

BCL ep309 The Secret to a Thriving Home Life in a Busy World with Charity Gibson

The time we have at home with our children is a precious gift, but balancing the demands of home and work and everything in between requires intentional effort. Today we're tackling a challenge that hits close to home for many parents, especially moms, who often feel stretched thin by competing demands for family and career and personal responsibilities. How can we as Christian parents cultivate deep, lasting relationships with our families and resist the distractions of the endless to-do list and the temptations of screen time? And how can we use our time at home to reinforce the values and lessons their children are learning at school? Dads, you're not off the hook.

This conversation is just as much for you. Join us for this conversation as we seek wisdom, encouragement, and a fresh perspective on making every moment count on this episode of Basecamp Live. Mountains, we all face them as we seek to influence the next generation.

Get equipped to conquer the challenges, summit the peak, and shape exceptionally thoughtful, compassionate, and flourishing human beings. We call it ancient future education for raising the next generation. Welcome to Basecamp Live.

Now your host, Davies Owens. Welcome to Basecamp Live. Davies Owens here.

Part of the journey that we take every week is coming together and thinking more about this important job that God has given all of us to raise the next generation. Some of you who are listening are parents. Some are educators.

Some wear multiple hats. We've got grandparents. We've got folks who are just concerned about the next generation from all around the world.

It is always a joy to hear from you. You hear me say it every week, but podcasting is one of those odd experiences where it's kind of me in a room and a microphone, and there are thousands of people out there listening. I would love to hear from you.

It's a blessing just to know where you're listening from, what's on your mind, what you're thinking about. Info at Basecamp Live. Love to hear and connect with you.

I also just want to say it's always a couple shout outs to some folks who are doing great work around the country and are part of the Basecamp Live listener family, as well as joining us on the new Zipcast communication media platform, which we are so excited about. We've got schools wait-listed right now. We just can't take on any more folks.

We've got big announcements coming next year for Zipcast 2.0. We'll tell you all about that. But for this episode, I just want to shout out to Dale Cook, head of school at Sandhills Classical Christian School in Whispering Pines, North Carolina, as well as Stuart Davidson, head of school

at the Coram Dale Academy there in Bremerton, Washington. Thanks for being a part of the Basecamp Live and Zipcast family.

We are so glad to be on the journey with you. In this episode, I have the privilege of sitting down with Charity Gibson. Charity is the English professor at the College of the Ozarks, where she's taught for 13 years.

She has a PhD in literature and has, in the past, done most of her writing around academic topics. But she really felt God prompting her to branch out and to connect primarily with women beyond the work she's typically done in the academy. She believes that despite differing interests and areas of expertise, women really share so much in common in terms of partnering with their families.

As I said in the intro, dads, don't tune out. There's something here for you as well. Her new book, *The Working Homemaker, Employed Christian Moms Desiring a Thriving Home Life*, is really encouraging in terms of just how we redeem the time while our children are with us, regardless of where we are, working in the home or outside the home, or whether you're a dad or a mom.

I think there's a lot of wisdom here that I look forward to continuing these conversations with her. We are, as always, grateful in each episode for those organizations that partner with us and sponsor these episodes. The Classic Learning Test, Gordon College, Classical Academic Press, Wilson Hill Academy, and Life Architects Coaching.

Thank you so much for your partnership. You can learn more about them on our Base Camp Live website and the partners page. Without further ado, here's my conversation with Charity Gibson.

Well, Charity Gibson, welcome to Base Camp Live. Thank you so much, Davies. It's great to be here with you.

It's so good to be with you, Charity. Thanks for reaching out and for the great work you're doing. Share with folks a little bit of your story.

I know you wear a lot of hats, but Associate Professor of English there at College of the Ozarks, which, by the way, I've so enjoyed being on your campus. I had the privilege of being there before and love just share a little bit about the work that's going on there as well. Yeah.

So, I am at C of O, as we call it, the shorthand for College of the Ozarks. And I was actually a student there myself and then came back to teach. And I'm about halfway through my 13th year now.

So, I've really enjoyed that. And that is kind of, you know, a big part of my professional identity. But then on the opposite side, I'm also a wife and a mom.

