



Nebraska Homeschool

The Home Educators Network, Inc.

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Fall

Volume 11, Issue 5

Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Matthew 6:26



Teaching Our Children Gratefulness

Homeschool In The Hills

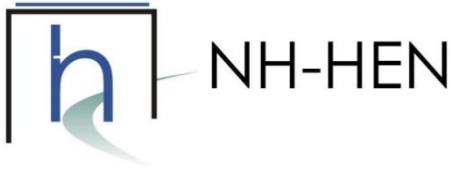
On The Wire



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Next Issue
Why Isn't Homeschooling
Working For Me?



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Scripture Version Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from NIV.

Columnists The views of guest columnists do not necessarily reflect the views of NH-HEN.

Submissions to newsletter must be received by the 20th of each month via email at media@nebraskahomeschool.org.

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Notes from the Board...

It's hard to believe the holiday season has arrived. This school year has been moving by quickly and promises to continue at a steady pace. With the onset of the holiday season it may be difficult to accomplish as much schooling as we desire and we may feel pressured to fit it all in. When we do this, it's easy to become discouraged, impatient, and a somewhat disagreeable person. Our children may wish someone else was their teacher.

When we get like this we need to pause, take a deep breath, and remember why we chose to homeschool, then go hug our kids. The Lord has placed it upon our hearts to teach our own children and we responded. Know that God will equip us to do what He has called us to do. He is our Provider - and He never fails us.

To the glory of Christ,
Kathryn Dillow
President

*Member Benefits article moved to Spring 2018 issue.



Network News

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www.nebraskahomeschool.org



Teaching Our Children Gratefulness

By
Kathryn Dillow

When I was asked to speak to a moms' group on the topic of gratefulness, I didn't have to think twice before saying yes. I enjoy sharing with others, especially other moms. I could say I enjoy it because I'm an aspiring Titus 2 woman, or because old nurses naturally want to help others, or perhaps it's because home educators just can't help but find every teachable moment in the day. A more likely explanation is the fact that it gave me permission to do something I enjoy – to consider something deeply – to turn it over and over in my mind, to have a conversation with myself – all for the purpose of deepening my understanding of the concept, to explore how man views a concept and to discover how God views it. It is my prayer that the Lord will somehow use my limited thoughts to guide you and your children towards Him.

What does man say about gratefulness?

Gratefulness is the act of expressing appreciation or thankfulness. I *express* gratefulness when I *have* gratitude. So where does the gratitude come from? To get started, I turned to the literature to see what others might have to say about the topic. Not surprisingly, I found that the concept of gratitude has been addressed in theological literature for quite some time. Yet, in the past 10-12 years it has come into vogue for others to address the concept of gratitude and the effect it has on people.

I found various articles citing research findings that extolled the benefits of having gratitude and emphasized the importance of fostering gratitude within ourselves. I also found some parenting resources that expressed concern for the lack of gratitude in our children and offered advice on how to address the problem. Despite the fact that most of the advice I read seemed practical (see list at the end of this article), I was concerned with what these publications were saying about why someone should have gratitude.

For example, did you know that having gratitude in your life could reap positive benefits *for you*? One particular publication from *Happier Human* <http://happierhuman.com/benefits-of-gratitude/> compiled a comprehensive list from other sources. The following table provides a list of the 31 things gratitude can do for you.

31 Benefits of Having Gratitude in Your Life

- Make you happier
- Make people like you
- Make you healthier
- Boost your career
- Strengthen your emotions
- Develop your personality
- Make you more optimistic
- Reduce materialism
- Increase spiritualism
- Make you less self-centered
- Increase your self esteem
- Improve your sleep
- Keep you away from the doctor
- Let you live longer
- Increase your energy level
- Make you more likely to exercise
- Help you bounce back
- Make you feel good
- Make your memories happier
- Reduce feelings of envy
- Help you relax
- Make you friendlier
- Help your marriage
- Make you look good
- Help you make friends
- Deepen your friendships
- Make you a more effective manager
- Help you network
- Increase your goal achievement
- Improve your decision making
- Improve your productivity

