

Abundant Living

MINISTRIES



May 2024

It is the looked-forward-to time of year. School's out... a change of pace for most families. Vacations are planned, perhaps to Florida for Disney, to the New Jersey shore, or even a three-week cross-country trip for sightseeing.

May I throw out an idea for you to at least consider? With a similar amount of expense you could probably go, as a family, on a "missions trip." Cost-wise, taking the family to Disney could quite probably be swapped for an international missions experience. The expense of one day at Hershey Park could be swapped for an inner-city service project.

It's amazing what can be observed and learned when we trade our pursuit of pleasure for an experience of service to help others less privileged. Children (and adults) often say their lives were changed. Adolescents are impressed with how happy people can be... even when living in poverty. And participating as a family in taking the name of Jesus beyond one's own neighborhood is an experience with value far beyond the churning stomach from a roller coaster ride.

Whatever you do and wherever you go... know that Jesus is with you!

Be blessed and... Be a blessing!

John (for Sharon and the rest at ALM)



Great-Grandma's Way

Question: "I'm exhausted. My children rarely obey when I give them an instruction. I try to speak calmly but usually end up losing control and yelling at them. It seems I'm always running to their activities, and never have time for anything or anyone else... including my husband. I'm frightened that my kids won't reach their

full potential if I don't devote myself totally to their development. Worse yet, I'm scared to death they might turn out badly. Why does parenting have to be so difficult?"

Response: Many moms share this woman's lament. But parenting doesn't have to be this hard. Interviews with mothers of a generation or two ago reveal that, for the most part, raising children wasn't viewed as such a burden back then. Perhaps our culture could take some tips from Great-Grandma and dare to adopt her common-sense ways of parenting. Here is some of her timeless wisdom:

"Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child."

This was a Scriptural (therefore correct!) view of human nature. Great-Grandma understood that children were born with a self-centered, sinful bent. This is contrary to current philosophies which maintain that all human beings are intrinsically good. Although Great-Grandma

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loved her children, she didn't delude herself into thinking that they were little angels. Therefore she didn't indulge her children's foolish and selfish whims. Instead, she taught her children right from wrong.

"First things first."

In Great-Grandma's view, children's demands were not among those "first things." Service to God, marriage, church, country, and community often took precedence over service to children. Not that children were unimportant to her... not at all! Great-Grandma would have given her life for her children! But she didn't allow them to rule the roost. Therefore, as she began each day, her number one thought usually wasn't, "What would the children like to do today?" Rather, she invited them to watch her, follow her, help her, learn from her, as she focused time and attention on giving to others. She cared for her children's *needs* ... food, clothing, rest, love and spiritual training, but concerned herself much less with their *wants*. Consequently, play was a privilege which came only after family, school or other responsibilities were first cared for.

"You can do it. And you will do it."

Great-Grandma rarely did for her children what they were capable of doing themselves. In fact, she was likely to allow them to struggle awhile in order to figure something out. She assigned tasks and expected her children to complete them and to do a good job. Today's parents often take pride in having intelligent, talented, even gifted children, but don't believe they're capable of carrying out simple household jobs. The same children that know how to program computers and smart phones are excused from chores. Participation in a plethora of extra-curricular activities is deemed necessary for developing healthy self-esteem. Great-Grandma knew self-worth is developed through service, so she gave her children lots of opportunity to serve others.

"Nip it in the bud, or lower the boom."

Great-Grandma was convinced that she could get good behavior from children. At the first sign of a developing problem, she would decisively and unapologetically intervene in such a way that the child would think twice before repeating the infraction. And if that consequence didn't

do the trick, she wouldn't hesitate to "lower the boom" to make a bigger impression when necessary. Today's mother would rather find a "disorder" or "condition" on which to blame her child's inappropriate words and actions. Then she convinces herself that she is helpless and at the mercy of her out-of-control child. Great-Grandma knew that love for a child requires firm discipline.

"I'll trust the Lord."

The wisest Great-Grandmas were Godly women who understood that one day their children would have to answer to their Creator for their thoughts, words, and actions. Therefore they prayed with and for their children. They taught them Bible verses and explained spiritual truth. Today's children can quote lines from movies and sports statistics better than they can Scripture. Great-Grandma made sure that children attended church and, given a choice, she would always choose spiritual pastimes over secular. And she prayed daily on her knees with tears and perseverance for the souls of her children.



The good news is, any mother can choose to adopt Great-Grandma's wisdom... beginning today!

With the same kind of courage and determination displayed by mothers of past generations, today's moms can stop being slaves to their children and start taking charge of their households. And they can know that every step of the way, they have the Lord's wisdom and help available.

With HIM plus Great-Grandma... things are bound to get better!

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