

HUGS

Heartfelt Uplifting Guest Stories

DEVOTIONS FROM OUR CHURCH FAMILY
NOVEMBER 14, 2019

Children

Children are God's gift to a family; and we can learn so much from them. Their humility, freedom from prejudice, love, trust, faith, innocence, freedom from anxiety and a desire to learn are all qualities that we should imitate. We as parents, teachers and church family have a responsibility to our children to never do anything that would cause them to lose their childlike innocence or to lose faith in their creator. Jesus exhorts his disciples, "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea" (Mark 9:42).

Our little ones learn from us when we share ourselves with them by: reading Bible stories; praying together; and playing and working together. Always assure them that when they make mistakes we will still love them and when we make mistakes we tell them that we're sorry. They need to know that God will always love and will forgive us if we ask for forgiveness. Teach them to share and be kind to everyone even if others are not kind. We should always be ready to let them know how proud we are of their accomplishments.

Children learn by example. If they see us helping others by: donating clothes; helping with food drives; making special donations to missionaries; aiding others with staggering medical bills; comforting

those who face loss; visiting the sick, helping shut-ins and older people, our young ones will learn what it is to be a servant for the Lord.

--Leslie Bean

Another Day

Working with kids, I never know what they will say on a day-to-day basis. Sometimes you laugh, you cry, or you stop and think.

When taking my second graders to lunch one day, I realized I had forgotten my chips from home. Luckily for me the cafeteria sells chips and a few other extras. As I was making my choice, I was taken by surprise as two small arms reached up from behind, and gave me a big hug. I turned around to see these big, bright eyes looking up at me. Smiling from ear to ear, she exclaimed, "I'm so glad God gave me another day to live!"

I gave her a hug back, almost at a loss for words. I told her how happy I was that she was there and then watched her practically skip back to our class table.

What a simple statement, but a powerful message from someone so young! God is in control. It is because of him that I have this day. When my student said that God *gave* me another day to live, I understood that God does not pick and choose who receives another day. That is not his nature. "Truly I

understand God shows no partiality” (Acts 10:34). Each day can be considered a gift, or blessing, from God.

Now, what am I going to do with that day? Worry about things I can't change? Let the small things upset me? It is so easy to get wrapped up in the daily worries and problems. Instead, maybe I should ask myself, “How would God want me to react or respond?”

--Kim Booker

Baptism

I remember our first church building was the little red brick structure in Calvert City, next door to the O'Dells' house. Brother Wiley Mathis, a farmer from Illinois, was our first preacher. He would preach once a month. We did not have Sunday or Wednesday night services.

Once a year, a visiting preacher would hold a gospel meeting which lasted for a week. The church building would be packed for the evening services. Sometimes, while the gospel meeting was going on, there would be an afternoon service. Since the men were working, attendees of that service were mainly women. The women looked so nice in their new foil dresses and white shoes. “Air conditioning” was supplied by Filbeck & Cann Funeral Home (handheld) fans.

In August of 1942, brother John Hardeman was holding the gospel meeting. During an afternoon service, five girls (including me) decided to be baptized. It might help to recall that this took place during World War II, and not too many families owned cars, and if they did, it most likely just one. Everything was rationed. You could not get tires, and only very little gasoline.

Since brother Hardeman was probably the only one with a car, he drove the five of us to Haddox Ferry and baptized us in the Tennessee River. As I look back, I imagine that his car was so wet, that it took a week to dry out! It held five girls with soaking wet dresses.

We appreciated brother Hardeman helping us obey the command of Jesus: “Whoever believes and is baptized shall be saved, but who ever does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:16).

--Joan Braford (deceased)

Love the Brotherhood!

Back a few years ago, my family and I worshipped with a congregation in Texas. As we approached the church building, though, there was nothing to tell *who* met there, nor *when* they met for worship and Bible study. Oh, it was adequate—contained a baptistery and had enough room for about one hundred and fifty people. There were about forty to fifty people who attended while we lived there. They were a friendly group and conversations with them were easy.

While we were there, some spiritually significant events occurred. The congregation encouraged me and another man to present Bible lessons every Sunday night. While it was not what I would call preaching, each lesson lasted about twenty minutes and I had to really study and work hard to present each one. Our daughter was baptized there. The congregation had a gospel singing and the director encouraged my son to pick out two songs and lead them. They even offered to send my son to singing school in Houston.

My family and I enjoyed our time in Texas. Even though our association with them got off to a shaky start, with no sign, I came to love and appreciate them. We hated to leave. There is one big regret have about our time there. At the time we were to leave, one of the women wanted me to conduct a Bible study with her husband and I was unable to do so.

By the way—by the time my family and I left, the church had put up a sign!

“Honor all people. Fear God. Love the brotherhood. Honor the Emperor” (1 Peter 2:17).

--Eugene Cope

Changed!

Life was good. Blessed with wonderful parents that loved and cared for me. Living in America. All was good.

When I was about ten, I was baptized because everyone else at Vacation Bible School was doing it. I knew right from wrong. However, I didn't change.

In 1983, life threw me a curve. On a hot July day that year, my twenty-one-year-old sister collapsed while running around a softball field. She died two days later....and we were changed. Life was never the same. We were so sad.

Why did this happen? I knew I wanted to see her again one day. I knew I needed to get to heaven. I knew I would have to make a change.

In 1993, I married and was blessed with a son. My husband and I were at a UK game and he had a grand mal seizure. He needed surgery on his brain. After he was released for work they told him he didn't have a job. My position as a sales representative had been eliminated due to downsizing in our industry. We were having a hard time paying our bills and my cabinets were getting bare. It was a humbling experience. A dear lady, Betty Goheen, brought me a bag of food. In the bottom of the bag was over \$300.00. I could not believe that someone would do that for me. I thought, “What a wonderful example of a Christian woman!” This act of kindness made a change in me.

In 2003 I decided to take the final step—baptism and change. Wow! Forgiven of all the guilt and shame I had been carrying around. What a relief!

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come” (2 Corinthians 5:17). *Changed!*

--Kimberlee Copeland