



**Grace in Homeschool EP 003:  
10 Reasons You Can Homeschool  
Reason 3: Your Child's Needs  
*Released April 11, 2023***

**Amy:** If you send your child to Caesar, he will become a Roman. The choice can often be exceedingly difficult, but it is up to you.

(Opening Intro Music)

**Amy:** Hi, friends, and welcome. I'm your host AmyElizSmith. I'm a homeschool mom of three and have homeschooled each from the start. While I have a Master's in Elementary Ed, I want to teach other mamas that you don't need a fancy degree to have the passion and knowledge to educate your children from home successfully.

I encourage you to jump in and start your homeschool journey and provide my absolute best recommendations to help you begin your homeschool journey. Thanks for joining us for this crazy, messy, grace-filled homeschool ride.

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**Amy:** Hi, friends, and welcome back. We are excited to continue our series on "Top Reasons Why You Can Homeschool." Today we will discuss the public school system and how that is not for your child. We will go extensively into the history of public school, and this is just a summary of what public school education looks like and how that affects your child.

In the 18th and 19th Centuries, students were educated at home or in small one-room schoolhouses. In the South, it was more spread out, and there were fewer educational opportunities for poor whites and few opportunities for blacks still in slavery. So throughout the 19th Century, formerly enslaved persons began creating their own schoolhouses.

There was an individual schoolhouse with a single teacher and often siblings, and many age groups learned together. Then, in the Mid-19th Century, the US began



establishing compulsory education for children. [Horace Mann](#), often called the father of American education, was Secretary of Education in Massachusetts. He pursued significant educational reform and wanted a unified curriculum to be established.

Mann helped implement Massachusetts's first statewide public school system in the 1830s. As a result, education went from a foundational place of teaching, moral values, and a structure of wisdom and liberal arts to a place where the goal of socialization and secularization within a social society was pursued.

[John Dewey](#) impacted this educational theory in the 1900s. He felt we must look ahead and not turn back to ideas of our past. This was an idea called pragmatism, and it turned away from classical thinking. Alberto Piedra writes in [The Tragedy of American Education: The Role of John Dewey](#). He wrote, and I quote,

"Dewey's ideal educational system lacked the teaching of basic academic skills, the respect for a teaching authority, and the belief in a moral order. Thus relativism takes its place and becomes the ethical norm of conduct." This influence then will perpetuate into all aspects of one's childhood and then on into adult life. And this new relativism or pragmatism will affect their choices and influence things like medical care, nutrition, religion, one's relationships.

In *The Crisis of Western Civilization*, Christopher Dawson reminds us that, and I quote, "In Dewey's view, our purpose for education is not the communication of knowledge, but the sharing of social experience so that the child shall become integrated into the democratic community. He believed that morals were social and pragmatic and that any attempt to subordinate education to transcendent values or dogmas ought to be resistant."

R.C. Sproul, in his book, [The Consequences of Ideas](#), noted that quote, "In carrying out pragmatist's program, John Dewey succeeded in revolutionizing our public school system." How Dewey framed these progressive educational theories as a means for social justice was rooted in Mann's actions in Massachusetts.

Maintaining and enforcing a public school system, Dewey insisted, and I'm quoting, "that concerns every citizen who cares for the establishment of a truly democratic way



of life" and should be taken as seriously as Mann took it during his time. Now, Mann grew up in Massachusetts, which was his birthplace, and that was the common school that was established in the 1600s.

School Masters were paid by collecting from each group of households where their children would be coming from. But Mann championed schools as foundational for democracy, and he often, and he's famous for this, riding around his State on horseback, implementing his ideals into these schools.

An essential part of Mann's vision was that public schools should be for everyone. And that children of different class backgrounds should learn together. So he pushed to draw wealthier students out of the private schools and established "normal schools" to train teachers, have the State take over charitable schools, and increase taxes.

Now, he succeeded. By the early 20th Century, all States had free primary schools paid for by taxpayers that students were required to attend. And since the early 1900s, most US citizens have accepted the establishment of this public government school as being for the better good. We can certainly acknowledge that access to learning for our children is good. Still, this becomes extremely muddled when the government replaces the parent's authority in their child's education and completely controls what and how it is taught.