I've got four children. They are kind of the heartbeat of everything that I do as well. And so, I think what we're kind of going to be getting into a bit is just kind of how to think about specifically certain things related to the way that our family is functioning and how that can align with other things, including the work that parents are doing.

But then, of course, also the other things that kids are involved with, with school and all of that. Well, it's such a, I mean, very timely topic as I have the privilege of traveling around the country and meeting with parents. I mean, this, you know, I often quote this statistic that according to Pew, only 30% of modern families live within a 100-mile radius of extended family.

And so, there's just a lot of folks that are kind of figuring it out as they go, so to speak. And so, where are those models of what does it mean to be a, you know, a healthy family, you know, especially in the roles of being a mom and trying to balance all the messages and demands and separate what am I supposed to do from what I should do. And I know Keith McCurdy often talks a lot about just the guilt that a lot of moms feel today, wives feel just trying to do it all.

And it's pretty challenging. So, on that vein, share a little bit of just the impetus behind your new book, *The Working Homemaker*, kind of really hits this full on. Talk about just some of the challenges you are seeing.

Yes, thank you. The book *The Working Homemaker*, it really does put the home front and center. And really, the motivation for writing it was just recognizing all of the ways that families today are being pulled in all of these different directions.

Some of the ways that we are being pulled, we could say, you know, this could be a negative thing to pursuing or to be pursuing, and we need to redirect. But a lot of these things are decently positive. But when you put so many things on top of each other, it just becomes too much.

And so, in thinking about specifically my role as a working mom, and then my children, they're attending a classical Christian school, and my youngest is still in daycare. But during the week, my kids spend more time away from me during their waking hours than they do with me and my husband. And so, I don't think guilt is a helpful framework.

Mom guilt is very real. Parent guilt, in general, can be very real. And though I don't think that's a good impetus for the way that we act, it does help put things in perspective, that time.

And I think this would be true regardless of what that family dynamic looks like. But if our children are away from us at school, that time is one of our most precious resources. And so, really thinking about how much time do we have together at home? And then how are we using that time together when we are home? Yeah.

And that's it. And really, it's intentional parenting. I'm more and more fond of saying, I think all parenting today with their schools, and we'll talk in particular about the relationship with the school, but it's collaborative.

I mean, there's no, you know, we live in an outsource culture today. And I think this really gets at the heart of this challenge of the way you think about the role of being a parent and the role of interacting with your school is intrinsically different than this sort of cultural idea of, you know, paying someone to do this for you. And you can step away from those responsibilities.

But to your point, there seems like more than ever, there's this, you know, there's FOMO, fear of missing out. There's this guilt that, you know, am I doing it right? And I'm going to blink an eye and they're going to be 18. And what did I mess up on? And so, again, help us understand where is all that pressure coming from? Because it seems like that's something that's really even more in the last decade spun up in the hearts and minds of so many parents and moms in particular.

Yeah. I mean, I think if we look at Western culture as a whole, we do see the idols that we've constructed and busyness is certainly one. I've noticed myself that it's this badge of honor when you're catching up with someone.

It's, well, these are all of the things that have been filling our schedule. What about you? And if you don't have those things, or your kids don't have those things, you can kind of start to wonder, are we unpopular and we're just not being asked to participate? Are we lazy? Are we, you know, why aren't we involved like everyone else seems to be? And so, I think there's that. There's maybe that we kind of observe and then assume what we're supposed to be doing based on that.

And our observations may or may not be correct. We might be seeing someone else in a busy moment and not realizing that's a season, and that's not their norm. But, but I do think that the busyness is something that, you know, it kind of is related to productivity and worth and value coming from that.

And then alongside with that, I think thinking about talent and being capable. And especially, this is good to an extent, but especially when we're thinking about families that are prioritizing having their children in school environments where they are being challenged, and we see the value of that, but then there can be kind of a ripple effect into, well, I want them to have, you know, all of this experience with and then fill in the blank sports, extracurricular, fine arts, socialization. And though all of those things are great in moderation, they can kind of just build up to be something that's a burden.

Well, yeah, that keeping up with the Joneses is alive and well, even in our Christian circles, and some of it's well-intended. You know, we don't want our children to miss out on an opportunity. And so, again, another statistic I often quote is I think 58% of students, you know, elementary and middle high school students today are in three or more after-school activities.

