying this to the illustrations and examples God has provided in His world for us to gain knowledge. That is, we move from whole to parts. We teach within context, instead of unrelated trivia.

The purpose of this *L.E.D. Guide* is to plant seeds. I hope to plant in your heart the seeds of the Foundations and Rudiments of HisStory, and a Freedom & Simplicity structure for in turn sowing these in your children's hearts. I hope to show you the Big Picture of HisStory, the context to fit all your daily lessons into.

I hope to show you how we plant the seeds in our younger children and they grow and mature in their youth, as they launch into their own personal studies. For further information on our discipleship approach for children, we direct you to our publication *Sorting it Out & Pulling it Together* on how we teach children up to about age 13.

In our society of relativism, we approach education differently. In addition to a structure of Freedom & Simplicity, we also follow a methodology of Discipleship. You follow me as I follow Christ. We model true learning to our children, and we teach them as we learn. You need not be an "expert" on the subject, knowing every detail before you can begin. Nor do you need a degree in education (or anything else) to teach your children. You need only have a love for your chil-

dren and for God and a desire to follow Him and grow in your own learning.

We are called by God to teach our children out of our own hearts. That means our hearts must be renewed. This is where we begin our teaching, by learning. But, as the Biblical Master Teacher Katherine Dang says, "You don't have to teach a lot to teach a lot." This also means you don't have to know a lot to begin teaching. We are planting seeds. Seeds are tiny. But seeds grow over time. Seeds are what we must first plant in our own lives. We can't plant full-grown trees. These seeds will grow in us too. And out of this growth we disciple our children.

Richard "Little Bear" Wheeler tells of how God convicted him to teach his children of God's mighty works through HisStory. He knew nothing, but He began learning of God's Providential HisStory and began sharing what he learned with his children. He then began recording these stories he shared with his children, and these became 12 series of 4 tapes each, the excellent resource Historical Devotionals. His love for HisStory grew, and he continued learning. He has gone on to become one of the leading speakers on Providential History.

This example shows how Freedom & Simplicity is casual yet intentional. As Deut. 6:6 commands us, these things that are in our hearts we are to diligently teach to our children; we are intentional and diligent in our teaching. But how we do it is by talking of them when we sit in our homes, when we walk by the way, when we lie down and when we rise up, we are casually yet intentionally discussing them. It is not the form of a heavy yoke, nor is it a "free for all". It is discipleship.

Our goals are not to prepare our children to win a trivia game show by shoveling in massive amounts of unrelated tidbits, but to know God and understand His universe that they may walk in the dominion He has designed them for. This is done by planting seeds, by beginning with the Biblical source, origin and purpose of the subject, and teaching the "big picture" rudiments. This is do-able for you!

I pray that this resource will bring you Freedom & Simplicity, that it will help you see the teaching of HisStory as not something overwhelming and impossible, but something exciting that God has called you to do, and is there to equip you to do.

A friend recently said, "This sounds freeing and so simple compared to what I've been trying to do." I hope you think so too.

*At Jesus' feet,
Soli Deo Gloria,
Lisa*

Introduction

There is grave danger that knowledge should be an end in itself, practically divorced from the art of living.

'For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope.' These are the words of the apostle Paul to the Romans (Rom. 15:4). The history of the Old Testament was not written for us only that we might know, but that we might learn from the experience of those who have gone on before, lessons which will vitally affect our daily living and order the progress of our spiritual walk. The great need of the present day is not for more knowledge, theological or historical, but that what knowledge we have should be practically related to life.ⁱ

Although a surface study of History can answer the questions, "Who did What, Where and When"; to give the study of HisStory meaning, we must dig deeper to understand the "Why," God's purpose for the People, Ideas, Places, and Events we study. Without the understanding of God's purpose, His Big Picture in HisStory, it is at best an interesting story that has no significance to me, and at worst nothing more than boring lists of names, dates, and places to memorize. We truly need more than just knowledge. We need our study of HisStory to be related to our life.

Charles Rollins, a French historian from the early 1700's, wrote in the preface to his *Ancient History*:

The study of profane [secular] history would little deserve to have a serious attention, and a considerable length of time bestowed upon it, if it were confined to the bare knowledge of ancient transactions, and an uninteresting inquiry into the eras when each of them happened. It little concerns us to know, that there were once such men as Alexander, Caesar, Aristides, or Cato, and that they lived in this or that period; that the empire of the Assyrians made way for that of the Babylonians, and the latter for the empire of the Medes and Persians, who were themselves subjected by the Macedonians, as these were afterwards by the Romans.

