

HUGS

Heartfelt, Uplifting, Guest Stories

DEVOTIONS FROM OUR CHURCH FAMILY
DECEMBER 5, 2019



Changing Seasons

The sun is rising as I look out my kitchen window; another new day has come. Wild turkeys are crossing the field from the woods across the way. They have young ones with them this time. I wonder how hard it was for them to survive this bad winter. A red bird is perched on the bird feeder, as squirrels dart up and down the trees; all are looking for food. God provides for the wild life.

What a wonderful thought—to have no worries! We worry when it does not help at all. It just makes us sick sometimes. How can we control worry? We should trust God and place everything in His hands (Proverbs 3:4; Matthew 6:33).

Winter is almost over and signs of spring are beginning to show. I love the changing of the seasons. It is so refreshing to see the trees starting to bud, and the grass turning green again. God's beauty is all around us. Planting season is here again. The farmers and gardeners are hoping for a good harvest.

Our bodies are also feeling the changes of the seasons. Maybe we can't do this year what we were able to do last year. I find myself calling my children and grandchildren to help me with things I can't do anymore. Our minds are willing, but our bodies won't cooperate. This is the time of life where it is so

wonderful to have a loving church family, to help each other.

No matter how long we live, when we look back, it seems like just a twinkling of an eye.

--Inez Darnell

The First Campout

The annual youth group campout at the Hunt's and Darnell's is a much-anticipated event at the end of the summer. The night is filled with food, games, (capture-the-flag, cricket-spitting) and a period of devotion. However, there is very little camping anymore. It is more a continuous night of staying awake.

The first campout was the summer of 2006. It all began with four women working with the teen girls of the congregation: Amy Cunningham, Stephanie Evans, Deena Whirley, and me. We asked the girls what they wanted to do for the summer—they answered with the idea of a "girls-only, no-boys-allowed" campout. It was decided that my backyard was the perfect place. Several tents and much preparation later, the first campout became a reality.

That summer we had been studying women of the Bible. I prepared a devotional for that night on the book of Ruth. As it became dark, we made a circle with our chairs among the tents. We sang

songs the girls wanted to sing. Some giggling and volunteering to sing bass were the only hints of missing the boys.

As we sat in our circle, we opened God's word and read the entire book of Ruth by lantern and flashlight. We discussed Ruth's devotion to Naomi, when she said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go, I will go; and where you lodge, I will lodge" (Ruth 1:16). We decided that the devotion Ruth had to Naomi is what we needed to have to God—the devotion every Christian is to have to the one true God.

--Wendy Hall Darnell

Drifting

When I was 4 years old my dad moved our family to a rural part of the next county. We only had two snowy channels on the television, no city water, and a four-party phone line. There was a small one-lane gravel road that led back to our house. My life went from having kids to play with on a daily basis to there being no kids around for miles. It was a drastic change for me.

One day at the small community store, I met a little girl that changed my life forever. When school started we were in the same class and remained close friends all during elementary school often riding our bikes to each other's house to play. By high school we started to meet new people. Then she went to college and joined the army.

Once I finished high school, I got married. Our lives were completely different and we lost touch for several years. One day the phone rang and it was her. I was so excited to hear her voice. We picked up where we left off. It was as if nothing had changed, even though we were married, and God had blessed us both with children and grandchildren.

Even though our lives went in different directions for years, today we are as close as we were when we were young. This is in spite of the fact we live several states apart. The way we picked up after all that time reminds me of the parable of the lost sheep in Luke 15:7, and how God welcomes us back with open arms if we drift away.

--Bobbye Davis

Models

Please read Titus 2:1-8.

When we, as older men in the church, live our lives in such a way that our young people cannot see that we are sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness, WE have failed—failed GOD, THE CHURCH, AND ESPECIALLY THE CHILDREN.

When the older women in the church, do not live their lives in such a way that our young people

can see that they are "in behavior as reverent, not slanderers, not slaves to much wine, and teachers of good things," then WE have again failed—failed GOD, THE CHURCH, AND ESPECIALLY THE CHILDREN.

Likewise, if the young women and young men fail the test of the words of Titus 2, then, again, we have failed.

We have a responsibility to GOD and all mankind to live as we have been taught in Titus. Everyone we come in contact with will form an opinion of us based on the way we conduct our lives. So, whether we like it or not we are all to be teachers—older men to teach younger men; older women to teach younger women, younger men and women to teach their children. And yes, boys and girls that are old enough to understand what I am writing about, you also are teachers. Don't you know that the kids around you are watching you and listening to you, forming an opinion of you and your lifestyle? Our country, our politics, our people in politics, (the people WE elected) do not show in their actions the lessons of Titus. So the way to fix it is clear: RETURN TO THE WAYS OF THE LORD.

Now: Let us get to work, TOGETHER!!!

--Glenn Davis

Courage to Confront a Bull

One day several years ago, Dad and I were working with the Sojourners* at Western Kentucky Youth Camp. It was not unusual for the Sojourners to come and stay at camp for a month to help make the necessary improvements and repairs each year. The job that year was to make the pavilion larger in order to accommodate more children. We were helping them put tresses on the pavilion when a large bull came down the field by it. We could tell that he was very agitated because he was shaking his head and snorting all the while making his way towards us. We all stopped, stood there in amazement, and wondered what to do next. That was when my dad got down off his ladder, picked up a big stick and started toward that bull. He was yelling and shaking the stick right at him! The bull stopped and looked at that man with a stick in his hand, then turned and ran away from us.

Everyone saw a lot of courage in my dad that day. I knew he acted courageously on a regular basis and that he did not fear dying. It was nice that others now had seen the courage of a man I loved dearly.

"Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them. For it is the LORD your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you" (Deuteronomy 31:6). "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28).

--Larry Davis

*The *Sojourners* are made up of retired Christians who travel the USA working in projects of evangelism and edification among churches of Christ.