So, you know, they come crawling in the house at eight o'clock at night ready to start their homework, and the parents are feeling like they've done a lot, trying to do all they can, but it's like the rules of engagement are so impossible. I want to, you know, one of the things that you

really focus on that I know is a very real issue, especially for Christian women, is this tension between, do I work outside the home, or what does that look like? I know years ago, I remember when I was head of school in Atlanta, I had a mom saying to me, I've always thought about this, she said, you know, when I went to look at your schools as a prospective parent, the number one thing I was looking at was, are these my people? And she said, you know, I'm a working mom, and if all the moms here are, you know, stay-at-home moms, I'm going to kind of feel like the weird outsider, or maybe even judge because I'm working outside the home. So, this is a real tension, and I think even, you know, post-COVID, you've got inflation, and more people are trying to juggle tuition payments, and so there's all these mitigating factors, and I think that variable of, you know, is this a school that's going to accommodate the real frame of my family today? And we, obviously, there's some people that, you know, work for maybe wrong reasons, other people, there's just survival.

So, talk to that stress, because again, it seems it's very real and very universal among a lot of moms today. I think you're exactly right that that's kind of tension of, how do I do both things well if I am, if I'm working, and then I'm staying home at the same time? Is that, or if I'm working, and then I'm wanting to be present when I am home at the same time? I mean, I have noticed that I think certain values, which maybe we would call traditional values or classical values, and ways that that extends to education, sometimes does trickle down into certain tendencies in terms of how families organize, you know, whether or not the mom's more likely to stay home, which I have noticed some of that. But really, this book, I think, was trying to highlight ways that being a homemaker is something that all of us as women can kind of share in, and that that can be the kind of the bridging of that gap, that we can all have these homemaking hearts that are towards our children and toward our husbands, kind of regardless of what we're doing between eight to five.

And I found a lot of grace and acceptance from women that maybe are doing things differently in the fact that we can recognize that shared vision and the shared goals. And I think that's true for the moms and dads. You know, we might see families doing things a different way than we are a little bit, but when those big picture ideas and values in terms of how are we choosing to spend our time away from work and school, when those are in place, then it can still create a lot of solidarity in Christian families.

Well, I mean, to the very title, *The Working Homemaker*, I mean, there's as much as, you know, again, statistically, so many modern parents are just honestly kind of, they would describe, self-describe themselves as really in survival mode. I mean, they're kind of just, you know, burning the candle at work. They come rushing home, they drive the taxi, you know, do the food thing, try to get through the homework.

And then, oh yeah, by the way, I'm supposed to make this a really dynamic and healthy environment. So, you know, the point of our podcast here is not to layer in, here's the 10 more things you're not doing, you should be doing, but really to kind of redeem the time. I mean, that's very much what Paul says, redeem the time for the days are evil.

So how do we redeem the time that we're home? Because whether it's, you know, full-time at home in the capacity of a homeschooler or is very limited at the end of a very long day, what I love about what you're writing is there's an intentionality and purposefulness in it, which is a great message. Yeah. So thinking about the time that we spend at home, for me, something that I think is very important in our family is we try not to just go off into our separate spaces, children going into rooms and closing the doors, people escaping onto their own personal screens.

I think that part of the idea of home is togetherness. And when I'm thinking about homemaking, it's less about me being in the kitchen baking from scratch, and it's more about the relationships, the conversations, the togetherness that we're trying to form. And sometimes everybody does have their own homework assignment to do, or they're reading their own book.

But to me, there seems to be something significant that you're still doing that in a similar space and people might pause and have conversations or just kind of see, oh, okay, we're all on the same page here. Do you think that, you know, again, part of the back to the pressure we talked about of kind of guilt or having to do it just a certain way. I mean, I wonder if some of, especially with the many voices that form in the minds of so many families, what is normative? You've got like, you know, pioneer woman who's out there, you know, shearing the sheep before breakfast and, you know, turning the butter and doing all these things.

It just seems so wholesome and romantic and amazing. And then I think most families are like, all I can do is just find something frozen to throw in the microwave right now. I mean, so it's just trying to find that realistic balance of what it looks like.