It is also imperative to note that many reformers today like to credit Mann and Dewey with integrating schools between different socioeconomic communities and minority communities. However, the government did not fight to allow blacks in school alongside their white peers.

In fact, during this time, even in the North, the governments were still against integration. So instead, it was abolitionists and teachers like [Prudence Crandall](#), poets and writers, activists like John Greenleaf Whittier, and heroic abolitionists like Booker T Washington and Frederick Douglas.

And they dedicated their lives to proving that black children deserved education and social integration. Thirty years ago, John Hood wrote an article on [The Failure of American Public Education](#), and he stated that proponents of government-mandated



**schools would state that desiring an educational alternative for your children is a rejection of a diverse society and an effort to segregate groups by class or race or socioeconomic status.**

**But seeking out homeschooling or private school is not a rejection of diversity. Instead, it is choosing the best alternative for one's children. And these same parents would argue that all parents, families, and children deserve that choice and accessibility to an alternative.**

**Indeed, we can acknowledge that public school is often the only physically safe place for many children nationwide. And sadly, this is the harsh truth. Schools have become where sometimes a child's only meal or warmth will come. But this terrible reality does not negate the fact that every child also deserves to be challenged, and every student deserves to have the opportunity to excel and have their curiosity sparked in education. Today more recently, more parents are questioning the government system. The abhorrent way that the Teacher Union Complex treated children during the Coronavirus Pandemic opened many parents' eyes to the fact that the union's needs were put above the children's.**

**Pragmatism ruled the day and not the centralistic concept that children need to learn. And we saw contradiction after contradiction. First, children need to be out of school for everyone's safety. And then the argument that teachers in public schools are essential. And then, they argued that children experienced no backward educational slide in student performance.**

**Why do we insist that our public school identity, as envisioned by Mann and Dewey, must continue if they are sorely feeling at their sole purpose, which is to educate and prepare young men and young women for fulfilling lives in an honorable society? Indeed, public education for the public good and the underprivileged should be a positive and noble endeavor.**

**But how and why have we gotten it so wrong as Americans and the American government school system? The lockdowns and the pandemic put these problems in a glaring light, and more are asking these questions. But, again, we must look at history**



to know how it went wrong. The content of education switched in the 1900s from the liberal arts of the classical western world to instead focusing on process and critical thinking skills and a disdain for authority.

Martin Cothran of Memoria Press and his article, [War on Knowledge](#), wrote about what education used to look like. And I quote, "A classical liberal arts education consists of a solid grounding in intellectual skills of the liberal arts. Guide students on the ability to think and aids in their cultural heritage through reading classical literature and western history. In so learning, children turn into responsible adults who are given the knowledge and ability to make wise judgments as they pursue life as citizens and voters. Yet, throughout the 20th century, every 25 years or so, the educational elites decide to reform education by integrating nonsensical buzzwords like collaboration and critical thinking skills into every aspect of every American government school, classroom."

These reforms are always marketed as new and improved educational thinking as a means to de-emphasize rote learning and emphasize creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking skills. Still, they are the same pragmatic philosophies that Dewey touted in the early 1900s.

I'm going to quote Mr. Cothran again.

"These changes-- the backing away from basic skills, classroom methodologies that took the teacher out of the role of directing the classroom, the shift from tried and true disciplines toward hands-on methods, and the abandonment of traditional methods of knowledge acquisition and a curriculum. All of these parents were told that would help the acquisition of knowledge. Furthermore, parents were told that these 'new practices' were research-based and based on science. And if parents only knew what the experts in Colleges of Education knew, they would be assured that this was the best way to educate children." End quote.

So, when I was studying to receive my master's in elementary education at the University of Michigan, I expected to learn the basics of what every child should learn from elementary school: wisdom, knowledge, truth, and the classics. Instead, I learned



about child psychology, how to facilitate a group project, and how to manage a classroom with respect to every child's autonomy. Teachers are no longer taught the basics of liberal arts, which has been going on for a long time. They're not taught the essential goals of children's learning.

Cothran writes further in his essay that "because of this emphasis on the how of education rather than on the what, we are not passing on our culture to our students, nor are they acquiring the basic linguistics and mathematical skills they need to do well in their lives and occupations. American children don't know basic facts about history, geography, and literature. Moreover, they could do better in mathematics compared to many nations, which, ironically, stress rote memorization and drill and practice.

