

**June 10, 2007**

## What Memories Are You Making?

2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14-15

Every once in a while when I speak to my mother on the telephone she becomes a bit nostalgic. At 88 years of age she has lived a long life full of memories and experiences. Her experiences of life especially during her childhood fascinate me. She walked several miles to school and on cold days her mom would give her a hot baked potato to keep her warm and also serve as her lunch. While just in grade school she went to live with her sister because her mom passed away. Her life growing up was far different from mine. The memories of those experiences of life back in the twenties and thirties laid a foundation for my mother that she will never forget. Mom doesn't take electricity or running water for granted. Every day she thanks God for central air and heat, for food in the kitchen and money in her purse. Remembering her past helps my mother never to take today for granted.

Memories are important. Memories have a way of shaping and transforming our lives, don't they? They serve to encourage and strengthen us during difficult times. Certainly that is true of our faith memories. Our memories of past experiences with God give us confidence that our faith will see us through the daily difficult and uncertain events of life. The Bible, after all, is a book of memories—people of faith remembering how God cared for them through the journey of life.

I know people whose parents took them to church every Sunday. Several times I have spoken with people who tell me that when they were children they were taken to church every time the doors were opened. They did not always want to go, but their parents took them nonetheless. And as a result they have a rich treasure of memories to draw from, to lean on and to guide them.

The parable of the men who built houses is instructive. One builder built his house on the sand. When the winds blew and the rains came the house fell to the ground. The other man constructed his house on solid rock and when the winds blew and the rains came the house built on a solid rock withstood the storms.

The point of this little parable is that building faith memories with children provides them with a solid foundation for life. What a blessing to have a bank account of spiritual memories. Paul reminds Timothy that his reserve of memories runs deep. From a child Timothy was taught the ways of God by his mother and grandmother. Timothy's spiritual memories served him well, especially when life threw him a curve. Paul instructs Timothy to continue in what he has learned. In other words, build your life on the spiritual foundation you learned as a child. But what if your child has no spiritual memories? Your child can't remember what he has never experienced.

What spiritual memories are you making with your children? Are you providing them with a spiritual foundation that will give them the support they need to live in today's world? Unfortunately, sometimes as parents we let ourselves become so busy with other things that we fail to take time to make memories with our children.

One of my favorite writers, Erma Bombeck, wrote an article years ago entitled *Time Through the Eyes of A Child* that I want to share with you.

When I was young,  
Daddy was going to throw me in the air  
and catch me, and I would giggle until I  
couldn't giggle anymore, but he had to  
change the furnace filter,  
...so there wasn't time.

When I was young,  
Mama was going to read me a story,  
and I was going to turn the pages and  
pretend I could read, but she had to wax  
the bathroom floor,  
...so there wasn't time.

When I was young  
Daddy was going to come to school and  
watch me in a play. I was the fourth  
wise Man, just in case one of the other  
three got sick, but he had an  
appointment, and it took longer than he  
thought,  
...so there wasn't time.

When I was young,  
Mama was going to listen to me read  
my essay on "What I Want to be When I  
Grow up," but she was in the middle of  
the Monday Night Movie, and Gregory Peck  
always was one of her favorites,  
...so there wasn't time.

When I was young,  
Dad and I were going fishing one  
weekend, just the two of us, and we were  
going to pitch a tent and fry fish with the  
heads still on them, like they do in those  
flashlight commercials, but at the last  
minute he had to fertilize the grass,  
...so there wasn't time.

When I was young,  
the whole family was going to pose  
together for our Christmas cards, but my  
brother had ball practice, my sister had  
her hair up, Dad was watching the  
television, and Mom had to wax the  
bathroom floor again,  
...so there wasn't time.

"There wasn't time." Will that be the most enduring memory our children have of us? Are you making the time to create memories with your children? How tragic if our children's memories are only of how we never had time to be with them. If we are not making memories with our children, when they grow up they won't be able to remember the things we didn't do with them.

Whenever I talk with adult children after one of their parents has died I ask them to share memories of their deceased parent with me. Sometimes as the kids began sharing stories they laugh or cry. The room becomes animated with precious thoughts of earlier and happier days when the child was young and their parent was in the prime of life. Those memories will stay with that adult child forever, and maybe they will even be passed down to a later generation.

Is there something you would like for your child to remember about you? If so, then you better begin making that memory today. Our kids will never be able to remember what they didn't experience. If we are going to make a memory, then we must begin now. It's later than you think. If your child is two or three, they will be four or five before you know it. If they are twelve or thirteen, you will be watching them graduate from high school or college quicker than you think. If there is something you want your child to remember, then you better get busy making memories. It's later than you think.

The great philosopher Yogi Berra, commenting on how the shadows fell on Yankee stadium, once said, "It sure gets late early out there." That's true of life as well. It's getting late, early. If there is something you want your child to remember, then you better make those memories now. Life is moving faster than you think.

Today, while you receive the Lord's Supper, allow this moment to be a beautiful spiritual memory for your children. Let them hold the cup in their hands, take a bit of the wafer and let them taste it. Tell them that this little piece of bread and juice, while not very much food, will one day be a great banquet when we will eat and celebrate it with God.

Talk about the service at lunch today. Say a prayer before you eat. Tell them that every good thing comes from God. Read them a story this afternoon. Maybe ride bikes with them or take your child to the beach. Go for a long walk and tell your child about your mom and dad. Your child may pretend that they are bored by all of this, but I promise you they will cling to every word. They will treasure every moment of your time with them. You will be making a memory that will forever be treasured.

Timothy had memories of his grandmother and mother teaching him the wonderful life of faith. Make memories with your children so that when he grows old he will have a strong foundation of faith. Our kids cannot remember what they have not experienced. Make a memory and begin today.