But it highly concerns us to know by what methods those empires were founded; by what steps they rose to that exalted pitch of grandeur which we so much admire; what it was that constituted their true glory and felicity; and what were the causes of their declension and fall.

It is of no less importance to study attentively the manners of different nations; ...

Such are the great objects which ancient history presents... thereby instructing us, by example rather than precept, in the arts of empire and war, the principles of government, the rules of policy, the maxims of civil society, and the conduct of life that suits all ages and conditions. ...

But another object of infinitely greater importance claims our attention. For although profane history treats only of nations who had imbibed all the absurdities of a superstitious worship; and abandoned themselves to all the irregularities of which human nature, after the fall of the first man, became capable; it nevertheless proclaims universally the greatness of the Almighty, his power, his justice, and above all, the admirable wisdom with which his providence governs the universe....

Nothing gives history a greater superiority to many branches of literature, than to see in a manner imprinted, in almost every page of it, the precious footstep and shining proofs of this great truth, viz. that God disposes all events as supreme Lord and Sovereign; that He alone determines the fate of kings and the duration of empires; and that he transfers the government of kingdoms from one nation to another because of the unrighteous dealings and wickedness committed therein.

God, although forgot by the nations, and seemingly forgetting them, always retained and exercised his supreme power over them, which, though concealed behind the veil of ordinary events, and such a conduct and government as was merely human, was not therefore less real or divine. "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof," says the prophet, "the world and they that dwell therein.

It would be an error highly injurious to the Almighty, to suppose him the master only of one family, and not of all the nations of the world.ⁱⁱ

History is truly His Story, God's Story in which His Plan is unfolded, and His Providential Hand is seen advancing His Kingdom. History is the One True God working in nations and events to bring about His Plan and purposes.

Each chapter in HisStory, from Genesis to our own time, records the acts of not only God's Covenant Keepers, but also Covenant Breakers. As we study each chapter in His Story, we examine these, not just the facts about them, but also

the ideas of nations, institutions, and individuals that made them what they were. We look at all in light of the Cross of Christ, through the lens of Biblical Principles and in the context of the advancement of God's Kingdom through the *PIPEline* of HisStory. Things written of past times are written for our learning. The experiences of the lives of those whom have gone before us affect our lives. We must seek for *how* they do that, through studying cause and effect. To accomplish this we present HisStory through a framework of continuity, looking at the big picture of HisStory through the wisdom of a Biblical worldview.

ⁱ John W. Kennedy, *The Torch of the Testimony*, (Beaumont, TX, 1965), pg. xi

ⁱⁱ Charles Rollin, *Ancient History Vol. 1*, (Cincinnati, 1857), pg. 19

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Laying the Foundation – Looking for God’s Wisdom

Just as we must see the picture on the puzzle box to know how the pieces are supposed to fit together to form the picture and what it is supposed to look like, we need to look to the Author of HisStory to see what the big picture of it looks like. If we spend all our time looking at the individual pieces scattered all over the table, we will never get a true picture. Everything will appear abstract and unrelated. In all our L.E.D. studies, we focus on the big picture, then build the frame, then begin fitting in the pieces to give us a clear picture. We follow the Learning Triad as outlined in the Proverbs - Wisdom, Understanding, and Knowledge.

We begin the study of HisStory (as we do of all the disciplines) by laying its foundation from the wisdom of God’s Word. We look at the big picture of HisStory, what exactly we are studying and why, its rudiments (basic elements), and Biblical origin, purpose and principles.

Biblical Foundation

Our foundation for every study is the solid rock of God’s Word - His written Word, the Holy Bible, as the lens we gain our principles from and through which we look at all else, and His living Word Jesus Christ, the centerpiece of His Story, the focal point of His plan. We study His Word to learn His perspective on HisStory.

There is certainly another way to study history. That is to look at it through the eyes of man, instead of God’s Word. History is either man’s work or God’s. It is either “the march of humanity from the earliest times to the present... the great triumph and tragedies of mankind,”ⁱ his “altering [his] external environment [hoping] to produce better internal character,” “telling “man’s story” for “man’s glory”.ⁱⁱ Or it is “the auto biography of Him ‘who worketh all things after the council of His will’ (Eph. 1:11) and who is graciously timing all events after the council of his Christ, and the kingdom of God on earth. It is His-Story.”ⁱⁱⁱ

“History from a Christian perspective is not just the accumulation of millions of events over time and in space, but the outworking of the plan of an omnipotent, perfect sovereign God.”^{iv} It “is not a string of striking episodes, with no other connection but that of time. It is rather the working out of a mighty system by means of regularly defined principles as old as creation, and as infallible as divine wisdom.” “Tracing the history of men, we find the most trivial and seemingly fortuitous