

SOME THINGS I LEARNED FROM MY MOTHER

Text: Proverbs 1:8-9; 6:20-23

INTRO: A few years ago a Universalist preacher, Robert Fulgham, wrote: "Most of what I really need to know about how to live & what to do & how to be, I learned in kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate school mountain, but there in the sandpile at Sunday school. These are the things I learned: Share everything. Play fair. Don't hit people. Put things back where you found them. Clean up your own mess. Don't take things that aren't yours. Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody. Wash your hands before you eat. Flush. Warm cookies & cold milk are good for you... When you go out into the world, watch out for traffic, hold hands & stick together..."

That's not quite all he wrote, but most of it. I didn't go to kindergarten & I missed the Sunday school sandpile. But I think I did Mr. Fulgham one better. What he learned in kindergarten, I learned from my mother. And a lot of other useful stuff, as well.

I. I LEARNED WHOSE DAY THIS IS--THE LORD'S

DAY. Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:1-2. If company came, we went to church. If there was a family reunion, we went to church first. If some of us were sick, those of us who were well enough went to church. Of course, if the sick person were so sick someone needed to stay with him, one of us would stay.) If somebody was celebrating a birthday or whatever, we went to church first. Sunday was the Lord's day.

II. I LEARNED RESPECT. Say "yes, sir," & "no, sir,;" "yes, mam," & "no, mam." I was not required to say "sir" & "mam" to my parents, but I knew better than to say "yeah" to them when I meant "yes." I was taught not to talk back to my mother or to my dad. I tried it a few times, but I paid for it. And I learned not to do it.

Lev 19:32, You shall rise before the gray headed & honor the presence of an old man...

1 Tim 5:1-2, Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters...

1 Pet 5:5, Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders...

III. MAMA CAUTIONED ME...

A. Don't Gamble. You're not likely to win. And you can't win without hurting somebody else.

B. Don't Cheat. How would you like to be doctored by a man who cheated his way thru medical school? How would you like your freedom to hinge on a lawyer who cheated his way thru law school?

C. Don't Lie. Rev. 21:8.

D. Don't Trade. It took me a while to figure this one out. I got in trouble

one time because I traded a rubber lizard my grandpa gave me for a real looking policeman's badge. My mother made me give the badge back, but the boy I traded with wouldn't let me have the lizard back. I'm not sure why Mama thought trading was so bad-- but I guess she knew if you didn't cheat & you didn't lie, it put you at a decided disadvantage in the trading world.

IV. I LEARNED THAT THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD, THAT IT IS THE STANDARD BY WHICH I'LL BE JUDGED AT THE END OF THE WORLD. Of course, Mama thought she was right religiously, but she taught me to read & study for myself. She didn't always agree with my conclusions, but she respected my study & my honesty. She never liked for me to initiate a discussion of our areas of disagreement, but several times, she sought my judgment & my counsel, listened attentively, sometimes changed her mind, but always respected my study & my honesty.

IV. I EVENTUALLY LEARNED THAT NOBODY BUT JESUS WOULD EVER LOVE ME MORE THAN SHE DID. There's just something about a mother's love that is impossible to duplicate. I lost my Mama in 1981. A few years ago, Lewis Grizzard wrote a book with a title he took from a telephone company advertisement. Alabama football coach Bear Bryant did a commercial for AT&T a few weeks before Mother's Day. His last line was supposed to be, "Don't forget to call your mama." But he ad-libbed, "I wish I could call mine."

CONCLUSION: Sometime back, I somehow got to thinking about my friends. Every place I've lived, I've had a few close friends. I began to wonder, all things considered, "Who is my best friend on earth?" I thought about it a few hours. I thought of my friends in Liberty Hill, in La Porte, in Louisiana, in Pennsylv-ania... Who would do the most for me if I really needed their help? Who would put up with more out of me than any other person. And the answer was clear. My best friend on earth is Betty, the mother of my children. This is the Lord's day. Most of all I honor my Lord, the best friend I have in the universe. But He said for us to honor our fathers & our mothers, and so today, I especially call your attention to the honor, respect & love that is due our own mothers & the mothers of our children. "Don't forget to call your mama. I wish I could call mine."

Shiloh, Mexia, TX, May 12, 1996

Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, May 10, 1998