Wow! By now I'm sure everyone one of us is eager to learn how to have more gratitude in our lives. Who doesn't want these benefits?! We all want to know where we can obtain this magical elixir of life. But is this for real? Turns out that immediately after expounding on the benefits of gratitude, the author is quick to say, "Gratitude is no cure-all, but it is a massively underutilized tool for improving life-satisfaction and happiness." While I agree with the first part of his statement (no cure-all), I was unsettled by the second part. Is gratitude a tool to be manipulated by us for our own satisfaction and happiness? This question set me to defining the terms.

What is gratitude?

The current Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines gratitude as "the state of being grateful: THANKFULNESS." <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/gratitude> While technically correct, I find this definition somewhat lacking. It lacks feeling and depth. It leaves me with the impression that gratitude is confined within the person who is in "the state of being grateful" – it feels static, like a statue or photograph. So I turned to an older dictionary, the American Dictionary of the English Language written in 1828 by Noah Webster, author of the first truly American dictionary. Noah Webster's dictionary offers the following definition of gratitude:

“An emotion of the heart, excited by a favor or benefit received; a sentiment of kindness or good will towards a benefactor; thankfulness. *Gratitude* is an agreeable emotion, consisting in or accompanied with good will to a benefactor, and a disposition to make a suitable return of benefits or services, or when no return can be made, with a desire to see the benefactor prosperous and happy. *Gratitude* is a virtue of the highest excellence, as it implies a feeling and generous heart, and a proper sense of duty.” <http://webstersdictionary1828.com/>

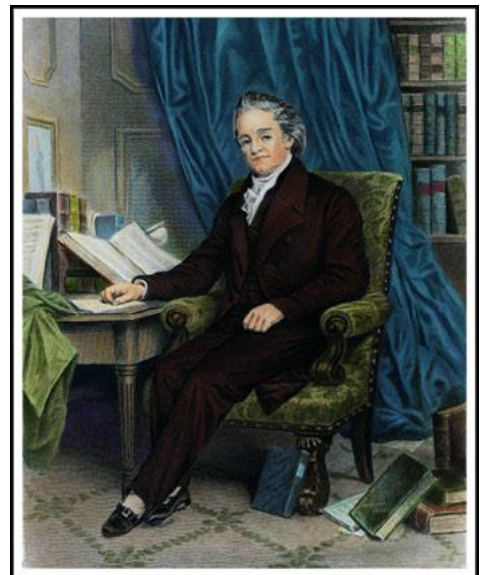
I think Noah Webster’s definition is much richer. Gratitude is a virtue, an emotion of the heart – not a tool. Mr. Webster’s definition clearly demonstrates a relationship between the benefactor, or *giver*, of the favor or benefit and the *recipient* of the favor or benefit. There is mutual exchange of giving and responding, without manipulation. It is genuine; the key here is that the response is from the heart. Gratitude is no longer just a state of being but an action that is mobilized into the act of gratefulness. Lastly, the act of gratefulness is focused on the giver of the favor or benefit, not the person expressing it.

What does God reveal about gratefulness?

If we consider that gratitude is for the benefit of our giver, then why should we have gratitude in our lives? In short, we should have gratitude in our lives so we can express our heartfelt emotion of thankfulness to our giver. In fact, the Scriptures actually command us to be thankful and to express our gratitude. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 tells us to “Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” But if it is merely a matter of following a command, then why is it so hard for us to be grateful or for us to teach our children to be grateful?

Learn more about Noah Webster
at the
[Noah Webster House &
West Hartford Historical Society](#)

[Image credit to Noah Webster House]



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NH-HEN Members enjoy a \$20 savings on Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) membership when they use our *Discount Group* number. Login to the member website to find the discount number or request it by email from info@nebraskahomeschool.org.

Notice to Nebraska Homeschool – HEN membership: we are currently verifying our Discount Group listing with HSLDA. Please be sure to annotate Nebraska Homeschool as your Discount Group when you renew your HSLDA membership.

