

The Family Friend

A collection of articles and quotes to aid your family in daily living.

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'Tis the Season for Memories

Making marriage Work After the Golden Anniversary (3)

"It was the best of times and the worst of times." Charles Dickens' famous opening line in *A Tale of Two Cities* seems especially applicable to older couples during the Christmas season.

It's the best of times because it brings happy memories to the forefront. We recall the special foods, the special visits, the special gifts, the good times with family and loved ones. Memory is a powerful tool. It can become the catalyst for renewal. We may have gone through long periods of neglecting each other. The memory of that special Christmas, when we were so much in love and much alive, may awaken thoughts that have lain dormant all year long. It's a time when we have an opportunity to renew our commitment to unselfish caring acts and making sure our relationship is still in a growth mode. Yes, Virginia, there is still life among married people who have spent a half-century together.

It's the worst of times when it brings unpleasant hol-

iday memories to the forefront - the loss of a loved one during the Christmas season, the insensitive comments that ruined Christmas a few years back, the disappointments because things weren't perfect. Maybe it was during the Christmas season that layoffs were announced or maybe you heard your parents were divorcing. Those negative memories are just as powerful as the positive ones, but it's important to make sure they don't control our attitude especially during this time of year. It's a time to be thankful that you have each other. Some of your friends won't be celebrating the holiday with a spouse. Celebrating holidays after the death of a spouse is very difficult. You can strengthen your own relationship by reaching out to them and making sure that they don't have to spend the time alone.

It's the best of times because we have an opportunity to focus on the birth of Jesus. After all, it was at his birth that the shepherds were told, "...a savior has been born to you (Luke 2:10). The marriage bond is deeper and stronger when husband and wife are both committed to the Savior. It's an opportunity to think about, talk about, and to be challenged by the fact that God became flesh and lived among us.

It's the worst of times when one spouse is deeply committed to the Savior and the other could care less. It's sad because Christmas night could be a time of encouraging and reinforcing each other's faith. Instead it becomes a reminder of the wall that separates husband and wife. This Christmas would be the perfect time to tear down that wall. It would be a great blessing if the spouse who has resisted the Lord for so long would reach for the hand of the Savior. In so doing you could draw closer to the one you share your life with so that your relationship and commitment will be renewed. That would be the greatest gift for both of you.

As we age, memories intensify. Our memories are not always accurate barometers of the past. We tend to embellish the pleasant memories and imagine the past to be more glorious than it actually was. On the other hand, we may take a depressing view of the past, selectively remembering the painful details of the hurts and slights we experienced, whether real or imagined.

Perhaps the worst mistake we make is assuming that all the good Christmas memories are in the past. We hope you'll make some good new

memories this year. We certainly plan to do just that. Please join us.—**Norman & Ann Bales**

Strong Medicine for Us All

The night before last (Tuesday) I dedicated two hours to systematically going through my Facebook friends list with one specific question in view: *What are my fellow church members posting regarding current events?*

Why? Curiosity and to be informed.

I found many good things, and for that, I thank God.

However, I must say, it was, to say the very least, and all too very often - by no means an edifying exercise. I would certainly not recommend this exercise to the faint of heart and I would warn the depressed or doubting to not do anything like it. And, given the dates of posting, it was apparent that such matters have only increased in darkness and intensity over the past several weeks as a national election date draws ever closer.

It was as if I was witnessing points of light being dimmed, or even completely overcome, by darkness. (sigh)

As I scrolled and read, five passages of Scripture kept popping up in my mind, firing off like popcorn. What were those passages? Here they are (with my own application points inserted in all CAPS, within brackets).

Our Lord Jesus said ...

1. "I tell you, on the day of judgment you will have to give an account for every careless word you utter [VIA SHARING ON SOCIAL MEDIA]." (*Matthew 12.36*)

An apostle of our Savior said ...

2. "[POSTING] Obscene stories, foolish talk, and coarse jokes [ON SOCIAL MEDIA] — these are not for you." (*Ephesians 5.4*)

3. "Let your [SOCIAL MEDIA] conversation be always full of grace ..." (*Colossians 4.6a*)

An unknown preacher, inspired by the Holy Spirit said ...

4. "Make every effort to live in peace with everyone [ON SOCIAL MEDIA] and to be holy, for without holiness no one will see the Lord." (*Hebrews 12.14*)

And our Lord Jesus' half-brother said ...

5. "With our tongues we bless God our Father; with the same tongues we curse the very men and women he made in his image [VIA SOCIAL MEDIA]. Curses and blessings out of the same mouth! My friends, this can't go on. A spring doesn't gush fresh water one day [OR POST] and brackish the next, does it?" (*James 3.9-11*)

And so ...

Let us re-dedicate our tongues and typing fingers to the Lord, my brothers and sisters.

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May we do that by rededicating our heart to him in repentance and profession of faith. Daily.

And may we never forget that along with our God who knows even the motives unknown to us that help give rise to our thoughts, feelings, words, and ways, a world full of people, yet to believe, are also closely watching us and reading us, along with brothers and sisters of greatly varying degrees of strength, burden, understanding, and maturity.

Let us not stumble, and let us not unwittingly lead others to do the same, or worse. Rather, may we be an example of humility and godliness not only to fellow all believers, but to all who are yet to believe.

"Deliver us from evil, Lord. Grant us, by your grace, to rise to this occasion, reflecting your light, and by no means, or media, adding to this world's darkness. Amen."

Grace and PEACE, my fellow sheep. —**David Smith**, Baytown, TX