Our educational establishment, the one that we have charged with transmitting the acquired knowledge and wisdom of the ages, is not very interested in doing this. It is interested instead in learning styles, projects, unit studies, child-centered learning, learning centers, critical thinking skills, and in liberating students and not familiarizing them with our civilization."

Today, there is an emphasis on process over content in our failed educational system. As a side note, early childhood development and education are quite different, which is different from what I'm referring to here. We will have a topic of conversation on play, the importance of play, and play in early childhood.

But we want children to think, but we need to give them the knowledge and the wisdom for what to think about. If they are not taught basic, general knowledge, then what are they actually learning? Educational consultants swoop in and tell lawmakers the changes in transformations needed to make progressive reforms. They are usually emphasizing the latest trends or increase critical thinking skills.

The educational system takes our tax dollars and constantly "improves things" while students are not learning. Cothran continues, and his articles are amazing in Memoria Press. I recommend you grab their classical teacher magazine, which is free at [memoriapress.com](http://memoriapress.com). But he reminds us to look at the past.



Okay. "In the 1990s, when whole language instruction was taught instead of phonics, teachers were no longer allowed to teach formal grammar and spelling. They were not to correct their students' papers for these things because that would stifle their creativity. Teachers were not to stand up in front of a classroom and teach. Still, they were to play the role of facilitator in the education of the children in their classes because children needed to be "active learners" or "passive learners" rather than passive learners.

And students were supposed to choose what they learned from learning centers rather than have a teacher directly tell them what they were supposed to. The very structure of the classroom was to be changed. No longer would there be rows of desks, a physical arrangement that bespoke order and individuality.

Long tables were installed so children could collaborate in groups, individual subjects were out, and projects and unit studies would replace them. The rote memorization and the boring drill and practice were to be abandoned. The abandonment of the traditional curriculum, the shift from classical literature to amorphous books by unknown authors, and the neglect of the standard history curriculum."

Cothram, in "War in Knowledge," discusses the "Cardinal Principles" document and Kilpatrick's "The Project Method," which were written in the 1920s and 30s. He states that before these were published, a system of education saw it as its job to pass on our culture. It knew that memorization and drill, and practice were not boring but exciting and valuable for young children.

It saw that teaching literature and history, when properly taught, was interesting and exciting to students. Hence, it was called classical education. But after these pragmatic reforms were introduced, the liberal arts drastically suffered. Now, Charlotte Mason, a huge proponent of educational access for all children in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in England, stated that each child, who is a person and a sense maker, has the right to gain understanding in the knowledge of the world, the knowledge of man, and the knowledge of God.



She wrote in her Volume Six Philosophy of Education, "I need not waste time in attempting to convince the reader of what we all know, that a liberal education is like justice, religion, liberty, fresh air, the natural birthright of every child. Neither need we discuss the scope of such an education. We are aware that good life implies cultivated intelligence, and according to the platonic axiom, knowledge is virtue even though there are many exceptions to the rule.

Educated teachers quickly perceive the humanities part as a worthy education scheme. But our government school system is a result of the pragmatists who continue to tout the theories of Dewey instead of the goal to teach children the basic skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic, wisdom and virtue through literature and history, and advanced intellectual skills that can only come from the liberal arts."

Reform after reform, tax after tax, our children's hearts and minds, and futures are at stake and compromise. And to what end? I know that as a parent, I won't let my child be a victim of these reforms. Today we face far more difficult challenges than ones in the past. Not only are we refuting absolute truths, but we are also now, in our public school system and our culture, we are completely reversing truths.

The educational system can do that. Society can do that because the groundwork has been laid in the last century. I am so grateful that we have a choice. We still have the choice of what we want our children to learn. If you send your child to Caesar, he will become a Roman. The choice can often be exceedingly difficult, but it is up to you.

I pray that if you desire to get your child out of the pragmatic government schools, you can do so. You could just fulfill your child with the curiosity they need and fill their hearts with the wisdom of old and the books that can develop their character.

I hope that that was valuable to you, for I know it was for me to look into the history of public schools and to really fully understand what is now happening and how it is just catapulted farther and farther away from the biblical truths and the absolute truths that are the foundation for the family and society, and for everything as we know it.