Our problem

As I read through the parenting resources, I noticed they all touched on developmental stages (toddlers through teens) and the natural inclination of children to be self-centered. While I don't disagree with their observation, I think it is too narrow. Let's be honest, we're all naturally self-centered – even adults. This is due to the fact that we all have a sin nature. As the Apostle Paul explains, “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—” (Romans 5:12). It's this very sin nature that allows us to place ourselves above others and begin to believe that we are the most important person in the world and that we work so hard to take care of ourselves and our children. But this thinking creates a false sense of self-sufficiency and pride.

God's provision

We need to remember our source of provision if we are to develop gratitude and learn how to express gratefulness. “Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.” (James 1:17) To borrow from a website called GotQuestions.org, “Feeling and expressing appreciation is good for us. Like any wise father, God wants us to learn to be thankful for all the gifts He has given us. It is in our best interest to be reminded that everything we have is a gift from Him. Without gratefulness, we become arrogant and self-centered. We begin to believe that we have achieved everything on our own. Thankfulness keeps our hearts in right relationship to the Giver of all good gifts.” <https://www.gotquestions.org/giving-thanks-to-God.html> This brings me to my next point. We need a proper perspective.



Gaining a proper perspective

GotQuestions.org goes on to say, “Giving thanks also reminds us of how much we do have. Human beings are prone to covetousness. We tend to focus on what we don't have. By giving thanks continually we are reminded of how much we *do* have. When we focus on blessings rather than wants, we are happier. When we start thanking

God for the things we usually take for granted, our perspective changes. We realize that we could not even exist without the merciful blessings of God.” Interesting. It’s at this point that we do begin to reap benefits of expressing our gratitude. With a new perspective we can acknowledge God as the source of our provision and begin to enjoy even the smallest blessing of everyday life. “And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:19)

Yet, we must continue to guard against discontentment and worry – both of them can get in the way of having a grateful heart. “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentle *spirit* be known to all men. The Lord is near. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:4-9) We must choose to set aside worry and trust God more, especially when it feels like everything is falling down around us. If we’re having a hard time finding something to be grateful for, let’s thank Him for the everyday things, thank Him for the things He shields us from, thank Him for the blessings He bestows upon our friends or family members... just keep on thanking Him.

When we demonstrate gratefulness in our attitude and actions our children can see we are grateful for everything God provides to us. It helps them see that God, our Giver, is the object of our gratitude. As we grow in our contentedness and release worry to God, we no longer need to fret. We know we are cared for by a great and loving God who is true to His word. We can truly enjoy a peace of mind and heart.

Teaching Gratefulness

If we already have gratitude and express gratefulness, we’re on the right track. We just need to continue and ensure we help our children learn the proper object of our gratitude. If we as parents still need to learn how to be grateful, we can learn alongside our children. God will bless us all along the way.

[Click here for a list of suggestions from various publications.](#)
Hopefully you’ll find some ideas for your family.



Seeking Christian homeschoolers to serve on Board of Directors and in other programs.

Serving others is a reward unto itself. But we want to offer a few more perks to those who are willing to help Nebraska Homeschool support homeschool families.



Board member perks:

- Waived membership fee; lifetime membership for those who serve a term as president!
- TechSoup account allowing you to purchase computers and discounted software while you serve with Nebraska Homeschool.
- Free or discounted professional training with Nonprofit Association of the Midlands (NAM). We're all life-long learners, so build your skills and resume.
- Opportunity to shape our programs. We're always seeking ways to improve homeschooling opportunities across Nebraska. We would love some fresh ideas and folks who are willing to help us "make it happen."

[Board applicants must be approved by sitting BOD and agree to sign documents prior to serving.]

