

## Podcast #34: My Wish For You

I've been thinking of what I might say to you at this New Year that will give you renewed hope and vision of what we're trying to accomplish here at the Well-Educated Heart. I've written several podcasts already that I've erased. They just didn't seem right. Then yesterday, the thought struck me, "Search the meaning of 'the spoken word of the Lord.' And I was astonished at what I learned. It confirmed again that the things that I am sharing with you that I have been learning—especially the Pattern for Learning I keep referring to-- are not things that I have made up. I believe they are true. I leave it to you to experiment upon the things I say and prove for yourself whether or not they are true by the fruit it bears in your life.

Just a warning—I'm taking this podcast to a deeper spiritual level than we usually go. Everyone is at a different place—I respect that and all are welcome to all the resources in The Well-Educated Heart to use as you wish. But I feel that I should share these thoughts with you today.

This is what I learned about the spoken word of the Lord. And you can do your own search! Just Google it. The New Testament was translated from the Greek into the English language. While we read just one expression—the word of the Lord- if you go back to the original Greek, there were two different words that were used. One word was logos and it referred to the words that were given generally to all people. But the other word that was used frequently was rehma which has an entirely different meaning. Let me quote some of what I read: Rehma refers to a divinely inspired impression upon your soul; a flash of thought or a creative idea from God. It's divine illumination that is always accompanied by a deep inner assurance. As the scriptures say, The spirit of the Lord giveth understanding.

Rehma is dependent upon having something stored up within—a stockpile of ideas and words—that can be illuminated or brought to life with the purpose of a lesson or benefit to the individual or his personal mission.

So one person may read the logos of the scriptures or I would expand that to say the written word of anything and never have those words brought to life. They're just words on a page. But another person will read those same words and be given flashes of inspiration of how they apply to one's own life or learning. It's as though the words are illuminated. The first is logos and the second is rehma. At least that's how I'm understanding it.

This act of divine illumination is another way of saying what Charlotte Mason taught: True education is between a child's soul and God. Or Isaiah when he taught that the day would come when all our children would be taught of the Lord. Not about the Lord, but by the spoken word of the Lord—rehma.

Such instruction is “not helped or hindered by our vocabulary or eloquent speech” because it unfolds deep within our soul. As the article said, you can learn many things at college, but you cannot go to school to learn God. You either learn from Him or you don't know Him at all.

Rehma is that still, small voice.

So that sounds like a discussion for church, right? What does that have to do with The Well-Educated Heart and educating our children? Well, in a nutshell, hard hearts cannot feel rehma. Hard hearts look but don't see. They listen but don't hear. They know but don't understand. They think but don't feel. Those flashes of illumination apply to all our learning whether scriptural or historical or scientific or artistic. So, in order for this kind of learning to happen, we need to keep our children's hearts warm and open and pure. To hear this ‘spoken word of the Lord’ requires living in harmony with divine laws and principles. As we learn from literature, history, art, music and nature, we're constantly searching for those universal true principles by which we teach our children to govern their lives. And they test the truth of those principles by the fruit it bears in their lives. As their hearts grow to love that which is good, true and beautiful and as they are obedient to right laws, this creative power, this divine illumination, will flow into their lives and bear good fruit in the world. It's an individual, personalized course of learning. And its fruits are increased joy, love, and peace.

Hearts are growing hard and cold for a lot of reasons. For one, electronic media is rewiring the brains of our children—they are living in a virtual world and losing touch with the real world about them; with real relationships and real joys. It's a big problem and challenge for us to overcome. This generation seeks for the instant gratification of entertainment and pleasure which can never satisfy. We are living in an age when we are surrounded by all stirring things, unmoved.

And, as I have said before, the world has turned upside down. That which, just a short time ago, was seen as good is now seen as bad and that which is bad is seen as good. Every good is mocked and every fault is magnified. Man's reasoning is creating his own moral code and is creating chaos and confusion in the world.

Goethe's suggestion to, everyday, listen to some inspired music, look at some fine art, read a few lines of beautiful poetry and spend time with a great soul, which easily happens through story, as well as to spend time with the Creator among His creations is how we can warm and soften and STIR the hearts of our children and turn things around because hard hearts cannot feel Rehma. The arts are for the heart.

