

Washing Dishes By Kent Heaton

The simple act of putting ones hands into warm, soapy water has a soothing appeal. That simplicity may be marred by the pile of dishes awaiting the cleansing hand of the washer, but nonetheless there is in dish washing a lost art. With all the modern conveniences, something is lost and missing in the home. As a boy and part of a family of six children, dish washing was a family project. Some cleaned the table off while someone washed, another rinsed and each dish was dried by hand. It was not the most exciting time of life and doubtless memories are clouded with more fondness than reality. There were a lot of things we did as a family that is now done with great ease.

Surprising in a world run by technology we have less time than before. Machines wash the dishes and clothes, microwaves speed cooking to minutes, and communication is as instant as your cell phone or computer. Television has made families single nuclear insular people who seldom venture beyond the remote control. The tragedy of our country came about when homes no longer had front porches where endless stories and lives were shared. We just don't have time any more. And that is where we began with washing dishes.

It takes time to wash each dish, rinse and dry. We just don't want to take the time. We are busy about being busy about busy things. And to what end? Children are neglected by busy homes that seldom (if ever) share meals together (without television). Husbands and wives grow apart because it takes time to build relationships and there is no time. The work of the church goes undone because there is so much on the calendar to do this week and next week and next month. We have planners, schedules and expectations to keep. Washing dishes reminds us of the simple times of communication, fellowship and family unity.

When was the last time you sat down with your family and shared a common meal more than once during the week (Eph. 6:1-4)? How often do you take the time to meditate upon the mind of God with any clarity (Psalm 119:15-16)? What acts of kindness have we sought to do with others to help (1Thes. 5:14)? When was the last time we talked with our family or neighbors about the works of God (Psalm 77:11-14)? What efforts have been made to share the good news of Jesus Christ (John 14:6)? How much faith do we have (Rom. 10:17)? When was the last time we put our hands in soapy water and worked on our family values?

The 'Good Samaritan' knew something about dish washing. The parable Jesus told was of a man who had somewhere to go and something to do but took the time to help a man in need (Luke 10:25-37). Unlike the priest and the Levite, the Samaritan had meditated upon God's word and knew the heart of its message. His compassion came from hours 'washing dishes' and knowing the true value of life. He put out his hands from a heart bound by God's love. To be a neighbor we need to get our hands in soapy water.

Children need to learn how to wash dishes. It teaches simplicity, cleanliness, honesty and a wonderful work ethic. Responsibility is found in soapy water and respect for parents. Amazing what a little bit of water and soap will do for a person. Make it warm and it will last. Make it last and it will warm your heart. As you wash the dishes teach them about God and His power. These are lessons that will last a lifetime.

Mother Doesn't Want Pie

A teacher asked a boy this question: "Suppose your mother baked a pie and there were seven of you--your parents and five children. What part of the pie would you get?" "A sixth," replied the boy. "I'm afraid you don't know your fractions," said the teacher. "Remember, there are seven of you." "Yes, teacher," said the boy, "but you don't know my mother. Mother would say she didn't want any pie."

Depths of Mother's Love

Years ago, a young mother was making her way across the hills of South Wales, carrying her tiny baby in her arms, when she was overtaken by a blinding blizzard. She never reached her destination and when the blizzard subsided her body was found by searchers beneath a mound of snow. But they discovered that before her death, she had taken off all her outer clothing and wrapped it about her baby. When they unwrapped the child, to their great surprise and joy, they found he was alive and well. She had mounded her body over his and given her life for her child, proving the depths of her mother love. Years later that child, David Lloyd George, grown to manhood, became prime minister of Great Britain, and, without doubt, one of England's greatest statesman.

Compassion from the Womb

In the Hebrew language of the Old Testament the word for "compassion" comes from the root word, "womb." The picture is of a birthing. Something new is being born. If I apply this in a human experience, it means that my compassionate acts always give the other person another chance. I do not hold past failures against them. I offer a "fresh start." I want this for myself from others. Am I willing to give it to the other person? Such compassion will dramatically change the way we relate to each other.

Grandma's Perfect Day

Grandma, on a winter's day,
Milked the cows and fed them hay,
Hitched the mule, drove kids to school,
Did a washing, mopped the floors,
Washed the windows and did some chores,
Cooked a dish of home-dried fruit,
Pressed her husband's Sunday suit,
Swept the parlor, made the bed,
Baked a dozen loaves of bread
Split some firewood and lugged it in,
Enough to fill the kitchen bin
Cleaned the lamps and put in oil,
Stewed some apples before they spoiled

Churned the butter, baked a cake,
Then exclaimed, "For goodness sake!"
When the calves ran from the pen,
And chased them all back in again,
Gathered eggs and locked the stable,
Back to the house and set the table
Cooked a supper that was delicious,
Then washed and dried all dirty dishes
Fed the cat and sprinkled clothes,
Mended a basketful of hose
Then opened the organ and began to play:
"When You Come to the End of a Perfect Day..."

No man is poor who has had a godly mother.
An ounce of motherhood for a child is worth a ton of preaching in his later years.