Program manager perks:

- Support from the board of directors (website promotion, marketing, administrative requirements, etc.). We'll do our best to let you have the fun of running a program while we take care of the behind the scenes business.
- Same Tech Soup access as a board member
- Same NAM training opportunities as a board member
- Opportunity to shape the program you manage

in a 
nutshell

Our immediate needs:

2 – board members

1 – Network News manager

[Contact us for more details](#)



On the Wire

By Allison Dillow

Every day was the same for the shoes. The sun would rise behind them, warming their old rubber soles, and at sunset, it would sink below the horizon in front of them, washing out any color left in their canvas material. The breeze would make them sway back and forth, and the tightly knotted shoelaces that had held strong for years would keep them forever hanging on the telephone wire. The rain and snow would soak and freeze them; the heat would bake them. Light or dark, rain or shine, there they would always hang.

Sometimes the shoes wished their former owner hadn't tied the laces so tightly. Maybe then the knot that tethered them would loosen, and they would tumble to the street below. Then someone would find them, and put them on, and...

No. They would never leave this wire, they would never get to be worn again. They had no way of getting down. It was a hopeless dream.

So the shoes looked down on the people passing by, staring forlornly at their footwear. They weren't dangling above people's heads, but were where good shoes belong: on their owners' feet: dancing, kicking, running, and scuffing against the pavement. If the hanging shoes had eyes, they would have been filled with tears.

One day, a great gusty wind blew through the city. The shoes were tossed and battered worse than ever before, but in one of the more violent gusts, they felt the laces lift into the air a little before plopping back down. The shoes' spirits fluttered. Maybe this wind could finally get them down!

The next gust was even stronger than the first, and this time the laces lifted several inches before thudding back onto their wire, swinging madly. The shoes hoped and wished with all their might for one more gust, just a bit stronger than the last.

A wind so powerful that it could have torn the telephone wire in two whipped up, and the shoes flew off their perch into the open air. The wind died in almost an instant, and they plummeted down, down, down to smack into the hard concrete sidewalk. They landed face-down, laces still tied securely in a weather-worn knot.

If the shoes had a mouth, it would have broken into an enormous grin. They were free! Now the only thing they wanted was an owner, and they would be forever happy-

Footsteps were reverberating in the pavement, growing nearer and nearer. Right next to them, the steps stopped. The shoes held their breath.

The next moment, they were being lifted up by the laces and dangled in the face of a young boy. Their heart drummed as the boy turned them this way and that, examining them. He squinted up at the telephone wire, then looked back at them. Then he turned around, the laces still clutched in his hand, and began to walk away. The shoes' heart soared. He was taking them! They would have an owner! They would be worn again! They-

The boy stopped, turned, and in one swift motion, threw them up into the air. The shoes' laces wound about the telephone wire, and they hung there, swinging with the momentum, then swaying, then slowly rocking, then... stopped.

Homeschool in the Hills

Earlier this autumn, Pottawattamie County Conservation (PCC) piloted new programming geared towards expanding the resources available to the homeschool community. The pilot program was held on September 26th, 2017 at Hitchcock Nature Center and centered on the Loess Hills, a globally significant landform located in western Iowa. During the program, 75 participants enjoyed a self-guided nature quest that had participants searching the park for Loess Hills inhabitants, and naturalist-led programming focusing on the geological processes that formed the Loess Hills landform.

The naturalist led portion was split between two groups, with younger students upstairs and older students downstairs. Younger students were able to explore stations that focused on sensory observations such as feeling the difference between soil types, playing with sand, and exploring sand's interactions with water and ice. Older students observed and tested the differences between soil types and gained firsthand knowledge of the effects of geological events by using model simulations. Older students were then challenged to match various landforms to the different model simulations and were asked to explain their decisions. By the end of the lesson, students were able to explain how the Loess Hills formed.



As the day wrapped-up, everyone gathered for socialization and networking time on the nature center's back patio while enjoying snacks that included fresh popped popcorn and lemonade courtesy of PCC's supporting foundation, the Pottawattamie Conservation Foundation.