Maybe, I guess the question is, I mean, do you see we're sort of, we almost become all or none because there's this fear that we're not going to do it just right. So we kind of shy away from even trying as maybe as intentionally as we should. I think that definitely can be a tendency.

You know, the perfectionistic, I want to do this perfectly. And if I'm unable to do it perfectly, then what's the point of even trying? Right. And so, yeah, I mean, I think being just kind of really honest, like for me, more power to the pioneer women out there, but I'm not cooking everything from scratch, but I can still say, you know, a top value is that we're eating dinner together as a family.

And so I'm going to put something nutritious in front of my family, even if I've had help with, you know, some box mixes here or whatever the case might be. Yeah. That makes total sense.

We're going to take a break. I want to come back. We're going to get super practical.

You have a chapter I want to focus on just this idea of being called to be a teacher, which is intriguing, I think, for a lot of families that think, OK, well, first of all, we're a part of a five day school where we've hired a school to be the teacher of our children. And yet you make this very

compelling point that all of us as parents are in a teaching role all the time and sort of re-embracing or even understanding for the first time what that opportunity is, I think is really important. So why don't we take a break and come back? I'll kind of roll our sleeves up and get in some practical ways to implement this in our homes.

Graduating can be intimidating. Life Architects brings peace to the process by guiding your student through proven pathways to discover who God made them to be and how they can reflect that identity in meaningful work. We call it vocational discipleship, and it's a practice we offer one on one in schoolwide workshops and as a consulting service to transform campus culture.

Learn more at lifearchitectscoaching.com today. Charity, as we think about the role of the modern parent and the amazing gift and blessing of partnering with a school, whether it's a five day a week or a collaborative school, or maybe somebody's listening to homeschooling, there's an element in which we're doing this in partnership with these other folks and other organizations. And yet it still kind of leaves the question, well, what is my job as a parent? When I'm with my children in the home, there's a lot that, again, just the practicality of life tends to override a lot of just important moment over moment life skills and wisdom that's being passed on.

What does that look like to you as you articulate it in the book? What are just those practical moments that maybe we underrate sometimes that are actually really significant in terms of the influence we have as parents? Well, I think the term teacher really can be an effective way to think about part of the way that we parent our kids. And I know those of us that do have our kids at classical schools, they have such wonderful teachers that are pouring into them and guiding them and mentoring them. But at the same time, God has chosen us as parents to be the ones that are most directly and intimately walking with our children, not just in one grade, but throughout their lifetime.

And since I'm a teacher myself, I think some of this does come a little bit naturally, but a lot of this teaching moves far beyond academics. And so the way that I look at it, I think there's actually five different ways that as parents that we can think about teaching our own children. And so those five ways, I'm just going to list them quickly here.

First and foremost would be spiritual formation, but then also it would be social and interpersonal growth. That would be the second one. The third would be teaching them practical skills.

The fourth would be kind of guiding them regarding skill sets and hobbies that we have as people just based on our own individualism and interests. And then finally finding ways that we're directly partnering with our children's schools and their teachers and kind of supporting the work that's happening there. I think it's helpful to have categories like that because again, sometimes I think maybe we're more intentional about one and then we just don't really have a written objective, a goal.

And I'm a big fan of writing out just like schools have goals of their graduates. Like what are the goals when your child is 18 and heading off to college in life? What are those things you hope they know how to do? And I love that you're tackling everything from maybe the more obvious, I would hope, kind of spiritual formation down to wow, my child's never learned how to prepare a meal. That might actually be helpful as they move into the world.

So let's get practical in terms of unpacking some of those. I'd love to just hear some of those ideas that you're bringing to life. And I know in the book, you talked about this idea of coincidental teaching.

Talk about that because when I read that, that's really helpful in terms of a term to think about this role and what it looks like. Right. So I think when we think about a coincidence, it didn't necessarily happen on purpose.

We didn't plan it. It's just sort of, oh, well, this is a coincidence. And I think that's true of so many teachable moments that we have with our children.