A mom in our group wrote that it was necessary to put her kids back in public school recently. One day her 11 year old came to her and asked if she had noticed that he was a little blah when he came home from school. She said that yes, she had noticed. And he responded, "I don't know what it is, mom. I just feel dead." A little while later she found him pulling out a story from France to read and put on some music which he and his siblings listened to while they drew. He instinctively turned to those things that would warm his heart because his mother had given him that experience.

So, yes, we spend a lot of time here learning about how to awaken a love and desire for the arts—Music, Paintings and other Fine Art, Poetry and Story—in the lives of our children. And we encourage them to spend time in nature that is actually naturally filled with music, beautiful imagery and even poetry and story to those who have eyes to see and hearts to feel.

But as only a warm heart can kindle warmth in another, we first tend to our own hearts.

So, to hear that still small voice and feel that divine inspiration, Rehma, we have to warm our hearts. But it also mentioned that this Spirit needs something to light up. We need to provide the stockpile of ideas to draw from.

The rotation schedule is simply a way to stockpile the heart in a broad way and in this phase of learning, that's really all we have to worry about doing. We don't need to draw the conclusions for our children or fit everything together for them. We just need to facilitate the planting of knowledge and ideas.

I love this perspective of an English poet, John Drinkwater, that I included in the Mother's Learning Library poetry book. Let me quote a section from it:

“Nothing in the world gives people so much real pleasure as making things. And have you ever tried to think exactly what making a thing means? It doesn't mean making something out of nothing in a magical way, but it means taking a thing, or a number of things that are already in existence, and so arranging them, that in addition to the things that have been used, an entirely new thing comes into being.

I would insert here that rehma is what helps us in that creative process. Continuing....

“For instance, a man may take thousands of bricks, each of which is a separate thing that has already been made, and out of them make an entirely new thing, a house. And in building a house the man is happy for two reasons—because he is making a useful thing, a place where he or some one else can live, and also because he is able to take a lot of bricks that have been lying in heaps, that do not seem to mean anything, and arrange them so that they become a house, which means a great deal. And there is nothing which gives us so much satisfaction as this ability to make disorder into order and give a useful meaning to things that until we have arranged them--just as the man arranges his bricks into a house--seemed to have no use or

meaning at all.

“It is a curious thing that we are able to get just this same kind of pleasure, which is so good for us, without having any real things to arrange. If you shut your eyes and then think of a horse, for example, it is certain that there is no real horse that you are looking at, and yet in some wonderful way you have been able to make a horse in your mind out of nothing. And the truth is that the idea of a horse which you have been able to call up in your mind, is just as real a thing, and just as important to you, as the horse that you may see in the street.

“And nothing will help you more in your life than the habit of seeing things in your mind very clearly; the habit not only of making things with your hands, but of making them in your mind as well. And just as, if you were building a house of bricks, you would not get the greatest possible pleasure unless you built a good, well-shapen, and complete house, so you will not get the greatest possible pleasure from the things that you make in your mind, unless they too are well-shaped and complete. You will find, for instance, that if you think about a horse with your eyes shut, that is to say, if you make a horse in your mind, you will get far more pleasure if you have learnt how to make it very exactly and clearly, than if you are only able to make it uncertainly, so that the horse in your mind is a confused kind of thing.

“I have said that the pleasure that we get from making things, whether with our hands or in our minds, is good for us. That is so because, ever since the earth began, the greatest purpose of the life on it has been to grow from a confusion that cannot be understood into clear shapes that can be well understood, and when we make anything clearly and exactly we are helping this purpose.”

Can you begin to see why our emphasis on the arts—paintings, poetry, and stories that rely upon imagery to help us see and feel clearly—are so important in childhood?

And a little further on, Drinkwater adds: “. . . by far the most important matter is to like a good thing...” It’s that first step in the Pattern for Learning --Desiring that which is good.

