



By Education is a discipline, is meant the discipline of habits formed definitely and thoughtfully, whether habits of mind or body. ¹

— SHANNON SEIBERLICH —

Habits! We all have them. Are the habits we're forming life-giving or life-stealing?

Because habit is inevitable, if we are not forming life-giving habits, we will form life-stealing habits. Our children and students reveal to each of us of the kinds of habits, physical, intellectual, and moral which both they and we need to form or reform. This is our starting place.

Thomas awakes, runs down the stairs ready for the day, greeting dad, mom, and baby brother. "Good Morning, Good Morning!" Lily lags behind, mopes down the stairs, and asks, "Are we having oatmeal? I hate oatmeal."

Some parents dismiss the difference; Thomas is a morning person and Lily obviously is not! Are we willing to leave Lily to her nature? The truth is Thomas and Lily have formed different habits. Thomas' habit may be natural or may be the result of formation, his parents having instructed him to greet persons when he comes into a room. He followed their imperative. Whereas Lily has been lax (and so have her parents) dismissing the imperative, not forming the positive habit, but instead a contrary habit.

With mom and dad's support, Lily can form the positive habit easily enough. "Lily, try coming downstairs again, the right way?" If need be, dad or mom might run up to Lily, tickling or kissing her (to distract her from herself), and state, "Try that again."

Questions to Consider

- Why do we so easily dismiss the work of forming habits in the lives of our children/students to personality, birth order, gender, etc.?
- Consider the Four-Part Process ² of Habit Formation:
- A Positive Relational Alliance ~ Sowing an Idea ~ Proactive Support ~ Natural Consequences

¹ Mason, Charlotte. *Home Education*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1989. (Preface).

² St. Cyr, William, *Ambleside Schools International Internship Manual*. Leesburg, VA. Ambleside Schools, 2010. 25-30.