We didn't wake up with the objective to necessarily impart wisdom in this particular area, but a situation naturally arises where we can do that. And so when we think about a lot of the soft skills that our children need to have, and I see this as well at the college level, even that it's not all just about the cognitive hard skills in terms of knowledge, but what are the people skills? What are kind of like the unwritten rules that somebody has to tell them about? And so just really practically, I think one thing we could think about is manners. And so we don't necessarily have someone at school that teaches them, chew with your mouth closed or don't put your elbows on the table.

And so in one way, when we're home, we want it to be comfortable. We want it to be casual. But if we're not teaching them those things, then who's going to? And might it be an embarrassing moment or a shameful moment if it happens from, you know, up here or in a public situation as opposed to the privacy of our own homes? Well, yeah, I think that it's a great question.

It's like, who's going to teach them back to our children are 18? Do we want them to be, you know, an individual that knows you don't just walk up and interrupt a conversation or that knows how to naturally make eye contact when talking, or as you talk about the book, just how to practice empathy for others. And it's such a good point. I was not too long ago, I was actually chatting with a neighbor.

And they, it was a husband and wife, and I hadn't seen him in a while. I was talking to them and their high school daughter, who's not involved in our schools, and they're not believers, but the high school daughter walked up and just interrupted our conversation. And I hadn't, I hadn't seen her in months.

And, you know, mom and dad just shifted all focus over to the daughter. And then she was turning to go. And I thought, wow, what a missed opportunity.

Not only did she interrupt us, but, you know, to have said, hey, but, you know, Susie or whatever name was, you know, if you know, would remind you of the name of our neighbor and like reconnecting. It's just sort of what I would consider just kind of basic, civil manners to interact, but just totally didn't happen. And, and yet who's teaching that? I mean, it's easy to kind of be critical of it, but it's a really good point.

Who's on first, I guess, who's, who's paying attention to these very important soft skills as you described them. Right. And I've even been blessed watching the way that our circle of friends handles this sort of thing.

Speaking to your point about what does a kid do if they need to ask their mom or dad a question? You know, we have friends and we've noticed they've taught their child to lightly touch their arm and to stand there until they look at them and say, okay, what, what would you like to say? And just sometimes being, you know, some of these things, how do we do this in a lighthearted way? How do we make sure we cover this? There are things that probably other like-minded families are also doing. And, you know, sometimes just getting pointers from each other can be really useful. And I know I've had Josh Mulvihill wrote a book, *The 50 Things Every Child Needs to Know Before Graduating*, and others have sort of tried to come at this and just say, could somebody please make, give me a list of things to think about? Because it's very easy, I think, to think we've kind of got it all thought through.

And it's like, oh, wait, nobody's ever taught him about how to manage budgeting or no one's ever thought about like, you know, just how to schedule something, kind of just basic life skills that sometimes I think fall in the gaps. And if I could say quite, you know, I guess as a broad brushstroke, I think some of those in our classical schools, because we're so focused on, you know, excellence and the liberal arts and deep thinking and Socratic discussions, it's sometimes like, wait, no one ever taught you how to balance your budget or how to, you know, perform basic maintenance. Again, it's a balancing act.

And I think those are things that would be helpful to see in a list. You articulate a lot of these things in your book, which is helpful. Yeah, well, thank you.

And I think that is a conversation that some are having, what is the role of the skill or what is the role of the school regarding these soft skills? And I've heard some, you know, thinking that it is the teacher's job to do some of this. And personally, that's what I so enjoy about Christian classical education is that they're partnering with us as parents and that that is seen as being part of within our jurisdiction, that teachers have plenty on their plates to get through the subject matter and all of that. So again, kind of reclaiming that as the territory of the home, the territory of the private sphere, as opposed to the public sphere, is again, just a practical way for us as parents to see ourselves as teachers.

One of the things you talk about in the book is just the importance of being intentional about the atmosphere that you're creating, or even thinking of it kind of from a habit formation standpoint. You give the example of working with your child, memorizing spelling words on the

ride to school each morning, and then catching them looking out the window, becoming distracted. And so talk about like, what's a good way to handle that? Because that little moment in and of itself, there's a lot more teaching opportunity there than maybe we realize at first blush.

