

CHAPTER 1: MY FAMILY

Mom Memories 1

Proverbs 23:22

*Listen to your father who gave you life,
and do not despise your mother when she is old.*

Discipline at home

My mom had her favorite verses while we were growing up. One was “*Spare the rod and spoil the child.*” (Proverbs 13:24) We got lots of spankings. We deserved it. We were rowdy, mean, disobedient, and deserved much of it I’m sure. We were always jealous of other children who didn’t get spanked or who got discipline through a smack on the hands with a ruler, or a paddling with the flat of mom or dad’s hand on the bottom. We were not so lucky. Mom always prefaced our spankings with, “This hurts me more than it hurts you, but God said, ‘*Spare the rod and spoil the child,*’ this is for your own good.” I’m sure when we were little mom might have used the flat of her hand on our bottoms, but soon she graduated to a belt. When the belt elicited a stubborn, “You’re not going to make me cry” response from us boys, she started to use an electric extension cord. (Not plugged in.) That hurt!!! In fact, it left welts and bruises. My parents were fortunate that our teachers never saw our legs and buttocks or they might have called child social services, if that even existed back then. Too often mom would hold the spanking of us boys for when dad came home from work after a 12 hour day. Dad never said, “This will hurt me more than it hurts you.” No, he made sure that it hurt us. We learned to scream and beg while being spanked hoping for some mercy. It never worked.



One time while waiting upstairs for dad to come home we decided to pad our backsides with extra clothes and magazines to lessen the effect of the electric cord. It still hurt.

Mom the Spiritual Leader

Mom could be counted on to be up well before the rest of us sitting in her rocker with her Bible open and her prayer sheet in front of her.

My mom was the spiritual director of our family. Dad was often off working, so much of our upbringing fell to mother. My maternal grandmother was the first to get saved, soon after my mother and my aunt came to know the Lord too.

My parents took us to church as often as the doors were open. Really, if the church doors were open, we were there lined up in the third row from the front on the right side. That was our pew. We attended Sunday School, morning worship and Sunday evening services every Sunday, plus prayer meeting on Wednesday nights. Then we were also in church for every weeknight Missions Conference and any revival or deeper life conference, sometimes two weeks at a time.

Devotions

Mom also made a habit of having family devotions with all of us children. We weren't allowed to go off to play without first having Bible reading and prayer. As we grew older mom was sensitive to the reality that this was very boring for us. She began reading us stories from Christian children's books and missionary stories. That helped. Our favorite was Paul Hutchens's series titled, *The Adventures of the Sugar Creek Gang*. It was funny, neighborhood children would come to the door and press their noses against the screen door to ask if we could come out and play. We always embarrassingly had to say, "Not until we have had devotions." They would ask, "Devotions? What is that?" I'm sure we responded with something like, "You don't even want to know." Devotions had an effect on us. Most of us prayed to receive Christ as our personal Savior at a very young age.

Leading Friends to Jesus

I remember in our first house on Keagan Road I was in the first or second grade. My good friend, Floyd Davis, would come over almost every day to play with me in our sand mound in our backyard. I was always envious of him. We had our cheap plastic trucks while he had those heavy duty Tonka trucks with backhoes and front loaders. We'd play and sometimes the subject of going to church would come up. I would tell him about heaven and hell and that he needed to pray to receive Jesus into his heart. I remember asking him day after day if he had asked Jesus to come into his heart. He would say, "Oh, yah, I forgot. I'll do it tonight." One day when I asked him he burst into a big smile and said, "Yes, I did. I asked Jesus into my heart last night." I never knew if that conversion really stuck with him or not, but after my college days I returned home and I heard that Floyd became a minister in the Lutheran Church. I guess something stuck.

The Stereo Record Player

When we were in our young teen years mom must have been very frustrated trying to keep our attention at devotions. One day a door to door salesman stopped by selling a stereo record player console cabinet with a package of Gospel music and a series of audio stories by Ethel Barrett. It also contained the audio Bible (King James Version of course) and Clyde Narramore's *Psychology for Living*. I don't know how they managed to afford it or how she convinced my

dad this was needed, but they bought the set, which proved to be invaluable in giving me a desire to be able to tell stories like Ethel Barrett.