These years of childhood and young adulthood are for gathering bricks, which is not the end of learning, but the beginning of a lifetime of creation. That's why when someone asks which month a book should be studied, it doesn't really matter. Often it will fit in several different months. The rotation schedule is just a means to add a little order and rhythm to the gathering stage. We're simply gathering the raw materials with which to arrange and build, the creation stage— which will come later on in the learning process. The more raw materials they have to build with, the more ideas they can see —the more complete and clear they are-- the more can be illuminated and used for good purpose.

When you sketch something from nature, when you follow a melody line in a piece of music, when you memorize a few lines from poetry you love, when you copy words that have touched your heart, when you see and feel a story so clearly that you can retell it, when you try and recreate the details of a work of fine art in your memory, you are bringing order to your internal world from the chaos and confusion of the outer world. These activities help you work towards stockpiling ideas with clarity and completeness of vision, which can then be arranged to good use.

I have a feeling that these things that I am saying so imperfectly with my words will only be understood by the same spirit of learning I am trying to describe. I can tell you that I have been practicing the very things I am sharing with you. It truly is a joyful journey. It is the same process I am encouraging you to take the time to do in The Mother's University—stockpile your heart with good things, apply principles and then trust in that Rehma that will teach you to adapt it to your life and circumstances.

A few days ago, I posted in our Facebook group that I visited the National Portrait Gallery in Washington DC over the holidays and fell in love with the sculpture of a little girl—La Petite Pensee. I couldn't take my eyes off of her. What she made me feel, I have no words to describe to you. But I couldn't stop thinking about her after we left. When I got home, I wondered who was the artist who could have created such a beautiful and inspiring piece of art. His name was Thomas Ball and I found his autobiography online. At the end of the book, he gave some advice to young artists starting out,

and as I read the words, I thought these same words apply to you because you are artist mothers who are shaping the hearts of your children. And sometimes the work is discouraging. We feel inadequate. We feel like we aren't doing a good job. The work isn't turning out the way we hoped it would. To all these very real feelings, he says:

“My most bitter tears have been shed at the completion of some work, when I felt that I had done all I could do, and yet found it so far from what I had hoped to make it, and that it must go out to the world with all its imperfections. Falling upon my knees in agony, praying for comfort and faith to believe the present disappointment to be for my ultimate good, I have arisen comforted and strengthened in the hope that perhaps I had worked better than I knew, and that in my next work I might be permitted to approach a little nearer my ideal. Imperfect and unsatisfactory as all my works seem to me, I shudder when I think of what they might have been, and what I might have been, without that firm belief that He was ever at my right hand as long as I was true to myself—to bear me up when I would have fainted; to help me when my strength left me..

“I write this for the encouragement of my young brothers in art; not those arrogant and proud ones who believe in nothing but their own strength and will, jealous at even a hint of any assistance from a higher power—let them revel in their belief; but ...in the hour when their strength fails them!— But to that sensitive, retiring one who shrinks from the sound of approbation, ... to him I would say Coraggio! You are stronger than you imagine; be but sincere and conscientious in your efforts; work away with all your might. Strive to live a pure and clean life, and to improve the talents God has given you, and leave the rest to him. He will not let you fail. Keep up a good heart; cultivate a cheery disposition...Above all, beware of the first thought or feeling that you are born unlucky, or that you are neglected or unappreciated. Do not think of those who seem to be successful beyond their merit. Your time will surely come, if you deserve it. Be prepared for it when it comes. Beyond everything else, cherish Faith and Hope, the mother and godmother of Patience.”

So as we begin a New Year, I too wish to tell you “You are stronger

than you think . . . keep a good heart....Corragio! Courage!” Do your part. Warm and stir the hearts of your children, teach them the joy of obedience to correct principles and then trust the process of what will naturally follow.

And now I have the traditional poem for you to end this podcast, but I added a couple of other languages of the heart to go with it—some fine art images and a little music that I asked my daughter, Sara, to put together in a video and she did a beautiful job. This poem written in 1914 by Charles Snell perfectly captures My Wish For You as you move forward in this journey of the heart. You’ll find the video linked in the Podcast Notes.

I hope you like it.

Bye bye.