Oh, definitely. So something that has stuck with me since high school, my high school English teacher would tell all of us this, to use our little minutes. That if we're just waiting for these big blocks of time in order to have the important conversation or do the review or whatever, that it might not ever happen, or it might be rushed at the end of the night.

So we do have a bit of a commute to and from school each day. And so we try to use our little minutes in that sense and be wise with our time. And I think it also becomes a great opportunity for the younger kids to learn almost via osmosis, that they're picking up on a lot of that stuff because they're seeing what their older siblings are doing that, and they're benefiting from that.

And so we'll use the phrase, train your mind. Just as we have to train our bodies, if we are training for some athletic endeavor, that we do have to train our mind sometimes. But then it's also, I think, when we're thinking about soft skills and practical skills in the home, we have to train our hearts, that it's oftentimes not the most enjoyable things to do.

And so it's the important things that sometimes we have to cultivate ourselves to have an affection for those. Mm-hmm. Well, and I think that's a great phrase, train your mind.

And are there little slogans that you have in your house that, to your point, you're riding in the car and you turn to the younger one that's looking out the window and not focusing on their spelling words and you go, hey, remember, train your mind. Everybody in the car just was like reminded, oh yeah, we're supposed to train our mind. That's actually something we celebrate.

It's something we've normalized. So that's a great, you know, to put that on your family t-shirt, we train our mind around here. We do hard things, you know, we live sturdy, as Keith McCurdy would remind us.

So yeah, these are great suggestions, Charity, and ideas of what this looks like lived out. Why don't we take another quick break? We'll come right back and we're going to provide, just jump into more of these. Your book is so filled with these just day over day, moment over moment ways of being the teacher in your home as the parent, which is a wonderful way to think about it.

We'll be right back and continue our conversation. You choose a traditional education for a reason. So why use standardized tests that don't reflect that? Basecamp Lab is proud to partner with Classic Learning Test, which offers online academic assessments that strengthen a traditional education.

CLT's assessments for grades three through 12 provide a meaningful metric of students'

abilities, equipping parents and educators and helping students pursue a fulfilling future. Explore CLT's assessments by visiting www.cltxam.com forward slash basecamp. Well, Charity, what I love about this idea of really being intentional and partnering well in your home is that there's things we should already be doing that maybe we don't think of it in terms of ways to involve our children, like our own hobbies and connecting them.

It's one of the things that stood out to me. I'm a big fan of automobile restoration and restored cars, and my kids have been a part of that. I'll save stories for later, but I've thought about, is this hobby taking me away from my family or involving them? And so in this case, it was a win-win because it's become kind of something our families have done a good bit together.

But yes, talk about that because I think there is a place for being intentional even in a hobby. How early were your kids able to start participating in that? Very early. We had some acreage here in Idaho, and I grew up riding go carts and mini bikes.

And so this from early age was sort of a passion of all of our kids, working on small engines and restoring things. And so I think they just kind of grew up in that environment, which is still something today we share together. So I think everybody's got different things from outdoors and indoor stuff, whatever.

I mean, it's just, but I love the thinking of like, is this pulling me away from my family or is it something we're doing together, which is really important. All right. Well, I think now we're going to move on to talk about hobbies, which is a lot of fun.

And one of the things that in our own home that my husband and I have tried to do is really just think about the passions that we have, some of the giftings that the Lord has given us and ways that we can pass those on to our children. Not assuming that they will necessarily become an expert at them or that we ourselves are an expert, but that it's something that kind of makes us tick. It's something that we find enjoyment in.

And it's a way that we can share that with our children and teach them a little bit about that. So with regard to hobbies, I mean, are there other experiences? I mean, we think of hobbies as maybe something that's, you know, get in the car and go do the hobby or something different, but just sort of, again, in the ebb and flow of life in the home, what are other examples of just ways that we can kind of engage our kids, our children with us? Yeah. So my book is about homemaking and I think it certainly is important to be home together.

I don't think that means that we need to feel any guilt about leaving the home. But you know, there's a great quote about homemaking is home in motion, kind of taking the people that we love with us and kind of just making sure that our priorities are oriented around the people that we're sharing our home with. And so one thing that our family likes to do is go hiking together.

And we don't always do that in the backyard, but that's something that we are sharing time doing together. And in some ways, it might seem like, okay, that doesn't really require much of

a skill set. You just start walking.

