

## What If God Took the Day Off?

One afternoon a man came home from work to find total mayhem in his house. His three children were outside, still in their pajamas, playing in the mud, with empty food boxes and wrappers strewn all around the front yard. The door of his wife's car was open, as was the front door to the house. Proceeding into the entry, he found an even bigger mess. A lamp had been knocked over, and the throw rug was wadded against one wall. In the front room, the TV was loudly blaring a cartoon channel, and the family room was strewn with toys and various items of clothing. In the kitchen, dishes filled the sink, breakfast food was spilled on the counter, dog food was spilled on the floor, a broken glass lay under the table, and a small pile of sand was spread by the back door.

He quickly headed up the stairs, stepping over toys and piles of clothes, looking for his wife. He was worried she may be ill, or that something serious had happened. He found her lounging in the bedroom, still curled in the bed in her pajamas, reading a novel. She looked up at him, smiled, and asked how his day went.

He looked at her bewildered and asked, "What happened here today?" She again smiled and answered, "You know every day when you come home from work and ask me what in the world I did today?" "Yes" was his incredulous reply. She answered, "Well, today I didn't do it."

We often take for granted those things that others do for us, and it sometimes takes their absence for us to appreciate what they do. Now think... what if God took the day off?

"For in Him we live and move and have our being..." (Acts 17:28). This represents what God does for us every day, whether or not we are aware of it.

"Every day I will bless You, And I will praise Your name forever and ever" (Psalm 145:2). This represents what ought, every day, to be our reaction to what God does for us.

## Making a Trough

Once upon a time there was a little old man whose hands trembled uncontrollably; when he ate he clattered the silverware distressingly, missed his mouth with the spoon as often as not, and dribbled a bit of his food on the tablecloth. He lived with his married son, having nowhere else to go, and his son's wife didn't like the arrangement.

"I can't have this," she said. "It interferes with my right to happiness." So she and her husband took the old man gently but firmly by the arm and led him to the corner of the kitchen. There they set him on a stool and gave him his food in an earthenware bowl and a wooden spoon. From then on he always ate in the corner, blinking at the table with wistful eyes.

One day his hands trembled rather more than usual, and the earthenware bowl fell and broke. "If you are going to make a mess like a pig when you eat," said the daughter-in-law, "you must eat out of a trough on the back porch." So they made him a little wooden trough, and he ate his meals from that.

These people had a four-year-old son of whom they were very fond. One evening the young man noticed his boy playing intently with some bits of wood and asked what he was doing.

"I'm making a trough" he said, smiling up at his father for approval, "to feed you and Momma when I get big."

The man and his wife looked at each other for a while and didn't say anything. Then they cried a little. Then they went to the corner and took the old man by the arm and led him back to the table. They sat him in a comfortable chair and gave him his food on a plate, and from then on nobody ever scolded when he clattered or spilled or broke things.

One of Grimm's fairy tales, this anecdote has the crudeness of the old, simple days. But perhaps crassness is perhaps a good descriptor for our youth worshipping culture. This story makes a strong point: honor your parents, lest your children dishonor you. Or in other words, a society that destroys the family destroys itself.

A man of honor repays his parents. A Christian is honored to do so. The elderly are a link to a past you and I will never see; and their wisdom is a light that shines into the future so that we need not wander blindly forward. Cherish the aged as a treasured blessing. "Honor widows who are really widows. But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God" (1Tim. 5:3-4).

## Dying To Self

When you are forgotten, or neglected, or purposely set at naught, and you don't sting and hurt with the insult or the oversight, but your heart is happy, being counted worthy to suffer for Christ, that is dying to self.

When your good is evil spoken of, when your wishes are crossed, your advice disregarded, your opinions ridiculed, and you refuse to let anger rise in your heart, or even defend yourself, but take in all in patient, loving silence, that is dying to self.

When you lovingly and patiently bear any disorder, any irregularity, any impunctuality, or any annoyance; when you stand face-to-face with waste, folly, extravagance, spiritual insensibility -- and endure it as Jesus endured, that is dying to self.

When you are content with any food, any offering, any climate, any society, any raiment, any interruption by the will of God, that is dying to self.

When you never care to refer to yourself in conversation, or to record your own good works, or itch after commendations, when you can truly love to be unknown, that is dying to self.

When you can see your brother prosper and have his needs met and can honestly rejoice with him in spirit and feel no envy, nor question God, while your own needs are far greater and in desperate circumstances, that is dying to self.

When you can receive correction and reproof from one of less stature than yourself and can humbly submit inwardly as well as outwardly, finding no rebellion or resentment rising up within your heart, that is dying to self.

"Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it" (Matt. 16:24-25).

#### A Moments Wisdom

Over the years, many changes have been seen in preachers and preaching, but one will never see changes in the will of God.

Belly-aching is contagious; one whining dog can get a whole kennel howling.