All in all, participants and PCC staff felt the new program was an overwhelming success! Given the positive response from attending homeschool groups and the extensive waitlist for the event, PCC plans to begin a seasonal series in 2018. Seasonal programming will be offered twice daily (families may choose between morning or afternoon sessions), and families may choose to stay together or divide up by approximate grade levels K-2 or 3-5. Both groups will focus on the same overarching theme but content will vary to remain age/grade appropriate. Future seasonal programs will include an introduction activity, followed by a naturalist lead program and guided hike, and will end with time for families to visit, socialize, network, and play.

The 2018 series schedule includes the following dates and topics:

- February 6th, *Winter Wonders* - Adventure into Hitchcock Nature Center's winter wonderland and dwell in the unique experiences that only this season can offer.
- April 3rd, *Spring Fling* - Spring is flinging forward during this month! Join us as we explore how nature wakes up from winter's slumber during this exciting season of change.
- June 5th, *Summer Soiree* - The sights and sounds of summer will surround our senses as we discover the plants and animals that are so active during this season of growth.
- September 25th, *Fall Field Day* - Come explore the autumnal changes occurring throughout the different habitats at the park as nature prepares for winter's sleep.

Families should come prepared for the weather as at least one lesson each season will occur outdoors. Pre-registration is required in order to reserve a spot. To register for programs, please log on to www.pottcoconservation.com and for more information please contact Rene Stroud at rene.stroud@pottcounty-ia.gov or 712-242-1197. As with all visitors to the park, a \$2.00 daily park pass or annual permit is required to enter the park. Annual permits may be purchased for \$10.00 and are good for 12-months and at all five PCC parks.

PCC is excited to embark on a new journey
With the homeschool community!



We thank Pottawattamie County Conservation and Ms. Rene Stroud for hearing and responding to the needs of our homeschool community. Thank you!

Nebraska Homeschool working on behalf of our homeschool community.



Pottawattamie County
Conservation
2018 Homeschool
Series:

FEBRUARY 6TH: WINTER WONDERS

APRIL 3RD: SPRING FLING

JUNE 5TH: SUMMER SOIREE

SEPTEMBER 25: FALL FIELD DAY

PROGRAM TIMES:
10:00-11:30 A.M. OR 1:00-2:30 P.M.

Programs are designed for students 12 years and younger.
Families may stay together or separate out by
approximate grade levels: K-2 and 3-5.

Registration Required at:
www.pottcoconservation.com

\$2 Daily Pass or
Annual Permit Required

Hitchcock Nature Center
27792 Ski Hill Loop
Honey Creek, Iowa 51542
rene.stroud@pottcounty-ia.gov
Rene Stroud 712-242-1197



Thank you!

To all of our members who completed the Member Survey.
We will use your input to shape our future programs.

Homeschool Picture Days A Bit Hit!

We had a great turnout at all three days. It's our pleasure to bring this event to our homeschool community. Thank you to all of our volunteers.

[Photograph by Olari Photography]



Legacy Yearbook Prices! Nebraska Homeschool Members: \$25; Non-Members: \$35

Don't forget to submit your homeschool photos to the yearbook.

Mail submissions to yearbook@nebraskahomeschool.org

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SAVE THE DATES!

- Jan 19, 2018 Nebraska Homeschool Spelling Bee (Official Scripps Bee)
- Jan (3rd wk) 2018 Nebraska Homeschool Member-Only Event (Date TBA)
- Feb/Mar 2018 Mentoring Event (Details coming soon!)
- Apr 21, 2018 Class of 2018 Homeschool Graduation Ceremony
- Apr 27-28, 2018 NCHEA Homeschool Conference

Watch for details in the Network News!
[Subscribe to the Network News HERE](#)



Share Your Homeschool Events: Do you or your group want an event listed on our calendar? If so, just email info@nebraskahomeschool.org. Be sure to place "Calendar Submission" in your email subject line and include full details in the body of the email. We are interested in homeschool events, clubs, sports and arts activities. We also accept some community events as well. Please submit your item as early as possible so we have time to contact you if we have any questions. Submission is not a guarantee of posting. NH-HEN holds full discretion on which items to post.

Next Issue:

Member Benefits – making the most of your membership

Why Isn't Homeschooling Working For Me?

Meet Our Project Managers