But with our youngest, endurance is a real thing and learning the patience of going a little bit further than maybe he wants to go. There still has been kind of these teachable moments in that. And for some families, this could look drastically different, whatever the thing is that their family enjoys.

But I think that it really, it becomes a way that you build your family's culture. And for some families, they're very musical. Other families, they're very outdoorsy.

Another thing that my family really enjoys is live theater. And so that will be something that we do a lot of reading and talking about stories at home, and then we'll sometimes go and watch those together. And then I teach the girls piano lessons.

And sometimes the pieces that they will choose might sort of be based on something that we've seen. And so I think it can be easy to look at another family and kind of say, oh, wow, they just have all of these cool things that they're into. What's our thing? But just kind of becoming comfortable in who we are as people and just seeing it as a way to bond with our children, I think can also just help us slow down and say, okay, we don't have to be performance oriented.

We can just be together. And sometimes that's enough. And that's, again, the simple things we talk about all the time is just having a meal together, which for a lot of families is all too often infrequent.

And then during the meal, like what are you doing? How do you redeem the time there? How do you create conversation? How do you use that time? I know a lot of families have said to me, just being in the car, going to school. I mean, those are rare moments, by the way, before they start driving and you're gonna look back on it and think, wow, we had X amount of time every morning, every afternoon together. Not that it has to be some amazingly deep conversation, but just having a conversation and redeeming the time makes a lot of sense.

I want to get your opinion too, just around the idea of partnering with schools in particular. And I think families try to sort out to the conversation we're having, how do we compliment what's happening at school? I think on the extreme, sometimes there, I think some families maybe feel like, well, especially in a classical school, gosh, my children have just been working so hard all day and legitimately and studying. And now when they come home, it's going to be, we're just going to shift and kind of offset all that with just fun, fun, fun and do whatever you want and put your feet up and just kind of be casual.

There is a place for that, but there's also, I think, an intentionality that's maybe sometimes missed in terms of what does it look like to continue reinforcing not only habits, but just learning at home that complements school. Yeah. I remember when my husband and I, we were making the decision about where we were going to send our children to school that a parent shared that she saw herself in a partnership with her children's teachers, as opposed to

taking a backseat.

And that just resonated with me so much that I wanted to be an active partner, not just taking a backseat. And I think a really practical way to do this is when they get home, not saying what homework do you need to complete, but what did you learn? And then it kind of shifts the focus from being a task or a checklist. And then you just complete that to extending the conversation.

What were you learning today? How is that going to continue into whatever you might need to follow up with tonight as homework? That's a good example. Yeah. And again, in some ways, certain subjects, you know, for me as an English professor, math is not my favorite.

And I have to kind of learn sort of like, how can I see the value in this and hopefully pass that on to my children as well, as opposed to just, okay, let's get these problems completed. And so, you know, it can be convicting for me sometimes as a parent, like I have my natural subjects that I'm drawn to, but then what are the other subjects that I can model for them? We can do hard things, or we can be curious about things outside of what we consider within our comfort zone. You were talking about reading to your children before, talk a little bit about that.

Cause I think perhaps there's often a notion, well, yeah, sure. When they're in kindergarten, first grade, but you know, they read a lot in school. We don't need to do that as a family.

What words of encouragement would you give a family around the importance of reading? Yeah. I would say, honestly, out of all of the things that we can do to support our children academically, nothing is going to top reading. And there's been a lot of studies about that, that it's not just reading is going to help them in literature class or an English class, but it, it's going to help them in so many different ways.

And I think really what is at the core of the way that I try to do things is not just supporting them in the reading that they're doing for classes and for school, but try to really instill a love of reading for its own sake. And part of the ways that we do that, we read lots of books that have nothing to do with their schoolwork. They know that I'm reading things.

Reading is something that is communal, that we do it together as well as individually. There are books kind of everywhere. You know, I think that if they're all hidden away, it's not going to be perhaps, you know, as enticing if they're bored and looking for something to do than if they have easy access to them.

