

Four Reasons I Love Kids

I don't remember a time in my life that I didn't love kids. And in the study of the life of Jesus we see clearly that He more than anyone loved kids and He loved to bless them. *"Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven"* (Matthew 19:13). The people were bringing the children to Jesus that He might lay His hands on them and bless them. The disciples were often surprised at our Lord's response to circumstances. In this case, the Lord rebuked His disciples who thought the children's presence would be a nuisance to Him. I appreciate something I see in our text that I have never noticed until this writing. I looked up the word "suffer" in the Greek and English. I noticed that in the original language (Greek) the word "suffer" can mean *leave them alone* and *let them go*. Here is the truth that hit me: A child left to himself with a clear clean opportunity will come to Jesus! It is natural. It is as though a child almost has to grow up and be taught by word and/or example not to love God. I would also strongly suspect if they, in their older years, associate closely with those who do not love the Lord Jesus, the temptation to forsake the way of righteousness may occur. *"Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners"* (I Corinthians 15:33).

Although I always loved children, my love for them escalated when we had kids of our own. I have noticed with grandchildren, my wife and I have fallen in love with every child on the earth all over again. But my first teachers on loving kids came from the four that we prayed for: our four children God loaned to us. We have always realized our children in fact belong to God; they have only been on loan to us for a little while. As they have grown up, I have to tell you on this side of life, I have been the student and they have been my teachers. Forgive me if I get a little too personal and for my kids who may read this, my intent is not to embarrass you, but hopefully by reading, you may be blessed as I have been blessed by your lives.

1. Be Responsible.

I am going to do this in the birth order of our children. Heather taught me much about responsibility. As I look back I remember the pride and appreciation for everything she possessed. She loved and took care of her little ponies, her dolls, her brushes, her bed, her violin and yes, even her siblings. One of my favorite pictures is the picture of Heather and her daddy on her first day of school. Every hair (her hair) was in place, her outfit was meticulous and she was embracing her new notebook and schoolbook. A cute little smile on her face said, "I'm ready!"

I came home one afternoon to see her standing in front of her kid-size chalkboard with arithmetic written on the board. She had placed her little sister, Juliana in a school desk, while she with a pointer stick was explaining the early rules of math. By the way, Juliana says she did so well in school because of the playful early start she had in the "School of Heather."

Through her life she has reminded me of the importance to work hard at what needs to be done, enjoy it, don't complain. You know, I think I might have enjoyed math better if I had a big sister like Heather. *"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might..."* (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

2. Have Friends.

Now keeping up with Juliana is like keeping up with the wind. She has always been in a hurry to get to where she was going. Why, she didn't even wait for us to get to the hospital; she was born in the car. Yet in all the hurry and scurry of her busy life, I have noticed a precious attribute. She took time for friends. She never met a stranger on the playground; she carried on conversations with our dogs, and was best friends with our cat, Chip. If you look back at her pictures she is often pressing her little cheeks to someone's face. When you got hugged you needed to brace yourself for her embrace.

I'll be honest with you. I cherish my relationship with Christ more than anything. And everyone knows how I feel about my wife. But sometimes I feel like a man against the mountains of life. Yet Juliana reminds me to have the horizontal relationships too. The value of good friends is that

they will not get between you and your Lord; they will help and nurture your walk with God. *"Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not...."* (Proverbs 27:10)

3. Be Determined.

One word comes to mind when I think of my oldest son, Jonathan, "driven." Now don't think for a moment that his drivenness didn't sometimes butt heads with my drivenness. There was an episode that stands out in his teen years. Jonathan attended (as all our kids), Klein High School in Spring, Texas. This is no joke, it was voted a few years ago to be the second snobbiest school in America. So the competition for everything was tough. Jonathan went out for basketball. It came down to 27 left, with three more cuts. On the final cut, Jonathan just missed making the team. I remember he came home from school with his head lowered and said tearfully, "Dad, I was cut." I didn't know what to say, so I sat down and cried with him.

But you know what; Jonathan dried his tears and became a wonderful cellist. I'm certain he would never have played Carnegie Hall with his orchestra if he had made the team. And through his life, he has allowed detours to boost his determination to excel in the natural areas God has given him ability. *"This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before"* (Philippians 3:13).

4. Never Grow Up.

Well now we come to our baby, Sean Patrick. Although he is a senior at college, he has never quite grown up. Allow me to say, I hope he never does. Please know we are not for him acting childish for the rest of his life, but we are in favor of him honing his child-likeness to be Christ-like and to draw others to our Lord through his unique personality. Should you visit our home you will see signs of his appreciation for being a kid. Sean had an imaginary *Sean World*. He also had a *Sean Club*. Every visitor in our home would be inducted into his world. I still remember having my old friend, Ben Jordan over and Sean seated us down and he put on a puppet show for us and he played all the parts.

Even today one of his desires is to relate truth through the medium of story telling. Sean has been a valuable reminder to me to stay youthful, have fun and you don't have to be a prude to be a good Christian. *"Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein"* (Mark 10:15).

In all honesty, all our kids have exemplified to a degree everything I have said. For all of our kids these attributes have been interchangeable. They have been the joy of our life, the chief motivation of our prayers. So along with our Mother's Days and Father's Days, if we decide to celebrate "Children's Day," I have four good reasons why I love kids! They have been fantastic teachers and I love them so much. *"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also"* (II Timothy 2:2).

- Pastor Pope -

Back to Pastor's Word