And I do think that there are times that this can be challenging. You know, maybe you have a struggling reader or maybe you have a season that's pretty busy. And coming back to what we said earlier about, if you can't do something perfectly, it can feel tempting to say, well, why do it at all? But Sarah McKenzie with her Read Aloud family, she talks about this, but that those little bits of time that you spend reading add up in the long run.

So it might feel like, okay, we only do one story at bedtime, but then if you do that every night, then how many days do you have in a year, right? And so you're actually building that in as part

of the family culture. I'm big on adding it in on the weekends. And then if you're doing that consistently every weekend, that builds up to over 50 plus reading times over the course of the year.

And I love the idea of it. You know, find something that you enjoy reading as a family. And that was something that I wouldn't have thought of as a younger parent about reading to my middle high school student.

It just seemed like that wasn't something necessary or wouldn't something at face value they would have liked. But I remember reading the biography of Eddie Rickenbacker, you know, the flying ace in World War I and just his story, which is so interesting and captivating. We read that to our children in high school and just, I think it was, you know, we, it would vary at the times we do it, but it became part of a ongoing experience that they were even asking about.

So it's an intentional effort that you have to make, but the fruit of it's certainly rich. And I love that you're recommending that. So, you know, one thing you were just alluding to is kind of this idea of really starting where you are.

We began the interview just by saying, the goal here is not to give you 15 more things to do and even overwhelm you further, but to encourage you to embrace these moments that are all around you. And you say in the book that anything worth doing is worth doing poorly. That's kind of an interesting way to look at it, but it's like, just start somewhere.

Don't fret that you've got to be perfect. So help us understand that idea because it's very important. Right.

I mean, it feels rather counterintuitive because we know anything worth doing is worth doing well, but if something is truly worth doing, then doing it imperfectly is still better than not doing it at all. And I like to use the example of brushing your teeth that we all know we should brush our teeth at least two times a day. But if we are not meeting that bar, it's still much better to brush our teeth once a day than not at all.

Not that I'm recommending not, you know, not having a dental hygiene, but a little bit is better than none. And so, yeah, when we're thinking about, and it might be okay, you know, how long can we sit and do this? Maybe if we haven't really been prioritizing reading after five minutes, everybody's antsy. Well, that five minutes, maybe that doesn't feel great, but we got to start somewhere and then we can extend it to 10 minutes.

And then before you know it, they're asking for another chapter. That's right. That's right.

Well, that's a good word of encouragement. There's so much more to talk about. You've got a lot more in your book, and I just encourage folks to dive in and read more and learn more from you.

Tell folks how they can find you and learn more about your work there. Okay. Well, thank you

for asking.

So, I do have a website. It's CharityGibson.com, and there's more information about me, and the book is there as well. You could go directly to Amazon as well.

And the full title, so it's *The Working Homemaker*, and then the subtitle, *Employed Christian Moms Desiring a Thriving Home Life*. Love it. Charity, thank you for your words of encouragement and the great work you're doing.

I know this will speak very much to so many working families out there carrying this important role of raising the next generation. Thanks for your encouragement. Thank you so much for having me.

This has been really enjoyable to have a conversation about these things that we're clearly very like-minded about. Absolutely. Thanks so much, Charity.

This episode of Base Camp Live is sponsored by the program at Gordon College, one of the nation's top Christian liberal arts colleges. Their program equips rising the classical Christian movement with the knowledge, skills, and relational wisdom to lead thriving schools. Earn your graduate degree in leadership in a two-year hybrid program designed by classical leaders for classical leaders.

Learn more at Gordon.edu forward slash graduate forward slash classical. Well, you've done it. You've made it through another episode of Base Camp Live, and I sincerely hope that you've been encouraged along the way.

Thank you for being such a faithful listener. And thanks again to America's Christian Credit Union, Classic Learning Test, Gutenberg College, and Wilson Hill Academy for sponsoring this episode of Base Camp Live. Be sure to give us a five-star rating on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, or wherever you're listening from.

We would love to hear from you. And let us know what's on your mind, what questions you have. Email us at info@basecamplive.com. We really do appreciate you as a faithful listener.

Take a moment to invite other parents and school leaders, anyone involved in raising the next generation to listen to the podcast. And we will see you back here next week with another episode that you will not want to miss. Thanks again for listening.

Transcribed by <https://otter.ai>